

Pioneers' Memorial Tower

MARYBOROUGH (VIC.)



[WRAGG PHOTO]

SOUVENIR BOOKLET

marking Official Opening

Sunday, April 16th, 1933 . . .

LTP
994.531
M36P

Lest
We
Forget

Pioneers' Memorial Tower

MARYBOROUGH

. . . VICTORIA . . .



Souvenir
Booklet



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PRETTY, Rev. W. H. DRURY, Messrs. P. F. FISHER, J. MAC-
KAY, H. BINMORE, W. SOUTTER, Pastor A. WITHERS.

Programme for Official Opening

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1933

Procession of Citizens' Brass Band and Highland Pipe Band
from A.M.P. Corner at 3 p.m.

3.30 p.m.: National Anthem. Music by Brass Band.

Chairman's Address, Mr. P. F. Fisher.

Selection, Citizens' Brass Band.

Address by Representative of Tower Committee (Mr.
H. V. Nunn).

Selection by Highland Pipe Band.

Address by President Maryborough Old Boys and
Girls' Association (Mr. W. Morris).

Item by Maryborough Entertainment Society.

Address by Mr. W. G. Gibson, M.H.R.

Selection by Citizens' Brass Band.

Official Opening of Tower by Mr. Geo. Frost, M.L.A.

Presentation of Tower to Borough Council on behalf
of joint committees—Cr. S. Poole.

Acknowledgment of gift—the Mayor (Cr. J. R. Bryant)

National Anthem.

The general public are invited to drop family records into vault
at the conclusion of the official opening.

The Story of the Tower

POINTS WHICH LED TO ITS ERECTION

AN ASSET WITHIN A MEMORIAL

THE ERECTION of the Pioneers' Memorial Tower is the culmination of a collective effort on the part of Maryborough. Paradoxical as it might appear, the depression, too, has been a very important feature. Without the necessity for the Unemployed Relief Committee, to which body so great a debt is due, it is possible that the structure now presented would not have been on so pretentious a scale. If for no other reason than in supplying work for the deserving unemployed, the construction of the Tower has been well worth while.

But it has a deeper meaning. Maryborough, in common with other places, owes much to its pioneers, and that their efforts in giving birth to the town should gain recognition is only fitting. In a space of three-quarters of a century much has passed; old customs have changed; life generally has taken on a new perspective, and, above all, out of chaos there has been evolved a decent civilisation. The pioneers were far-seeing men and women. History shows that their immediate ambition was to do something by which posterity would benefit, and so they laid a foundation for future stability and progress, catering for all branches of community life. For their initiative and foresightedness, which count for much, this Tower, as far as Maryborough is concerned, pays tribute.

Every country realises the necessity for such monuments. America has a number of beautiful memorials of this kind in various places, and, to quote but one, the thoughts expressed in the memorial to the pioneers of the covered wagon have made a great impression on many travellers. Shrines that are definitely linked to the country, and particularly those of an impersonal character, inspire one with a feeling of tenderness and patriotism, which no monument to a great event in another land can possibly arouse. Remember that without memorials of this kind our young people will grow up feeling that they belong to nowhere.

Our pioneers were the gold diggers of the fifties—the adventurous spirits of Europe. Certainly the squatters were in Victoria before them, but they were few. The gold diggers were the real founders of our nation; they were the founders of Maryborough; and on a site where they labored, not far from where gold was first discovered, this memorial stands. They were men of grit and determination, and we are their descendants. Some succeeded in their quest and some failed, but Victoria emerged the solid State that it has remained ever since. The grit and enterprise of these hardy men and women have been the mainstay of Australia ever since. Victorian men, and Victorian enterprise were the driving forces which made both Queensland and Western Australia what they are to-day. Both these States were torpid and stagnant until galvanised by the energy of those Victorians who moved there, generally in search of gold.

Oh, who would paint a goldfield,
And limn the picture right,
As we have often seen it
In early morning's light.
The yellow mounds of mullock
With spots of red and white,
The scattered quartz that glistened,
Like diamonds in light.
The azure lines of ridges,
The bush of darkest green,
The little homes of calico
That dotted all the scene.
Oh, they were lion-hearted
Who gave our country birth!
Oh, they were of the stoutest sons
From all the lands on earth!

—Lawson.

What does the world owe? After the Napoleonic wars the world went through a long depression, similar to that now experienced. Greater inventions occurred, but little use was made of them as the world was too poor. Then the miracle happened. Gold, in large quantities, was found in California and Australia. Credit expanded, and the great progress of the nineteenth century commenced. Shortage of gold had been the world's trouble, and the work of our pioneers was largely responsible for the progress which followed in every branch of life during the past century. To materialise this must never be forgotten.

For long it was realised that Maryborough was not taking full advantage of the asset it possessed in Bristol Hill. A lookout, or tower, was long considered by the Traders' Association, but nothing was done until the co-operation of other bodies and descendants of the pioneers was solicited. Then with the announcement that the tower should be erected as a memorial to the pioneers public interest was aroused, showing that the fires of enthusiasm only required fanning to give full effect to the spirit of appreciation.

While preliminary meetings were held, the movement was not definitely launched until a joint public meeting was held on June 30, 1932. From that time, with a steady response from residents and former residents, together with the wholehearted co-operation of the Unemployment Relief Committee in providing the necessary labor, and the Maryborough Old Boys and Girls' Association in Melbourne, it was soon possible to commence the work. The Borough Council lent its aid in various directions; the work commenced in August, and the laying of the foundation stone by Cr. H. E. Williams, J.P., took place on October 15, 1932. Much credit is due to Mr. E. J. Peck, the honorary architect, under whose guidance the whole of the work has been carried out, and who was responsible for the plan and specifications of the Tower. The committee expresses its thanks to the donors, members of both committees, and all who in any way made possible this great achievement.

Thanks to the initiative displayed, Maryborough now possesses an asset within a memorial, and so further is the spirit of the pioneers perpetuated. The Committee expresses the hope that the Tower will for ever be treasured by the residents of Maryborough and that all who climb the steps will remember those who first labored in this district, and made possible the privileges enjoyed to-day.

Assessed in capital terms, the Tower has cost approximately £800.



The Pioneering Digging Days

HOW FIRST RESIDENTS LIVED AND WORKED

AN INTERESTING REVIEW OF LIFE IN THE
FIFTIES.

MARYBOROUGH—"BUILT ON THE GOLDEN LEADS"

IN 1848, several years after the brothers Simson had established themselves on the station, which they named Simson's Range, a bullock driver in their employ, according to the late J. C. Simson, discovered a nugget of gold, on that part of the run about ten miles from the homestead, now known as Daisy Hill. He showed the gold to his employers, but they took no steps to make public the discovery. The early squatters of those days kept finds secret for fear of a rush impeding their pastoral activities. What became of the nugget is unknown, but probably it was sold to one of the Melbourne jewellers, as they were the only buyers of the precious metal before the discovery of the goldfields.

It was not till 1851 that the first official discovery of gold in Victoria was made. Gold was found at Clunes on July 8, 1851, at Buninyong, on August 9, Castlemaine September 10, at Ballarat on September 8, and at Bendigo in 1852. Shortly after, in June, 1854, Hector Norman Simson was making a tour of the station, when he saw three young men working at a hole at a place known as the White Hills, about three miles from the homestead. He approached them, and, on inquiry, they told him they were looking for gold, but had very little luck, at the same time showing him a matchbox containing a small quantity of the metal. But from their demeanor, and the large amount of work they had done, Simson concluded they were doing better than they admitted, and had made an important discovery. They were diggers of some experience, having worked on the Castlemaine and Bendigo fields, but with little success.

One was reputed to be a young English medical man, and many of the early residents regarded him as being identical with the late Dr. F. M. Laidman, a well-known surgeon, for many years coroner for the district, who was known to have worked on the rush as a digger in 1854, and for 25 years afterwards practised his profession in Maryborough. At no time did he claim to be one of the discoverers, and the records of the Mines Department show that the names of the three first discoverers of the Simson's Range goldfield were unknown, and that no claim was made for a reward. None was paid by the Government for its discovery.

Simson lost no time in making the discovery known—a contrast to his attitude on the finding of the nugget in 1848. On the rustic log bridge over the Deep Creek near the homestead, traces of which are still visible, he erected a notice as follows:—"This way to the New Goldfield." The news spread rapidly to the city, and other goldfields and a great influx of diggers set in from all parts of the colony. The tracks and roads leading to Simson's Range were alive with people. Many carried swags, some with wheelbarrows, whilst coaches, waggons and vehicles of all description laden with diggers and their belongings, sped along the track. They were mostly young, unmarried men, a few foreigners, and elderly men, but even married men with their families were among the throng. All classes were represented—laborers, artisans, seafaring men, tradesmen, professional men, and others who had discarded their usual avocations in this mad rush for gold.

Within a few weeks there were several thousand men on the field, and a large canvas town of tents soon sprang up. It was at this time that the Government took control of the field, and a gold commissioner (Mr. Daly, a young Irishman), a staff of police, and other officials necessary to enforce Government enactments arrived. Their headquarters were near where the Royal Park stands, and named Commissioner's Flat. This consisted of commissioner's quarters, gold licence office, gold receiver's office, police headquarters, stables, and lockup (built of heavy, rough bush logs, about a foot thick, with the roof covered thickly with bark). The other places were made of calico, with the exception of the stables, which were of bark. The police had a variety of duties to perform, police escort duty, catching criminals (who were numerous), and suppressing the sly-grog dens constituting only a part of their duties. Enforcing the taking out of gold licences, and hunting diggers who had evaded it, was their principal work.

The first Government proclamation, respecting the issue of gold licences, in Victoria was made on August 16, 1851. Two days later it became law, the fee being £1 10/ monthly in advance. On May 1, 1852, the price was risen to £3 per month, and in 1854, when the Simson's Range diggings broke out, the price was reduced to £1 monthly. In the latter part of 1854 it was again reduced to £2 for three months, payable in advance. It entitled the owner to mine or dig for gold, reside at or carry on, or follow any trade or calling except that of shopkeeper. The licence was to be carried on the person and produced on demand to the commissioner, police officer, or other duly authorised person. It was not transferable, and any person transferring same was liable to a penalty for a misdemeanor. No mining was permitted where it would be destructive to any line of road, which was necessary to maintain, and which was determined by the commissioner, nor within such distance around any store as was necessary to reserve access to it. It was enjoined that all persons maintain a due and proper observance of the Sunday. The extent of claim allowed to each licensed miner was 12 ft. x 12 ft., to two miners 12 ft. by 24 ft., to three miners 18 ft,

by 24 ft., and to a party of four miners 24 ft. x 24 ft., beyond which no greater area could be allowed in one claim.

The licence fee was of little consequence to those on payable gold, but to those who were not it was an unjust and iniquitous tax. It would have been fairer had it been placed on the amount of gold won, the value of which was £3 an ounce. Though quiet reigned on the field during its enforcement, it was not so at Ballarat, where it culminated in the fight at Eureka Stockade on December 3, 1854, and which brought about its abolishment. Shortly after the Government appointed a Royal Commission, which proceeded to the goldfields, and its report was followed by the Miner's Right being substituted for the gold licence. Local courts were established, auriferous leases granted, and the goldfields had conferred on them the right to have municipal and legislative representation. The rights were sold at a nominal figure, and in 1858 mining boards were established at the various goldfields centres. The members were elected for a term by the holders of miners' rights. For many years they carried on in the interest of the miners and mining generally, but, having outlived their usefulness, were eventually abolished.

The scarcity of water was the greatest drawback on the diggings. Water had to be carted from the Deep Creek at Carisbrook, to which the diggers also carted the wash dirt. Water was 1/6 a bucket, flour as high as £50 a ton; butter was 4/ a pound, milk 4/ a quart, potatoes 1/3 lb.; vegetables were almost unprocurable, cabbages bringing from 2/6 to 4/6 each. The freight from Melbourne on all other necessaries was exorbitant; liquor was out of the question, except that procurable at the shanties. The sale of drink was strictly prohibited, and persons found in possession of it were liable to prosecution. The diggers lived principally on damper and mutton, which was plentiful, and which was regularly procurable from the Simsons.

The diggers lived mostly in tents, some in log and bark huts. Their furniture generally consisted of a bunk made of forked sticks and saplings. For chairs and tables small logs, boxes and stumps sufficed. Their cooking utensils were generally a billy or two, a pot, a frying pan and a pannikin; and the cooking was usually done in the open. The blazing wood of hundreds of fires on a winter night, with diggers perched around chatting and singing, was an extraordinary sight. In the shallow ground the dirt was raised by means of a tripod made of three pieces of wood fixed together, with a block and pulley on the top; but where the ground was deeper the windlass was in use.

Mr. Edward O'Farrell, one of the earliest diggers, who later became a well-known hotelkeeper in Maryborough and chairman of the Mining Board, with his mates, was among the first on the rush. He stated that on arrival at White Hills they saw about forty men at work on a flat close to a blind creek, now known as Four Mile Creek. Water was being procured from the Bet Bet

and Deep Creeks. The sinking was hard and the ground rich. One party was picking out nuggets of from one to ten ounces. Further on, towards the site of Maryborough, men were working, the sinking being from 16 to 24 ft. in hard cement, the wash being from 4 to 6 ft. thick, full of splendid nuggets on a pipeclay bottom. Further up the lead the gold was found in shallow ground, and the rush became greatly intensified all along the lead, gold being found in nearly every hole. Within three months of the first discovery there were between 20,000 and 30,000 men on the field. The depth there was from 4 to 10 ft. As much as one shovelful of dirt yielded nearly 20 oz., and the average of the wash was from 24 to 36 oz. to the load. Near the Government headquarters at Commissioner's Flat the lead was 15 chains wide, and the sinking from 55 to 60 ft., the wash being from 2 to 5 ft. thick, and yielding from 4 to 10 oz. to the load. The surfacing was also good.

Two diggers who worked on Blackman's Lead quickly got 690 oz. from their claim. They afterwards worked on the Main Lead, got the wash at 14 ft., yielding as much as 10 oz. to the bucket, the average being 11 oz. to the load. After working it out they took up another claim on Blackman's. This was the richer of the two leads. They got 3 ft. of wash and coarse gold with nuggets from 2 to 12 oz., and afterwards discovered a beautiful nugget, shaped like a pear, which turned the scale at 11 lb. 3 oz., and was valued at £400. The average of this claim was 14 oz. to the load. The gold of the leads was generally coarse, and the total length was about eight miles. Where they junctioned it was expected the leads would be richer, but such was not the case, and for nearly half a mile towards Commissioner's Flat it was somewhat poorer. In June, 1855, a nugget weighing 1024 oz. was found in the Blackman's Lead, at a depth of five feet, and was sold for £3250. Another was found in the Main Lead at White Hills in 1856 at a depth of 12 ft., and weighed 236 oz. In January, 1858, another nugget was found in Blackman's Lead at a depth of 6 ft., weighing 537 oz.

At the latter part of 1854 it was decided to change the name of the goldfield. Various names were suggested, but it was left to Commissioner Daly to decide, and he named it Maryborough, in honor of his native town in Ireland. In 1855 the population of the goldfield and its environs was estimated at 53,000. Rich gold having been discovered in the adjacent gullies and outlying places, thousands of diggers were attracted to the Alma field (which was discovered by W. Fierce and T. Ritchie, to whom the Government paid rewards of £150 each) and to Chinaman's Flat (now Bowenvale), Adelaide Lead and Havelock. There was trouble at the Alma through the jumping of claims, and rioting ensued. This was soon quelled, the jumpers faring badly. It was known as the Tipperary riot. At these places rich gold was found.

In April, 1855, Mr. Taylor, a Government surveyor, arrived and surveyed the site for a town, on the slopes of Simson Range (now Bristol Hill) of an area of about 2250 acres—nearly four square

miles. The first crown lands sale was held in October, 1856. At that time the main part of the field was a long, irregular thoroughfare nearly two miles long, now known as High Street, consisting mainly of tents and log and slab tenements. Some were places of business, and, the Government having granted liquor licences, many were tap rooms. Skittle alleys and other places of amusement were in evidence, and the sly-grog shanties, where diggers were often drugged and robbed, were still in evidence, despite the efforts of the police to suppress them.

At this time (in 1856) the population had decreased to 15,000, and at the time the municipality was created, in 1857, it had dwindled to 12,000. Whilst the rush was at its maximum crime was prevalent. Numbers of Vandemonians on ticket of leave from Tasmania, and criminals from Sydney and other places, had infested the field. One of the most notorious was Black Douglas, a big American negro. He was leader of a gang of ruffians who had been robbing diggers on the Bendigo and other fields, and had evaded capture for a considerable time. He arrived at Simson's Ranges and the Alma about 1855 in search of fresh victims. He was soon identified, and a large number of diggers surrounded his camp at the Alma and captured him without a fight. The scoundrel was manacled and escorted to the Maryborough police camp by an escort of excited diggers. Their entry into the town caused great excitement.

After the shallow ground had been mostly worked out, large numbers of Chinese arrived and spread themselves in camps over the diggings and adjacent gullies. They never searched for fresh finds, but invariably fossicked the old workings. They were numerous on other fields, their number in Victoria in 1857 being 25,424, which had increased in 1859 to nearly 40,000. Shortly after being established in 1854, Cobb & Co. ran a line of coaches to the district, and this was continued till the opening of the railway from Castlemaine in 1874.

In 1854 the Maryborough Hospital was established in a large tent. The first medical officer was the late Dr. R. H. Dunn, who had served on the medical staff of the British forces in the Crimean war, and who, for about half a century afterwards, was resident and consulting surgeon to the Hospital.

When the rush had somewhat subsided, attention was given to the deep ground and reefing, and with the advent of machinery and the employment of large numbers of miners, payable gold was soon found. The district developed into one of the leading gold-fields of Victoria, and a prosperous Maryborough came into being, a town built on the golden leads of the early days. In 1857 the municipality was created, the first members being D. K. Campbell, general merchant; D. Taylor, grocer and draper; — Fowler, iron-monger; M. Garland, wine and spirit merchant; — Levy, wine and spirit merchant; — Roberts, draper; and A. McLandress, boot

merchant (chairman), and Mr. J. C. Hooper (secretary). In 1859 it was proclaimed the Borough of Maryborough, with Mr. McLandress as Mayor, and Mr. Thos. Gardiner Town Clerk.

There are few relics of the early days visible. Many of the worked-out claims are to be seen, but the pioneer diggers of 1854 are no more. The most interesting relics are the early burying grounds (which are to be found in the district) before cemeteries were established. As a rule the dead were buried on rising ground, not far from where they died, and it was seldom that any stone or enclosure marked their last resting place. The old cemetery on Bristol Hill (Simson's Range), which was closed in 1858, stands out as the most interesting of all.

The amount of gold produced from the field and the outlying leads from 1854 to 1859 was enormous, amounting approximately to several million ounces.

In search of wealth, mankind's desire,
They sped the track, and crossed the main
These worthy sons of British sires,
The Pioneers—the country's gain.
They've bade farewell, and gone far away,
Where the sere autumn never falls.
The pioneer men of the gold era days,
Honor them, honor them all;
And may the memory never fade
Of those departed, good and brave—
Their work is done, their last debt paid;
In peace they rest in yonder grave.



The History of the Simsons

A REVIEW OF MARYBOROUGH'S FIRST
RESIDENTS.

GRIM TRAGEDY AND HUMOR HAND IN HAND

(DATA BY J. D. McNABB.)

THE TOWER on Bristol Hill has been erected to perpetuate the memory of those sterling men and women who, although suffering isolation and privations that would quickly dampen the ardor of the average present-day resident, brazed a successful golden trail, from out of which one of the most impressive of Victoria's country towns has been built.

Much is known of the early history of Maryborough from the time gold was first discovered, of the mad rushes which took place in pursuit of the precious metal, of the many tragedies which marked that golden era, and how, out of something of a state of chaos, there was gradually evolved law and order, decent living conditions, and the foundation for the successful building of a town.

But there is an even earlier page in Maryborough's history than that relating to gold. It is that which traces the adventures of the Simsons, the actual pioneers of the district. The story of the Simsons has never been fully told; but now, through the co-operation of Mr. J. D. McNabb, of Baringhup, who was entirely responsible for the marshalling of the facts, the Pioneers' Tower Committee is able to present a word picture of their lives and experiences in this district, which was appropriately first known as Simson's Run. The committee believes that its incorporation in this booklet will meet with general approbation. Mr. McNabb was engaged for six months in preparing the necessary data for this chronological review of the hardy men who first set foot in this district, and did so much to pioneer the agricultural and pastoral wealth.

We introduce the story by stating that Messrs John C., Donald Campbell, and Hector Norman Simson, three brothers, came from the island of Islay, in the west of Scotland, part of the island being owned by their father. Possessed with the pioneering zeal of their forefathers, the three brothers early decided in favor of colonial life, and Australia, then the land of new opportunity, was their choice. Hector Norman Simson ar-

rived in Melbourne from Sydney in November, 1839, and made a tour through Victoria.

It was partly through accident that Maryborough came to know the Simsons, for Hector Norman, during his stay in Victoria, wrote to his brother, Donald Campbell, who was then collecting a large stock at Maneroo, N.S.W., recommending the Portland Bay district. For that destination the stock accordingly started under the

charge of J. M. Darlot (manager) and Charles Jones, the head stockman. It is a matter of interest that Jones's Creek was afterwards named after Jones. The stock consisted of 13,000 sheep, 4,000 head of cattle and 100 horses, the overlanding naturally being associated with many difficulties. It was because of this that Maryborough was made a halting place. That minute care for the protection of the animals was necessary is evidenced by the fact in those days ewes cost £2 per head; cattle £10 to £15; horses £100 each; flour £100 per ton; tea, £20 a chest; wheat, was worth 20/ per bushel. It was not until 1840 that the first mill for grinding corn by water power was erected at the Coliban.

The route taken by the overlanders was that known as the Major's line. This was the track made by Major Mitchell's party returning to Sydney from Portland in 1836, after exploring Victoria in 1835-36.

The stock arrived at Mt. Alexander, and were there met by Donald Campbell Simson, who had travelled by sea to Melbourne, and, after exploring northward, decided to take up the country on the Loddon and Deep Creek, instead of proceeding to Portland Bay. This decision was largely influenced by heavy losses resulting from catarrh and scab, and the fact that the ewes had then commenced to lamb. Just as accidental discovery gave Maryborough its golden lustre thus did misfortune bring the Simson party to this district.

Having decided to settle in this district, which had many appealing features to this hardy Scotsman, Donald Campbell Simson, immediately set about placing his house in order and providing for his stock. It was in June, 1840, however, that he settled and took up the stations afterwards known as Charlotte Plains, Cairn Curran, Janevale and Glenmona, and on which are now the towns of Maryborough, Carisbrook, Betley, Bet Bet, Timor, Have-lock, Eddington and Laanecoorie. The boundary on the east was Castlemaine; it went to the Pyrenees on the west, from Clunes on the south to Laanecoorie on the north. Charlotte Plains and Cairn Curran, to quote only two, are names

which still remain as links with the Simsons and the birth of Maryborough. It was some time after their selection that the Simson brothers disposed of Cairn Curran, Glenmona and Janevale. Their initial establishment of stock was one of the largest that had then come overland.

It was John Simson who eventually took up the Bet Bet station. He was the eldest son of the famous family, his brothers having preceded him to this country. Mr. D. C. Simson married Miss Charlotte Coghill, a daughter of Captain Coghill, who was associated with Captain Hepburn, of Smeaton. The township of Coghill's Creek, a short distance from Clunes, was named after Capt. Coghill. Mr. and Mrs. Simson had two sons, John Coghill Campbell, who was born at Charlotte Plains in 1840; David Dalgety, and one daughter, Charlotte, named after the mother. Mr. Simson named the station Charlotte Plains after his daughter.

Mr. Hector Norman Simson was associated with his brother, Donald Campbell, at Charlotte Plains. He married Miss Bryant, daughter of Mr. M. Bryant, of Cairn Curran station, Baringhup. A nephew, Mr. Bailey Bryant, at present carries on the station. Descendants of this family still reside in the district. In April, 1843, Hector Norman travelled with stock past the Grampians to the head of the Glenelg, and in June of that year took up the station now known as Glenisla. The blacks were at this time very troublesome, and Hector Norman, in establishing himself at Glenisla, had more than one anxious moment. He subsequently held other stations in other parts of Victoria, and thus his association with Maryborough was not of a permanent character.

In taking up the Charlotte Plains the necessity for a home was immediately apparent to the Simsons. Thus the first residence was a small house built close to the Deep Creek. A bridge across the creek was also erected at the same time. The position of the house, however, was soon found to be unsuitable, as its close proximity to the creek made it an easy prey to flooding when the creek came down with any volume of water.

It was then decided to build on top of what was then known as the Green Hill, a short distance away, but here again trouble was encountered. The foundations for the new house were laid and an excavation made for a cellar, but a favorite horse called "Noble" fell down the unprotected hole and broke his neck. The horse was buried alongside, and the site was abandoned as unlucky.

In its day Simson House was one of the finest homesteads in Australia. It was started in 1843, but was not finished until three years later. It was the first stone house built in Victoria, and the workmanship displayed was a credit to early day artisans. Standing out in its majesty Simson House was always a landmark in the district, and the pity is that during latter years it was allowed to get into a state of disrepair. What better monument to the Simsons than that homestead should have been allowed to remain!

The homestead was built in the form of a quadrangle, with large iron gates leading into the courtyard. In the centre was a large underground tank, 16ft. by 14 ft. The house itself contained 18 rooms. The walls were 21 inches thick, and provision was made for 28 doors. What an experience the builders must have had in door-hanging, and what a task was presented the "brickies," especially when it is remembered that the average brick wall nowadays is but nine inches thick! All the wood used in the construction of the homestead was imported cedar, and, when the building was completed, furniture from England was imported, anything of a pretentious nature from an Australian manufacture standpoint then being out of the question. At the time of its completion Simson House was one of the finest homes in Victoria.

But what a different picture to-day! Now the once beautiful home of the Simsons has been unroofed and is falling into decay, the bare walls standing as a silent reminder of the days that have passed. They seem to re-echo still the tread of those worthy pioneers. Even now it would be fitting if the remains of Simson House could be retained.

Generally speaking the Simsons found the blacks in the Maryborough district to be of a peaceable nature. These were afterwards known as the Jim Crow tribe. A creek of this name is one of the tributaries to the Loddon River. There is a history attached to this tribe also, because accounts show that they were a small insignificant band, frequently spoiled and oppressed by the more numerous and warlike tribes from the Murray river and Goulburn, and also westward tribes who used to make a practice of carrying off the women, etc. At the time of the arrival of the Simsons, this particular tribe had concentrated at Jim Crow Hill (Mount Franklin), under the charge of a Mr. Parker, an assistant protector. These blacks were found to be very useful to the settlers in cutting bark and sheep-washing.

Records show that the sheep on the station were generally run in flocks of 500 to 1,000, according to the nature of the pasture. Each flock was in charge of a shepherd, whose duty it was to fold the sheep every night. A permanent fold was erected on a high, well drained spot, and was made of trees cut down and hauled into the form of a circle by the bullock teams. The branches were piled on the trunks of the trees to make the primitive wall sufficiently high to hold the sheep. The shepherd's hut, or watch-box, was in close proximity, in order that the sheep might be under his constant supervision and he could respond to any emergency. In the low-lying country hurdles were erected to fold the sheep and were removed to fresh ground every day.

Obviously, with the sheep being so valuable, every effort was made by the shepherd and his men to save the lambs. The practice invariably followed in this connection was that if a ewe died and left a lamb, and there was another ewe that had lost a lamb, the carcass of the latter was skinned and the skin tied to the orphan. The lamb, with its own and the make-believe coat, was placed in a small enclosure with the ewe and given a drink. It was generally found that the ewe would take to the lamb when her milk was taken by the suckling. If the ewe refused to

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"adopt" the orphan, well there was further trouble ahead.

Troubles came frequently during these early days on the land. For instance, it was found that the sheep running on the heavy country at Charlotte Plains had what is known as earth tip in the fleece. Consequently D. C. Simson resolved upon a plan of washing the sheep before shearing each year. For this purpose he had a special sheep-wash built. The site selected was about half a mile below where Hooper's Bridge now stands, and where a good solid gravel foundation was available in the bed of the creek. A stone wall of bluestone was built diagonally across the creek to dam back the water. To-day approximately one-third of the wall is still standing, having successfully weathered the storms of nearly a century. What a tribute to the workmanship of those early builders! What a story that wall tells of the pioneering days, when the indomitable spirit to succeed appeared to surmount all difficulties, and they were legion! This particular wall was 40 yards long, 10 ft. high in the centre of the creek, and 6ft. wide at the base, tapering to 5ft. 6 inches in width at the top. It was characteristic of D. C. Simson that when he set out upon a project he did it thoroughly. His homestead and this wall were a tribute to his enterprise and creative mind.

The wall actually caused a diversion of the creek, and an island of about an acre was formed between the new stream and the old water-course. One can hardly fail to wonder what would be the attitude of legislative authorities if a person were to erect such a creek wall to-day. Perhaps D. C. Simson was fortunate in one way that he was not hampered by Red Tape, and was free to do that which he thought was right. But just to conclude the reference to this wall let it be said that the sheep were washed at the spot every year, and the result was that a very clean fleece was cut, the added return for the wool thus compensating D. C. Simson for the labor involved in preparing for and washing the sheep.

The Charlotte Plains and Cairn Curran stations' boundary was the site known as Boundary Gully, on the main road from Carlsbrook to Baringhup. Hence the name of the Boundary Gully reservoir, which still exists, and, incidentally, last year kicked over the traces by overflowing its banks for the first time for several years. The reservoir is well known to all travellers between Carlsbrook and Baringhup, and is a still further link with the Simsons and all that pertained to their experiences in this district. At this boundary the stockmen from each station used to muster, and at the conclusion of this work there was always a race to Franklin's Hotel, Joyce's Creek, for a jollification.

The adventure of the Simsons in the Maryborough district were not altogether serious. There was, as might naturally be expected, a lighter side, and at least one particular incident is well worth recording. One of D.C. Simson's children took suddenly and seriously ill one evening, and as there was no improvement the following morning, D.C., as a man of quick action, decided to send to Melbourne for the services of a doctor. A rider was despatched post haste, and was instructed to spare neither himself nor his horse on the journey. The horseman reached Melbourne the same evening, and, as quickly as possible, set out on the return journey, accompanied, of course, by the doctor. When they returned to the station the child was playing about the yard!

At this particular time Messrs John and Hector Norman Simson, then being single men, often made the home of their brother, D.C., their headquarters, and they thought nothing of riding down to Melbourne to the races, going to a dance afterwards, and then setting out to ride the long journey home without further delay.

Another amusing incident was that associated with D. C. Simson's practice of charging a toll fee of 5/ to every person crossing his bridge. Subsequent history shows that these toll charges, operating in various parts of the country, were a source of great annoyance amongst the people, and

there was a persistent agitation until their removal was finally brought about, largely by legislative enactment. On one particular occasion a bullock-driver came along with his team, and, for payment, handed D.C. a £100 cheque which he had received for a carting job. The bullocky had, on previous occasions in other places, presented the cheque in payment for toll charges. The inability of the persons concerned to cash the cheque had enabled him to cross many bridges without paying, but he met his fate when it came to the inimitable D.C. One can reasonably imagine the latter examining the cheque to ascertain its bona fides, but the bullocky obtained the surprise of his life when D.C. adjourned to the house and immediately cashed the cheque. Such marked the close of one "scaler" of the bridges.

John Simson, of Bet Bet Station, was the elder brother of Donald Campbell and Hector Norman Simson, and he was a man of exceptional strength. It was said of him that he could go into the cattle yards, seize the largest bullock by the horns, throw it and hold it down. During his life he had saved 32 people from drowning, a whole ship's crew making the number so large. But John Simson, the pride of the district for his magnificent athletic build, was not destined to live to be an old man for an unfortunate accident robbed him of his life at a time when he promised so well. He had risked his life many times previously in going to the assistance of others, but the time came when his spirit of "Greater Love" made him pay the supreme penalty. His memory should be all the brighter because of the heroic manner in which he laid down his life.

One day, when the creek was in flood and well over the bridge at Simson's property, a bullock driver, with his team, attempted to make the crossing, with Messrs John and D. C. Simson watching his progress. In the middle of the stream, the bullocks took fright, swerved and overturned the dray into the creek. The bullocky was immediately in difficulties in the water and John, seeing his plight, rushed to his assistance without a

care for his own safety. Both were overwhelmed by the flood and were drowned in the big hole below the bridge. This was the first break in the family, and the second came when the famous D.C. died suddenly in 1851 at the age of 35 years.

Following the death in such tragic circumstances of John Simson his "ghost" used to be seen on a dark night whenever the creek came down in flood. The form of a man with his arms outstretched and wearing a long night-shirt appeared to stand above the flooded waters of the creek. The apparition scared a large number of people before its origin was discovered. It was engineered thus:— In a passage leading to a front door was a hanging lamp, and over the door was a hinged leadlight. The light from the lamp would reflect through the leadlight to the waters of the creek, providing the latter was sufficiently high in flood. The reflection of the light on the waters showed, on a dark night, the figure of a man with a long night-shirt, and the overhanging limbs of a tree formed the arms. When conditions were favorable to its appearance visitors to the station were invariably shown the "ghost" of John Simson.

The first land sale held inland took place at Castlemaine in 1853, when a portion of the Charlotte Plains station was offered under the hammer, thus marking the commencement of the breaking up of the historic Simson's run. Before the sale Mr. Charles Stewart started from Carisbrook with his horse and dray, slept underneath the dray that night, and rose early the following morning in order to be in Castlemaine by 10 o'clock, in time for the sale. He was able to purchase the whole creek frontage on the right hand side of the creek from Carisbrook, two and a half miles down, and within half a mile of the Simson station.

It was also during 1853 that Mrs. D. C. Simson decided to take her family, John Coghill Campbell, David Dalgety and Charlotte, to Europe and England to be educated. They received tuition in England and also at Heidelberg, Germany. Of the family of D.C.,

John was married in Germany to a German baroness. The mother did not return to Australia, having married a German professor of music. Charlotte married Baron Luthvitg and had one son and three daughters.

With the sudden death of D. C. Simson arrangements had accordingly to be made for the carrying on of the station. John had predeceased the brother, and so Hector Norman took over control, carrying on until 1858, when he left and took up Tatong Station, 10 miles from Benalla. He died there in 1880 at the age of 60 years. From the time of Hector Norman's departure in 1858, until the return of John C. and David Dalgety in 1865, Charlotte Plains was rented to the Messrs Yuille.

After their return to Australia, J.C. and D.D. kept up the home in grand style, and were among the leading people of the Colony. They frequently drove their four in hand to the Melbourne races. Then J.C., after residing at the station for a short time, removed to Maryborough, where he was associated with much of the life of the town, holding many public positions. For a time he carried on the business of auctioneer in premises now occupied by R. W. Wilkinson, chemist, High street. In later years he was a sharebroker, and his one essay for Parliamentary honors was almost successful. J.C. had a generous heart, and it was a common practice for him to buy tickets for a circus or other travelling amusement which visited the town and treat the boys and girls to a free night, much to the obvious delight of the youngsters.

When J.C. decided to make his residence in Maryborough it meant that the control of the station fell upon the shoulders of David. During his regime several outstanding horses were maintained, one, Paul Pry, doing much to improve the standard of the light horses in the district. It is also said that a Melbourne Cup winner came from the station. The brothers, despite the absence of J.C. in Maryborough, were very progressive in their work, and, in addition to the racehorses, kept excellent stock on the station, one Shorthorn bull alone costing them 1,000 guineas.

Tragedy again entered the Simson home when J.C.'s wife, the Baroness, met her death as the result of an accident. This happened when J.C. and his wife were returning to Maryborough from the Majorca races, driving the famous buggy and pair. Both were thrown out of the buggy, and the Baroness received injuries from which she died a few days afterwards. She was buried in the Roman Catholic portion of the Maryborough cemetery.

J.C. subsequently married the second time, when his wife was Miss Lynch, of Melbourne. The wedding took place in Maryborough and was celebrated with great solemnity. It was said that this wedding cost Simson £500, the wedding cake alone, made in Maryborough, absorbing £50. J.C. was then at the height of his prosperity in this town, and could afford to spend lavishly.

David Simson also came to Maryborough to claim his bride, who was a Miss Smith, who hailed from Ballarat. J.C.'s princely living, his passion for the races, and his many ventures, eventually lead to the collapse of his fortune, and history tells that when the brothers were short of money they would hold a clearing sale at the station. Then by exercising care they were able to pull things together for a time. They held, altogether, three different sales, and after replenishing their fortunes would send to England for new furniture to replace that which had been sold. The final sale, which lasted three days, took place in 1878. A year later David left the station and took up residence in Melbourne, where he established a labor agency near Kirk's Bazaar. He died in 1907. J.C. carried on the business or sharebroker in Maryborough until the early nineties. He then removed to Melbourne and afterwards went to the Western Australian goldfields. He died at Claremont at the age of 75 years, thus establishing the Simson record for longevity as far as the brothers were concerned.

The country in the vicinity of the Simson homestead teems with historical associations, and the pity is that some action has not been taken

to preserve them as indelible links with these first residents. There are, for instance, two burial grounds near the old station. The first ground used, now known as the employes' burial ground, is situated on rising ground in Messrs Kellackys Bros.' paddock at Havelock. It was here, after the drowning fatality, that John, the eldest of the Simsons, and the bullock driver, were buried. Altogether nine bodies rest in this sacred spot. Their names are known, and some of the relatives still reside in the district. Many years ago a bush fire swept the area, and the encircling fence was destroyed. The mounds have now flattened almost to the level of the surrounding soil, and unless shown the passer-by would be ignorant of the presence of the graves.

The burial ground of the Simson family lies on the south side of the Green Hill, and although the fence encircling it has gone two pine trees mark the spot. At the foot of the pines lie the remains of the pioneer, D. C. Simson, who died in 1851, together with those of his infant son. John Simson was re-interred with his brother in this ground after D.C.'s death. So just as they labored together the two Simson brothers rest together.

"They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old;

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn,

At the going down of the sun and in the morning.

We will remember them."

This brief history of the Simsons, incomplete as it might be, but yet designed to give some idea of these hardy Scottish pioneers, must certainly contain some reference to the ultimate fate of the station. At the time of the final sale in 1878 the once large area of station property had been reduced to an area of about 450 acres.

It was carried on for some time after Simson's death by Messrs Younghusband, who later sold to the Messrs Fisher. The latter, in about 1904, sold the property to Mr. Norman Gillies, of Maryborough. Mr. Gillies carried on the station very successfully. He engaged in dairying, and had a splendid stud of Ayrshire cattle. Mr. Gillies planted lucerne on the creek flats, and with his own irrigation plant grew an abundance of fodder for his dairy herd. A few years ago Mr. Gillies retired and still lives privately in this town. It is a remarkable coincidence that the house in which Mr. Gillies now resides in Maryborough was once occupied by J. C. Simson. Mr. Jas. Bant is the present owner of the station property, and in recent years he erected a fine modern home on the top of the Green Hill, almost on the identical spot where the Simsons abandoned the foundations of the house when they lost their favorite horse in the cellar excavations. Mr. Bant successfully carries on dairying and pig raising.



But a Sprinkling of the Pioneers

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