

# SAOA Historical Series No 60

## Frank Milton Angel

by Penny Paton

We continue the Historical Series with another Honorary Member of the SAOA, one who is little known due to the facts that he did not collect bird specimens nor did he publish many articles. References to him in the *SA Ornithologist* therefore mainly reflect his contributions as an office bearer of the Association. Frank Milton Angel was born with twin brother Sidney on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1876 to Alfred Thomas Howell and Maria Brechin (née Taylor) Angel. Alfred and Maria had a large family, of eight

boys and four girls, born between 1870 and 1890. Sidney's name is spelt with an 'i' in some references

(including the South Australian Register of Births) but elsewhere is spelt Sydney. Alfred worked for *The Advertiser* for more than 50 years and Maria was an active member of the Unitarian Church and the League of Nations Union.

Two of their sons joined up for the First World War, Mervyn Moss Angel, born 1880, and (Leslie) Roy Angel, the youngest son, born 1890. Roy was a surveyor's assistant, of the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, and was killed at Bullecourt on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1917 after serving at Gallipoli and in France. He is buried in the Australian Field Ambulance Cemetery in Vaulx, Picardie, France.

Frank was educated at Whinham College, North Adelaide (Photo 1), to which he daily walked from his home in Coke Street, Norwood (Ragless 1970). Whinham College has a most interesting history. John Whinham (1803-1886) opened the North Adelaide Grammar School in Ward Street with one

pupil in 1854 but, as numbers increased rapidly, he moved premises to Goode's Store in Kermode Street. The school flourished and in the 1870s became one of the most prestigious in Australia, averaging two or three hundred pupils. For a few years Whinham used Prospect House (previously known as Graham's Castle) to house boarders from the Grammar School. Some of the students remember seeing 'pinkies' (i.e. bilbies), bandicoots and native cats in the grounds. Prospect House, built

in the early 1840s by John Benjamin Graham from the profits of the Burra mine, was located between what are now Clifton and Rose Streets and Churchill and Braund Roads. Sources differ but when John retired (probably in 1873), his son Robert became headmaster and proceeded to build a new school with 40 rooms on the corner of Jeffcott and Ward Streets, opened as Whinham College

on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1882 (now a Lutheran College). Robert was killed by a fall from his horse in 1884, prompting his father to come out of retirement, but John died of 'pulmonary psthisis' (probably tuberculosis) two years later. The school declined in popularity and closed in 1898.

When Frank left school he joined the Adelaide branch of J. Kronheimer & Co., a tobacco firm established in Melbourne in the second half of the nineteenth century by brothers, Julius and Joseph Kronheimer. This later became part of W.D. & H.O. Wills Ltd, where Frank worked until his retirement. W.D. & H.O. Wills Ltd was founded in 1786 in Bristol

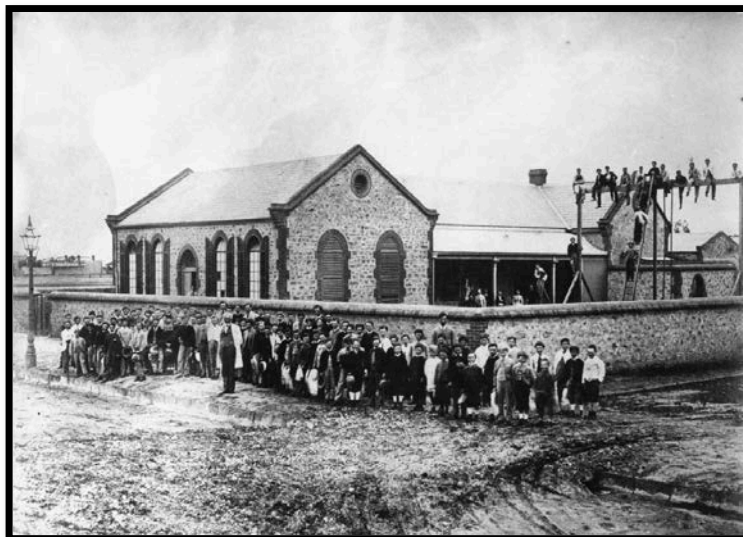


Photo 1 — North Adelaide Grammar School, 1869; John Whinham in the white coat. This is the predecessor of Whinham College, which Frank Angel attended in the 1880s. (From the collection of the State Library of South Australia, B5109)

as Wills, Watkins & Co. by Henry Overton Wills and Watkins, but took the name W.D. & H.O. Wills in 1830 after the original Henry's two sons took over the company. Despite being one of the foremost tobacco companies, neither of the Wills brothers smoked.

The company opened in Australia in 1900 after Henry Wills visited in 1898. In 1887 Wills was one of the first UK tobacco companies to include advertising cards in their cigarette packs. These cards derived from the tradesmen's cards of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and began life as stiffeners for soft cigarette packs, but companies soon realised that the stiffeners were a missed advertising opportunity. It was 1895 when Wills produced their first set of general interest cards – 'Ships and Sailors' – and they went on to produce many sets with sporting, natural history, military, transportation, royalty and other themes. These cards are now highly sought after by collectors. Birds were a popular theme and in 1912 a 'Birds of Australasia' series was produced. Another series on Australian birds came out in 1918.

Frank Angel was a champion gymnast and interested in physical fitness, which paid off as he "hardly had a day's sickness up to the day he died" (Ragless 1970). A fine singer, he was a member of the Unitarian Church Choir for 70 years. Early in their lives, he and his twin brother, Sidney, became interested in entomology and particularly butterflies and, with his friend Frank Parsons, Frank travelled across Australia collecting specimens (Ragless 1970). As noted in the Encyclopaedia of Australian Science, Sidney's collection is in the hands of descendants and includes most species occurring in Tasmania, where he worked for the Commercial Bank of Australia and where he died in 1966. Frank Angel's collection, along with artefacts from New Guinea collected in about 1914 by his brother-in-law, Cecil Taplin, was donated to the South Australian Museum.

Another Museum connection is that Frank's niece, L. Madeline Angel (who was the daughter of Frank's younger brother, Charles), was an Honorary

Research Associate at the Museum in the Parasitology Section. She began in this position in the 1976/77 financial year, presumably shortly after she retired from Adelaide University. She died in 1990 and probably retired as an Honorary a year or two before she died (P. Horton pers. comm.).

Frank married Elsie Flora Taplin on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1907 in the Unitarian Church in Adelaide; Elsie was the daughter of Charles Eaton Taplin and Flora Mary Winch, both born in 1857. Charles was boarded out by the Destitute Board of South Australia so may have been an orphan. Elsie, born at Hindmarsh on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1882, became an unpaid monitor at the Unley Public School at the age of 14, but I am unsure whether this means that she was a pupil at this school or not. Frank and Elsie, who lived at Parkside, had four children, twins Ronald Frank and Norman Sidney born in 1908, Marie Milton born in 1914 and Dorothy Milton born in 1916.

Frank joined the SAOA in 1913. On the resignation of Robert Crompton (Paton 2017) as Secretary (and Treasurer) on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1915, Frank became Acting



Photo 2 — A group of naturalists outside a cottage on Moolooloo Station, October 1915 (From the collection of the State Library of South Australia, PRG 335/96/22)

Secretary. He continued in this position until Robert Crompton returned from the war in 1920. That year J.N. McGilp was elected as Secretary but, due to his ill health, Frank continued with the secretarial duties until McGilp could begin his term. A year later Frank Parsons nominated Frank Angel as Vice President on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1921 and he served as Vice President until the following AGM in March 1922 when he became President for one year. He also became a member of the Editorial Committee for the *South Australian Ornithologist* in 1922, a position he held until early 1948.

Just before joining the SAOA, Frank was a member of the RAOU Campout to Flinders Island in Bass Strait in 1912 and in October 1915 was one of 14 people from the Field Naturalists' Section of the Royal Society of South Australia who visited Moolooloo Station in the Flinders Ranges (White 1916). The President, Captain S.A. White, led the party and took many photos, which are now in the State Library of South Australia's collection. Several of White's Moolooloo Station photos feature seven of the field naturalists, although we do not know if any of them is Frank (Photo 2).

The only two contributions that Frank Angel made to the *South Australian Ornithologist* appeared in Volume 13 (Angel 1935, Angel 1936). The first documents birds seen along the River Murray while Angel was a passenger on the steamer 'Ruby', travelling from Morgan in South Australia to Mildura in Victoria and back again. Opportunities for birdwatching on land were few and far between as 'Ruby' rarely stopped in daylight hours and then merely to load wood or call at towns. The excursion took place between 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> August 1935, so a little before the breeding season for most bird species. Angel also speculated that many waterbird species bred away from the main channel and thus would not be visible from the steamer. Nineteen species of waterbird were recorded and 23 terrestrial species were seen, of which four were raptors and four were from the parrot family. Very few small birds were seen, with swallows, martins, Willie Wagtails, Red-capped Robins and Brown Treecreepers being the only ones. Few species were numerous, with the Ringneck Parrot, Fairy Martin, native-hen and kookaburra being the most abundant. Magpie-larks, Pallid Cuckoos and Willie Wagtails were common but presumably seen in small numbers. Surprises for modern-day birdwatchers would be that Angel saw only two Silver Gulls at Berri and no others, and that Galahs were "not very plentiful". In the 1930s Galahs were still on their march southwards through the state. The other contribution (Angel 1936) was a note about a Pallid Cuckoo calling at Parkside during the night of 31<sup>st</sup> August 1935.

Frank Angel typed a letter to the SAOA on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1949, tendering his resignation due to his inability to attend meetings; the Secretary wrote on the letter "Accepted 1/2/49". However the Committee obviously thought better of this decision as he received a letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 1949 letting him know that two days before, at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Association, he had been elected an Honorary Member. The last piece of information regarding Angel in the SAOA Correspondence was a letter of 17<sup>th</sup> October 1969 from the Executor Trustee & Agency Co. of SA Ltd, advising of the death of Frank Milton Angel and asking the SAOA to

remove him from their membership list. At the time, Frank was one of the oldest members of the SAOA. Frank died on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1969 at Parkside in his 94<sup>th</sup> year, having been predeceased by his wife, Elsie, who died on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1956. Frank's Obituary appeared in the *South Australian Ornithologist* in the year following his death (Ragless 1970).

Once again I am indebted to Philippa Horton for so ably editing this piece and improving it by her editorial skill and by drawing my attention to Madeline Angel's honorary position at the South Australia Museum.

## References

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## The SAOA Historical Series, 2002-17 and into the Future

The SAOA Historical Series began in 2002 with a piece on one of my heroes, John Sutton, who was Secretary and Treasurer for the organisation from 1922 to 1938. The idea was that the pages would be stapled into the centre of the Newsletter and could easily be pulled out and then eventually bound into a book. Technology has moved on and it would be a relatively simple matter now to re-arrange them in a more sensible order, write an introduction, provide an index and scan it. Hey presto— a book!

However I have many more ideas and hope that others will be enthused to write pieces too, if they have a particular person or event that would be of interest. I would like to say that I have all the contributions digitally, but I have had several computers since 2002 so can only provide digital copies from Boehm onwards (No.28, Feb 2009). However I could scan the older ones if anyone is interested.

Sincere thanks to all members who have written pieces over the last 15 years and particular thanks must go to Philippa Horton, not only for writing several pieces but also for carefully editing my contributions and improving them with her meticulous eye for detail, providing details of specimens in our Museum and for drawing my attention to relevant information. We must also pay homage to our Newsletter Editor of many years, Cynthia Pyle, who has served the Association as a largely 'unsung hero' and set the word documents and photos I send her with the artistic talent and technological skill that I lack.

Penny Paton

### ARTICLES IN THE SAOA HISTORICAL SERIES — 2002 to 2017

No	Newsletter Issue	Subject of Article	Author	No	Newsletter Issue	Subject of Article	Author
1	182 Jun 02	J Sutton	P Paton	31	212 Nov 09	EF Boehm Pt. 4	P Paton
2	183 Sep 02	H Boss-Walker	M Reid	32	213 Feb 10	EF Boehm Pt. 5	P Paton
3	184 Dec 02	H B-W Pt. 2	M Reid	33 *	215 Aug 10	EF Boehm Pt. 6	P Paton
4	185 Mar 03	M Kuss & bio info on H B W	P Paton	34	216 Nov 10	EF Boehm Pt. 7	P Paton
5	186 Jun 03	M Kuss Pt. 2	P Paton	35	217 Feb 11	EF Boehm Pt. 8	P Paton
6	187 Sep 03	N H Pearse	B Matheson	36	218 May 11	EF Boehm Pt. 9	P Paton
7	188 Dec 03	C Cain	S Bradley	37	219 Aug 11	EF Boehm Pt. 10	P Paton
8	189 Mar 04	W Cain	S Bradley	38	220 Nov 11	EF Boehm Pt. 11	P Paton
9	190 Jun 04	T Brandon	P Paton	39	221 Feb 12	EF Boehm Pt. 12	P Paton
10	191 Sep 04	P C Darke	M Reid	40	222 May 12	FW Andrews Pt. 1	G Carpenter
11	192 Dec 04	W Cain Pt. 2	S Bradley	41	223 Aug 12	FW Andrews Pt. 2	G Carpenter
12	193 Mar 05	W Cain Pt. 3	S Bradley	42	224 Nov 12	FW Andrews Pt. 3	G Carpenter
13	194 Jun 05	H Simpson	P Paton	43	225 Feb 13	FW Andrews Pt. 4	G Carpenter
14	195 Sep 05	J Hood	P Paton	44	226 May 13	J Sutton Pt. 1	P Horton
15	196 Nov 05	W Cain Pt. 4	S Bradley	45	227 Aug 13	J Sutton Pt. 2	P Horton
16	197 Feb 06	W Cain Pt. 5	S Bradley	46	228 Nov 13	WT Angove Pt. 1	P Paton
17	198 May 06	HH Howard	P Paton	47	229 Feb 14	WT Angove Pt. 2	P Paton
18	199 Aug 06	F L Berney	P Paton	48	230 May 14	WT Angove Pt. 3	P Paton
19	200 Nov 06	W C Johnston	P Paton	49	231 Aug 14	J Sutton Pt. 3	P Horton
20	201 Feb 07	J T Gray	P Paton	50	232 Nov 14	J Sutton Pt. 4	P Horton
21	202 May 07	AFC Lashmar Pt. 1	P Paton	51	233 Feb 15	W Cain Cont.	P Paton
22	203 Aug 07	AFC Lashmar Pt. 2	P Paton	52	234 May 15	J Sutton – OH Pt. 1	P Paton
23	204 Nov 07	AFC Lashmar Pt. 3	P Paton	53	235 Aug 15	J Sutton – OH Pt. 2	P Paton
24	205 Feb 08	WJ Harvey Pt. 1	P Paton	54	236 Nov 15	J Sutton – OH Pt. 3	P Paton
25	206 May 08	WJ Harvey Pt. 2	P Paton	55	237 Feb 16	J Sutton – OH Pt. 4	P Paton
26	207 Aug 08	WJ Harvey Pt. 3	P Paton	56	238 May 16	J Sutton – OH Pt. 5	P Paton
27	208 Nov 08	WJ Harvey Pt. 4	P Paton	57	239 Aug 16	J Sutton – OH Pt.6	P Paton
28	209 Feb 09	EF Boehm Pt. 1	P Paton	58	240 Nov 16	J Sutton – OH Pt.7	P Paton
29	210 May 09	EF Boehm Pt. 2	P Paton	59	241 Mar 17	Cromptons of Stonyfell	P Paton
30	211 Aug 09	EF Boehm Pt. 3	P Paton	60	242 May 17	Frank Angel	P Paton

\* There was no article in the May 2010 Newsletter because Penny Paton was away.