

The Australian Cobdens

Henry Andrews Cobden 1813-1858
Frances Baddily 1817-1856
and their sons

Henry was the ninth of eleven children of farmers **William Cobden** and **Millicent Amber** of Midhurst, Sussex and was born near Midhurst on December 12th 1813. When he was only about 1 year old, the family had to sell their farm, due to economic hardship. They moved to West Meon in nearby Hampshire where they ran a millinery/drapery shop and rented property from the Rogers, a family with whom the Cobdens maintained close friendships over the years to come.¹



Henry's parents: Left: William Cobden 1830. Original at Manchester City Council. Centre: Millicent Amber, miniature by W. Dudman 1798. Original at Manchester City Council. Right: Henry's brother Richard 1843. Stipple engraving by Frederick Christian Lewis Sr, after Charles Allen Duval. Source: National Portrait Gallery, London

Henry attended Christ's Hospital, a charity school in London, from 1820 to 1828. During this time, in 1825, his mother died at the age of 50. She had contracted typhoid whilst looking after an ill neighbour in West Meon. This had devastating consequences for the family as Millicent was regarded as the family's strength, William being poor at business, even though a well-liked, pleasant and amiable man. The eldest sons, Frederick and particularly Richard, became the source of guidance and support for the family. In 1827 whilst Henry was still at school in London, the family moved to Farnham in Surrey hoping to find better economic opportunities than in West Meon.

The 1830s saw the deaths of his father (1833) as well as illness causing the premature deaths of three sisters: **Emma** (1836), Millicent (1839) and Jane (1830), and younger brother Miles (1830). The remaining family (Frederick, Richard, Charles, Henry, Priscilla, Mary and Sarah, were now centred around Manchester where Richard was establishing himself as a successful manufacturer of quality printed calicoes. In partnership with Sheriff, Foster and Gillett he had a printing works at Sabden in Lancashire, with offices in Manchester and London.



Christ's Hospital School London: the exterior of the Writing School. Engraving by J. Lambert after himself, 1812. Source: The Wellcome Collection. Henry was sent here from 1820 to 1828.

Employed by his brother

After leaving school, Henry was employed by Richard as an apprentice in the Sabden printing works and by 1832 he was working in the Manchester warehouse at Mosley Street and living with his brothers and sisters at Richard's house in Quay Street. The following year Richard sent him to New York to look for business opportunities for the firm. Apparently, Henry was not very successful at this, although he was employed by Richard until 1839.



Cobdens in Manchester. Left: The Cobdens' house in Quay Street 2014. Above: the Mosley Street offices 2018. Photos: Euan McGillivray.

Controversial relationship

By the age of 26, Henry had met Frances Baddily (also spelled Baddeley), daughter of shopkeepers Thomas and Elizabeth Baddily of Cheshire. The young couple had a son who was baptised on January 2nd 1839 at Stockport, Cheshire, and as they were not married, the child was brought up by Frances's parents as their son and named Henry Baddily. Later that year on September 10th Henry and Frances married in London at St. Pancras church.



St Pancras Old Church, London where Henry and Frances married in 1839. Photo: Euan McGillivray 2018

1839 was also the year Richard was in the process of terminating his business partnership with Sheriff, Foster and Gillett at the Sabden factory and leasing a printing works at Chorley (closer to Manchester than Sabden). He and his brother Frederick would be new business partners. Did Henry see this as a convenient time to seek a future elsewhere? Very shortly after his wedding, Henry was in Paris and on September 16th wrote a letter² to Frederick:

'Dear Fred

I find I have been put to some rather extraordinary expenses during the last fortnight and have been compelled to draw for £50 which I hope you will make right - I shall not of course require any thing further for months to come - I saw Gillett but not Sheriff in London he was extraordinary kind, much more so than I had ever anticipated, he had just heard of my having left Mosely Street I leave tomorrow or day after for Rouen and Havre, and shall be back again in a fortnight.....'

Perhaps the 'extraordinary expenses' may have been due to wedding celebrations in London or possibly preparations for a long voyage. The letter says he will return from the continent in a fortnight. There is a record³ of a Mr Henry Cobden and Mrs

Cobden arriving in Sydney, New South Wales, on January 24th 1840 on board the *Henry*. This vessel had left London on October 5th 1839. From this information and the letter, a picture can be given of Henry's movements from his wedding day until his departure for Australia. A letter written by Richard dated November 25th 1839, also fits the timeline.

Character assassination

Richard clearly disapproved of Henry and Frances's relationship. He wrote angrily in a letter⁴ of November 25th 1839 to a close business friend:

'My brother Henry has clandestinely gone to South Australia, and taken a wife with him from a very low and disreputable station - He has committed suicide morally forever - My conscience acquits me of blame, except that I did too much for him, and spent money in vain upon one so unworthy - You formed a true estimate of his character from the beginning - had he been any other man's brother I should not have been deceived in him.'

There is no evidence that Henry and Frances ever arrived in South Australia, but this may have been their original intention, and for whatever reason, whether from advice or practicality, or maybe Richard was mistaken, South Australia was not Henry and Frances's final destination.

In his angry letter, was Richard referring to not only the illegitimate birth, but also perhaps the manner in which the young couple departed England? Maybe Henry left the firm without giving notice. Richard implies the marriage was done secretly and perhaps this is true - there were no Cobdens as witnesses to the marriage. Was Frances's 'disreputable station' due to her having an illegitimate child, or some other reason (a biographer, Wendy Hinde, suggests Frances may have been a prostitute)? To what extent the couple deserved this criticism, and how much was the view of 19th century middle-class morality, we can only guess at. As will be shown, Henry and Frances were regarded in high esteem among their community in New South Wales.

But what happened to baby Henry Baddily?

Letter to the PM

I wondered whether the baby Henry Baddily lived to adulthood in England and if he had descendants. Recently I discovered from an article entitled 'The Cobdens - Interesting Past History' published in the *Lachlander and Condobolin and Western Districts Recorder* in September 1944, that an Arthur Baddeley in England, was trying to trace his Australian relatives. This was written during World War 2 and Arthur had sent a letter to the Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin, whilst the PM was on a visit to Britain. He judiciously mentioned the name of his famous relative Richard Cobden, probably in order to get the PM's attention...and it did! Enquiries were made and Mrs Agnes Cobden (widow of Henry's grandson Charles) living in the Molong area of western New South Wales, was contacted. Clearly, she did not know much about the family history but was able to make contact with Mr W. R. Taylor whose grandfather knew the Cobdens from Molong and had written some memoirs about them.

So, this confirmed two things: firstly that 'baby' Henry had grown up, married and had children of his own; and secondly that even though his name was Baddeley, he knew about his Cobden ancestry.

The Baddeleys

Frances's parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Baddeley included the baby Henry in their family. I cannot find them in the 1841 census, but by 1851, Elizabeth had become a widow, and in the census that year she was living in Cheadle (a suburb of Stockport, Greater Manchester) with three children, a 13-year-old son, a 10-year-old daughter and 12-year-old Henry.

In 1856 Henry Baddeley married Ann Leigh at Manchester Cathedral. Although both the bride and groom stated they were 21 years old, Henry was only 17. His occupation was a 'warehouseman' and they lived in the Manchester suburb of Hulme. Henry and Ann had four children: John, Walter, Ada and Arthur (the one who wrote to John Curtin in 1944). Henry's occupation in the 1881 census states he was a warehouseman for a calico printer. I wonder if his Cobden connections in this industry had any influence on his employment.⁵



Manchester Cathedral c1870s. Photo: Francis Frith & Co. Source: John Rylands Library Special Collections. Henry Baddeley and Ann Leigh married here in 1856. The church became a cathedral in 1847. This tower built in 1868 is a replica of the earlier one and a little taller than the 1850s tower.

Henry Baddeley died in 1884 at the age of 50, and is buried in the Southern Cemetery, Manchester. His son Arthur didn't marry and lived with his widowed mother until at least 1911. She died in 1923 and was buried with Henry. Arthur died in 1954, age 77. His cremated remains are buried with his parents. I hope he was able to connect with his Australian nieces and nephews.

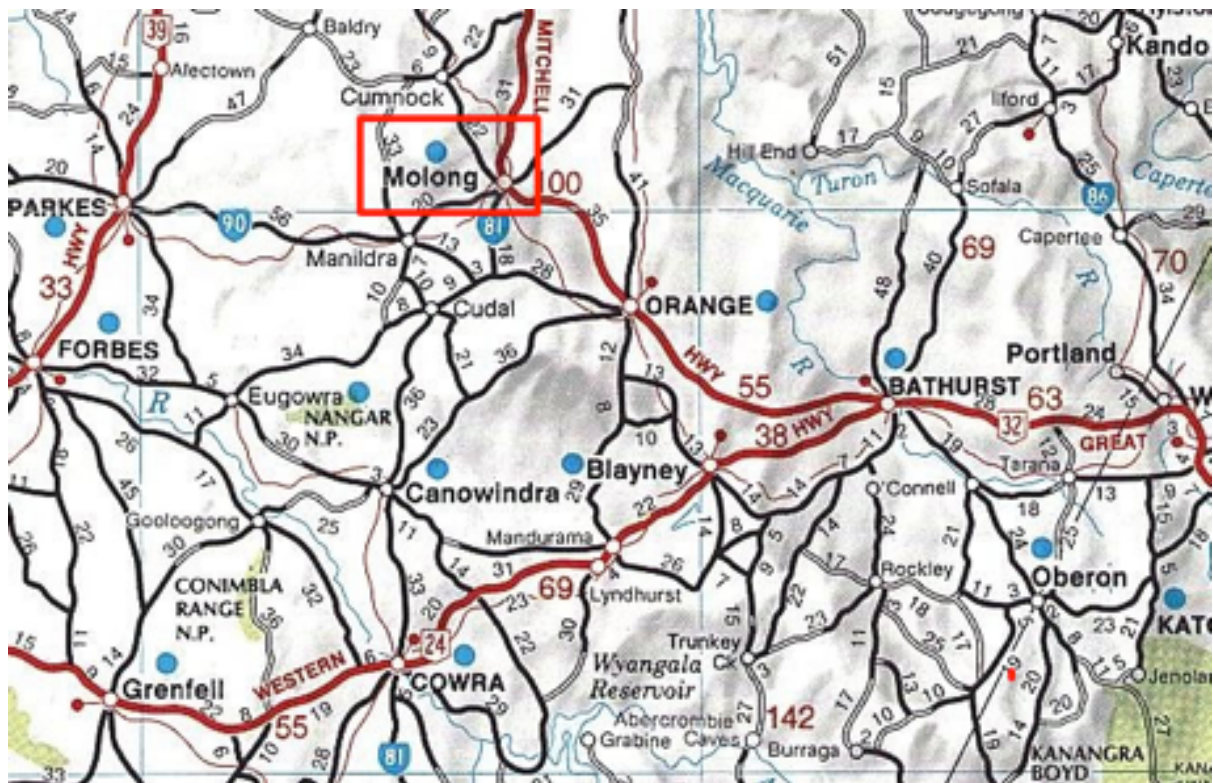
Molong, New South Wales

By 1840 Henry and Frances had made their way to Sydney, New South Wales. From there they would have had to journey through the Blue Mountains, then to Bathurst (a centre for pastoral runs and transient explorers) and Orange (then known as Blackman's Swamp) to reach Molong, about 300km northwest of Sydney. It is unknown why the Cobdens were attracted to this area. Copper was not discovered there until 1845, and gold not until 1851. Probably all that existed of European settlement when Henry and Frances arrived was a stock stopping-off point and large pastoral runs. This area, having abundant natural resources, especially fresh water,

was at the junction of several important traditional routes of the Wiradjuri people, and consequently from the 1820s the Molong area had been the site of bloody conflict between the native inhabitants and the invading squatters and pastoralists. By the time the Cobdens arrived, they would have observed indigenous people living in the area and working on the pastoral runs. They probably also saw many carved trees - engraved with bold designs to mark ceremonial sites (only a few remain today).



Carved tree, Gamboola, near Molong, at the grave of Wiradjuri man Yuranigh who died in 1850 and was Major Thomas Mitchell's highly regarded exploration guide in 1845. Photo: 1912. Shown here with amateur anthropologist Edmund Milne and although he holds an axe, the carved trees were not damaged or removed by him. Source: State Library New South Wales.



Map showing Molong in New South Wales where Henry and Frances settled in 1840

Shopkeeping and innkeeping

Henry first took a position as clerk and storekeeper for Mr Lawson at Davey's Plains, a 64,000-acre pastoral run in the Molong area. No doubt this was the logical trade for the Cobdens, using Frances's experience, being the daughter of shopkeepers, and Henry's clerical skills and sales knowledge learned from working in the textiles industry. The Cobdens remained at Davey's Plains for about five or six years and here Frances gave birth to a second son Richard, on March 14th 1844. Later, two more sons were born: Frederick William in 1846 and Charles Henry in 1849. The boys were known locally as Dick, Fred and Charlie. They all attended a small school run by Mr Johnson.

From about 1848/9 Henry and Frances moved into Molong and ran a store. Henry was now becoming well-established in the community. In 1850 he was asked to chair a committee of local residents which aimed to organise a race meeting. As reported in *The Bathurst Free Press* on Dec. 21st 1850, Henry was elected treasurer:

RACE MEETING.—A meeting of the people of Molong took place at Mr. Cobcroft's, King's Arms Inn, to adopt the necessary steps towards getting up races at East Molong for the 26th instant. Mr. Cobden was called to the chair, and the business of the meeting gone through in a spirited manner. The following appointments were made:—Mr. Henry Blunden, judge; Messrs. A. Murray, D. Bowie, and J. Cobcroft, stewards; Mr. H. Cobden, treasurer; and Mr. P. Gledhill, hon. sec.

The couple were doing well. In 1852 Henry was able to buy a Town Lot for £12 from the government, and made another Crown Land purchase in 1855 for £20. During this time the Cobdens moved to the 'the round house' as it was locally known (it was partly octagonal) - a residence and hotel, known as *The Molong Inn*, on top of the hill on the *Vale Head Estate*⁶. For several years, from at least 1853 Henry was granted a licence 'for the sale of fermented and spiritous liquors therein'⁷.

Crime in Molong

These years were not without their share of crime. In 1851 James Sutherland was found guilty of forgery when he attempted to pass off a fraudulently altered paper money order when buying boots and a coat at Henry's store - £2 being altered to £5. When apprehended by the police, Sutherland was also found to have the papers, pen and ink in his possession.

Theft of livestock was a common crime at the time. In March 1855, Henry had to appear as one of the witnesses at the Bathurst Court to testify that John Pickup, accused of stealing three bullocks and one cow, had feloniously sold Henry one of the bullocks.

The Cobdens earned extra money by leasing out their paddock, but this was not without problems. Another incidence of animal theft occurred when a horse was stolen from their paddock, as reported in the *Police Gazette* of December 1857:

DISTRICT OF MOLONG.—£5 REWARD.

Stolen from Mr. H. Cobden's paddock, Molong, on the night of the 27th of December, 1857, the property of F. G. Rawly, Esq., a black pony, between 13 and 14 hands high, branded on near shoulder J, about 7 years old. A reward of £5 is offered if stolen, and £2 if strayed, by applying to F. G. Rawly, Esq., at Mr. Cobden's, Molong. Information received at this Office on the 24th instant.

A horse of the following description is in the hands of the Chief Constable at

Henry also had an issue with an irresponsible tenant, so he placed this advertisement in the *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal* of July 7th 1855:

'If Thomas Jones does not release a cream coloured poney (sic) left in my paddock last November, I will cause him to be sold in 21 days from this date to pay expenses.'

Perhaps it was in the light of the frequent lawlessness of the local area that Henry and others felt a need for spiritual guidance. In October 1856, he is one of a long list of residents petitioning the Anglican church for 'the maintenance of a clergyman, to be resident in the District of Orange and Molong.'⁸ Each petitioner pledged financial support towards a resident clergyman - Henry pledged £2 per annum, a bit more than the average £1 pledge (although a few had pledged £10 or £20).

Death of Frances

In June 1856 Frances died at the age of only 38 and was buried in the old Molong cemetery situated in Bett's paddock on the old *Vale Head* estate near the Molong Creek and opposite Black's Flour Mill. I believe nothing remains of this cemetery which may have been destroyed when the railway went through years later, and after the new cemetery was established further out of town (in accordance with new regulations). A news item stated Frances had suffered from a 'long and painful illness'⁹. When they lost their mother, the Cobden boys were still quite young: Dick 12; Fred 10; and Charlie about 7.

Stoney Creek diggings

For whatever reason, only a month or two after his wife's death, Henry and his sons moved to Stoney Creek, near Stuart Town about 50kms north of Molong. This was an emerging gold field which probably was the attraction for Henry, and so on September 20th he received his publican's licence to open a new hotel, *The Masonic Arms*. It was described as 'the most comfortable establishment and best conducted one here'¹⁰ and another review stated ...'although we are but common diggers we can appreciate good liquors, clean beds and clean rooms. Success to *The Masonic Arms* say I.'¹¹

But apart from gold prospecting, there was not much else at Stoney Creek, just a handful of hotels competing with each other and supplying not only food and drinks

but also stores and tools for the diggings. A school had briefly been set up but had not long closed. *The Masonic Arms* was well situated for good business, near the creek and in an area that had at first reportedly 5000 miners seeking their fortune there. But miners were fickle and gold finds were 'patchy'. When new fields opened up in a nearby area, miners would pack up, leave their tents and flock to where the prospects may be better. It couldn't be guaranteed if and how soon they would return. Apart from lack of enough customers and lack of a school, another difficulty that deterred people from staying was a concern about a lack of security. Therefore, establishing a real community was impossible. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of July 18th 1857 reported the place was now deserted. So, after only less than a year, Henry decided to return to Molong.

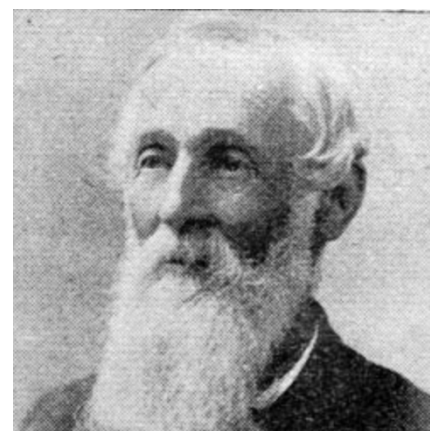


An Australian gold diggings c1855 Oil on canvas. Artist: Edwin Stocqueler
Source: National Gallery of Australia

Back to Molong

Henry was able to return to his old *Molong Inn* which had been run, perhaps not so well, by Joseph Parslow (who had trouble renewing his licence due to some maintenance issues) for the past year. By April 1858 Henry had the licence for the hotel once more.

Another reason for Henry returning may have been ill-health. According to his physician, Dr. Ross, Henry was suffering from jaundice ('a protracted illness of 6 weeks') and it was only a few months until Henry died on August 17th 1858 at the age of 45 years. He was with Dr Ross and Fred Rollings his 'manager and school teacher' when he died. His funeral was 'attended by the largest concourse of the inhabitants ever brought together upon any occasion'.¹²



Dr Andrew Hendry Ross, Henry's doctor at Molong, later an MP for Molong. Source: Parliament of New South Wales

Henry was buried next to Frances in the old Molong cemetery. Apparently, the graves had wooden markers instead of headstones but by the end of the 19th century were dilapidated, overgrown and

hardly visible. The location is north of the present-day bowling club.

'A good sort'

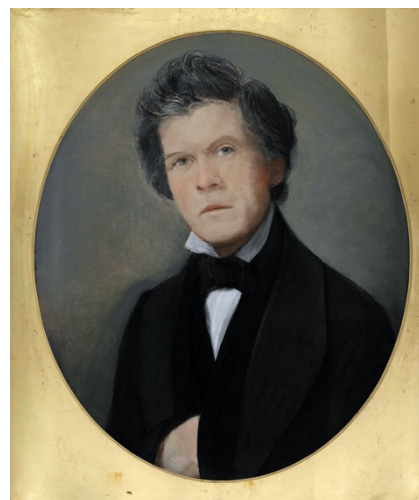
From all accounts, and contrary to his brother's opinion, Henry was highly regarded by his local community. A newspaper obituary in the *Moreton Bay Courier* of September 18th 1858 states:

'Warm in his friendships, generous in his sympathies his memory will long be cherished as that of a right-hearted, good-souled man, whom Providence had blessed with a capacity fitted for a much higher sphere of action, but whose unambitious disposition preferred rather to lead him quietly and unobtrusively along the humbler walks of life. That he was by no means destitute of failings, we are ready to admit least of all should they be raked up to the gaze of a curious world.....'

The circumstances which led to the Cobdens' emigration was not entirely kept secret. The article also states: 'His emigration to this colony was consequent upon a matrimonial alliance effected in opposition to the wishes of his family, but which eventuated in a happy domestic life, if not in a prosperous career.'

I wonder how Henry felt about his brother Richard and the family's disapproval of his marriage. The fact that the names of his Australian born sons reflect those of his three brothers, it would seem he bore no grudges and was proud of his Cobden family.

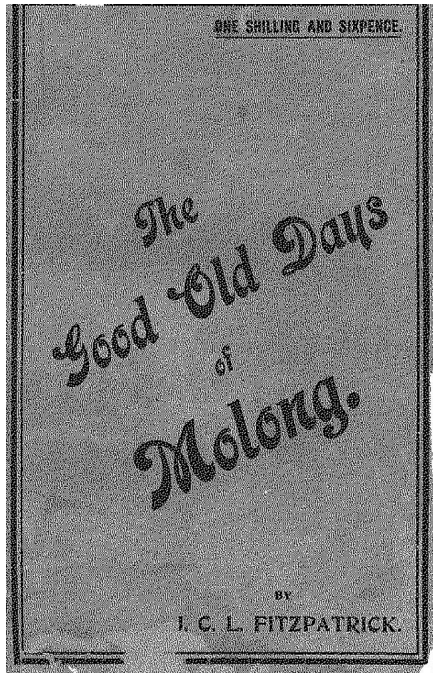
Henry could count among his friends the future Premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes¹³ (aka the Father of Federation), who visited Henry at Stoney Creek in 1857 when on a tour of western New South Wales. A news report in the *Empire* May 26th 1857 states that after visiting Orange he went to inspect the Stoney Creek diggings and had 'a long chat with friend Cobden and a few other liberals' before returning to Orange.



A young Henry Parkes c1860
Pastel drawing artist unknown
Source: Mitchell Library, State
Library of New South Wales



Countryside around Molong.
Source:
commercialrealestate.com.au



A short history of the district written in 1913 by J. C. L. Fitzpatrick, *The Good Old Days of Molong* entitles a chapter *Charles Henry Cobden and Others*, erroneously giving Henry his youngest son's name.

The book describes Henry as:

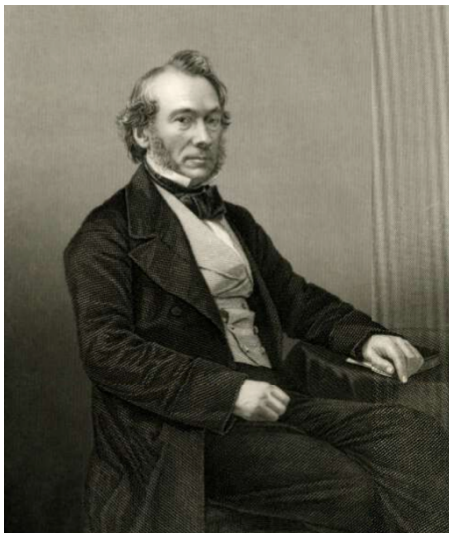
'... a burly man, well-built, possessed of considerable educational attainments, and colloquially termed "a good sort".'

Fitzpatrick's book of 1912 on Molong's history. Source: National Library Australia

'Somewhat wild' boys

The Good Old Days of Molong also mentions the three Australian born children of Henry and Frances, and describes the eldest two as 'somewhat wild'. At the time the author knew little about Henry's sons except that Fred went to Queensland, led a wandering life, and was apparently killed by aborigines, and nothing was known about Dick or Charlie.

Orphaned sons



The boys' uncle Richard Cobden, who offered to help support them after Henry died in 1858. Engraving by D. J. Pound, from a Photograph by J. Eastham & Bassano 1859-60. Source: British Museum

After their parents' deaths, their uncle Richard Cobden in England enquired about Henry's boys (Dick was 14, Fred 12, and Charlie was 9) offering to help take responsibility for the education of Charlie. A letter¹⁴, undated, to Mr W. H. Cousins of Boomey in New South Wales, from Richard Cobden, throws light on how they were taken care of immediately after their father died. Richard Cobden thanks Mr Cousins and his wife for the 'kindness you have shown to my brother's family' especially the eldest, Dick and showing 'goodness towards these helpless young ones' as well as acknowledging the help of a Mrs Brazier and others. He goes on to offer assistance for Dick, by proposing a savings plan:

'He is getting, I understand, a salary of £30 from you. Whatever he saves.... on the first of January next, I will give him the same amount at the end of the year.'

He hopes this will set a good example to 'help his younger brother'.

He also impresses the need for the boys to continue their education, offers to send books if needed, and expresses his opinion that Dick needs to practise writing and have his spelling checked (Dick had written to one of his aunts, a letter his uncle Richard must have seen). The letter continues: 'His younger brother, I suppose, stands more in need of improvement', probably referring to Charlie. Another letter¹⁵ Richard wrote to a friend describes the boys: 'The oldest boy is 14, & has already been showing signs of energy & self-reliance. It would be a pity to bring him away from so good a field for his exertions. The youngest must be brought to England. The second is a doubtful case.'

Richard (Dick) Cobden 1844-1934 - 'a very good and faithful lad'

Dick, the eldest son, was described as being of a very shy disposition, a good horseman, and a 'very good and faithful lad'.¹⁶ He lived and worked most of his adult life around Condobolin on the Lachlan River, about 220 kms west of Molong.

With the support of the Cousins family, and the funds from his uncle Richard in England, Dick lived and worked for a few years at the Cousins' property, Beri Station, Boomey near Molong, and later was sent to be manager of the cattle station of Mr C. Y. Cousins at Kiacatoo on the Lachlan River. Dick later selected land at nearby Wardry, and remained there for the remainder of his long life (two of his sons later had property in the area also).

Diphtheria epidemic

Dick married Charlotte Peters in the Wesleyan Church at her home town of Orange, and they lived at Wardry and produced 15 children. But in December 1892 diphtheria spread through the Condobolin district, and it was reported in the local news that this disease had caused the loss of three of the Cobden children within one week: 15-year-old Henry; 7-year-old Sidney; and 3-year-old Clara. Six years later Charlotte died at the age of 52 years. They are buried in the Condobolin Cemetery.

The stolen *Forest Queen*

The previous year a report in the Police Gazette of what seems to be an out of character incident: In 1891 Dick was charged with receiving stolen goods:

Vide Police Gazette, 1891, pages 66 and 76.

Richard Cobden, of Wardry, summoned by Sergeant Muldoon, Condobolin Police, for receiving into his possession the bay blood mare Forest Queen, No. 14 in this week's list (recovered), the property of John Costello, knowing the same to have been stolen, has been committed for trial at Forbes Quarter Sessions. Bail allowed—self in £100, and two sureties in £50 each.

Was this crime connected to his brother Fred? Whatever the situation, Dick was committed to trial at the Forbes Court. A report in the *Australian Town and Country Journal* of April 11th states:

'A man named Richard Cobden, a well-known selector on the river, was proceeded against for having in his possession a blood mare (*Forest Queen*) which had been stolen from her owner some time ago. Cobden explained that he met a man leading the mare, which was dead lame, and, after a conversation with him, agreed to let her stay in his (Cobden's) paddock, and have her served with the horse, for which he was to receive £3 3s at some future date. He did not know the man's name, having lost the paper he had written it on..... A great amount of interest attaches to this case, as the man is said to be a nephew of the great Richard Cobden.' (*Australian Town and Country Journal* 11 April 1891)

I don't know the outcome of his trial, but wonder if Dick's family connections, both famous and infamous, played any part or prejudice as to his innocence or guilt.

'A generous and far-seeing nature'

As mentioned earlier, Dick was known for his skills as a horseman. An obituary from the *Lachlander and Condobolin and Western Districts Recorder* 19 September 1934 stated:

One could always hear of his ability as a horseman. Many an outlaw was tamed by his hands. Whether at breaking-in, rough riding or driving, one could aptly use 'Banjo' Patterson's phrase: "No finer horseman ever held the reins."

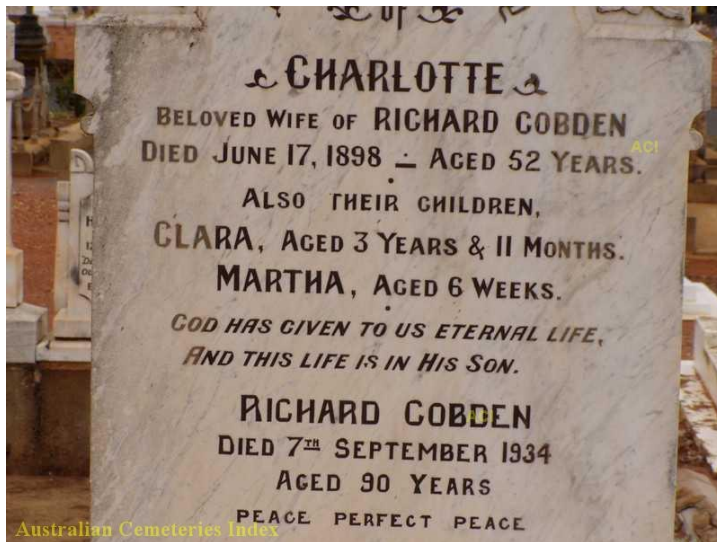
He must have been extremely fit and healthy. Even at the age of 86 his occupation given on the electoral roll of 1930 is a labourer. Dick lived to the age of 90 and died on September 7th 1934 at his daughter Amy's home in Condobolin after suffering with pleurisy for about a month. His obituary from the *Molong Express and Western District Advertiser* of September 15th states:

'DEATH OF RICHARD COBDEN - EARLY MOLONG RESIDENT

Richard Cobden, who was much spoken of during "Back to Molong Week" passed away at Condobolin on September 7. The deceased gentleman lived at Vale Head, Molong, for many years, where his father kept the hotel. He had been ailing for the past three weeks and his family were called to his bedside before he passed away. He was 90 years old last March. Members of the family still living are: Mrs McLean (Petersham), Mrs Holmes (Nyngan), Mrs Avey (Kensington), Mrs Lewis (Wagga), Mrs Peters (Mullion Creek), Mrs Dunstan (Condobolin), James (Canowindra) and Fred (Newtown).

The deceased was a prominent figure in the early days of Molong, and was of a generous and far-seeing nature.'

Dick was also described as a 'fine old gentleman, typical pioneer and splendid character in every way'¹⁷



Grave of Richard 'Dick' Cobden 1934 and his wife Charlotte and two of their children. Condobolin Cemetery NSW. Source: Australian Cemeteries Index

Frederick William (Fred) Cobden b.1846 - horse and cattle thief

After his father died, Fred worked at nearby J. T. Parslow's farm and then at James Lee's Larras Lake property in the 1860s. Fred was known to be 'a wizard with a lasso (sic) and branding iron and a good rough rider'¹⁸, skills he utilised for evil rather than good, as will be shown below.

The reputation of being 'somewhat wild' seems to at least, in the case of Fred, have some foundation. Firstly, records from Molong provided to me indicate that Fred fathered two illegitimate daughters: Caroline Charlotte Brazier (aka Sloane), born in 1866, daughter of Mary Elizabeth Brazier who married Maurice Sloane; and Louisa Caroline born in 1867, daughter of Harriet Thompson of Stoney Creek.

Secondly, Fred was charged, convicted and gaoled for horse and cattle stealing. The New South Wales Police Gazettes tell the story of his crimes and punishments between 1866 and 1874. In a report on July 25th 1866, Fred, age 21, along with 18-year old Henry Williams, had a warrant out for their arrest for stealing a horse from William Brazier of Nubrygyn near Stony Creek, probably a relative of Mary Brazier mentioned above (and Mrs Brazier who helped the orphaned boys?). By October 24th they had been arrested, but discharged on November 7th due to insufficient evidence. Sadly, the horse had been found dead, and partially burned.

His luck quickly ran out, because immediately he was re-arrested and charged by the Molong Police with 'stealing a brown mare.... the property of W.C. Chambers of Stony Creek.'¹⁹ On August 14th the following year, the NSW Police Gazette reports Fred is suspected of stealing a saddle belonging to A. Kerr from the *Cross Roads Inn* near Molong. A description of Fred's appearance is given:

'He is about 21 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches high, light brown hair, no whiskers..... well known in the western district'²⁰

The next report is from the last quarter of 1867, where there is a warrant for Fred's arrest issued from Molong, for stealing again from William Brazier, a bullock. He also has an accomplice, Oliver Sloane (related to his daughter's step father?):

Vide Police Gazette, 16th October, 20th November, and 11th December, 1867, pages 305, 336, and 357.

A warrant has been issued by the Molong Bench for the arrest of Frederick Cobden, charged with stealing the bullock No. 10 in the above reference, the property of William Brazier, Nubrygan. He is about 22 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches high, medium build, ruddy complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, nose rather prominent; a native. Oliver Sloane, charged with aiding and abetting Frederick Cobden, in the commission of the above offence, has been arrested by Senior Constable Wallings and Constable Parker, Molong Police. Remanded.

(NSW Police Gazette 15/1/1868)

Hard labour

In 1870, Fred is reported as having several aliases: James Adams, Charles Frost and Jack Jones.²¹ In August that year he was arrested again for horse stealing and appeared in the Quarter Sessions at Bathurst where he was sentenced to 12 months hard labour at Bathurst Gaol. After serving this sentence, he was escorted to Molong where he was charged again with cattle stealing. On October 24th 1871 he was convicted of this crime and sentenced to 18 months hard labour at Bathurst Gaol. However, after serving 4 months there, he was transferred to Darlinghurst Gaol, where he served a further 10 months and was released on February 25th 1873 having the last 2 months of his sentence remitted.



Familiar sights for Fred:
Left: Darlinghurst Gaol
in 1870, where Fred
served 10 months hard
labour in 1872. Source:
State Library of NSW

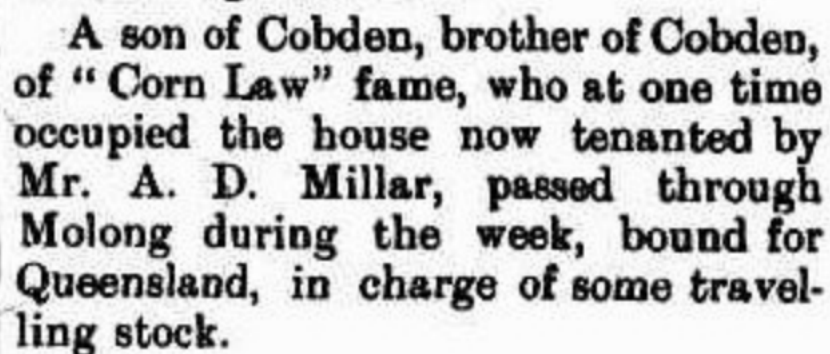
Below: Molong Court
House and Lockup.
Source: flickriver.com



Incorrigible 'Silver Hair'

Unfortunately, Fred seems not to have mended his ways, for in March 1874 there is a warrant for his arrest on the charge of horse stealing from Elias Cohen of Brewarrina. The report says he is thought to have gone to Cousin's Station on the Lachlan River, near Condobolin (about 400 kms away, maintaining links with the Cousins family and also his brother Dick lived in the area). The next month, although no warrant was issued, he was suspected of stealing a horse from Alexander Ferguson of Mullengudgery. The report says his alias is 'Silver Hair'²² and he is said to have gone to Cannonbar (over 700 kms away).

In the police records, Fred's occupation is given variously as a bushman, horse-breaker and drover. When and where he died, I have not been able to discover. The last evidence I have of Fred comes from an article in the *Molong Express and Western District Advertiser* of December 12th 1908 which stated:



A son of Cobden, brother of Cobden, of "Corn Law" fame, who at one time occupied the house now tenanted by Mr. A. D. Millar, passed through Molong during the week, bound for Queensland, in charge of some travelling stock.

Perhaps the author of the Molong history is closer to the truth when saying he went to Queensland and was killed by aborigines. A death record has not been found.

Charles Henry (Charlie) Cobden 1849-1891

The youngest and perhaps most interesting of Henry and Frances's sons, Charlie, is another story.

Ann Hurley

2020

See my story **Cobdens in Japan** for more about Charles Henry Cobden.

hurleyskidmorehistory.com

Notes:

¹ Henry's eldest sister Emma married one of the Rogers' eldest sons John Blyth Rogers, and his brother James Edwin Thorald Rogers was a close friend and supporter of Henry's brother Richard Cobden, the famous economic reformer.

² Letter held at the West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, West Sussex

³ *The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser* January 27 1840

⁴ Howe, Anthony and Bannerman, Gordon - *The Letters of Richard Cobden 1815-1847* (2007). Letter to Arnold König.

⁵ Henry Baddeley's uncle John Nicholas Sale (married to Mary Cobden) was a calico printer in Manchester in the 1850s and '60s.

⁶ *Vale Head* estate originally owned by the Rev Samuel Marsden and then by his daughter Mrs Betts.

⁷ *New South Wales, Australia, Certificates for Publicans' Licences, 1830-1849, 1853-1899* (Ancestry.com)

⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald* October 18 1856

⁹ *Bathurst Free Press & Mining Journal* June 7 1856

¹⁰ *Empire* 21 Oct 1856

¹¹ *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal* Nov 5 1856

¹² *The Moreton Bay Courier* 18 September 1858

¹³ Sir Henry Parkes was an admirer of Henry's brother Richard Cobden whom he visited at *Dunford* in West Sussex. Parkes also gave a speech at a Cobden Club dinner in England in 1884, and named his youngest son Cobden Parkes! Parkes was also the owner of the *Empire* newspaper in Sydney.

¹⁴ Fitzpatrick J.C.L. - *The Good Old Days of Molong* (1913) p 67-69

¹⁵ Morgan, Simon and Cobden, Richard - *The Letters of Richard Cobden Vol 3 1854-1859* (2012). Letter dated November 18th 1858 from Richard Cobden to John Bright

¹⁶ *Molong Argus* 6 March 1903

¹⁷ *Lachlander and Condobolin and Western Districts Recorder* 19 September 1934

¹⁸ *Molong Express and Western District Advertiser* July 12th 1941

¹⁹ NSW Police Gazette 7/11/1866

²⁰ NSW Police Gazette 14/8/1867

²¹ NSW Police Gazette 24/8/1870

²² NSW Police Gazette 1/4/1874

Other resources:

1939 England and Wales Register (Ancestry.com)

England & Wales National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1858-1995 (Ancestry.com)

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The Cobden Papers - West Sussex Record Office, Chichester UK

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West Sussex Record Office, Chichester UK - Cobden family letters