

Edward Dash & Susannah Debney

Melbourne 1853-1858

The *Ann Dashwood*, with Edward Dash and about 400 other passengers on board, dropped anchor in Port Phillip Bay, Melbourne, on 9th November 1853 after a 5-month voyage from Liverpool, England. Edward and his friend, Charles Redman, landed on shore on 11th November and obtained accommodation at the Immigrants Home at a cost of 8/- per week for bunks similar to those on the ship and use of the galley fire. Charles secured a job as a porter at Buckley & Nunns, but Edward was unsuccessful in obtaining a position with Mr Langwile, Ironmonger of Collins Street. Despite this initial disappointment Edward must have formed a favourable impression of opportunities in the colony because his wife and their four children joined him in Melbourne in September 1854.

Entries in the Melbourne Directory and the Victorian electoral roll from 1856 to 1858 show Edward engaged in business in Melbourne:

Melbourne Directory 1856:	<i>Edward Dash, confectioner, 127 Little Lonsdale St East</i>
Victorian Electoral Roll 1856/7:	<i>Edward Dash, dealer, 151 Spring St, Melbourne</i>
Melbourne Directory 1857:	<i>Edward Dash, confectioner & newsagent, 253 Spring St</i>
Melbourne Directory 1858:	<i>Edward Dash, confectioner & newsagent, 253 Spring St</i>

He was not listed in the Melbourne Directories of 1859 and 1860, so his whereabouts in these years are not known.

Ararat 1861-1865



The classified lists of civil servants in the Victorian Government Gazette show that Edward Dash was employed as Receiver and Paymaster for the Treasury Department at the gold mining town of Ararat from 1st January 1861 to 13th October 1865. While he was resident there he was very active in community affairs, being instrumental in forming the Ararat Branch of the Ancient Order of Foresters, was president of the Mechanics Institute and Hospital Committee, and a member of the Fire Brigade, Ararat Cemetery Trust, Dramatic Club, and Ararat Public School Committee.

As well as caring for their own four children, Edward & Susannah accepted the role of foster parents to 7-year-old Caroline Brown after her mother died in Ararat Hospital on 1st June 1864. Sadly, Susannah herself became seriously ill about 6 months later and died in Ararat Hospital on 2nd July 1865, aged 43. [Her death notice and a report of her funeral](#) were published in *The Ararat and Pleasant Creek Advertiser* a few days later.

In October 1865, 3 months after his wife's death, Edward Dash was transferred in his position as Receiver and Paymaster for the Treasury Department to Hamilton, a rural town about 100 km south-west of Ararat. Before he left Ararat he was honoured at a public supper on 10th October, reported in the [Ararat and Pleasant Creek Advertiser](#) of 13th October. Edward remarried at Hamilton in 1866, to Catherine Macdonald, and fathered 11 children with her. He died at Leichhardt, Sydney, on 17th August 1891, aged 72.

This untitled studio photo from Caroline Brown's album, by G. Behrens, Ararat, is believed to be of Edward Dash & Susannah Debney c.1865. It is reproduced by permission of Renn Wortley

To view marriage and death registrations for Edward Dash & Susannah Debney, [click here](#).

It is not known if Edward's children, then aged from 15 to 22, accompanied him to Hamilton or stayed in Ararat, but the probability is that they stayed in the Ararat region. Eliza Debney, Susannah's sister, who in the 1850s had managed a confectionery shop in London for Edward, arrived in Victoria at about the time of Susannah's death and may have gone to Hamilton with Edward as his housekeeper. She is listed in church records, as are Edward Dash and Mrs Catherine Dash, Edward's second wife, among the 15 members of the Hamilton Baptist Church when it was founded in the 1860s*. Eliza returned to Ararat some time later and was working as a housekeeper there when she died in 1880, aged 60. The informant of her death, and witness at her burial, was her nephew, John Lawson Dash, so she was still closely associated with the Dash family.

* *From a research report, "Baptist Church – Hamilton", by the Hamilton & Western District Historical Society, copied to Renn Wortley in 2001.*