



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Culture and the Arts**
State Records Office of **Western Australia**

Occasional Papers

Occasional Paper No 1, March 2010

Anna and Thomas Leonowens in Western Australia, 1853-1857.

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Occasional Paper 1: Anna and Thomas Leonowens in Western Australia, 1853-1857.

Published by the State Records Office of Western Australia

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Acknowledgments:

The authors wish to acknowledge the editorial suggestions of Henry Wauchop, the kind assistance of Jack Honniball and Sandra Simkin, and the considerable research done by Nellie Habegger. The paper was drafted in 2007. In March 2008 it was presented by Gerard Foley at a meeting of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society.

Anna and Thomas Leonowens in Western Australia, 1853-1857.

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**Anna Leonowens as photographed by Sarony of New York City, probably c. 1870.
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Introduction

In the 1860s Anna Leonowens spent five years in Bangkok teaching the King of Siam's children. Her books about the experience, *The English Governess at the Court of Siam* (1870) and *The Romance of the Harem* (1873), brought her modest fame, but her mythic status dates from the 1940s and 1950s, when Margaret Landon retold her story in the bestselling book *Anna and the King of Siam* (1944) and the Broadway team of Rodgers and Hammerstein brought to the stage the musical, *The King and I* (1951). Both were turned into popular Hollywood films. A third movie was released in 1999, *Anna and the King*. These twentieth-century treatments, based in varying degrees on Anna's unreliable accounts of her adventurous life, naturally added much that never happened and left out much that did. One of the significant omissions, still very little known, is that she and her husband, Thomas Leonowens, spent four years in Western Australia in the 1850s, well before she found employment at the Siamese court.

Anna was strikingly tight-lipped and even mendacious about her past. She hid her mixed-race Anglo-Indian ancestry, and she claimed that her husband, a former sergeant, had held the rank of major. Her one summary statement about her life before Siam was a publicity release composed in the 1870s to promote her career as lecturer. Decades later, pressed by her family to put her youthful adventures on record, she dusted off this promotional blurb and, with a few revisions, presented it as the true story of her origins. These two versions of Anna's account of her first three decades contain her only known reference to her time in Australia. The following excerpt begins with her earlier married life in Bombay:

When I was only eighteen, the death of my mother and my first baby came upon me with such terrible force that my life was despaired of, and my husband embarked with me on a sea voyage to England. But the ship 'Alibi' went on some rocks, through the carelessness of the captain, I believe, and we were rescued by another sailing vessel and taken to New South Wales. Here I buried my second baby, an infant son, and still dreadfully ill, we took a steamer for England and finally settled down in St. James's Square, London for nearly three years.¹

Most of the claims in this paragraph are distorted or false. When Anna buried her first baby in Bombay in May 1852 she was twenty, not eighteen. Her mother did not die then but in 1873, twenty-one years later. The sea voyage was not west to England but further east and south. There was no rescue by another vessel, no sojourn in New South Wales, and above all no residence in London at the splendid address she named. But not everything is untrue: she did take passage on the *Alibi*, which struck a reef off Western Australia's treacherous coast, and her second child did indeed die in Australia, though not in New South Wales, which she never saw. Also, it seems plausible that she was 'dreadfully ill' in Perth, suffering from despair or depression after losing a baby.

The first publication to disclose Anna's whereabouts in the mid-1850s was the *Dictionary of Western Australians*, compiled for this State's sesquicentennial in 1979. The entry, loaded with valuable finds and leads for further research, and also a few wrong dates and an incorrect child's name, reads:

LEONOWENS Thomas. M. Harriett. Children; child b. 1853 d. 1854, Annie [sic] b. 1854, son b. 1856. Auditor of Swan R. Mech. Inst. 1855. In 1856 storekeeper Commis. Dept.; at PT. GREGORY 1856-1857; Mrs. advt. Young Ladies' School PERTH 1854. To Singapore with wife and 2 children per 'Lady Amherst' 3.4.1857.

Harriett was Anna's baptismal middle name, the one she went by at this time.

When an expanded edition of the *Dictionary* was prepared for Australia's bicentennial in 1988, another mistake crept in: the month the Leonowenses left

Australia was inadvertently changed from April to February. Neither this nor the previous version of the entry drew attention till 1998, when Justin Corfield brought out a brief article in *Ancestor*, the organ of the Genealogical Society of Victoria. 'Anna Leonowens and the Australian Connection' reproduced the revised entry's facts and errors but failed to identify the source of these disclosures, thus leaving it unclear whether they could be relied on.

In 2004 Elizabeth Baigent and Lois K. Yorke, authors of the entry for Anna in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, chose to rely on Corfield, in the process repeating the errors and introducing a few new ones, but also making widely known the undoubted fact that Anna resided in Western Australia before she went to Siam.²

This paper, based chiefly on sources in Perth, and also in Singapore, England, Ireland, and the United States, traces the story of Anna's years in Western Australia. The archives are especially helpful with her husband, Thomas, whose employment record and prickly opinions and personality come into focus as never before.

The *Alibi*

The *Alibi* was a middle-sized barque that hauled freight and passengers around Eastern ports and was worked by a crew of 'lascars'. In 1852, this curiously named vessel successively docked in Calcutta, Penang, Singapore, and Amoy (Xiamen, China). Returning to Singapore on 24 October, Captain E. W. Bell took on cargo and, in mid-November, advertised for passengers:

For Port Phillip [i.e., Melbourne]

The A.1 fast sailing barque 'Alibi' of 318 Tons, Capt. Bell, will sail for the above Port positively on the 24th. Instant; for passage, having superior accommodation, apply to, Jose D'Almeida & Sons.

The positive language notwithstanding, the ship did not sail until 10 December--the only vessel to leave Singapore that month for Australia. The southern continent seems to have been new territory for the captain. Setting off with no more than 'an outline chart' of its reef-lined coasts, he carried twenty deck or steerage passengers and three cabin passengers—Anna, her husband Thomas, and her uncle William Vaudry Glasscott.³

The trio had reached Singapore six days earlier, arriving from Bombay on a modern Peninsular and Oriental steamer, the *Ganges*.⁴ Since no family letters are extant from 1852 to 1862, one must deduce the motives behind their decision to emigrate from India to Australia. It was, most importantly, the time of the Victorian gold rush but there were also other reasons to travel to Melbourne in 1852. Glasscott, a clerk for eight years at the Military Board in Bombay, may have been frustrated by restrictions on the

employment and promotion of Anglo-Indians. Thomas had been Paymaster Sergeant (equivalent to Paymaster's clerk) in Her Majesty's 28th Regiment before taking clerical positions in Bombay in the Commissary General's Office and the Military Pay Office, and also with a Bombay merchant. Each man was a practised bureaucratic 'writer' who knew the government office drill and had the global perspective that went with it. Thomas carried letters of recommendation, indicating that he certainly, and Glasscott probably, intended to look for work in Melbourne.

The first leg of the Leonowenses' passage from Singapore ended when the barque was 'obliged to put into Batavia [Djakarta] leaky', and was 'detained' there for three weeks for repairs. Setting sail again, the vessel reached Anyar in the Strait of Sunda on 14 January 1853. Ten days later, somewhere south of Java, Anna was delivered of her second child, a boy named after his father.⁵ There is no reason to think a doctor or midwife was on board. For the rest of her life, Anna never revealed that she had given birth at sea.

Six weeks later the *Alibi* was nearing west Australia. These were extremely dangerous waters, especially during the first three or four months of the year, the period of greatest tropical cyclone activity. It was the captain's plan to take on fresh water and provisions at Fremantle. On 8 March, retiring to his cabin, he left orders that he was to be called the instant land was sighted or danger threatened. At 4:30 in the morning land was seen and he was duly informed. Fifteen minutes later, after he failed to appear, the second mate again went below and found him still in bed, and then the ship struck a reef. Scraping over it, the vessel was brought to anchor in the shallows between reef and shore. There appeared to be no safe passage back to open water, and no sign of human life on land, nothing but sand, low hills, and treeless bush.

For eight days the *Alibi's* captain, crew, and deck passengers tried to find a way out of this trap. Groups of volunteers rowed out to search for water or find help, but all they brought back was 'a frightful description of the country'. A boat was wrecked in the surf, men were scattered on shore without water, and shipboard rations were reduced to 'half a pint of water and a little rice each day'. The captain decided to abandon ship but at the last minute was persuaded to lighten the vessel by throwing cargo overboard and then seek safe passage through the reef. Bringing up planks, furniture, and granite slabs, the desperate passengers and crew pitched them into the water along with cases of shoes, cigars, tea, tapioca, and arrowroot, and even two casks of rum,⁶ and then one of the deck passengers climbed a fore-arm and, peering down, guided the ship to open water.

It was later determined that they had been stranded in the vicinity of the Moore River, sixty miles north of Fremantle, which they reached in two days' sailing. The voyage from Singapore had taken over three months, far longer than usual.

Finding Work



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**The Perth Commissariat Building, erected 1835. Photograph taken c.1890.
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By the time the Leonowenses arrived, there were numerous Western Australians who had lived and worked in India. Captain James Stirling, the first Governor of Western Australia, at the helm from 1829 to 1838, had argued for the establishment of the Colony partly on the grounds of its proximity to the East Indies. Stirling's father-in-law, James Mangles, was a director of the East India Company. The second Governor, John Hutt, had been a Registrar in the Madras Presidency. Under his administration the southerly settlement of Australind was promoted as a place where 'the officers of the civil and military service of Great Britain and of the East India Company' could engage in trade, find a quiet refuge, and educate their children.⁷ Among later arrivals were many members of the colonial administration and the military, including members of the Enrolled Pensioner Force—men who, in the main, had served twenty years in the army and came as guards on the ships transporting convicts. Most Pensioner Guards brought their families and intended to settle. Their wives sometimes proved to be Indians or

‘East Indians’ (mixed-race Anglo-Indians), some of whom made quite an impression with their ‘artificial black eyes’⁸—their use of kohl as eye-liner.

The Leonowenses were fortunate in reaching Perth when its economy was booming, owing to the introduction of convicts from Britain in 1850. In 1849 the total Imperial Revenue allocated to the tiny colony was £9,600. Three years later, thanks to the convicts, the amount had nearly quadrupled to £37,000. This enormous expansion of the administrative budget resulted in many opportunities for free immigrants. When Mark Dyett, Esq., an enterprising Englishman, first learned of the new convict establishment, he resolved to move to Western Australia and invest in its growth.⁹ All this new outside money had a predictable impact on the colony’s tiny capital. Originally a place of ridges and hollows, ‘swamps, sand-heaps and lakes’, as an early settler recalled,¹⁰ it now bore the marks of a raw boomtown. ‘Within the last few months’, the *Gazette* noted in October 1853, ‘a marked change has taken place in the appearance of the town of Perth, from the many fresh buildings which have sprung up in all directions. Not only in our principal streets is this change noticeable, but at the back of the town, innumerable small dwelling houses have been erected.’¹¹ A year later the town’s population had risen to 2,755.

Within five days of his arrival, Thomas Leonowens found employment. On 24 March 1853 Governor Charles Fitzgerald received an official request from William F. Mends, head of the Commissariat:

I beg to submit for the sanction of His Excellency the Governor the employment of Mr. T. Leon Owens, recently arrived from India, and who bears very respectable testimonials: as a Temporary Clerk in this Department, at five shillings per diem, from the 23rd Instant.

On 1 June Thomas’s ‘ability and anxiety to make himself useful’—Mends’s words in a later communication—brought a raise of one shilling a day.¹²

By then Anna’s uncle had also become a writer in the Commissariat office. On 1 May, Mr. William Vaudry Glascott, as he was named in the letter of appointment, went to work on a provisional basis. By the 17th, having proved himself ‘tolerably conversant with office work, and his services being much required’,¹³ he was deemed acceptable. The language of his appointment, measurably cooler than that for Thomas, may reflect Glascott’s inexperience in Commissariat procedures. Apparently, this didn’t matter: Mends’s office was so busy he had to have additional staff.

The Commissariat was the arm of the Imperial government that bought, stored, and distributed food, tools, machinery, building materials, weapons, and other goods for its specific purposes. Though its traditional role was to supply the military forces, in

Western Australia it also provided for the newly arrived convicts and the Enrolled Pensioner Force. It enjoyed considerable independence in that its finances and activities were controlled not by the colonial government but by the relevant authorities in London. Each spring the central Commissariat office in Perth solicited sealed tenders for everything from beef, mutton, and potatoes to hay and fuel wood. These goods were received and kept in storehouses managed by duly appointed local storekeepers, who answered to Mends, the Deputy Commissary General, rather than to the local Resident Magistrate, the general factotum of the colonial administration.

Thomas's work in western India had prepared him well for his new duties as clerk in Perth's Commissariat office. He was not only familiar with military and Treasury protocols, but his Bombay employer, Robert Frith and Company, had been a mess agent as well as an importer and auctioneer. But Thomas's new job was not something a man of ability could regard as permanent, especially if he had a wife and child to support. After five months, he resigned in favour of a more secure and apparently better paying job in the central Post Office.

Here, too, the press of work had been increasing. The Postmaster General, Anton Helmich, was by now an old hand in the Colony. In mid 1853 he made it known through official channels and the press that he badly needed clerical help. Helmich and Thomas both belonged to the Wesley or Methodist Church in Perth. By the time a new position was approved, Thomas was on the inside track. His formal application, submitted 1 September, spoke of his 'regularity and attention to business' at the Commissariat. In his endorsement, Helmich noted that the 'gentleman has from the assistance he has already afforded, proved to me his fitness in every way', and recommended a salary of £120. Nine days later Anna's husband had the job, at £100 a year. The next day he quit the Commissariat.¹⁴

The new position quickly soured. There were burdensome routines, a work day running to twelve hours, and no holidays, and the level of remuneration didn't match the required duties. Two years later, after a series of clerks had taken the job only to resign, the Perth *Inquirer* was not surprised that it 'is impossible to retain them, and that they secure the first vacant situation which offers either more pay or requires less work'. It was Thomas who established this pattern. On 15 December, three months after going to work for the Postmaster General, he quit.¹⁵

He went back to clerking in the Perth office of the Deputy Commissary General,¹⁶ and he stayed there until October 1855, when he accepted a far more challenging position—Commissariat Storekeeper at the Lynton convict depot. The quasi-military

Commissariat was Anna's husband's true employment home: the imperial sector in which his expertise and usefulness were obvious.

Anna's Advertisement for a School for Young Ladies

Thomas's unsettled employment in 1853 had a dramatic result: at the end of the year, probably to bring in additional income, his wife advertised a school for young ladies. This is the earliest known signal of her interest in teaching--the work with which she would later support herself in Singapore, Bangkok, and the United States, and that led to her successful reincarnation as 'the English governess'.

Parents in Perth who wished to educate their daughters had two choices, the free public Perth Colonial Girls' School and the Academy for Young Ladies conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. The latter institution was the better one, well established and with a trained staff and many courses and options. Aiming to instil 'a sincere and practical love of all the Christian and social virtues', the Sisters of Mercy received broad public support. Today their school flourishes as Mercedes College. By contrast, the public school was widely seen as a free school for the poor and was thus less well funded. A letter to a newspaper signed 'A Parent' noted that one of its teachers couldn't even spell *grammar*. 'If matters go on much longer as they do at present', this writer grumbled, 'the parents of the pupils will transfer them to another school, where they will obtain an education, although at the risk of changing their faith.' An editorial pronounced the government's female schools 'thoroughly inefficient, as is fully evidenced by the number of Protestant children of all classes who are instructed by the Sisters of Mercy.'¹⁷

The notice Anna placed in the *Western Australian Almanack* for 1854 listed the standard subjects to be taught but named no references who could attest to her competence. Instead there was an appeal to sectarian Protestant loyalty—in her words, 'the principles of the Reformed Religion'. Clearly, Anna was hoping to fill a niche:

PERTH YOUNG LADIES' SCHOOL.
SUPERINTENDED BY MRS. LEONOWENS.

THE course of Instruction pursued at this Seminary embraces the following :—

English Grammar
 " Composition
 Arithmetic
 Writing
 Geography
 The use of the Globes

History
 Music
 Drawing
 Plain Needlework
 Ornamental do.

TERMS—6 guineas per annum. Music and drawing extra.
 The utmost care is devoted to the improvement of the Pupils at this school, and whilst their minds and manners are studiously cultivated, the principles of the Reformed Religion are carefully instilled.

Reproduced from *Western Australian Almanack 1854*, p.54

If Anna was the superintendent or principal, one would expect a staff of more than one. Did she plan to run a school in her home while looking after her baby and household? One can only guess, there being absolutely no evidence apart from this advertisement that the 'Seminary' so much as opened. A search through Perth's two weekly newspapers turns up no references whatever. The most plausible explanation is that the school existed only as an inflated public prospectus, and that the sectarian patronage Anna hoped to attract did not materialise.

Promotional imposture is not unknown in rapidly growing economies, and Anna was not averse to stretching the truth, especially when she wanted to float an enterprise to bring in needed income. But remembering how she went on to open schools and write books, we should not rule out other motives: a desire for independent work, the stirrings of ambition. 1852 and 1853 were the years *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became a phenomenal worldwide bestseller. Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel got a lot of sympathetic attention in both Bombay and Perth¹⁸ and was destined to play a role in Anna's life in Bangkok. It would have been unusual and difficult for a married woman with a baby to start a school of her own in the 1850s, but Anna was not cut from the usual mould. If she took any cues from Stowe's career, she may have decided that a high-minded and determined woman could do absolutely anything.

A Second Beloved Child, and a Third

Six weeks after reaching Western Australia, Anna and Thomas had the Reverend William Lowe, minister of Perth's Wesley Church, baptise their baby. Lowe's entry in this church's Register of Baptisms, cited above, is triply significant: it tells us the Leonowenses had left the Church of England and joined the Methodists, it reveals that the infant had been born on 24 January, and thus at sea, and it is the sole surviving record of his name—Thomas.

On 22 March 1854 the *Inquirer* announced the child's death: 'On Thursday the 16th instant, the beloved and only child of T. Leonowens, Esq., aged 13 months'. That punchy 'Esq.' was surely no accident. Chances are the author was Thomas, who placed his paternal grief on record but guarded the devastated mother from public attention by not mentioning her.

In India Anna had been desolated by her first child's death, and in her one account of her visit to Australia, quoted earlier, she characterised herself as 'still dreadfully ill' after burying her second child. The phrase hints at the intensity of her grief following this death. Twice, now, she had gone through the wretched experience of losing an only child.

But she was already pregnant again, and on 25 October 1854 she gave birth to a daughter. In Western Australia's official register of births, the child's name is given as Avis Annie.¹⁹

Two years later a fourth and last child was born named Louis Gunnis; this is the boy who figures in *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* and the three American films based on Anna's life in Bangkok. The unusual middle name came from Thomas's older brother, Gunnis Lean Owens, who, it may be noted, took cabin passage from Liverpool to New York one year before Thomas and Anna left Bombay for Australia.²⁰ The Owens brothers illustrate the nineteenth-century Irish diaspora at its most extreme.

As Avis and Louis grew up, either they were led to believe they were born in London or they agreed to pretend that they were. One way or another, their true country of origin had to be concealed if their mother was to maintain that she had spent her early twenties in a fashionable part of the metropolis rather than remote and undeveloped Western Australia.

The Swan River Mechanics' Institute

In 1851 a society had been organized in Perth for mainly middle-class men—businessmen, tradesmen, clerks, teachers, ex-army men—who wished to improve their minds. The Swan River Mechanics' Institute assembled the best library in the colony, offered 'classes for mutual instruction in useful branches of knowledge', convened weekly discussions of 'some subject of a literary, scientific or other useful character', and offered members a public forum.²¹ Many Nonconformists joined and there were also several Catholics. During 1854 Thomas emerged as one of the more active members: He was elected to the executive committee,²² served as auditor, gave a lecture, and spoke up at the Monday evening discussion class. Thanks to a secretary's detailed minutes of the class's rather formal arguments, we have a surprising, indeed incomparable, record of Thomas's views. On certain questions that the class agreed to debate—for example, whether the 'colored races' were inferior in intellect to whites—he proved strikingly engaged, expansive, forceful.

On 27 January 1854, six weeks after Thomas left the Post Office to return to the Commissariat, the Swan River Mechanics' Institute held its annual meeting in new quarters on Howick (now Hay) Street. There were encouraging reports and rousing speeches and a resolution thanking the Governor that 'carried with acclamation—three times three, and one cheer more'. When Thomas Allmond rose to move 'that what has been done is but a beginning; and this meeting pledges itself to increased zeal and energy for the current year', the motion was seconded by 'Mr. Leonowens'²³—the first time his name appears in connection with the Institute.

In February a new question came up in the discussion class: 'Was the execution of Charles 1st justifiable?' Opinion ran against the king, and when a man named Gray defended the principle that 'the people delegate to the Sovereign the power to rule[,] but according to Law', 'Leon Owens' spoke up in agreement and then added his own downright opinions. The secretary's minutes summarize them as follows:

Charles was a traitor he acted despotically. Approves of Grays remarks. The people justly maintained their rights. These are facts. Charles was guilty of High Treason. He was therefore a traitor because he made War upon his own subjects. The Puritans of that day were the Holiest & best men of the time. Charles 2nd was an abandoned Wretch. Denounced Charles 1st as a traitor and does'nt approve of capital punishment. Charles was an arbitrary king.²⁴

These rough notes clarify something documented nowhere else, namely, that Anna's husband was not only a staunch Protestant but that his view of England's constitutional history was shaped by the seventeenth century's religious wars. Particularly striking is

his opinion that the Puritans were ‘the Holiest’ people of their time and Charles II was an ‘abandoned Wretch’—views consistent with his wife’s plan for a school emphasizing ‘the Reformed Religion’.

Thomas was born in Enniscorthy, Ireland, a quarter century after the bitter defeat of the United Irishmen on Vinegar Hill, which rises from the town’s eastern edge. The parish church in which he was baptised Thomas Lane/Lean Owens in 1824²⁵ served the occupying British garrison and the ruling Anglo-Irish minority. One would expect his opinions to have an anti-Catholic tendency, as they evidently did. The big surprise is the vigour with which he opposed British attitudes toward people of colour and adopted the point of view of Anglo-Indians. It is at this point that one begins to glimpse what kind of man Anna chose to marry in India, and why the couple were drawn to one another.

On Monday, 22 May, a Mr. Johnston proposed a new topic for discussion: ‘Is the alleged essential intellectual inferiority of the colored races correct?’ Thomas missed this session but was present the evening of 12 June, when Johnston maintained that people of colour had a history of achievement as impressive as anything the whites could show. Not everyone agreed. Presently ‘Mr. Leonowns’ spoke up, citing his Indian experience and his view of religious history:

Has not heard much of the discussion but in what has fallen from Mr. Johnston he fully concurs there are very intelligent natives in the East Indies, was personally acquainted with a Gentleman Parsee, a Shipbuilder whose work in that branch of Science was Superb, and the Natives are ingenuous in works of arts, literature and Science their colour it is that makes an unfavorable impression. There is no inferiority of intellect, in the Coloured races. Solomon the wisest of all Men was a Coloured Man—and from the East, and God himself spoke from the East—and all tends to shew the superiority of the Coloured races.

Here, again, we find something unexpected—an arresting defence of the priority, the original authority, of ‘the East’. That this view was more than theoretical is evident from his wife’s study of Sanskrit, Persian, and other Asian languages and her later investigations into Asian religious history. Thanks to these Perth discussion notes, it appears that Anna and her husband were serious if amateur Orientalists well before her arrival in Bangkok. Their Protestantism seems to have stimulated an energetic exploration of ‘Eastern’ origins.

The next week, returning to the charge, ‘Mr. Leonowns’ forcefully distanced himself from the growing mid-century insularity and racism of colonial Britons: if we knew the languages of India, he argued, we would realize that many natives ‘possess a fund of sound knowledge . . . they are excellent Mathematicians, Astronomers and

particularly well versed in the history of their own Country'. In a sense, he was harking back to the late eighteenth-century 'Orientalists' who advocated the study of Indian languages and intellectual traditions.²⁶ He went beyond this point of view, however, by insisting that European officers were 'very often inferior in mind to the Native troops they command', and that Indian and 'East Indian' office-workers were an indispensable but unappreciated arm of colonial administration. He attributed native deficiencies to an invidious colour-line, a lack of educational opportunity, and a certain side-effect of British military might—the illusion that superior weapons and training were signs of social and intellectual superiority.

Some, not all, of his arguments were persuasive. At the end of the evening the initial proposition was amended—'That the alledged inferiority discernable in the colour[ed] races is not an inherent attribute of their nature but the effects of a steril [sic] mind for want of cultivation'—and put to a vote. It carried with 'only two dissentients'.

Unlike those officers who sought relief from boredom in billiards and pig-sticking, Sergeant Paymaster Leonowens had taken a keen interest in social history during his nine years in India. His point about the disabilities suffered by 'East Indians'—a euphemism for Eurasians—long remained a minority concern. Only recently have historians focused on what the Anglo-Indian activist Herbert A. Stark vigorously argued in the 1920s and 1930s: that even though Anglo-Indians were 'the important wheels, the cranks and pivots in the machinery of the [East India] Company's operations',²⁷ they were denied recognition and promotion. Why would a young Protestant from southeast Ireland be so concerned to make that point in the 1850s? Part of the answer surely lies in his marriage to a mixed-race woman and his friendship with her mixed-race uncle and fellow clerk in Bombay--connections that mandated a reinterpretation of the relationship between coloniser and colonised. Behind Anna's husband's vehement defence of the intellectual capacity of the 'coloured races' lay a direct personal engagement.

Speaking with the authority of experience, Thomas made a strong impression on his fellow discussants. Two days after the vote, he was 'requested to deliver a lecture, at a time most convenient to himself, and on any subject, he may deem necessary'. The subject he selected and announced, 'Study of History', seems to reflect his admiration of Indians 'versed in the history of their own Country'. A book he is known to have borrowed from the Mechanics' Institute's library was Leopold von Ranke's *History of the Popes*, a close archival chronicle of 'the secrets of the papacy'²⁸ from a Protestant point of view. Was Thomas's avid interest in history bound up with concerns over sectarian conflict and abuses of power? Sadly, there is no record of the content of his lecture. The

minutes for 11 September tell us only that twenty-eight people were present, and that the talk

was listened to with marked attention, and at intervals during its delivery elicited rapturous applause from the Members present at its conclusion Mr. Johnston passed a very high and well merited Compliment to Mr. Leonowens for the ability and talent displayed, throughout the delivery of his very interesting lecture—After which a vote of thanks to the lecturer was passed by acclamation.²⁹

Manning the Commissariat in Lynton

Thomas continued working as clerk in the main Commissariat office in Perth until October 1855, when, taking another job in this department, he sailed five hundred kilometres north with his wife and daughter to Port Gregory. A convict hiring depot had been established in the vicinity, and Thomas was to be its Commissariat Storekeeper. A convict depot was a place where ticket-of-leave men were hired out to farmers and other free settlers. Ticket-of-leave men were convicts of good behaviour who had been granted a conditional release. At the time Port Gregory was the most northern outpost of settlement in Western Australia. Beyond, for thousands of kilometres, lay a coast virtually untouched by Europeans. It was Governor FitzGerald's dream that the placement of convict hiring depots in such remote localities would promote settlement and economic development.³⁰

To follow this, the most challenging phase of Thomas's and Anna's life in Western Australia, it is necessary first to return to Anna's uncle, William Vaudry Glasscott, who preceded Thomas in the new position.

In August 1853, after serving as clerk for several months in Perth's Commissariat headquarters, Glasscott was appointed³¹ the first fulltime government storekeeper at the new convict depot. The site of his labours was harsh and unpromising, the settlement was only a few months old, construction of a storehouse had not yet begun, and countless difficulties lay ahead. For nearly two years Glasscott minded the store at this extremely isolated post.

The local impetus for creating the settlement was the new Geraldine lead mine, fifty kilometres distant. It was hoped that constructing a road from the mine to Port Gregory would make it possible to ship pig-lead to Singapore at competitive rates. Labour for road-building would come from the new convict hiring depot. Building stone would come from the limestone hills, rushes for thatch from the Hutt River, and there was level land for cultivation. The Governor was an enthusiastic backer of the plan.³²

The hiring depot was located almost ten kilometres from Port Gregory at Lynton. Established in 1853, it was closed less than four years later. Today Lynton consists of a single substantial farmstead. Nearby stand the empty two-story verandahed dwelling of the man who owned and named the place, and the mostly ruined buildings that comprised the convict hiring station. For fifteen months Anna held her and her family's bodies and souls together here—an achievement mentioned in none of her later writings.

An archival and archaeological study of the convict depot provides a rough timeline for the construction of its buildings. Initially, the occupants and officers lived under canvas. When a Royal Engineer inspected the site in 1854, he reported that only a few of the depot's structures had been completed: the superintendent's office, the depot store, and two 'warders quarters'. The commissariat store and office had their walls up but no roofs. Since there was no structural timber in the area, roofing was a serious problem.³³ Presumably, by the time the Leonowenses arrived, the storage and office sections of the Commissariat had at last been 'weather-boarded and shingled'.³⁴

If it seems peculiar that such a rudimentary establishment would need two stores, one for the Commissariat and one for the depot, the explanation is that this duplication was required by the division of powers built into the general administration. Officially, the Commissariat Storekeeper was independent of the colonial government. He issued 'supplies which are sufficient to last six months' to the Superintendent (who was part of the colonial government), and this officer then kept the supplies in the depot store and saw to the 'detail issues'. Two rooms and two men were needed for one complex function. Only at the end, after Lynton's convict depot proved too expensive to sustain, was the Colonial Secretary 'forcibly struck with the absurdity and unnecessary expense of the double system of issue: the two stores . . . divided only by a nine inch wall'.³⁵

Lynton was named by Captain Henry Ayshford Sanford after the village on the coast of north Devon that had been his home. When the Captain arrived in Port Gregory in early 1853 he set in motion several enterprises, chiefly whaling and the raising of grain, sheep, and horses. The Perth newspapers often reported on his operations and setbacks: how many barrels of whale oil he had collected, how many whaleboats were lost in a gale. He pushed things forward with great energy, taking shortcuts and stepping on toes. In 1854, after a ship was driven aground at Port Gregory, Sanford was seen on shore stripping his clothes off. 'Good God, he will never attempt it', the ship's master said, but Sanford plunged in and swam to the rescue. 'It was owing solely to him we were saved', the master wrote later.³⁶

Soon after Glasscott came to Lynton, he had a run-in with this forceful, influential, and at times short-tempered man. Someone discovered that government-owned timber had been used to build Sanford's house, and the new storekeeper was asked to witness the apparent theft. Doing so was not without risk for Glasscott. When another man accused the captain of being 'a chisel trying to cheat Govt out of some planks', Sanford threw a hatchet at him and 'cut his wrist severely'. The episode points up the perils of being a government functionary at a remote settlement dominated by an impatient man of means. Sanford felt confident that 'Glasscott's complaints' would be dismissed, and they were.³⁷

The case highlights an inherent conflict in the colonial bureaucracy. Because the British Treasury controlled the Commissariat's purse strings, this department was nominally independent of the colonial administration. But because local magistrates were men of much higher standing than storekeepers, this independence was apt to be precarious. In Lynton the man vested with the powers of government was William Burges, a prosperous settler who had come out from Ireland in 1830. In 1850 he was appointed first Resident Magistrate of the large Champion Bay District, stretching from the Irwin River to the Murchison River north of Port Gregory. When the convict depot was opened in the latter vicinity, he became in addition Visiting Magistrate for Port Gregory. Privately, he ran a large sheep station near the mouth of the Bowes River.³⁸ In several respects, he epitomized Western Australia's conservative gentry.

One of the main challenges a storekeeper faced in a remote place like Lynton was to hold his supplies against requisitions by the local magistrate. In October 1853, soon after Glasscott showed up, Burges sent the Colonial Secretary a typical complaint: 'The Commissariat officer at Port Gregory makes a demur about supplying the Colonial Government with stores, particularly flour, which he says he cannot spare . . . I hope instructions may be sent to him by the first opportunity to supply stores for the use of the Gaol here' [in Champion Bay]. In fact, Glasscott had been following instructions. Magistrates were supposed to depend on local suppliers rather than the Commissariat. Hence the Governor's response: 'The settlers must be prepared to supply flour to the Govt at a fair rate'. Unfortunately, this policy, meant to promote local development, was not based on local conditions. The soil and climate of Lynton were not suited for growing grain, and the pensioners who had been settled there were experiencing crop failures. Forced to act on his own, Burges made 'arrangements with . . . Mr. Glasscott that he should *lend me on my private account* sufficient rice to feed the Native Prisoners here' [italics added].³⁹

So policy had to evolve, and Burges was presently authorised to requisition 'such provisions as may be absolutely necessary for the maintenance of prisoners'. The storekeeper was sent new orders, which he obeyed, and the two men developed a smooth working relationship, 'pull[ing] well together', as Burges noted later. Glasscott also served the magistrate as clerk, took over his Customs work, and acted as Postmaster. In performing these varied functions, he followed regulations to the letter. When the *Mary Queen of Scots* was driven ashore, he arranged 'for a guard to protect the wrecked property'. But when Captain Sleddon asked that his hungry crew be fed from Commissariat stores, Glasscott refused until the captain drafted a legal promise 'to pay whatever expense may be incurred thereby'. Among the items salvaged from the vessel was five gallons of gin. According to Burges's approving report, 'Mr. Glasscott made no attempt to charge duty on the gin, so long as he saw it used only for the shipwrecked seamen and others who were assisting in saving property from the wreck, but when he saw it put into a cart, and . . . sent away up the country', he seized the import and held it till duty was paid.⁴⁰ Glasscott was a trustworthy servant of the imperial command.

What remains obscure, owing to the absence of personal documents, is how the man endured his long, faithful, and poorly remunerated service in his isolated post, or what he thought about the area's displaced and suppressed Nanda people. In May 1855 a new storekeeper arrived in Lynton. Two months later Glasscott returned to Fremantle. By mid-October he was back in Bombay, where he was appointed Master of the Indo-British Boys School for mixed-race children. Since most schoolmasters were imported from Britain, this unusual appointment suggests that Anna's uncle's abilities had at last been recognised. But then, tragically, the promising new career was cut short. On 5 February 1856, at age thirty-three or thirty-four, Glasscott died of 'acute dysentery' in the European General Hospital in Bombay Fort.⁴¹

Anna and Thomas at Lynton



**Restored 'Superintendent's House' at Lynton.
Photograph taken by Nellie Habegger, May 2006.**

Between Glasscott's and Thomas's tenures as Commissariat Storekeeper, another man, Archibald Edgar, had a go at the job but quickly proved he lacked his predecessor's suavity in adjusting to its conflicts. When faced with Burges's demands, Edgar stubbornly maintained that Mends had 'told him not to make any issues whatever on the requisition of the Resident Magistrate'. In retaliation, Burges had the man removed on the grounds that he engaged in private retail sales at his quarters. The government sided with the Magistrate, but the Commissariat backed the storekeeper by submitting an extract from the instructions given him. Significantly, the signature that follows the extract and attests to its accuracy is none other than 'Thos Leonowens'.⁴² This document tells us that when Thomas accepted his new assignment he had a pretty fair idea of the embroilments that awaited him.

On 4 October 1855, five weeks after Edgar was sacked, Anna, Thomas and their one-year-old daughter embarked on the schooner *Perseverance*⁴³ for their new home in the Lynton Convict Hiring Depot. Like Edgar and his family, they probably resided in the Commissariat building itself, in a room designated as the office.⁴⁴ The Royal Engineer's report gives the office's dimensions as twelve by thirteen feet. For the next fifteen months, this small enclosed space apparently formed Anna's home and prison—the

word does not seem too strong. Several months before she arrived, the dug well caved in at the bottom. Water had to be carried quite a distance. The terrain was rocky and sandy, and the wind blew frequently and fiercely, so much so that today the few introduced trees are bent to the ground. In summer the narrow valley enclosing the depot turned into a cauldron. In August 1856 there was 'one continued heavy down-pour accompanied with tempests of winds'. That September, touring the northern districts, the Colonial Secretary was dismayed at how 'very rough' everything was: 'the morals of the Inhabitants are at a somewhat low ebb, and the want of females is very apparent'.⁴⁵ These were the conditions (except that winter had turned to spring) in which Anna went through her fourth and last childbirth in October 1856.

On top of everything, the Western Australian economy had entered a period of economic contraction. The arrival of a new Governor on 20 July 1855 (the day Glascott returned to Fremantle) marked the end of an era. Arthur Edward Kennedy, born in County Down, was to prove more autocratic and unpopular than Fitzgerald, more disposed to pry into details and criticise and insist on official dignity. The first thing to emerge was that the Treasury was broke, with obligations much exceeding income. The Geraldine Mine, unable to raise needed capital, not only ceased operations but was offered for sale in London. Since a road to the mines had been the main pretext for creating the Convict Hiring Depot at Lynton, this establishment began to look fairly pointless.

Not much is known about Thomas's first year at Lynton. He had a horse and used it to ride the ninety-six kilometres to Geraldton once a month, and also for trips between Lynton and Port Gregory. His abilities were appreciated by Burges, who asked him to be his clerk. The appointment letter, of 17 December, is in Thomas's own hand. In Perth it passed under the eyes of the Deputy Commissary General, who, well aware of the tension between magistrates and storekeepers, scribbled his reluctant consent: '*as there is no suitable person . . . for the duty of Magistrate's Clerk, I have no objection to Mr. Leonowens holding this temporary post, with the understanding that it is not allowed to interfere, in any way, with his Commissariat duties.*'⁴⁶

Thomas's resignation of his clerkship in August 1856 may be a sign that the interfering had begun. Or maybe he was just too busy: that same month he complained that there was insufficient time between the overland mail's arrival and departure for him to answer communications from headquarters. The Colonial Secretary's bland response—'it is assumed' that the two and a half days already allowed are 'ample'⁴⁷—would not have soothed Thomas's rising temper. Anna was then in her eighth month of pregnancy.

For his part, Governor Kennedy, anxious to reduce the deficit, was increasingly provoked by the gap between the large sums expended on Lynton and Port Gregory and the slender returns. A fact-finding mission in September 1856 resulted in some sobering reports on the northern economy. In early November, after a farmer offered to supply the station with potatoes at an unheard-of rate of £20 a ton, the Governor had the Colonial Secretary send Burges a stern letter of warning:

I am directed to invite any remarks from yourself and other settlers in the District as to the reason of these prevailing high prices, and further to ask whether any and what amount of Potatoes has lately been grown in the Northern Districts . . .

I am further directed . . . to request you will make it known generally among the settlers in your district that it is the intention of H. E. [His Excellency] not to send any more men [i.e., convicts] to Port Gregory Depot till there is a considerable reduction in the cost and a greater facility afforded in the mode of procuring supplies . . . , and that H. E. has doubts if prices range as at present, as to the advisability of closing the Depot altogether.⁴⁸

Governor Kennedy, Magistrate Burges, and Commissariat Storekeeper Leonowens, all born in Ireland, would now find themselves fighting over potatoes.

In mid-November some barrels of the precious tubers unloaded at Port Gregory got 'wet and heated' and started to rot. Thomas decided to have them stored in an empty gaol cell. When Burges discovered them there on the afternoon of 18 November, he objected, declaring them a danger to health and ordering 'their immediate removal'. In response, the Magistrate reported,

Mr Leonowens stated *in very strong terms* that they should not be removed, that the Gaol was an Imperial Building, and that he would make what use he thought proper of it. I took no notice of his remarks but ordered Mr Snowdon the Gaoler to have them removed which was accordingly done [*italics added*].

Burges covered himself by having two medical officers affirm in writing that storing potatoes in the confinement of gaol could produce 'disease' and 'contagion' among prisoners. At the time there were no prisoners.

The next day Burges offered Thomas the use of his office for temporary storage. Thomas's reply, correct in form and icy in content, reveals the hand of a skilled bureaucratic writer:

I have to thank you for the offer conveyed in your letter (2nd) of this date, viz to give up your office to store the potatoes in; at the same time it is my duty to observe that as you vacated the Building and it has been unoccupied for some months, the charge of the same rests with me, and according to the Regulations of the Service it

can only be allotted for the purposes of the service by me, without special instructions from Head Quarters.

Under any Circumstances, your offer is very much too late, the Potatoes having been sent to the Port for shipment this morning.

I have the honor to be
Your obedient Servant
Tho^s Leonowens

Then, instead of identifying himself as ‘Commissariat Storekeeper’, Thomas penned a grander phrase: ‘in Charge of Imperial Buildings at Port Gregory’.⁴⁹ The imposing title was consistent with the declaration on his son’s birth certificate the previous week that his ‘Rank or Profession’ was, quite simply, ‘gentleman’⁵⁰—still a powerful word.

There was a second confrontation between Burges and Thomas on the 18th. The Magistrate had been trying to secure a handmill with which prisoners under sentence of hard labour could grind corn. When a mill was finally sent to Port Gregory, arriving with the bad potatoes, Thomas refused to turn it over. The Magistrate’s response was summary and humiliating. In Thomas’s version of events, ‘you [Burges] stated yesterday in my store and before some Ticket of Leave men that if I wanted Labor to work the Mill I must employ it myself, and turning to Mr Snowdon [the gaoler] you ordered him not to supply me with Labor.’ Evidently, the air was thoroughly poisoned, and not by potatoes, with Burges insisting that he would be the one to put prisoners to work and Thomas insisting on the independence of the Commissariat. His long, starchy, and defiant reply contains four separate uses of the key word, ‘interfere’:

... nor do I recognise your authority to interfere in the matter of the Mill received by this Department . . . I am compelled however reluctantly, to state that your interference in this matter is quite unprecedented . . . It is impossible that such undue and improper interference with the public service in matters where according to my instructions you have no right whatever to interfere--can be submitted to.

The correspondence was sent to superiors in Perth for comment. Backing Thomas’s contention and echoing his language, Mends, his boss, ‘submitted that Mr Burges’s interference in regard to the potatoes was altogether unnecessary, because the Commissariat Storekeeper is entirely and solely responsible for their proper keeping’. That the gaol was empty ‘should . . . have prevented any interference on Mr Burges’s part’. But Mends could not approve of Thomas’s tone:

he [i.e., Mends himself] regrets to have reason to animadvert upon Mr Leonowens style of correspondence towards the Resident Magistrate . . . [and] will not fail to remind the Storekeeper of what is always due to the office of Resident.

Kennedy agreed, but with a difference. The letter sent to Burges advised him rather mildly that the Governor 'considers it advisable that you should not interfere' and then assured him that Thomas would receive a sterner rebuke:

The correspondence of Mr Leonowens has been submitted to the Head of his Department with a view to prevent a recurrence of communications, which His Excellency considers to be improper in tone & substance.⁵¹

The difference is: Burges was privately advised how to conduct official business in future but Leonowens, treated as an inferior in the hearing of his antagonist, was ordered to mend his manners.

The quarrel reflects more than the inherent conflict between magistrates and storekeepers, or the fact that Lynton's convict depot was in its last days and tempers were fraying. Underneath was a bitter colonial-British class division. With his large independent capital unrelated to his government service, Burges was an undisputed member of Western Australia's conservative gentry.⁵² Thomas may have been a self-defined 'gentleman' who wielded an able pen and had a liberal outlook, but, economically, he was a beset functionary whose working identity came from the department that paid his salary. Thus, when the two men squared off against one another, Burges was backed by the full weight of government, whereas Thomas sustained a wound to his professional independence and personal dignity.

Moving On

And then it was only history after all. The Governor decided the Lynton Convict Hiring Depot was too much of a drain and must be shut down.⁵³ The depot buildings were abandoned and began their slow disintegration. Anna, Thomas, and their two children made their way back to Perth, where Thomas was taken on as Mends's 'Assistant',⁵⁴ a step up from clerk; apparently, he was too valuable an employee for his quarrel with Burges to count against him. In March 1857 he was proposed for membership in the Swan River Mechanics' Institute by Bernard Smith, Perth's long serving Commissariat Storekeeper, but the nomination never came up for a vote. On 3 April, four years after reaching Western Australia, the Leonowenses took passage on the *Lady Amherst*, a thirty-year-old sailing vessel that had been fitted up for transporting horses and was now bound for Singapore, where it arrived on 30 April.⁵⁵

The trip took less than a third as long as the outbound ordeal on the *Alibi*. That voyage and its horrors, along with much else that had occurred in tiny Perth and windy Lynton—the death of Anna's first son, the collapse of her plan for the Young Ladies School, the association with convicts at that raw northern outpost, and the humiliation of seeing her husband beaten down in his difficult and unrewarding job—would have been reason enough to draw a veil over her life in Western Australia. From now on, one guesses, she had an absolute benchmark for failure and futility, and with it a standing motive for doing *whatever* it took to succeed.

Notes

¹ Avis Selina Fyshe, unfinished typed biography of Anna Leonowens, Box VI C 4:2, folder 28, p. 35. Kenneth and Margaret Landon Papers, Wheaton College Special Collections, Wheaton, Illinois, USA. The passage originally formed part of 'A Biographical Sketch' in 'Mrs. A. H. Leonowens', *Redpath's Lyceum* [1873-1875] p. 42, preserved in the Anna Harriette Leonowens Papers, Personal Miscellaneous Collection, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

² Rica Erickson, *Dictionary of Western Australians 1829-1914. Volume 3, Free 1850-1868* (Nedlands; University of Western Australia Press, 1979) p. 494; Rica Erickson, *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians, pre 1829-1888, Volume III. K-Q* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1988) p. 1847; Justin Corfield, 'Anna Leonowens and the Australian Connection', *Ancestor* 24.4 (summer 1998), pp. 6-7; Elizabeth Baigent and Lois K. Yorke, 'Leonowens, Anna Harriette', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 33:403. The latter write: 'At about this time [1852] Anna broke completely with her family, and the couple . . . went to Perth, Western Australia. There they had a second child, who died after only a few months; a third child, Avis, was born in 1854, and a fourth, Louis, in 1856. . . In February 1857 the family sailed from Perth to Singapore'. In fact, the second child was born en route to Fremantle and lived past his first birthday; Louis was not born in Perth; and the family left Australia in April 1857. That William Vaudry Glasscott travelled with the Leonowenses shows that Anna had not completely broken with her maternal family. This uncle was named after his English father, Lieut. William Vaudrey Glascott, whose liaison or unrecorded marriage with an unidentified Indian or mixed-race woman can be thought of as 'founding' Anna's lineage.

³ Information on the *Alibi* and its passage to Western Australia is drawn chiefly from *Lloyd's List*; [Singapore] *Straits Times*; 'The Barque *Alibi*', *Perth Gazette*, 25 March 1853; and 'Fremantle', *Inquirer*, 23 March 1853.

⁴ *Singapore Free Press*, 10 December 1852.

⁵ *Perth Gazette*, 25 March 1853; *Lloyd's List*, 16 March 1853; Baptism no. 150, 1 May 1853, Register of Baptisms, Wesley Church, Perth, Accession (Acc) 1654A, Battye Library, Perth.

⁶ 'To be Sold by Auction', *Inquirer*, 6 April 1853; '£5 Reward', *Perth Gazette*, 22 April 1853.

⁷ *The New Settlement of Australind in Western Australia* (London: printed by A. Spottiswoode, c. 1842), pp. 22-3.

⁸ Diaries of Gerald de Courcy Lefroy, 6 July 1850 and 8 August 1851, Acc 648A, Battye Library.

⁹ *Perth Gazette*, 3 and 10 June 1853. Dyett was an importer, commission agent, and Lloyd's representative in Perth (*Western Australian Almanack, for . . . 1855* [Perth: Arthur Shenton, 1855] p. 69).

¹⁰ J. B. Roe, 'Some Old-Time Memories', *Journal and Proceedings of the Western Australian Historical Society*, 1.1 (1927) p. 6.

¹¹ *Perth Gazette*, 21 October 1853. Population figure from *Western Australian Almanack* (1855).

¹² Colonial Secretary's Office correspondence received, Acc 36, Vol 266, folios 154 and 265, State Records Office of Western Australia (SROWA).

¹³ Acc 36, 266/238. SROWA.

¹⁴ *Perth Gazette*, 29 July and 16 September 1853; C. A. Jenkins, 'Early Years of the Methodist Church in Western Australia', *Early Days* 2.13 (1933) pp. 10-12; Acc 36, 271/268-270; Colonial Secretary's Letterbook 1853-1854, Acc 49, Vol 36, 9 September 1853, SROWA; Acc 36, 267/148. SROWA.

¹⁵ *Inquirer*, 8 August 1855; Acc 36, 271/280. SROWA. Thomas quit on 15 December 1853. This was too close to the *Western Australian Almanack's* press date for the misleading entry showing 'Mr Leon Owens' as postal clerk for 1854 to be dropped (21).

¹⁶ Although no letter of application or appointment has been found, much of the paperwork generated by Mends's office in 1854-55 is in Thomas's hand; see Acc 36, 284/23, 24, 60, etc. On 20 January 1854 a 'true copy' was signed by 'Tho^s Leonowens' (Acc 36, 284/45-47). SROWA.

¹⁷ *Western Australian Almanack* (1854), p. 46; *Inquirer*, 19 December 1855; *Perth Gazette*, 3 February 1854; *Inquirer*, 3 January 1855.

¹⁸ *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was excerpted in the [Bombay] *Telegraph and Courier*, 20, 21, and 23 October 1852 and [Perth] *Inquirer*, 16 and 23 March 1853. Stowe's English tour was reported in *Inquirer*, 3 August 1853.

¹⁹ No. 2583, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in the State of Western Australia.

²⁰ For passage of 'Gunnis L. Owens' to New York, go to www.ancestry.com and see New York Passenger Lists, 1851-1891/1851/October/Princeton.

²¹ 'The Perth Literary Institute', Research Note 422, Battye Library; 'Domestic Sayings and Doings', *Perth Gazette*, 3 November 1854; Jan Partridge, 'The Establishment of Mechanics' Institutes in Western Australia: A Case Study of the Swan River Mechanics' Institute' (Melbourne: Sixth Annual Library History Forum, Monash University, 1995), 3-18 and appendix.

²² 'Domestic Sayings and Doings', *Perth Gazette*, 16 June 1854.

²³ *Inquirer*, 1 February 1854.

²⁴ Minutes for 6 and 14 February 1854, Records of the Perth Literary Institute, formerly the Swan River Mechanics' Institute, 1853 -1957, MN326, Acc 1830A, Battye Library. Unless otherwise noted, all references to Institute proceedings are to this source.

²⁵ 25 January 1824, Register of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1798-1826, St. Mary's, Enniscorthy, MFC1 100/1, National Archives of Ireland. Baigent and Yorke give 1823 as the year of baptism: an error.

²⁶ See Alexander Lyon Macfie's discussion of 'The Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy' in *Orientalism* (London: Longman, 2002) pp. 50-58. For another possible context for Thomas's thinking about the East, see Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008), chap. 3.

²⁷ Herbert Alick Stark, *Hostages to India* (Calcutta: Printed at Star Printing Works, 1936), p. 30.

²⁸ Leopold [von] Ranke, *History of the Popes, Their Church and State, and Especially of Their Conflicts with Protestantism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, translated by E. Foster (London: Bell, 1878), 1:viii. The minutes for 9 October 1854 show that Thomas had failed to return library book No. 420. According to the library's earliest published book catalogue, No. 420 was volume 1 of *History of the Popes by 'Rankes' (Rules and Regulations for the Guidance of the Swan River Mechanics' Institute: to Which Is Added a Catalogue of the Library* [Perth: R. Pether, 1864] p. 61.).

²⁹ Notwithstanding his responsive audience, Thomas would soon become less active in the Institute. His service as auditor, which commenced 3 July, ceased 11 December (Minutes). The impression that he held that office in 1855 derives from a misleading notice in the *Perth Gazette*, 8 December 1854.

³⁰ On the creation of the Lynton convict depot, see Mathew Trinca, 'Controlling Places: A History of Spatial Intent in Western Australian Convictism', *Studies in Western Australian History*, No. 17, *Historical Traces* (1997) pp. 25-31. Early on, the colonial administration was warned that if the expense of maintaining remote hiring stations continued 'to be so heavy as you have shewn, the proper remedy will be to break up the outlying convict depots'. Duke of Newcastle to Governor Fitzgerald, 8 May 1854. In *Australian Colonies. Convict Discipline and Transportation. Further Correspondence . . . (A Continuation of Papers presented May 1854)*. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, February 1855, pp. 205-6.

³¹ Acc 36, 267/69-70 (23 August 1853). SROWA.

³² On the connections between mine and depot, see Helen Summerville, 'Port Gregory', *Early Days* 6.8 (1969), pp. 74-88.

³³ Lieutenant Crossman's report, 28 April 1854, *Australian Colonies*, Appendix G.

³⁴ Comptroller Henderson's Report, 9 December 1854, Acc 36, 297/42. SROWA; Ian Lilley and Martin Gibbs, *An Archaeological Study of the Lynton Convict Hiring Depot* (East Perth, W.A.: Heritage Council of Western Australia, 1993) pp. 5-7, 25-37, 51-4.

³⁵ Report by Colonial Secretary Frederick Palgrave Barlee, 6 October 1856, Acc 36, 358/20. SROWA.

³⁶ Sandra Simkin, 'Historical Information on "Lynton Heritage Site" Est. 1853' (Northampton Historical Society, n.d.); *Perth Gazette*, 18 May, 29 June, and 31 August 1855; *Inquirer*, 28 February 1855.

³⁷ Henry A. Sanford to William A. Sanford, 3 December 1853, M386, Entry 135, Australian Joint Copying Project, Battye Library; Acc 36, 256/210. William was Captain Sanford's brother. The Colonial Secretary from 1852 to 1855, he was the second most powerful man in the colony.

³⁸ Gillian O'Mara, *Burges Saga* (Cottesloe: Owen G. Burges, 2000), pp. 4, 11, 17, 23, 25.

³⁹ Acc 36, 256/197; Acc 49/36, 26 October 1853; Acc 36, 256/211. SROWA. The latter is the one document that speaks of 'natives' in connection with Anna's uncle or husband.

⁴⁰ Acc 49/38, 11 May 1854; Acc 49/36, 2 February 1854; Acc 36, 339/82; Acc 49/38, 16 May 1854, 28 December 1854; Acc 36, 339/9, 11, 29-32. SROWA.

⁴¹ *Inquirer*, 25 July 1855; *Bombay Telegraph and Courier*, 13 October 1855 and 8 February 1856; India Office Records, N/3/30/69, British Library.

⁴² Acc 36, 339/48 (11 June 1855), 339/53-55, 58, 82; Acc 49, 38/1952 (30 August 1855); Acc 36, 319/157. SROWA.

⁴³ 'Shipping Intelligence', *Perth Gazette*, 12 October 1855.

⁴⁴ Before Edgar's arrival Burges noted that 'as he is a married man, I can no longer have the use of the Commissariat Office' (Acc 36, 322/157, SROWA), the implication being that this room would have to serve as the couple's home.

⁴⁵ Lieutenant Crossman's report; Acc 36, 322/157; *Perth Gazette*, 29 August 1856; Acc 36, 358/33 verso.

⁴⁶ Acc 36, 367/42; Acc 36, 339/113-4, 129. SROWA.

⁴⁷ Acc 36, 367/92, 89; Acc 49, 40/1349 (29 August 1856). SROWA.

⁴⁸ Acc 49, 40/1520 (4 November 1856). SROWA.

⁴⁹ Acc 36, 367/105-110. SROWA.

⁵⁰ No. 3469, 12 November 1856, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in the State of Western Australia.

⁵¹ Acc 36, 367/111-13, 106; Acc 49, 40/1589 (1 December 1856). SROWA.

⁵² A good overview of early Western Australian society can be found in C.T. Stannage, *The People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City* (Perth: Perth City Council, 1979), pp. 11-84. On Western Australia's conservative gentry, see Paul de Serville, *3 Barrack Street: The Weld Club 1871-2001* (Wahroonga, NSW: Helicon Press, 2003) chap.1.

⁵³ Governor Kennedy to H. Labouchere, 3 January 1857. In *Australian Colonies. Convict Discipline and Transportation. Further Correspondence . . . (In Continuation of Papers presented 21st March 1857)*, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, 25 August 1857.

⁵⁴ His given occupation at Louis' baptism, 29 March 1857, Register of Baptisms, Wesley Church, Perth, Acc 1654A, Battye Library.

⁵⁵ *Inquirer*, Advertisement running 25 February to 1 April 1857; 'Shipping Intelligence', *Inquirer*, 8 April 1857; *Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping* (London, 1862); 'Shipping in the Harbour', *Singapore Free Press*, supplement, 7 May 1857; *Lloyd's List*, 8 June 1857.