

Pioneer Vignerons:

Samuel SMITH: (1812-1889)

Samuel Smith, the founder of Yalumba Wines, was born in Wareham, Dorset, England, on 17th July 1812. He married Mary Osborne on 25th March 1835 and was engaged in the brewing business prior to emigrating to South Australia with his wife and their five children. They arrived at Port Adelaide in the *China* in 1847 and after a period at Klemzig they moved to Angaston, where Smith worked as a gardener for the Angas family at Tarrawatta.

In 1849 he purchased 30 acres near Angaston and established a vineyard and orchard. He named the property 'Yalumba', an Aboriginal word meaning 'all the country around'. Three years later he and his son Sidney went to the Victorian goldfields and the tale is told that on his sixteenth shaft he was lucky and returned to Adelaide £300 richer than he had left four months earlier. He invested the money in more land, a plough, two horses and a harness.

Samuel Smith planted his first vines in 1852 and at the Angaston Agricultural and Horticultural Show in 1856 he was awarded second prize for his collection of grapes. By 1862 he had 14 acres of Shiraz vines, seven of which were in full bearing. In the 1863 vintage he produced 60 hogsheads of wine from his own grapes and from some bought from his neighbours. His wines were soon gaining recognition at wine shows, the awards including a silver medal at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878.

The Yalumba vineyards were expanded considerably over the next two decades. In 1868 Smith had 20 acres planted and in 1887 this had grown to 76 acres. The varieties grown were Frontignac, Albillo, Dolcetto, Tokay, Mataro and Muscatel. During the 1870s the average vintage was about 20,000 gallons, a fair proportion of which was made from grapes bought in. The wines were fortified styles for the most part, the fortifying spirit being distilled on the premises.

Smith was a prominent member of the Angaston Congregational Church and served for many years as superintendent of the Sunday school. His first wife died in 1872 and on 6th January 1875 he married a widow, Frances Bayly (nee Goodwin). Sidney Smith joined his father in the Yalumba fruit-growing and winemaking business and, on his father's retirement in 1888, took over the management of the firm. Samuel Smith died at Angaston on 15th June 1889, survived by his second wife, four daughters and a son. He was buried at Angaston Cemetery.

Yalumba grew rapidly in the 1890s under Sidney's management. By 1891 he had 110 acres of vines planted and by 1902 had increased the cellar storage to 400,000 gallons.

In the 1903 vintage 180,000 gallons of wine were produced, no doubt far beyond Samuel's wildest dreams half a century earlier.

Source

John Healey; *S.A.'s Greats – The Men and Women of the North Terrace Plaques*, Historical Society of South Australia Incorporated; 2001

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Prepared March 2018 by Kevin Gogler and Barry Philp