

A migrant family

Among the people who lived then married in Tickhill and who made the momentous decision not only to leave Tickhill but to emigrate from England were Samuel and Isabella Shillito. After their marriage at St Mary's on May Day 1798 they settled for a time in Scrooby where their children were born. The Shillitos then became part of an attempt by the British Government to promote settlement in Cape Colony (South Africa) in 1820. This helped to solve two problems: adult unemployment in England after the Napoleonic Wars, which led to civil unrest in some Yorkshire towns, and a need to settle land at the Eastern Cape from which the Xhosa people had been evicted. In other words the settlers were to provide a buffer between the Xhosa and Cape Colony on what was essentially disputed land. The would-be settlers were unaware of this. Between March and June 1820 some 4,000 people in approximately 60 parties arrived in Cape Colony as Government assisted emigrants.

The Shillitos, Samuel aged 39 and Isabella (40), with their sons Thomas (18) and Samuel (13) and daughters Tabitha (10), and Hannah (22) with her husband George Carlisle (22) and year old daughter Mary, were among a party of Yorkshire people organised by Charles Mouncey, from Sheffield. They sailed from Liverpool on 13 January 1820 on board the 'John' and reached Table Bay (Cape Town) on 19 April then sailed further east to Algoa Bay (which became Port Elizabeth). Fellow migrants in the Mouncey party included a joiner, caddy maker, tailor, mason, labourer, farmer and button turner; Samuel Shillito Snr and his son Thomas were both sawyers, George Carlisle was a cutler.



The settlers, who were initially accommodated in tents before the journey inland by ox carts, were granted farms of some 100 acres and provided with food and equipment for which deposits of £10 were paid in advance by adult male settlers. The Mouncey party's land was between the Lynedoch and Kap rivers in Lower Albany and was given the name Wentworth Park. Not all the settlers were suited to a rural life, very few having previous experience of farming. Additionally they were beset by droughts and failed crops. Many later moved, for example to Grahamstown, and took up their original trades.

In 1974 a Settlers' National Monument, shown above, was erected in Grahamstown to commemorate the 1820 settlers, the first massed settlement of English-speakers in Africa's history.

Did the Shillitos and Carlises prosper? Earl Fitzwilliam paid the deposits for Samuel and Thomas Shillito and George Carlisle. However, likely disillusion caused by their difficult challenges saw the Shillitos and Carlises return to England. In 1824 Mouncey confirmed they had left and that a few

others intended to go home too. By 1841 the Carlises were in Sheffield at Crookesmoor with five of their children. Their eldest son Henry, born in Cape Colony, was found guilty of stealing a silk handkerchief from Messrs Yeardley and Armitage's shop door in Sheffield and sentenced at York Quarter Sessions on 8 July 1835 to be transported for seven years. Aged 15, he left England on 6 October on board the 'Susan' and reached New South Wales on 6 June 1836. He did not return to England.

See website: <http://www.geni.com/projects/1820-Settlers-Mouncey-s-Party/13971>