
FISHER, Charles (1818-1908)

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Series List

Charles Brown Fisher (1818-1908), grazier, was born in London, the second son of James Hurtle Fisher and his wife Elizabeth, nee Johnson. He spent two years on his uncle's farm in Northamptonshire before sailing with his parents in the Buffalo. He arrived in South Australia in December 1836, served briefly as a clerk to his father and then joined his elder brother James in Adelaide as merchants and carriers. In 1838 the brothers sought another partner and occupied their first pastoral lease, Little Para, a few miles north of Adelaide. The run was sold in 1840 but the Fisher brothers soon acquired other pastoral leases from which they supplied Adelaide with sheep and cattle.

In the early 1850s the Fishers sent large numbers of sheep and cattle to the Victorian goldfields and used the profits to expand their landholdings; in 1854 they bought Bundaleer; in 1855 Hill River, near Clare, and 800 square miles under pastoral leases. Charles also bought freehold land near Adelaide, where he started a merino stud.

Fisher became one of the biggest pastoralists in Australia. In Victoria he bought Cumberland, near Melbourne, and Pirron Yallock, near Colac, for breeding from imported Lincoln sheep and stud Shorthorns; Yanga near Balranald, Gunbower near Echuca and Thurlgoona on the Warego River. In 1868 he began to take up leases in Queensland; by 1877 he had sixteen runs but lost them when the Supreme Court ruled that his claim to qualify as a resident was fraudulent. After his appeal to the Privy Council failed he turned with great enterprise to the Northern Territory. With J.C. Lyon as partner he took Victoria River Downs and other leases and by 1887 they held about 34,000 square miles. In 1890 Goldsbrough Mort took over some of their leases. Overcapitalization, falling prices and six bad seasons forced Fisher into bankruptcy in 1895.

Sources: Australian Directory of Biography

M.S.
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Ledgers relating to the operation of Bundaleer Station
1855-1875. 78 cm.

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