

J. P.V. Madsen (1879-1969)- The Early Years of Education before University.

(Prepared by R W Madsen 26 September 2017).

Introduction.

JPVM lived at 19 Queen Street Newtown from 1882 to 1900 while attending Stanmore Public School, Sydney Boys High School (Ultimo) & Sydney University except for one year (1890) during a very bad influenza epidemic when he & his brothers attended Gresford Public School (a small one room school) while staying with his Mother's family.

His Father, Hans Frandsen Madsen (1843-1937) lived in Denmark until early 1862 & then worked on fully rigged sailing ships operating out of London, Liverpool & Belfast going to Canada, America & then arrived in Melbourne in January 1864. He spent the next ten years in the Ballarat area working in underground gold mines & then in 1875 he moved to the Parkes area of NSW working as a Surveyors Assistant & after qualifying as a Surveyor in February 1876 in Sydney worked for the NSW Lands Department in the Maitland & Mountains areas before marrying Annie Bush (1856-1929) in Gresford in May 1878. JPVM was their first of six children born on 24 March 1879 in Lochinvar where HFM had bought a house but later worked in the Castlereagh district (Biamble) where the Lands Department had work & he later moved to work on the detail survey of Sydney.

The Education of J P V Madsen's parents.

Hans Frandsen Madsen.(1843-1937).

HFM's education commenced in the Janderup area in Jutland where his father was a farmer & he attended a public school to the age of 14 & then continued for the next 2 years under private teachers while working as a junior clerk with the Police Magistrate & Registrar (Sir George Smith) of the town of Varde while living at his residence as one of themselves. At age 16 he spent a year studying Law in Copenhagen but did not pass the examination in February 1862. Having learnt the German language as well as his own he attempted to get work in a solicitor's office in Hamburg on the German border but was unable to find any work due to the German enmity to the Danish people after a 3 years war in 1852 & therefore decided to go to London to obtain work on a sailing ship although his knowledge of English was limited.

After a very eventful first voyage to St. Johns Newfoundland in which the steering gear broke he was discharged in London as an AB (Able Seaman) on double pay by which time he was able to converse pretty well in English having procured in a second hand bookshop in London a small dictionary, a grammar & a book of mathematical problems in navigation. HFM tried to get a ship to Australia where he had been told gold could be picked up anywhere with a small amount of trying but none were going so he went to Belfast & joined a ship going to America. After a number of voyages obtained a ship which went via Montivideo arriving in Melbourne & he tramped up country with a mate to Buninyong 7 miles from Ballarat where he obtained employment in a deep mine called Garibaldy. In 1868 caught typhoid fever & went to hospital where 3 doctors gave up on him but recovered in 6 months during which time he was unable to work but returned to mining also working on the engine above ground. He received

constant letters from his Mother in Denmark advising him to try getting something better which he did without success & then in 1874 a School of Mines was opened in Ballarat & HFM became one of the first pupils but after 6 months he was advised by the School Master a Mr Phillips that because of too few pupils the School would close & that he was going to NSW as a surveyor & offered him the position to go as his Assistant as he recognised that HFM's drawing & mathematical ability was good.

In February 1876 HFM passed third out of 15 in the Surveyor Exams held in Sydney which was far better than he expected & was offered a position with the NSW Lands Department. At this time while boarding on the Glebe Road he by chance met George Bush (1854-1899) on an omnibus going to the Lands Dept in Bridge St where he was working as well & subsequently recommended that HFM take up a position in the Maitland area which he was familiar with & where his younger brother John (1857-1931) could be obtained for 2 years to work as his assistant (the 2 brothers had both been schooled by their father John Bush [1815-1887] at Gresford). HFM on holiday briefly from his work in the Mountains was invited by John to visit with his family, the eldest of 4 sisters being Annie (1856-1929) & on the second visit at Christmas of 1877 they became engaged.

HFM had a passion for astronomy which was shared by a number of other members of the Lands Department staff. Between 1882 & 1886 he completed a number of 46 cm mirrors, one of which was made up into a complete telescope. This Newtonian instrument featured an English equatorial mounting & was housed in a circular stone building with a copper dome erected at "Hesselled" 19 Queen Street, Newtown. There is no evidence that it was used for any serious observing although it did provide local amateur astronomers with views of Mars in 1892. The challenge for HFM lay in successfully producing the optics, a task which he undertook with considerable skill & ingenuity. In Copenhagen there had been a long standing interest in astronomy with the work of Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) & Ole Roemer (1644-1710).



Annie Bush (1856-1929).

Annie was the eldest daughter of John Bush (1815-1887) & Mary Steer (1827-1899, born in England) who were married at Houghton in the lower Hunter region of NSW in 1854. John Bush was born in Bristol in England & arrived in Australia as a fairly young man & by 1850 held a position as a teacher at Vacy, of village size in the Hunter region north of Maitland in a Church of England Denominational School. John Bush moved to Gresford north of Vacy as it had a more stable population & also stable enrolments & ran a private school there until 1868 when local representations were made to start a Government Public School. A School Inspector Mr. Dwyer commented that he had reservations on John Bush's competency but said that his general character was very good & was likely to exert a beneficial influence on the children committed to his care. A Parish school had closed & the school building & residence were available. John Bush was the teacher at Gresford from 1868 to 1880 also acting as postmaster but retired for health reasons due to the loss of use of an arm. A new brick building was opened in 1882 which is still in use today & Gresford Public School is the sole survivor school out of 14 opened in the 1850's. The single room brick building measured 40 ft by 17ft with 3 tiers of floors & long cedar desks on long forms. The new teacher from 1881-1903 was Mr William Parker. By 1880 under the Education Act children aged 6-14 yrs were required to attend school. Annie & her 5 siblings were schooled by their father during their time in Gresford, the 2 brothers George & John obtaining positions in the Lands Department in Sydney.



Stanmore Public School (1884-1889,1891)

In the 1880's the population of the Newtown had approximately doubled to around 17,000 & following the Education Act of 1880 Denominational Schools closed as the Government no longer paid the salaries of their teachers & all the students transferred to Public Schools which barely coped with the provision of "weather shed" temporary accommodation. The SMH declared that the Newtown Public School was positively unhealthy with total enrolments in 1887 of 1497 where the minimum attendance was 3 days per week. Anecdotally the school conditions in Newtown were very rough.

Stanmore Public School (in Cambridge Street) was opened in April 1884 & from 1886 to 1961 was both a primary & secondary school. In 1885 an extension to form a new girls wing & many temporary buildings were built & by 1893 total enrolment exceeded 1,000. JPVM & his brother George would have been among the first students to enrol in the new school where discipline by teachers was strict.

Students were initially taught reading, writing (round hand with capitals) & arithmetic (multiplication to 12 times, multiplication by 2 digits), singing (simple melodies & scales) & scripture (old testament)-& were drilled until word perfect. At age 10-11 years studies were made in grammar, geography, drawing & English history. Sport featured in the early days with tennis & swimming clubs in the summer when clubs would visit baths once a week. The first Principal in 1884 was Mr James Hooworth until 1893 when he had to be replaced as he was not capable of managing a large school. The School became classified as a Superior Public School.



The Stanmore area was relatively well off & the Depression of the 1890's (1890-1896) had relatively little impact.

Gresford Public School 1890.

Due to the Asiatic Influenza epidemic of 1889-1891 in which millions of people worldwide died JPVM , his brothers George, Sidney & other siblings went to Gresford to stay with their Mother's family for 1 year & attend the Gresford Public School under instruction from Mr Parker. In a letter written in very clear handwriting to his Mother at "Hesselmed" of August 18, 1890 JPVM (then aged 11 ½) stated; "Tell Father I have commenced the Latin & Euclid and am up to the twenty seventh proposition in Euclid & a good way on in Latin. Auntie says to tell you that Mr Parker will not make any charge for the Latin lessons." "As Mr Parker has put us into mapping will you please send me a box of paints marked Watercolours G & R co".

Sydney Boys High School (1892-1896).

In 1892 Sydney Boys High School moved to its new premises in Ultimo (the Girls High School remaining in Castlereagh St), very close to the Technical College.

It appears that JPVM was very fortunate in having as a Maths Master Mr. L Stephenson who qualified at Cambridge University. For Physics in 1896 he also had a young Mr Henry Barraclough who also taught at the Technical College & subsequently became Professor of Engineering at Sydney University. JPVM's Matriculation subjects were :Ancient History- C, French- C, Latin- C, Arithmetic- A, Algebra- A, Geometry- A, Trigonometry- A, Elementary Surveying & Astronomy- B, Physics I- B, Physics II- B.

J.P.V. MADSEN ATTENDED S.B.H. FROM 1892 TO 1896. (ARCHIVES 4/9/17)



1883 - JUBILEE RECORD 1933



FOUNDATION ROLL OF SCHOLARS OF THE SYDNEY BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL, 1883.

*Eedy, A. M.	Halloran, H. F.	George, W.	Russell, C. R.
*Doak, F. W.	Clune, T.	Smith, Grafton Elliot	Langton, W.
*Durie, C. H.	Hobbs, F. P.	Russell, E. R.	Fisher, H. G.
*Paradice, W. H.	Lewis, W. G.	Erwin, A. E.	Heffernan, T.
*Zlotkowski, A. B. F.	Hall, A. T.	Barrett, C.	Kennedy, W. D.
Toms, W. E.	Fraser, A. C.	Baker, F.	Pratt, P. J.
Mackenzie, A. C. K.	Gardiner, H.	Rodick, W.	Mainwaring, A.
Beckett, E. C.	Bowmaker, D. W.	Woodhill, A.	Stewart, A.
Bell, J.	Southern, A. E.	Flannery, C.	Eagar, H.
Winchcombe, A.	Hillman, E.	Hafer, H.	Wicks, J.
Fraser, R.	Harrison, L.	King, R.	Triggs, H.
Harriott, C.			Brooks, E.

* Awarded Scholarships.

Efforts to secure a photograph of the assembled school of 1883 were fruitless. Mr. Waterhouse, Mr. Piddington, Mr. Eedy, Mr. Paradice—all declared "it was not done."

However, the group, the Sixth Form of 1896, may give present pupils a conception of the size of a higher class 37 years ago.



SIXTH FORM, S.B.H., ULTIMO, 1896.

Back: W. CAMPBELL, — WOOD, S. A. SMITH, W. H. PRATT, P. DEXTER, O. WOOD.
Front: A. MacINNIS, J. P. V. MADSEN, W. CROMPTON (Master), C. W. SALIER, F. A. TODD.