

## **The life of Christopher John Bartlett Collins by Geoff Bartlett**

Christopher John Bartlett Collins was born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1843 at Sellerswood Cottages Branscombe Devon to John Charles William Henry Edward Collins and Eleanor Bartlett and was Christened at St Winifreds Church on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1843, Unfortunately his mother Eleanor died a few days before his 1<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1844 so it was left to his father a Teacher to bring him up with the help of his grandparents, his father was to remarry in 1846 to Emma Minifie. Not much is known about Christopher's early years except that in the 1851 census he is living with his grandmother Martha Bartlett at Sellerswood Cottages and in the 1861 census, at the age of 18 was living at 9 Strongs Cottages St Sidwell Exeter with his cousin Noah Gay Bartlett and his wife Sally Bartlett [Nee Bush] and was employed as a Railway labourer/Miner on the line. No trace of Christopher until he turns up in Australia where he was married on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1875 to Esther Manser in Bendigo Victoria and went on to have 12 children by her at various locations around the Victoria area whilst working as a miner. It was in 1902 that he lost his life in a mining accident in a mine at Bendigo Victoria, a newspaper report reporting his death is below.

### **A Report on his death:**

Christopher Collins, 51 miner, was killed on Thursday in a shaft of the New Chum and Victoria mine, Bendigo. Deceased, and a mate, John Selwood had tribute in the workings at 600ft., and shortly after 2 p.m. they knocked off work. On reaching the plat they found the cage descending, and gave the signal for it to stop. The cage contained an empty truck into which Selwood slipped, Collins following him. The latter blew out his candle, and pulled the knocker line, giving the signal to be hauled to the surface. The cage commenced to ascend, and Collins must have been leaning over the side of the truck, as his head came in contact with the cap-price of the plat set. His mate heard him ejaculate "Oh!" and groan. When the cage reached the surfaces he was horrified to find Collins was dead in the cage. The head was smashed to pulp. Deceased leaves a large family. He was a member of the Miners' Association. This is the thirteenth mining fatality in the district this year.



Christopher Collins



Esther Manser

and his Wife