# **BEMBRICK, Thomas**

Thomas Bembrick was born on 14th October 1858, son of Alfred & Mary A. Bembrick, at Ginninderra, in the district of Queanbeyan, N.S.W. [now in Canberra. A.C.T.] Another source, however, gives his birthplace as Ryde Park.

In his early teens he lived with his parents in the Grenfell district.**1**

He married Emma Fowler in 1881, at Monteagle, in the district of Young. That year his father took up a selection of 200a, in the county of Monteagle, parish of Brundah.

Emma was born at Bong Bong, N.S.W {near Bowral) in 1852, of Anglican parents, John & Sarah Fowler, whom she lost at an early age. She then became the charge of her grandmother, a devout Methodist, who instructed her in the teachings of that Church.

After marrying they took up residence at Grenfell, where they lived for 35 years.**2**

In his early twenties Thomas Bembrick went into business at Brundah, near Grenfell, and later in Grenfell itself, where he was a storekeeper and estate agent for about 30 years.

In 1903 Thomas was a licensed auctioneer & commission agent, in Grenfell; in 1913 he was a stock & station agent, in Grenfell.

He entered into business at Grenfell with Mr. Norris, in the firm of Norris and Bembrick (later to become Messrs. R. W. Bradley and Co., after Thomas Bembrick’s departure from Grenfell).

He took an active part in all public matters, and was an alderman of Grenfell Municipal Council, and Mayor for the year 1902, being first elected as alderman in 1888; he was also a committee-man and President of Grenfell District Hospital, an active member of the Progress Committee, and a very ardent adherent of the Methodist Church, taking the pulpit on many occasions. He also was one of the committee-of-twelve appointed to urge the building of the railway line from Koorawatha to Grenfell.

In a close association with the Methodist Church, he filled the positions of trustee, circuit steward, Sunday school superintendent, and local preacher.

During this period Mrs. Bembrick devoted herself to the work of the Church, the local hospital, and other benevolent activities.**3**

In March 1914, at the Methodist Church, Grenfell, Ethel V. Bembrick, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs Thos. Bembrick, was married to Mr Norman J. Robertson, of Lautoka, Fiji. The ceremony was performed by Rev. M. Bembrick, Dubbo (uncle of the bride).**4**

In April 1914 Thomas Bembrick, after retiring from business, moved with his family from Grenfell to take up residence at Beecroft. For their departure, the family, were entertained at a social in the local Methodist Church, and words of appreciation was given as to their many and valued services. He was also presented with a gold watch, suitably inscribed.

Once in Beecroft, a life of inactivity proved to be unsatisfying, so he entered again into commercial pursuits. He was happiest when hard at work.

In January 1915 he was a commission agent, his business premises being at 1st Floor, 838 Pitt-street, Sydney.

He later entered into business at Hornsby with the late Mr. Dobson, in the firm of Dobson and Bembrick.**5**

In 1916 his son, Pte. Henley T. S. Bembrick, residing at Hornsby, was in camp at Seymour, Victoria. He was the recipient of a wristlet watch from his fellow employees at the Massey-Harris Company, and was tendered an evening and a presentation from the young people of the congregation of the Methodist Church at Beecroft on the eve of his departure for Victoria.**6**

In 1917 Doris P. Brembrick, (late Missionary Sister at Ubuia, Papua, New Guinea), third daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Bembrick, of Olessen, Beecroft, was married to Rev. W. J. Enticott, of the Methodist Mission Society, Rossel Island, New Guinea, at the Beecroft Methodist Church. Rev. M. L. Bembrick, of Rozelle (uncle of bride), officiated. After the ceremony a reception was held in the School of Arts. The honeymoon was spent in New Zealand, where Rev. W. J. Enticott had been appointed Methodist minister to Greytown, New Zealand.**7**

In June 1918 it was reported that Private Henley Thomas Southwell Bembrick, of 3rd Machine-gun Battalion, late 9th Machine-gun Company, only son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Bembrick, Olessen, Murray Road, Beecroft, was killed in action at Passchendale, France, October 12, 1917. He had previously been reported as being missing in action.**8**

In 1919 Jessie F. Bembrick, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Bembrick, of ' Olessen,' Murray Road, Beecroft, was married to Herbert Taylor, of Suva, Fiji, at the Beecroft Methodist Church. Their future home would be in Suva, Fiji.**9**

On 14th October 1933, a family re-union, took place at the home of Mr. Thos. Bembrick, “Olessen,” Murray Road, Beecroft., the occasion being the 75th anniversary of his birthday. Rev. G. W. Johnston, pastor of Beecroft Methodist Church, made mention of Mr. Bembrick's excellent service to his church as preacher, official, and member for very many years.**10**

On May 10, 1934, at her residence “Olessen,” 16 Murray Road, Beecroft, Emma, wife of Thomas Bembrick, and mother of Olive, Ethel (Mrs. N. J. Robertson), Pearl (Mrs. W. J. Enticott, N.Z.), Jessie (Mrs. Herbert Taylor), and Henley (deceased, A.I.F.), died, aged 81 years.

‘Of the many charitable women and social workers of her time the late Mrs. Bembrick was among the foremost, her interest in the welfare of the sick and the poor being ever warm. A part in which she excelled was as a collector for the Grenfell Hospital Saturday Fund, when householders on her “run” would find her waiting upon them before breakfast, the early visitation being made so as to enable her to concentrate on the street collections later in the day.

She was also a staunch supporter of the Methodist Church, and throughout the year her energies were always devoted to the raising of the various funds, and with her husband and children she was a regular attendant at all services.

The late Mrs. Bembrick also was a keen horticulturist, and her garden was a delight to flower lovers. And as she loved flowers so she also loved all things beautiful, and her family life was a joy to her husband and children.’

‘Says “The Methodist”: With the passing of Mrs. T. Bembrick, of Beecroft, our Auxiliary has lost a loyal and ardent worker. Three of her daughters served as Missionary Sisters in our own fields, and each member of her family has loyally loved and served the people of our Island Fields.’

‘Largely due to Mrs. Bembrick's initiative and energy, a Ladies' Church Aid and Women's Foreign Missionary Auxiliary were inaugurated to further the interests of the Church. The city missions and the needs of Dalmar Home found a big place in her affections; she, making herself responsible for the clothing, comfort and well-being of one of the children.’**11**

On 6th April 1935 Thomas Bembrick died at Beecroft, aged 76 years.

Since coming to Beecroft, he served the Methodist Church in connection with the Home Mission Executive, Foreign Mission, and other committees, including the Waverley War Memorial Hospital. He was a familiar figure at Synod and Conference.

Mr. Bembrick had, for about 40 years, been a lay preacher of the Methodist Church.

Rev. J. H. Somerville writes: I first met Mr. Bembrick in 1905. He honoured the Lord with his substance, being a 'Tenth' giver. He was a reader, thinker, and man of action. The wideness of his Christian sympathies found expression in many ways, including the occupancy of other than Methodist pulpits. Perhaps the most outstanding characteristics of Mr. Bembrick's life were the depth of his religious convictions, and his fearless loyalty to his Christian principles. What he believed to be right he would do, regardless of personal consequences. Yet with all his rugged strength of character Mr. Bembrick possessed a tender heart and gentle spirit, and when, during my term, the waters of life were very deep for me, these qualities revealed themselves in many beautiful ways. His home life was beautiful, and, aided by his excellent wife, he brought up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He was a man of prayer, and when his only son, Henley, during the Great War, was reported 'missing,' never being heard of again, his faith in God did not fail through the years of agonising suspense that followed. Thomas Bembrick was one of God's good men. Through his character and influence he made a fine contribution to the Kingdom of God, and the world is better for his coming. I am glad to have known him; my life has been enriched by his friendship; I cannot think of him as dead, but as alive for evermore.”

The Rev. G. W. Johnston conducted the memorial service in the Beecroft Church, and said: “During Mr. Bembrick's 21 years of residence at Beecroft, he gave of his best in time of strength and substance to the Church he loved dearly and served devotedly as trustee, steward, local preacher, and Sunday School superintendent. He was well known and highly respected throughout the circuit, and by his generous help, wise counsels, and inspiration, exerted a gracious influence for good of the whole of the community.”

He was a brother of the Rev. Silas Bembrick, who was president of the Methodist Conference in 1934, and of the Rev. M. Bembrick, and half-brother of Mr W. Bembrick, of Harden.

His remains were interred at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium.

He was survived by four daughters, Miss Olive Bembrick, Mrs. Endicott (N.Z.), Mrs. Robertson and Mrs, Taylor (Ryde).**12**

**Bibliography**

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3 Burrangong Argus (NSW), Wed 16 Feb 1881; Methodist (Sydney), Sat 28 Mar 1903; Methodist (Sydney), Sat 1 Mar 1913; Methodist (Sydney, NSW), Sat 16 Jun 1934; Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser (NSW), Mon 8 Apr 1935; Murrumburrah Signal and County of Harden Advocate (NSW), Thu 11 Apr 1935; Methodist (Sydney, NSW), Sat 13 Apr 1935

4 Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser (NSW), Tue 31 Mar 1914

5 Methodist (Sydney, NSW, Sat 18 Apr 1914; Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser (NSW), Fri 8 May 1914; Sydney Morning Herald, Fri 15 Jan 1915; Murrumburrah Signal and County of Harden Advocate (NSW), Thu 11 Apr 1935; Methodist (Sydney, NSW), Sat 13 Apr 1935

6 Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser (NSW), Tue 17 Oct 1916

7 Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser (NSW), Fri 23 Mar 1917

8 Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser (NSW), Friday 28 Jun 1918; Methodist (Sydney), Sat 23 Oct 1920

9 Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser (NSW), Tue 23 Sep 1919

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11 Methodist (Sydney, NSW), Saturday 19 May 1934; Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser (NSW), Thu 24 May 1934; Methodist (Sydney, NSW), Sat 16 Jun 1934

12 Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser (NSW, Mon 8 Apr 1935; Sydney Morning Herald, Mon 8 Apr 1935; Murrumburrah Signal and County of Harden Advocate (NSW), Thu 11 Apr 1935; Methodist (Sydney, NSW), Sat 13 Apr 1935; Methodist (Sydney, NSW), Sat 18 May 1935