

## **Adelheid Weidenhöfer 1845 - 1919**

Born 31 Oct 1845 Vegesack, Bremen, Lower Saxony, Germany,

Died 16 Dec 1919 Ambleside, South Australia

And

John Gibbons

Born 25 Apr 1839 Highgate, Middlesex, England

Died 29 Oct 1907 South Australia

And

Robert Mount

Born Abt. 1844 Scotland

Married 12 Aug 1874 Woodside, South Australia

Hans Robert Alfred Boehme

Born 21 Apr 1834 Dresden, Germany

Died 13 Mar 1912 Woodside, South Australia

Child of Adelheid Weidenhöfer and John Gibbons

William Gibbons Weidenhofer 1866 - 1942

Child of Adelheid Weidenhöfer and Robert Mount

Mary Ann Mount 1868 - 1917

Child of Adelheid Weidenhöfer

Robert Weidenhöfer 1870 - 1870

Children of Adelheid Weidenhöfer and Hans Robert Alfred Boehme

Rudolph Carl Paul Boehme 1875 - 1964

John William Reinhold Boehme 1877 -

Henry Boehme 1879 - 1955

Arthur Boehme 1882 - 1966

Adelheid was the fourth child of Johann and Wilhelmine Weidenhöfer. She was born on 31 October 1845 in the small village of Vegesack, which is near the city of Bremen in Lower Saxony, Germany. Adelheid was only eight months old, when her parents and their three other children boarded the sailing vessel "Pauline" to travel to South Australia. When she was about ten years old, her parents purchased land and the family moved to Woodside in the Adelaide Hills. It is unlikely that Adelheid would have been able to continue her schooling at Woodside as the family would have been totally occupied with clearing the land and establishing the farm. We can probably assume that Adelheid only received a basic education. There are no details of Adelheid's life until 17 June 1866 when at the age of twenty one, she gave birth to a son William Gibbons Weidenhofer. William was born at Craigdarroch, the home of Mr. Mitchell, near Woodside. Adelheid was possibly living there

and working as a domestic servant, and by then had adopted the English version of her name and was known as Adelaide.

William's birth certificate records the support father as John Gibbons, a labourer of Oakbank, South Australia. John Gibbons was born in Highgate, Middlesex, England in 1839, and arrived in South Australia with his parents on board the "Constance" in 1850. We do not know if John had any further contact with Adelaide or contributed to the support of their son.

Three days before Adelaide gave birth, John Gibbons married Belinda Morris. This must have been a very difficult and emotional time for Adelaide.

In 1867, Adelaide was again pregnant. The father was Robert Mount, who suggested they both go to Adelaide to be married. However, Adelaide and Robert secretly travelled to Melbourne. But when they arrived in Melbourne, Robert abandoned Adelaide. Although alone and expecting a baby, Adelaide remained in Melbourne. When a daughter was born in August 1868 Adelaide named her Mary Ann Mount.

However she did not let her family know of the birth or where she was living. By June 1870 Adelaide's father was becoming very concerned for the safety of his daughter. Adelaide had been away for almost two years and was reported to the police as a missing person.

Report from Police trooper Phelan at Woodside to Adelaide Police.

Mr John Weidenhofer of Woodside reports his daughter Adelaide Weidenhofer left his house on the 16 April 1868 and proceeded to Adelaide with the intention of getting married to a young man named Robert Mount who accompanied her. Not having returned home, her father made enquiries about her in Adelaide but could get no trace of her.

When the South Australian Police were also unable to trace Adelaide and Robert Mount they sought help from the Police Department in Melbourne.

The Police Department - Chief Commissioners Office, Melbourne 19 Dec 1870 Sir, With reference to my letter of the 18th December and previous correspondence on the subject of Adelaide Weidenhofer, I have the honour to inform you that the person in question is now engaged as a nurse at the Government Industrial School. Her wages are 20/- per week and rations. She is in good health, appears contented with her position where she is highly esteemed by the Matron of that establishment. Adelaide Weidenhofer promises to write to

her father and admits that she wrote the letter dated September 11th and signed it Mount. The child she was bearing on leaving Adelaide is now placed out at nurse. Your Departmental papers in this case are here with returned. I have the honour to be your most obedient servant, The Chief Commissioner of Police.

Her address - Adelaide Weidenhofer, Industrial School, Princes Bridge, Melbourne

The police records describe Adelaide as being of middle height, slight build, with a very fair complexion, fair hair, light blue eyes, and a short straight nose, a South Australian native of German parentage and able to speak English well.

Eventually Adelaide wrote a very apologetic letter to her family. In this letter, she asked about her son, William. This indicates that her parents, and probably with her sister, Wilhelmine, took care of William.

In 1870, Adelaide had another child in Melbourne whom she named Robert Weidenhofer and who died aged about three months. When Adelaide returned to South Australia, William would have been about five years old. There are no records to tell us whether Adelaide returned to her family or whether she showed any interest in her son.

But it is well documented that in 1874, Adelaide married Hans Robert Alfred Boehme (known as Alf), a well known and respected citizen of Woodside. Adelaide took her daughter Mary Ann into the Boehme family, but there was no mention of William.

Alf Boehme was a widower who had had six children, but only three of whom had survived their mother. So, Adelaide became a respectable married woman with two stepsons and her own daughter, Mary Ann.

In 1897, an interesting entry in the Admissions register of the Royal Adelaide Hospital records that "Ade Weidenhofer of Woodside was admitted with erysipelas of the leg." This was a streptococcal infection of the skin, and in those days before the invention of penicillin, was very painful and difficult to cure. It was observed that in the hospital records, Adelaide's name was given as "Ade Weidenhofer". One wonders why, after twenty years of marriage, she would give her maiden name.

Adelaide and Alf had four sons, all of whom were born at Woodside. All but the eldest son, Rudolph, changed the spelling of their surname to Bohme. On 16 December 1919, Adelaide

died in Ambleside, South Australia. Ambleside is a small town near Hahndorf, but for many years after the First World War, Hahndorf was also known as Ambleside.

The location of Adelaide's grave has not been discovered.

*A History of the Weidenhofer Families in Australia 1846 - 2004. Written by Wyn Allen (née Weidenhofer) 2004 ©. Reproduced with permission of Stewart Allen, Barry Malcolm and Carlien Melrose.*