

Royal Western Australian Historical Society's  
Annual Pioneers Memorial Service  
on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June 1989 at St Bartholomews Chapel, East Perth Cemeteries,

Commemorating Lewis Hasluck

Citation by Nick P Hasluck

LEWIS HASLUCK was born in London in 1824, the fifth son of Samuel Hasluck, goldsmith, clock-maker and jeweller. Various persons of this name had flourished in Norfolk from the time of King Canute until the 15th century. In the 16th century branches of the family appeared in Worcestershire and Warwickshire. The direct ancestors of Lewis Hasluck settled in the neighbourhood of Birmingham early in the 17th century. With the coming of the industrial age in the 18th century, some of them rose to prosperity in such trades as metal refining and clock-making and as hardware merchants. Samuel, the father of Lewis, trained as a goldsmith, left Birmingham for London as a young man early in the 19th century and set himself up in Hatton Garden, the centre of the jewellery trade. He was described variously as goldsmith, clock-maker and jeweller. Later he added to his other interests a trading business based in Gibraltar. In his prosperity he built a residence at West Ham in Essex and called it Hazeloake House.

Lewis Hasluck was born and educated in a period of rising prosperity and topped off his schooling by living "en famille" in France to learn the French language. This was apparently a common practice in families in the jewellery trade.

As a young man Lewis went to South Australia in 1848. He also had a period in the family business at Gibraltar and this was followed by a second visit to South Australia. He returned to England in 1855 With his first wife. About this time there was a division of the family interests, probably after the retirement of Samuel the father on reaching 70 years of age. The Gibraltar interests were given to the eldest son (another Samuel). The second son, Frederick, took over the Hatton Garden business. Lewis was set up as a watch and clock manufacturer and jeweller on his own account in Cornhill, central London. He continued in his own business for nearly twenty years but suffered a succession of losses from the defalcation of an employee, two burglaries and a fire. In the most serious of the robberies the major booty was a parcel of diamonds from Amsterdam which he was handling on behalf of the owner and he had to make good the loss. He had not been covered by insurance against any of these misadventures. So, at the age of 50, he found himself with severely reduced means, a second wife and a baby and further bereavement in the family. His parents, three of his brothers and the closest of his sisters had died and he was not feeling very well himself. He hoped a warmer climate might relieve asthma. He lived briefly in France, looked around for a new life and came to Western Australia.

Like many another migrant his decision to come to Western Australia resulted as much from his disappointments in England as from the lure of the Golden West. He had originally thought of somewhere in America, either north or south, but, according to what he told his son in later years, he was swayed by the fact that a ship to Fremantle was readily available and he had the prospect of getting some land. Under new land regulations which had come into force in 1872 agricultural land in Western Australia had been set aside in rural sections of 100 acres each at a fixed price of eight shillings an acre, payable in annual installments of one shilling an acre, subject to conditions of occupation and improvement. With his second wife and two young children Lewis set sail in the Lady Louisa and reached Fremantle in late December 1875. He had some sort of dream of being a gentleman farmer on his hundred acres, but it was over three years before a block was available and when he went to look at it he found it was a patch of virgin scrub in the middle of a swamp near Torbay, west of Albany. He rejected it and returned to the metropolis.

Before going south he had lived mostly at Fremantle doing a little bit of this and a little bit of that without much profit. It was during this period at Fremantle that he did some carving. It was not his trade but he could draw a design and handle tools. He carved a few tombstones and shaped the stones for the ornamental parts of St John's Church, but his pride was chiefly in the carvings he did in wood for the bow and stern of vessels being built for the coastal trade on the beach at Bathers' Bay. This wood carving led to a request from the Chief Judge to carve a coat of arms for the law courts in Perth and this is now on show at the Old Court building in the Supreme Court gardens.

After returning from Albany he lived mostly in Perth and finished up with a shop in Wellington Street, opposite the railway station. It was what would be called an antique dealer's shop today. The back room of the shop, according to a story written by an old-time journalist, Horace Stirling, became the "attractive rendezvous of collectors of art". He supplemented his income by giving lessons in drawing at the Perth High School and writing occasional editorial pieces for Horace Stirling's newspaper. Perhaps he added something to the urbanity of life in the little colony before the gold rush and shared in arguments about the colony's progress.

Lewis Hasluck died in 1896. Unfortunately the records he left of his 20 years in Western Australia suffered a fate similar to that of many other documents. His elder son (my grandfather) was in the colonial postal service in the Goldfields when my great grandfather died. By the time he was able to return to Perth a new tenant was already bustling about to take over the shop in Wellington Street. He had already cleared out what he called "the rubbish" from the back room (namely everything except a few personal effects). Instead of recovering my great grandfather's papers my grandfather sadly contemplated a big heap of ashes in the back yard. Most of what I have recorded is derived partly from what my grandfather told my father, Sir Paul Hasluck, and partly from a few letters recovered in later years from relatives in England.

A few years after my great grandfather's death his widow and his only daughter, who had married an Englishman, returned to England. They left here his grave and two unmarried sons to carry on his name. Our family thanks the Society for honouring his resting place.