



▲ Image 3: Excerpt from bible given to Edward Lee by his mother on leaving England for Australia, 1863. Image courtesy of owner of private collection.



▲ Image 4: An engraving by Gustav Doré from Dante Alighieri's 'Purgatory and Paradise', c1880. Image courtesy of the author.

prior to Edward in 1852. George was a reporter on the *Collingwood Observer*. His knowledge of the newspaper industry and its need for skilled wood engravers may have influenced Edward's decision to emigrate. Unfortunately, Edward and George were only together for 14 months in Australia before George's death.

A family descendant has the bible given to Edward by his mother *Jemima* when he left England for Australia in 1863. It is difficult not to be moved by her parting words.

A Lee family heirloom – the 'Dante books'

My grandmother, Mary Grace Jane **Coghlan** nee **Lee** (1881–1958), Edward's daughter, handed down to her son, John Leo **Coghlan** (1909–1974), my father, two large books of Dante **Alighieri's** verse: *Paradise and Purgatory and Hell*, published circa 1880.⁶ The books belonged to Edward, the engraver. As a child, parental supervision was mandatory to viewing the 'Dante books'. I was told to be very careful as they were precious. I found the images – wood engravings by Gustav

Doré (1832–1883), a well-respected exponent of modern wood engraving – curiously engrossing, fascinating and at times frightening.

Ownership of the 'Dante books' by Edward and the respect they were shown by the family implies they were very important to him most likely because of the expertise shown by **Doré**. Perhaps **Doré** was Edward's wood engraving idol; someone he tried to emulate. When I look at the images now with my recent knowledge of the craft I see the technical skill of the engraver; the resulting shades of grey.

Edward **Lee** and all the creators of the wood engravings for publication in the Australian newspapers of the mid to late 1800s have left an invaluable pictorial history of the changing colonies. They include scenes of the indigenous peoples and the new emigrants and they portray scenes, such as, means of transport, life on the goldfields, fashion, changing streetscapes with the growth of cities, leisure activities, local flora and fauna, civic occasions and portraits. ■

References

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3. GE Woodberry, *A history of wood engraving*, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, London, 1883, p.151, eBook, Gutenberg Project, viewed 5 June 2015.
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/40638/40638-h/40638-h.htm>.
4. TA Darragh, 'A Directory of engravers and lithographers working in Victoria in the nineteenth century: a description and some sources', *BSANZ Bulletin*, vol. 19, no.4, 1995, p.232.
5. RK Engen, *Dictionary of Victorian wood engravers*, Teaneck N.J: Chadwyk-Healey, Cambridge, 1985, p.153.
6. D Alighieri, *Purgatory and Paradise and Hell*. Translated by the Rev Henry Francis Cary and illustrated with the designs of M Gustav Doré, Cassell, Petter and Galpin, London, c1880.

Detailed references of this paper are available from the author.