

A MEDLEY OF EXPLORERS:**Charles Throsby, Hamilton Hume, C. T. Smith and Henry Angel.**

From the notes on Charles Throsby Smith in our Bulletin of May 1975 it may be recalled that Illawarra's pioneer, C. T. Smith, was something of an explorer in his own right. He had been sent by his much more famous uncle, Dr. Charles Throsby, to prove an unprovable theory about what we now call the Canberra area. On the truth inevitably emerging, the disconcerted uncle visited his embarrassment upon his high-spirited nephew, in consequence whereof Uncle Charles left his considerable fortune to another nephew, Charles Throsby of Moss Vale, instead of making C. T. Smith his heir. This contretemps is reflected in a letter to Smith from Hamilton Hume, who suffered also at the hands of the aforesaid Doctor, who in Hume's opinion took credit for explorations performed by that superb bushman himself. The original letter is in the Mitchell Library (ref. Ah 12/12) to which institution acknowledgement is due for permission to reprint:

Cooma, Yass, 21st April 1855.

My Dear Smith,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 30th inst, (sic) and am much pleased with your friendly remarks, for although we have not corresponded for nearly a quarter of a century, I am glad to find the same good feeling exists between us as formerly.

I well remember the treatment you received from your Uncle, as well as his conduct towards myself, but as you justly remark, it is now of little consequence, we are both as independent as those upon whom he lavished his riches.

I also recollect your journey with (Joseph) Wild and Vaughan in quest of a River, supposed by your Uncle to exist, and know the place you speak of well, where you could not get across for "want of a tarpauling," but it was at Queanbeyan and not Yass, for the plain you mention retains the name of Limestone plains to this day.

If you should meet with my old servant Harry Angel, I would thank you to ask him whether he has received the pamphlet I forwarded; if not I will send another to your care for him.

I am glad to hear you have had such a fine fall of rain at Woolongong—we are still sadly in want of that necessary element here—in fact the country is in a most deplorable state, the stock starving for want of grass and we almost in the same predicament for want of meat.

Pray present my kind regards to Mrs. Smith and believe me to be, My dear Smith,

Faithfully yours
Hamilton Hume.

Note: Angel is living either at his farm at Dapto or near Shell Harbour.

P.S. I shall feel much (ple)ased hearing from you whenever you (feel) disposed to write—I did intend (to) visit Woolongong, but something has always happened to prevent me, but I still hope to visit that locality ere long. H.H.

A few explanations are required. The letter is in a frail condi-

tion, and some of the wording at the end is conjectural. Cooma was the name of Hume's property near Yass. The pamphlet was no doubt the first edition of Hume's "A Brief Statement of Facts," published in 1855 when the veteran was becoming embittered and perhaps distorted in his recollections of the famous overland expedition with Captain Hovell. The pamphlet is very rare today.

But what of Harry Angel? The editor will put me right, because I write from memory, but this man was the subject of some notes in our Bulletin some years ago,* and I believe he was the man whose name is celebrated in Angel's Bridge at Corrimal. Hume, of course, had been exploring with Captain Sturt in 1828-9 along the Macquarie River in north-western N.S.W. when the Darling was first discovered, and Angel was of the party, employed in "General Services, servant to Mr. Hume." He was a convict at the time, and had come from the Liverpool establishment. He had obviously performed creditably, and in due course Sturt recommended indulgences for all the prisoners of the Crown. Most were granted tickets of leave, but Harry was not. Sturt wrote to find out the reason, as Archives records show, and the reason became apparent.

Harry must have been at screaming pitch with the obvious pun upon his name, but the fact is that from the official records Angel was no angel. He had been convicted at the assizes at Salisbury, Wiltshire, on 19th July 1817 for an unstated crime. Sentenced to life imprisonment, he had been transported in the second voyage of the ship "Neptune," and was disembarked in Sydney on 5th May 1818, so that he had been in the colony for over ten years when detached for Sturt's venture. The kindly leader of the party reported that Angel's conduct had been very good. As well as having been Hume's servant, he had been in charge of Sturt's precious boat, the boat which never sailed.

So the reason for refusal of Angel's ticket of leave became apparent. He had had his chance before, and had been found wanting. The footnote reads: "Obtained Ticket of Leave No. 349/1823 - 5th July 1825 which was cancelled 17th July 1828 at the recommendation of John Fitzgerald Esqre. J.P. Illawarra for harbouring in his Home a Notorious Cattle Stealer and being suspected of participating in his Depredations." Hence his record shows that Angel was not entirely diabolical; five years after arrival he had been given a ticket of leave which took effect two years later. Three years later he lost it, magistrates in those days apparently reasoning that if you can take the will for the deed, then mere suspicion of an offence could be taken as the duly proven Crime. At least that is what happened to Harry, which explains why he was back in convict barracks when detailed as one of Sturt's men. And he was not given a second chance, at that stage at least. But it is heartening to see that Sturt maintained his benevolent interest in the old lag, who must later have earned his freedom and continued to justify Hume's association amounting to close friendship a quarter of a century afterwards. And it has to be remembered that that friendship had its apparent origin in Hume and Hovell's overland expedition of 1824-5, when Angel was one of Hume's party. That, no doubt, was how he came to serve Hume again on Sturt's first expedition.

So much for the official records; what I have said above is in my view the proper conclusion to be drawn from the records, but I very much doubt if they reflect the true worth of Henry Angel. Since the above was written, I have had the benefit of comments from my kinsman, Mr. Stuart Hume of Goulburn. I quote him verbatim:

"Though family hand-downs must be regarded with suspicion, members of the Angel family (and they are legion) told me Harry Angel was 'framed' by an uncle. Two brothers had a farm at Salisbury and they fell out. One brother, to spite the other (Harry's father) planted £40 in a hayrick and let it be known where it could be found by Harry who, caught with the goods, was transported for life for theft. Repenting on his death-bed, the uncle cleared Harry Angel's name and the home government offered him a free passage home and gave him a free pardon. Harry lived to 91 and when he died at Wagga in the 1880s he was buried with his family Bible and pardon.

"It is said he got some land on the Tank Stream (at Angel Place today) which he swapped for a farm on the South Coast near Angel's Bridge. He married a widow named Ledwidge with a small family of boys. These boys used to haul wood for the schoolmistress with two bullocks branded 'HH' given to Harry Angel by Hamilton Hume. Angel is credited with founding either Wanganella or another big station out Hay way, and acquired much land near Lake Albert, Wagga, which is still in the family. I know several of the family still."

So; who knows? If all this is true, Harry may well reside even now amongst his harp-plucking namesakes. But one thing is certain; whatever the deeds or misdeeds which gave rise to suspicion and conviction, he lived a long and useful life, and served his adopted country well as a respected explorer.

—E.B.

* "Harry Angel's Bridge" (an extract from James Gormly's "Exploration and Settlement in Australia") in the November 1975 Bulletin.—Ed.