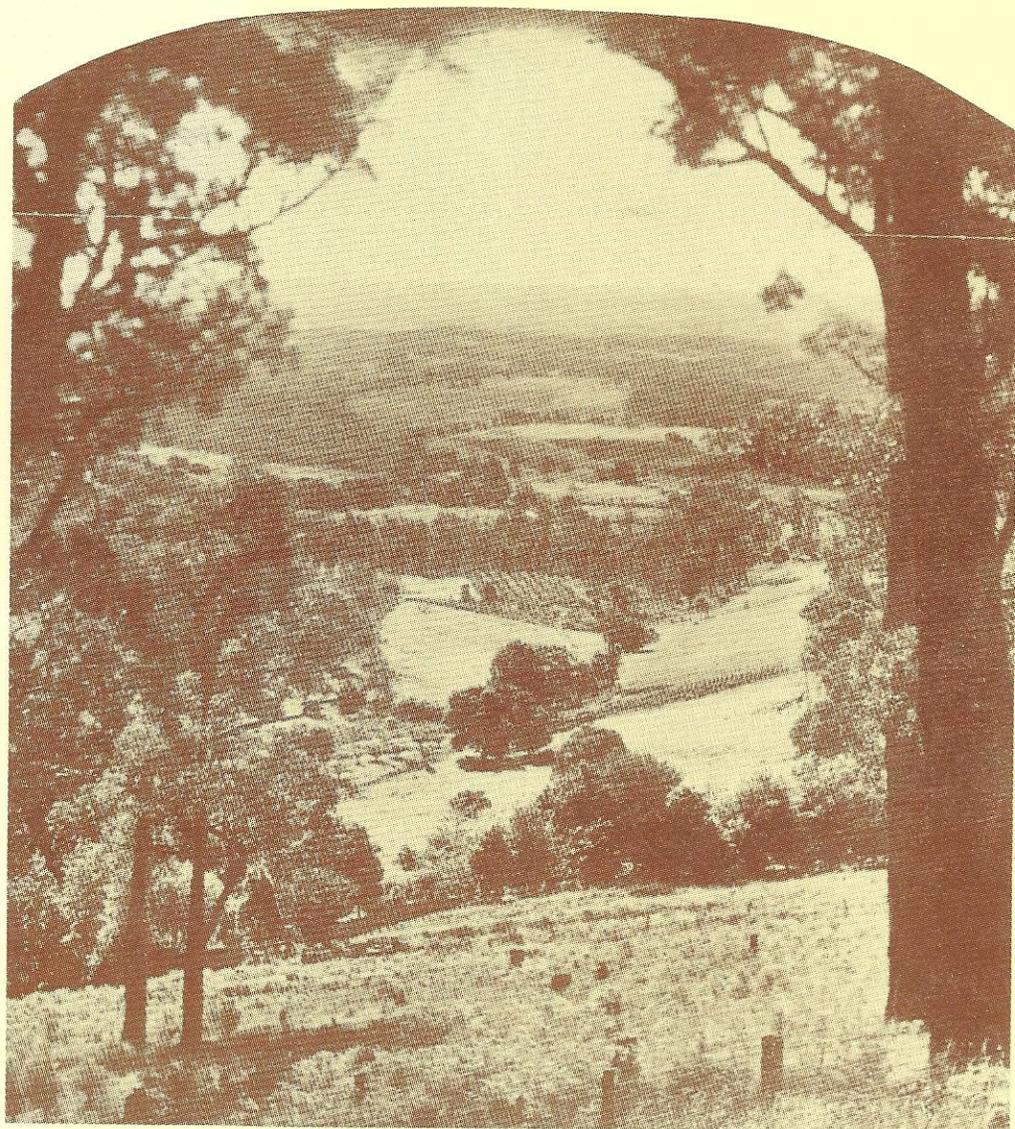


Fire On The Hill Flowers In The Valley



The Basin

History of The Basin

Chapter 1

Foundation

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Table of Contents

[Summary](#).....2

[The Basin is Formed](#).....3

[The First Inhabitants](#).....3

[The First White Visitor](#).....3

[Prominent Early Visitors](#).....4

[Daniel Bunce](#).....4

[Baron Von Mueller](#).....5

[The First Pasturing of Stock](#).....6

[The Name](#).....6

[The First Residents](#).....8

[Founder](#).....14

[The First Official Land Holder](#).....14

[Prominent Early Settlers](#).....15

[David Dobson](#).....15

[John James Miller](#).....18

[Edmund and Janet Wicks](#).....19

[William and Kate Chandler](#).....21

[James and Emily Griffiths](#).....28

[Other Early Settlers](#).....29

[The 1869 Land Act](#).....29

[Land Selection Files](#).....29

[Woodhouse](#).....29

[Samuel Collier](#).....29

[John & Mary Barns](#).....30

[George Bruce](#).....30

[John Bruce](#).....31

[James Richards](#).....31

[Jacob Schneider](#).....31

[Thomas Hodgson](#).....32

[John McClare](#).....33

[George Leach](#).....33

[John Rosney](#).....33

[William Tyner](#).....34

[George Dodd](#).....34

[William & Richard Murphy](#).....34

[Research Notes](#).....35

[Sources of Information](#).....36

[Media Clippings](#).....38

[Alphabetical Index](#).....39

Summary

Summary

The first recorded white visitor to The Basin was W. H. Hovell who explored the area in 1827.

Rev. James Clow's Corhanwarrabul run included The Basin and he pastured stock there as early as 1838.

William Turner and his family were the first long term white residents of The Basin, settling there in 1851. There are no official records to support the claim that they resided in The Basin except some letters written by Turner and unvalidated claims by other authors. However, a detailed argument is provided to support the claim.

The name "The Basin" is attributed to Baron Von Mueller who established a camp in 1853 on the creek flats near the corner of The Basin-Olinda and Sheffield Roads. The flat area of land on this corner combined with the surrounding hills form a distinct basin. Von Mueller, musing as he camped in this area, named it "The Basin". In 1868, John Hardy created the first map of the Dandenongs and was the first to officially pen the name "The Basin" on a map.

William Peverill Watson was the first official occupier of land in The Basin. On the 5th February 1867, Watson was granted title to Crown Allotment A.

The Dobson, Chandler and Wicks families settled in The Basin in 1870's as market gardeners. All families and their descendants have made enormous contributions in influencing development in The Basin area.

John James Miller, James and Emily Griffiths and Sir Matthew Davis all built palatial houses in The Basin. In 2017, only John James Miller's house remains and is owned and maintained by The City of Knox. The other two houses were destroyed by bushfire.

James and Emily Griffiths were religious people and devoted their time as benefactors to the local community. Both were killed in a tragic railway crossing accident in Bayswater. Ironically, in 2016, the railway crossings are being removed with the railway relocated underground.

Distinguished Resident

Helen Chandler

Helen Chandler must be one of The Basin's most distinguished residents having been awarded an MBE in 1967 for services to the community. Helen lived in The Basin for over 60 years after marrying Bert Chandler, who inherited Como Nurseries from his father, William Chandler.

The Red Cross, Royal Children's Hospital Auxiliary and Glengollan Retirement Village were just a few of the community organisations Helen devoted her life to. Her community work involved much car driving and when she obtained her drivers license in the 1930's she was one of a rare breed of women drivers.

The MBE award was a fine tribute to this great lady who devoted her life to those less fortunate than herself. Helen Chandler passed away in August, 1987.

The Basin is Formed

In the year 1770 the British ship “The Endeavour” was nearing the end of a three year voyage. The year before on 1st June, 1769 the captain, Lieutenant James Cook, had observed from Tahiti the crossing of the sun by the planet Venus. Cook then sailed around New Zealand and headed west. He discovered the east coast of Australia on the 20th April, 1770 and sailed north along it for eight days. Stepping ashore at Botany Bay on 28th April, he proclaimed the land “New South Wales” - a nation was born.

On his voyage, undertaken for scientific observation and discovery, Cook had with him two eminent botanists, Joseph Banks and Dr. Carl Solander. Both were greatly interested in the many new plant species they found around Botany Bay.

In later years after Batman and Fawcner had started another settlement at Port Phillip in 1835, other botanists were attracted to the fauna and flora to be found in the nearby hills. These hills, known by the aborigines as “Coran warabile”, were to reveal the most exquisite and unique flora and fauna to be found anywhere in the world.

It was in such a setting that The Basin was

formed.

The First Inhabitants

It is known that Aborigines have inhabited Australia for 40,000 years or more and The Basin area was home to the Wurundjeri tribe. Early white settlers had contact with the Aborigines and implements (stone axes, knives and spear heads) have been found by men ploughing and cultivating The Basin’s soil.

The Aboriginal tribes knew of the fertility of The Basin area, and indeed even up to the 1860’s members of tribes hunted the forest and fern gullies for wallaby, possum and native bear. Some trekked through The Basin and Bayswater foothills en route to hunting grounds in the Warburton Ranges.

The First White Visitor

The first recorded white visitor to the area now known as The Basin was the explorer W. H. Hovell.

In late 1826, Captain Samuel Wright arrived off Phillip Island in command of the vessels Dragon and Fly. He carried orders to establish a convict settlement in Westernport to discourage French interest in the area.

Captain Wright’s group consisted of soldiers, convicts and a few civilians – one being W. H. Hovell. Hovell’s intention was to survey the country around the settlement before heading across country toward Sydney. Hovell came well equipped, with four fine horses, two pack saddles, horseshoe nails, and presents for the blacks. Three convicts had been assigned to accompany him.

It was on Hovell’s fifth exploratory trip in February 1827, that he explored the southern and western faces of the Dandenongs. This route would have taken him through the area now known as The Basin.

Hovell’s explorations were so successful that he abandoned the idea of crossing to Sydney by country and instead returned by boat.

The Westernport settlement was abandoned in February 1828.

Depasturing Licences

Depasturing Licences were issued for the purpose of allowing the grazing of stock on Crown Land and were part of the “Act to restrain unauthorised occupation of Crown Lands” passed in 1836 in Sydney by the Legislative Council.

Soon after the foundation of Melbourne in 1836, settlers flooded into Victoria and by 1840 they had settled on and “claimed” most of pastoral Victorian land. The land they claimed was vacant Crown Land. These settlers were known as “squatters” and had no legal claim to the land until they applied for, and were granted, a Depasturing Licence for the land. The land was then known as a “pastoral run” or a “run”. Initially, the licence fee was set at 10 pounds per year irrespective of the size of the run. In later years, the fees and allowed land sizes were varied.

Pastoral runs were only on lease from the Crown, and the lease holder had no title to the land. In 2017 a number of pastoral runs still exist in the northern parts of Australia.

Pastoral runs were usually given a distinctive name by the original licence applicant and boundaries were loosely defined, usually by geographical features. The first licences were not issued until 1838, and one of the first was to Rev. Jas. Clow for the Corhanwarrabul run which included The Basin area.

Prominent Early Visitors

Daniel Bunce

The settlement at Port Phillip was five years old when Daniel Bunce, a botanist, arrived from Hobart. The blue range of hills lying some 25 miles east of Melbourne attracted his attention and, assisted by a group of natives, he explored the area.

In 1840, he blazed a track east of Melbourne through to the foot of the Dandenongs. The Basin would have the most likely place for him commence his ascent up the Dandenongs as it is a direct route east of Melbourne. Allan Dodd, a descendant of the George Dodd, who took up land at

the foot of the Dandenongs in 1873 (known as "Dodd's Gully"), claimed that Bunce's route passed through his descendant's property which is the source of the spring which feeds the Dandenong Creek.

It seems as if others may have previously ventured into the Western Port Range, as they were then called, but Bunce must be accorded the distinction of having been the first known white man to have ascended the Dandenongs. During his ascent, he made copious notes of the area and collected botanical specimens.

In later years Bunce joined Leichardt's expedition along the Condamine in Queensland, and later again became curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens.



The Turner's house in The Basin circa 1860. Turners descendants claim that this house was located on The Basin-Olinda Road near the corner of Sheffield Road.

Photo courtesy Croydon Historical Society.

Baron Von Mueller

Baron Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich Von Mueller (an imposing name for an unpretentious man) showed real interest in The Basin.

Appointed Government Botanist to the State of Victoria in 1852, "The Doctor" as he was known, spent a week in The Dandenongs and became so enthralled with their beauty that after many subsequent visits he established a camp in The Basin in 1853 on the creek flats near what later became William Chandler's property at the corner of The Basin-Olinda Road and Sheffield Road. From this and other camps he made excursions into the bush collecting botanical specimens.

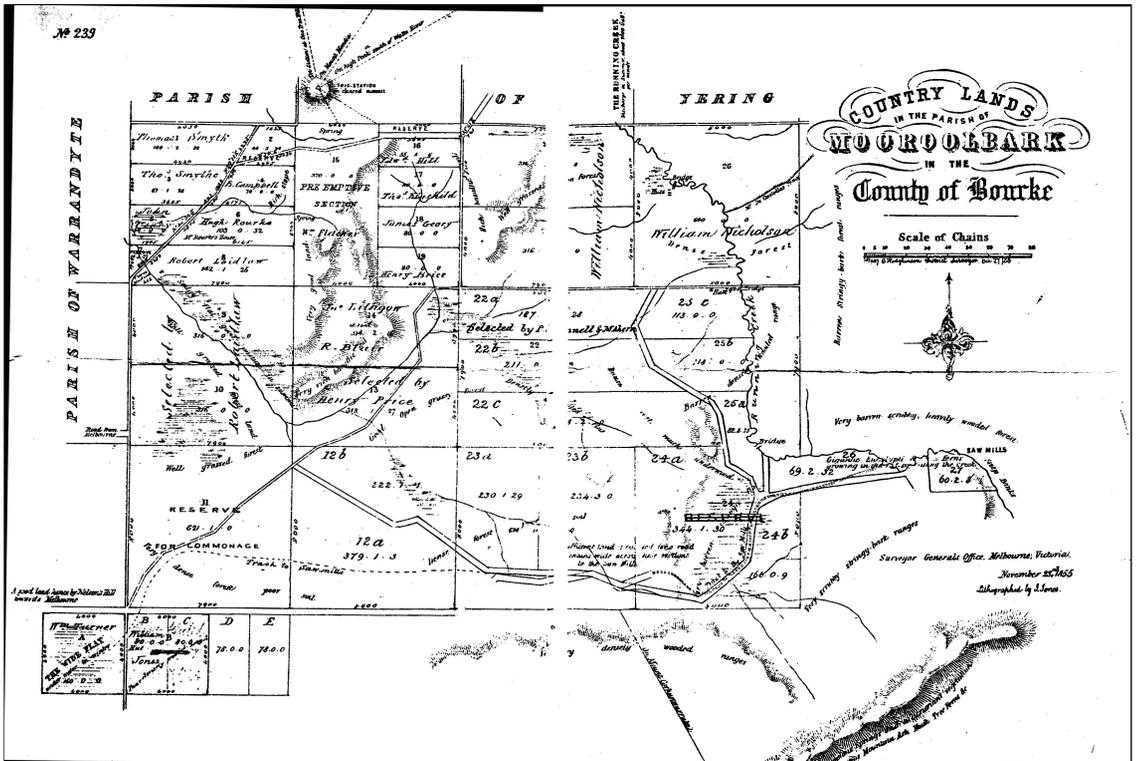
Von Mueller, born in Germany in 1825, came to Australia because of poor health. In 1852 he was appointed the State's first Government botan-

ist. It was in this capacity that he first visited the Dandenongs in 1853.

From 1857 to 1873 Von Mueller was Director of the Melbourne botanical Gardens. Von Mueller first exported eucalypts to many parts of the world and introduced many valuable plants, including the Monterey pine to Australia and it has been said he also introduced the blackberry.

A busy, but simple kindly man, Mueller invariably wore a white muffler, and at times wore wooden clogs. He enjoyed bread and butter, German sausage and ginger-beer.

For his outstanding work Mueller received many honours. The King of Wurttemberg made him a baron, Queen Victoria knighted him, and he received honours from France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Denmark, Holland and Sweden.



1855 map of part of the area now known as Croydon. William Turner's land of 160 acres is on the bottom left hand corner on what is now the corner of Dorset Road and Mt. Dandenong Road. Turner's land is marked with an "A". This indicates that the land may have been part of a Pre-emptive right claim. Note the "Track to Saw Mills" between Turner's land and the Saw Mills on the RH side. Also, the geographical feature on his land marked as the "THE WIDE FLAT".

The First Pasturing of Stock

The first pasturing of stock in The Basin area can be credited to Rev. James Clow. In 1838, he was granted a Depasturing Licence (see inset on page 3) to graze cattle on an area of land (or run) he named “Corhanwarrabul”. The name was taken from the Aboriginal word “Coran Warabile” which refers to the Dandenong Ranges. This run was approximately 36 square miles and roughly bordered by the Dandenong creek from the Police Paddocks in Rowville along past Bayswater and The Basin, parts of The Dandenongs and back around through Narre Warren East.

By 1860, this run had been broken up into a number of smaller runs. The closest of these runs to The Basin being the “Dandenong Creek Run” which was roughly bounded by Burwood Highway, the Dandenong Creek and Dorset Road – a total of 6 square miles.

The Name

The name “The Basin” is attributed to Baron Von Mueller, a botanist, who established a camp in 1853 on the creek flats near what later became William Chandler’s property at the corner of The Basin-Olinda Road and Sheffield Road. The flat area of land at this corner combined with the surrounding hills form a distinct basin. Von Mueller, musing as he camped in this area, named it “The Basin”. From this and other camps he made excursions into the bush collecting botanical specimens.

The earliest written recording of the name “The Basin” is on a plan of the Dandenong State Forest prepared by Surveyor John Hardy in 1868 (see map on page 12).

Early surveyors used field books to record raw survey information which was used for the later creation of plans and maps. They showed the physical features that were on the ground at that time and the survey

control that would be used to tie down this information. Page 21 in Hardy’s field book number 17 dated March 20, 1868 has the location “The Basin” clearly written and page 22 has a rough map showing allotments in The Basin marked “Wm Turner” and “Watson”. There are also numerous references to “One Tree Hill”.

William Chandler referred to “The Basin” when in 1872 he applied for a licence to occupy 40 acres (see page 24).

Mail to The Basin originally came addressed “Macauley via Ringwood” but later Macauley became known as Bayswater.

In some early land transactions, The Basin area was referred to as “North Scoresby”.

The Primary School, when first opened, was called “The Dandenong Ranges School”. During 1883, under Head Teacher Alice Hammond, the

Dandenong Range School was re-named “The Basin” as the previous name was too indefinite. This arose after a visit by Inspector Walter Gamble in November 1883 (when the average attendance was 20). He made a recommendation that: “.....the School be known as “The Basin” State School No. 2329, North Scoresby. Dandenong Ranges is too indefinite and is not recognised in the district. “The Basin” is the local name and is likely to be permanent.” The name was officially adopted by the Education Department in 1884.

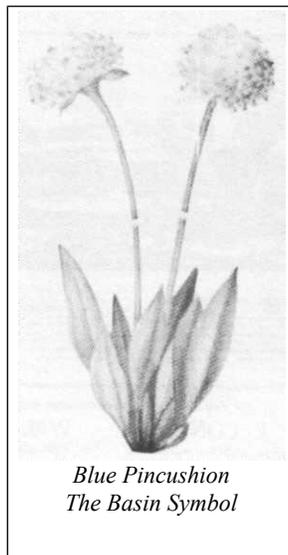
Local residents in the early 1890’s referred to the area near the corner of The Basin-Olinda Road and Sheffield Road as “The Little Basin” and the low area west of the Salvation Army buildings (known as the “Army flats”) as “The Big Basin”.

The Oakleigh & Ferntree Gully Times reported on 18th July, 1891 that Cr. Chandler of “The Little Basin” lost many plants in a flood.

Advertisements for the guest houses Hazel Dell and Clevedon



Eastern Rosella
The Basin Emblem



Blue Pincushion
The Basin Symbol

used Sassafras and Bayswater up until about 1930 and then used The Basin.

At the second meeting of the newly inaugurated The Basin Progress Association in July 1926 at The Basin Primary School, it was suggested that the name “The Basin” might be changed to something more in keeping with the grandeur of the Dandenong Ranges. A motion was put, supported by Guest House proprietors and some who had weekend cottages to let, to change the name because of its “ludicrous nature”. The names of “Eurimbla”, “Echo Valley”, “Eigenia”, “Veron-

ica”, “Lower Sassafras” and “South Sassafras” were suggested.

The motion to change the name was opposed by the Chandlers and Dobsons, pioneer families for whom the name had its roots in family traditions. They claimed the name had “distinction”. The motion was lost by a narrow margin.

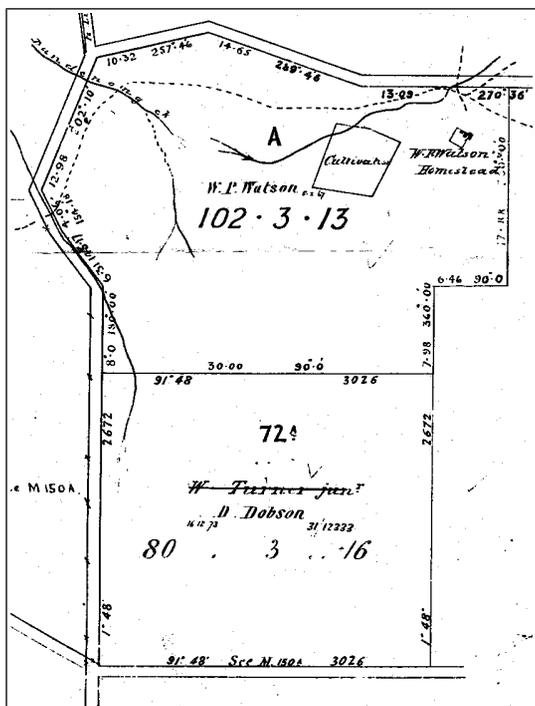
Early land sales in The Basin used Sassafras and Bayswater to refer to the land location.

In the 1920's and 1930's, the area around Mountain Highway/Claremont Avenue/Toorak Avenue was known as Switzerland and later Somerville after the estate names.

Two other “The Basins” have been heard of in Victoria – one in the Bacchus Marsh area and another near Lakes Entrance.

Associated with the name is the emblem of The Basin (see picture on page 6). The Football Club, The Primary School and the Scout Troop all originally chose the Rosella as their emblem because of the abundance of Eastern Rosella's in The Basin. The Basin Football Club won their first premiership as the “Rosella's” and later changed to be known as “The Bears”.

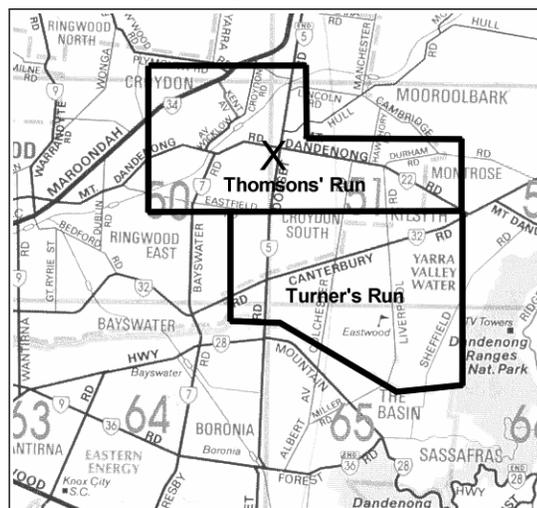
The Basin Progress Association adopted as their symbol a small blue native flower – Brunonia Australis, commonly known as Blue Pincushion (see photo on page 6). This little blue flower used to “carpet the ground” between The Basin



1866 map showing allotments A and 72A in The Basin. The Basin roundabout is located at the bottom left. Pavitt Lane is at the top. The road running up the LH side was never proclaimed except at the top where it is now Liverpool Road. On the RH side is now Sheffield Road. Note homestead and cultivation at top RH corner: William Peverill Watson was granted title to Crown Allotment A in 1867 and this was the first freehold land in The Basin.

William Turner Jnr. held a lease to Allotment 72A in 1867 but had his licence cancelled for being involved in “illicit distillation”. William Hall Watson held a lease in 1870 and David Dobson was granted title in 1872.

Map copyright Titles Office.



A modern map overlaid with the approximate boundaries of Thomson's and Turner's runs. Turner's lot (marked with X) is on what is now the corner of Mt Dandenong and Dorset Roads in Croydon. The lot is well within Thomson's run.

The Name

and Bayswater.

Letter 1

May 1854

To His Excellency
Charles Joseph Latrobe Esquire
Lieut. Governor
of Victoria

The Humble Petition of Wm Turner
Licensed occupant of Crown Lands
in the County of Ewylin
Humbly sheweth

That your petitioner having been a licensed occupant of Crown Lands for several years applied about of Three years ago under the pre emptive right for permission to purchase (160) On hundred and sixty acres of land for a homestead which application had been about 12 months ago but of which permission your petitioner has never received any official information that your petitioner having repeatedly applied to the Post Office Melbourne was assured by the Post Master General that no official communication for him had reached that office that your petitioner applied to the Hon the Colonial Secretary, who gave your petitioner an order addressed to the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, directing that officer to receive the amount for said land that your petitioner being compelled to return home to his family, placed the requisite funds in the hands of his agent, who neglected to present the money at the proper time that your petitioner on returning to Melbourne, was exceedingly distressed to find, that this neglect had occurred that you petitioner then personally tendered the money, but was informed that it could not be received without the special permission of Your Excellency

That your petitioner is married, has a large family & is poorly of but limited means, & is compelled to cast up the whole of his possessions from home. Your petitioner therefore humbly prays that your Excellency will be pleased to take the matter into your favourable consideration, and grants per mission to your petitioner to pay the money into the Treasury for the said land And your petitioner, as in duty bound I will ever pray
W. Turner

The First Residents

William Turner (see photo on page 11), his wife Margaret and their children were the first known long term white residents of The Basin. However, the only written evidence to support the Turners living in The Basin in the 1850's is in a letter written by Turner (see Letter 5 on page 10) and claims from descendants of the Turners. In particular, Tom Turner, the Turners second son who died in 1932 at the age of 88, was well known for making this claim. He passed on to his descendants that it was well remembered in his family that he was only 2 weeks old when they moved to the area now known as The Basin. He also claimed that their house was located on what is now The Basin-Olinda Road. Tom was a long term and prominent resident of Croydon. The

Letter 2

To the Honorable
The Colonial Secretary
Sir

The humble Petition of William Turner humbly sheweth that your petitioner did on the 16 th June 1854 pay into office of the Colonial Treasurer £160 for One Hundred and Sixty Acres Land (granted under Pre-emptive right) at Cohanwarranbull Dandenong Creek (known by the name of the White Flat) & which your petitioner resided on when he made application for same land and your petitioner has not been able to obtain the Grant in consequence of the land applied for being decided to be on Thompson's Run and as there is no land on your petitioners land fit for Agricultural purposes (and your petitioner being in a very humble position) having borrowed the said sum of £160 to pay for the said land, and in consequence of not being able to obtain same, has not been able to pay the party from whom the money was borrowed and an executor is now pending on your petitioner for recovery of said £160.

Your petitioner therefore humbly beg that you will direct the return of the said sum of £160 otherwise it will result in the ruin of your petitioner and family consisting of nine children, and who are entirely dependant on your petitioner And your petitioner in duty bound will ever pray

William Turner

Croydon Historical Society has many photos of Tom and his family.

Other publications also make the claim that the Turners were the first white residents of The Basin.

Turner's descendants claim that the Turners first lived in The Basin and then moved to Croydon. However, as will be shown later, the available evidence shows that the Turners first lived in Croydon, then moved to The Basin and then moved back to Croydon.

William Turner was born in Yorkshire in 1813 of a Quaker family and died in Ringwood in 1893. Turner was a Captain in the English army and his commission took him first to Sydney in 1837 and then to Melbourne where he arrived in 1840 (according to his death certificate). Turner gave up his commission soon after his arrival because the public flogging of convicted persons for petty offences was in conflict with his Quaker upbringing. After arriving in Melbourne, Turner opened the first Tailors shop in Elizabeth Street, and also conducted brick making works in partnership with Goliath Chatterton. On his death certificate, Turner's profession is listed as a Tailor.

Turner married Margaret Jane Killean in 1847 at St James Cathedral, Melbourne. She was born in Ireland in 1825 and died in Mooroolbark in 1882. The death certificates of both parents list that they had 10 children but the children's ages listed on the certificates are incorrect. From other records, the children and their Date of Birth (DOB) were as follows: William (DOB 1842), Thomas (DOB 1844), Janet (DOB 1847), Joshua

(DOB 1850), Louisa (DOB 1851), Catherine (DOB 1855), Hector (DOB 1853), Rose, (DOB 1857), May (DOB 1859), and Annie (DOB 1864). Louisa was the first born at their house in The Basin in 1851, and was the first known white child born in The Basin district. Tragically, Louisa died at the age of 17 and Joshua died at the age of 20.

Turner claimed in a letter dated 1855 (see Letter 2 on page 8) that he had a family of 9 children. However, it appears that the Turner's only had 7 children in 1855. Either the Turner's had other children that died very young or Turner was exaggerating his situation to support his claims. From Government and Church records, there are sketchy accounts indicating a possible 4 other births to the Turner name in the 1840's, but these cannot be confirmed.

In the 1840's, Turner held a Depasturing Licence for a run known as "Western Port". This run encompassed the areas of Lilydale and Croydon. In June 1849, he took up the Depasturing Licence for a pastoral run known as "Stringy Bark Forest Run" or "Mooroolbark" which he held until 1869. This run was first leased in 1840 by Rob Bennet who held it until 1842. William Cole held it from 1842 to 1843 and Rogerson and Dick held it from 1846 to 1847.

Turner also held a Depasturing Licence for an unnamed run which was located North of the Dandenong Creek extending from The Basin to the West (see map on page 7). It is recorded that he held this licence in 1852 (from the description of the run) but no other records can be found to establish the full period he held the run.

Letter 3

Melbourne 27 April 1855

To the Honorable
The Colonial Secretary
Sir

I applied to you by
Petition on the 19th ? relative
to the refunding of £160 for land
granted to me under preemptive right
at Corrwarrabul Dandenong Creek
Not having yet received an answer to
the same I take the liberty of writing
to ascertain if the same has been received

I am Sir
Your best Humble Servant
M. Carlton

for Wm Turner

Letter 4

I have reason to suppose that at the time Turner paid the purchase money, he was fully aware that he could not obtain a grant of the portion of land at the locality called the White Flat as I find that on the 15th of March 1851 he was ordered by the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the County of Bourke to remove from the locality,
which formed part of the run leased to Mr Thomson. That being the case there appears to be no reasonable ground for complying with the Petitioners request, except under his plea of poverty, and therefore His Excellency is pleased to sanction the refund of the money as an act of grace
12 June 1855
F. H. Powlett

The First Residents

In 1844 Turner erected a house near the area now known as Croydon South and moved there with his wife and children. It seems that the land he erected his house on was part of his Western Port run. William and his family were known to have lived in harmony with the local Aborigines.

In 1851, Turner applied to purchase, under Pre-emptive right (see inset on page 11), 160 acres of land surrounding his house. Assistant Surveyor H. B. Foot was instructed to: “mark lots for Turner and Thompson etc on the White Flats of Dandenong near the northern bend of Dandenong Creek connecting the survey with the southern boundary of the Parish of Warrandyte”.

In the 1850's, the plains North and South of the Dandenong Creek where it flows West from the Dandenongs were known as the “White Flats”.

Turner's lot was marked by Surveyor Clement Hodgkinson but the lot was found to be part of John Thomson's run (see map on page 7). On 15th March, 1851, Turner was ordered off the land (see letter 4 on page 9).

Letters from Turner on pages 8 and 8 confirm that he was ordered off the land and that his pre-emptive right was annulled. He also states that he resided on the land when he was ordered off. He claims to have paid 160 pounds for his pre-emptive right and requested a number of times that the money be repaid after the right was annulled. Eventually, he was granted return of the money (see letter 4 on page 9).

TURNER, William
Cohanwarranbul creek, Dandenong
(farmer)
freehold of the White Flats

TURNER, William
Warrandyte, grazier
Depasture Licence
Evelyn

TURNER, William
Cohanwarranbul, farmer
Freehold
Mornington Div.

*Copies of the 3 listings of William Turner for the
1856 Victorian election.*

In the publication “Crown Lands Pre-Emptive Right Applications: Victoria 1850 – 1854” by Marjorie Morgan, William Turner is listed in the County of Evelyn as having a Pre-emptive application as follows:

*Name of Run: Head of Dandenong Ck
Area applied: 160 acres
Application Date: 20 Feb, 1851
Area granted: 160 acres
Approval Date: 30 Apr, 1852
Amount: 160 Pounds
Payment Date: 16th June, 1854*

The name of the run is given as “Head of Dandenong Ck” but this is a position description and not the name of the run as Turners was an “unnamed run” (according to Government records). It is unclear if this is the same land that Turner was ordered off on 15th March 1851 but the Payment Date correlates with the date quoted by Turner (see letter 2 on page 8). However, the Approval Date is 30th April, 1852, which is after Turner was ordered off the land which was deemed to be on Thomson's run

Letter 5

April 20th 1858

*Chief Commissioner Crown Lands
Sir Having been allowed my preemptive rights by the Government bearing date April 13th 1853 which was marked of Mr Hodgekinson by the district Surveyor for which I paid £160 into the Treasury which was afterwards Annulled As forming part of Thomsons Run. Eighteen Months after I applied to the Surveyor General to have the land Above Mentioned put up for Sale which I purchased I humbly beg to have one Hundred and sixty Acres Marked of for my preemptive right which was allowed me by the Government The Ground I now apply for is Situated about 2 Miles East of H. Roukes purchased Land on the Dandenong Creek where I now reside The Improvements Consist of my House outbuildings Garden Etc stock Yard Etc
Your Obedient
Servant
W Turner
Address Mr Turner
Dandenong Creek
To be left at ? ? ? ? ?
No 79 Elizabeth Street Melbourne*

Interestingly, in 1855, Turner requested that the land he was ordered off be put up for sale by auction and he purchased it (see Letter 5 on page 10) The land he purchased is shown on the map on page 5.

Note that Turner uses the term “Corrwarrabul Dandenong Creek” at least twice in his letters implying that the two names were used synonymously in those days for the Dandenong Creek.

A detailed 1855 map of a part of the County of Evelyn (see page 5) shows 160 acres of land marked “Wm Turner” on what is now the South-Western corner of the junction of Dorset Road and Mount Dandenong Road in Croydon. The land is marked with an “A” indicating that this land may have been part of a Pre-emptive rights application. A track is clearly marked running from his land to a sawmill. It is well known that Turner ran a saw mill and supplied wooden casks for a boiling-down works in Mooroolbark. Also marked on Turners land is the geographical feature “The Wide Flat”.

This land is almost certainly the land originally part of John Thomson’s run that Turner applied to have surveyed for his Pre-emptive right in 1851. Turner was ordered off this land but later purchased it at auction.

Turners Pre-Emptive application is also entered in the “Applications Register for the purchase of Land under Pre-Emptive Right” held by the Public Records Office. In the remarks column it states “*Measured by Mr Hodgkinson – but on Thompson run land put up for auction & purchased by Turner £160*”. The entry is dated 1852.

When Turner was ordered off Thomson’s run in 1851, it is thought that this is when he moved to, and established a residence, in the area now known as The Basin.

In 1856, Victoria had its first election for Upper and Lower houses. Victoria was divided into

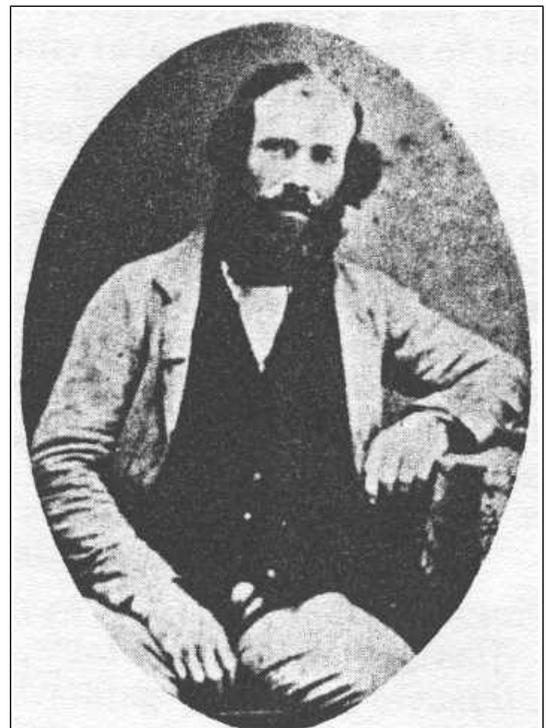
Divisions and The Basin was in Evelyn Division with Mornington Division further South. The boundary between Evelyn and Mornington was a line running approximately east of Oakleigh. Persons eligible to vote in the Lower house were:

- *Owners of freehold land to a value of £50.*
- *Owners of leasehold land to value of £10 annually.*
- *Crown tenants of waste lands or miners rights.*

Collectors were appointed and potential voters were invited to send the Collector their names, surnames, places of abode and particulars of their qualifications to the Collectors office or the Collector would call.

The Collector for Evelyn was Andrew Ross and for Mornington was J. R. Hudson.

Collectors were required to make an alphabetical list of all the qualified persons within his area of collection and these lists were published. Other potential voters could dispute any name on the list and there was a mechanism for resolving these disputes. After resolving any disputes, a final electoral roll was created.



*William Turner
First White Resident of The Basin
Photo courtesy Croydon Historical Society*

Pre-emptive Right

In 1847, an act was passed that gave settlers who held a licence for a Pastoral Run an exclusive right to purchase part of the land and later on, all of it. This was known as giving the settler a “Pre-emptive Right” to the land.

To qualify for a Pre-emptive grant, the applicant must be living in a homestead on the land and it must be inside a run licenced to the applicant. Granted land was almost always in increments of 80 acres, rectangular and with one side pointing North-South.

The First Residents

How the Collectors determined if a person was “qualified” is not known and other than the dispute mechanism, it is not known how the validity of a potential voters submitted information was checked.

Three listings referring to Turner are in the records of the 1856 election. The information in these listings is reproduced in an inset on page 10.

Extracts for Turner from the final electoral roll are as follows:

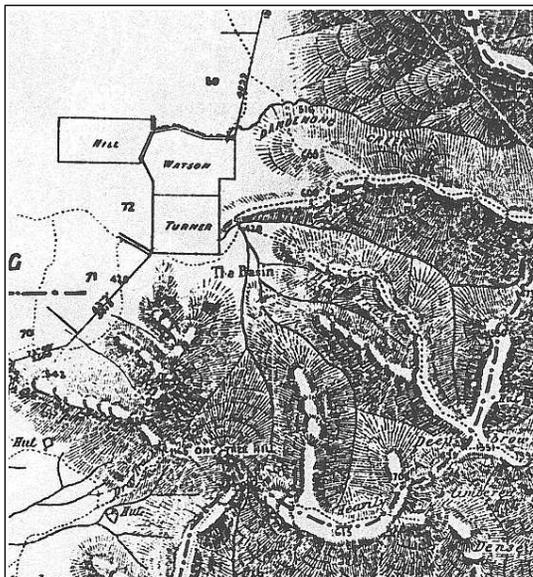
Mornington Div.

769 Turner, William Cohanwarranbul, Farmer The White Flats, Dandenong. Freehold

Evelyn Div.

403 Turner, William Warrantdyte, grazier, depas-ture license. Warrantdyte

It is difficult to correlate any of the election records with what is known of Turner’s holdings. Although Turner is listed as holding freehold land in the Mornington Division this seems unlikely as this Division is well south of his known holdings. It may be that Turner was confused as to the Division boundary and as the extent of checking the validity of voters details is unknown, the information in the electoral records cannot be taken as accurate.



Portion of a 1868 map by John Hardy of the Dandenong State Forest. Two dray tracks are shown starting at The Basin. The Basin roundabout is located on the bottom LH side of the land marked “Turner”.

In 1858, Turner applied to purchase, under Pre-emptive right, 160 acres of land (see Letter 5 on page 10). To purchase land under Pre-emptive right, the land must be on a licensed run. Turner held the licence to an unnamed run North of the Dandenong Creek

Turner says in his letter that he is residing on the land and that it is situated “about 2 Miles East of H. Rourke’s purchased Land”. Hugh and Henry Rourke held the Dandenong Creek Run from 1843 to 1853 and in 1854 Henry Rourke took over the run in his name only.

Rourke applied for, and in 1854 was granted, 160 acres of land within his run under Pre-emptive right. Rourke’s Pre-emptive land was located on what is now the South-East corner of the junction of Mountain Highway and Scoresby Road. On later maps, Rourke’s land is marked with an “A” indicating the land was originally part of a Pre-emptive right application.

The statement in Turner’s letter “about 2 Miles East of H. Rourke’s purchased Land” would place Turner’s land near the current The Basin township. This means that in 1858 the Turners were living in The Basin and it is most likely they moved there in 1851.

Crown allotment maps of The Basin in the area pointed to by Turner show an allotment marked with an “A” which may indicate the Pre-emptive right application made by Turner. This allotment is on the South-West corner of the junction of Pavitt Lane and Sheffield Road. William Peverill Watson is recorded as gaining freehold title to this land in 1867 (see map on page 7). The land is not of 160 acres as claimed by Turner, but the land boundaries may have been adjusted between Turner’s application and Watson’s purchase. Allotment A extends North of the Dandenong Creek into land which was part of Turner’s run.

Official records show William Watson and David Dobson as being the first freehold owners of Allotment A and Allotment 72A respectively, but no official records can be located to indicate Turner had an interest in allotment A or any other allotment in The Basin.

The allotment immediately to the South of allotment A (marked as 72A) is recorded as having been leased in 1867 to Wm. Turner Jr., of Lilydale who was most likely the Turners first son. He

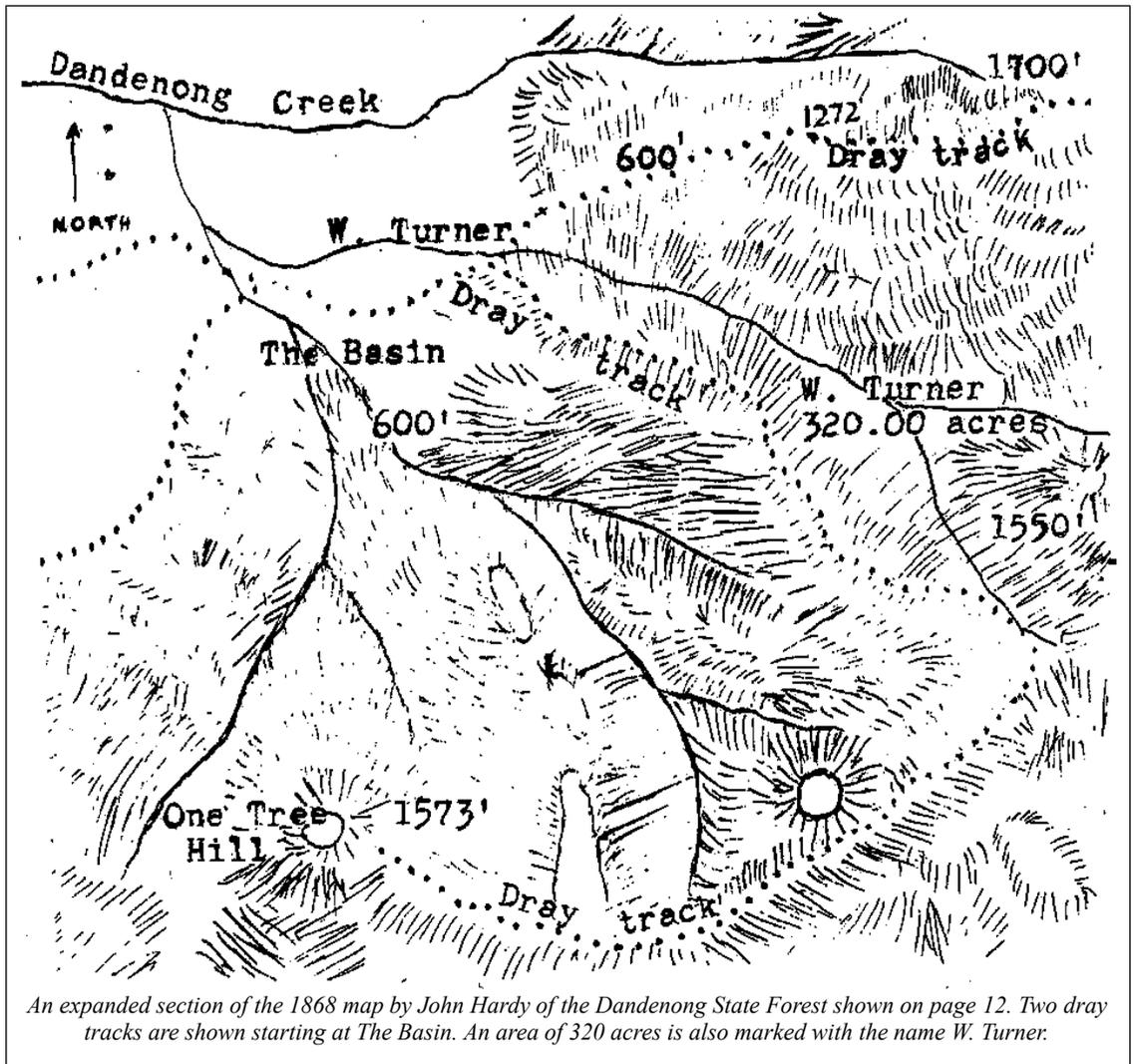
lost the licence for encouraging “illicit distillation”. Also, it is on this land that Turner’s descendants claim the Turner house was located. The name “Turner” appears on an 1867 map prepared by John Hardy (see later).

Turners statement in his letter where he is residing, combined with the fact that allotment A was a Pre-emptive right application gives credence to the claim by Turner’s descendants that the Turners once lived in The Basin. However, it is clear that the Turners did not live in The Basin until at least 1851.

In 1867, the Government instructed John Hardy to survey the Dandenong Ranges with a view to preserving sections of it as a forest. Hardy

created a detailed map of The Dandenong State Forest which included details of tracks and huts around The Basin (see map on page 12 and a more detailed section of the map on page 13). Turner’s descendants claim that Turner’s son, Tom, guided John Hardy in his survey.

On Hardy’s map, a dray track starts near land marked “Turner” in The Basin and then heads East splitting into two tracks, each following a ridge to the top of the mountain. These tracks are most likely the first tracks in the area and would have been created by William Turner. The Northern track became known as the “Bullock Track” or “Holden’s Track” (after George Holden) and follows the route of what later became Range



The First Residents

Road (now closed) to Olinda. The Southern track follows the route of what later became Cobblestone Road (now closed) to Ferny Creek. Both tracks would have been initially constructed to cart timber from the forest to Melbourne.

Other dray tracks start above Watson's land and head North and East. One dray track leads to a leasehold of 320 acres held by William Turner in the forest just below Sassafras. This leasehold would have been used in conjunction with his wood cutting operations. The detailed map shows the name "W. Turner" on the map near what is now Dobson's Creek

In the 1850's, William Turner (senior) is recorded as being sought after by an inspector from the Board of Land and Works for cutting timber on the upper regions of the southern branches of the Dandenong Creek without a licence. George Holden and his two sons were well known for cutting timber at Olinda during the 1850's and later. Both Turner and Holden would have had a hand in creating the tracks shown on Hardy's map.

The tracks around the land marked Turner and Watson were the main routes to the top of The Dandenongs at the time. They would have been well used by timber cutters, settlers and visitors as early as the 1850's.

The evidence that all tracks start near the land marked "Turner" together with Turners 320 acre land lease just below Sassafras and being sought after for cutting timber without a licence all indicate that William Turner resided on the land marked "Turner" on Hardy's map.

In 1860, the Turners moved back to Croydon to the land they first settled on in 1844, were removed from in 1851 but later purchased in 1855.

After Turners wife Margaret died on 4th December 1882, he married Harlettie Louisa Groombridge on June 30th, 1883 and they had three children, Sydney Groombridge Turner, born 12th July 1883, Claribell Victoria Turner, born 1886, and Myrtle Elsie Adelaide Turner, born

Ferntree Gully Coat of Arms

John James Miller was a well known early settler but how many knew he chose the Ferntree Gully Shire's coat of arms. In his capacity as the first Shire President, he said he believed the design of a "lyrebird and bower, surrounded with fern trees and the motto 'Prolific in God's Gifts' would be very appropriate".

1889. At the time of this marriage his occupation was stated as a Tailor and was living at 41 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. This was his occupation given when he resigned from the Army.

William Hector Turner died on July 1st 1893 and was apparently well known for his humanitarianism.

See the "Research Notes" section at the end of this chapter for information gathered by other authors about William Turner and other relevant information.

Founder

A founder is defined as "one who set up, established and originated a permanent home or edifice at a place".

William Watson was the first person to hold title to land in The Basin, but did not reside there very long.

The Dobsons and Chandlers came later and had a large influence in establishing The Basin with their involvement in local affairs.

The Turners were the first white residents of The Basin and indeed the Dandenongs, but the significance of this fact is passed over or given little status. As Murial McGivern relates in her publication "Founder of the Dandenongs", William Turner is the founder of The Dandenongs and The Basin.

The First Official Land Holder

William Peverill Watson is recorded as being the first official occupier of land in the area now known as The Basin. On the 5th February 1867, Watson was granted title to Crown Allotment A (see map on page 7). Watson paid cash for the 102 acres at £1 per acre. Improvements were already then valued at £345 and they included a homestead, outbuildings, some fencing and cultivation. The aforementioned map is dated 1866 and has Watson's name marked on Allotment A. Presumably he held the land in a leasehold capacity before he purchased it and it is therefore likely that he occupied the land from at least 1864.

Watson sold Allotment A to his daughter, Emma Rachel Dorrington, on 2nd August 1867 and on the 9th December 1872, David Dobson

purchased the land to add to his existing holdings.

To the South of Allotment A is Allotment 72A. William Turner Jnr. held a lease to this Allotment in 1867 but had his licence cancelled for being involved in “illicit distillation”. William Hall Watson held the lease in 1870 and David Dobson was granted title in 1872.

Prominent Early Settlers

Many early settlers were attracted by the fertile creek flats at The Basin. The most productive land being Allotment A, 72A, 72B and 75 (see maps on pages 7 and 24) with the Dandenong Creek and its tributaries running through them. The astuteness of the early settlers was confirmed by Robert Thompson, Government inspector, who wrote in 1870:

“The command of water here for irrigation over an extent of 65 acres might turn out six loads of vegetables every day round the year”.

Other early settlers were attracted by the Forest and easy access to large tracts of timber or the scenic beauty of the streams and fern gullies on the foothills of the mountains.

David Dobson

David Dobson was born in 1838 in Newcastle on Tone, England, and arrived in Melbourne on the “Persia” on 20th March 1854. The ship’s register described him as a 16 year old agricultural labourer from Cumberland. It also stated that he was travelling to Melbourne with his “uncle”, but all later official records show him as the son of Thomas and Susan, and the brother of Thomas 13, Charlotte 11 and Jane 9 who had boarded the ship in Liverpool, having come from “Gifford, East Lothia” in Scotland. An older brother, John Thomson, also emigrated to Melbourne. At that time the Victorian government was advertising for people with farming experience, and the Dobsons were exactly the type of family they were looking for.

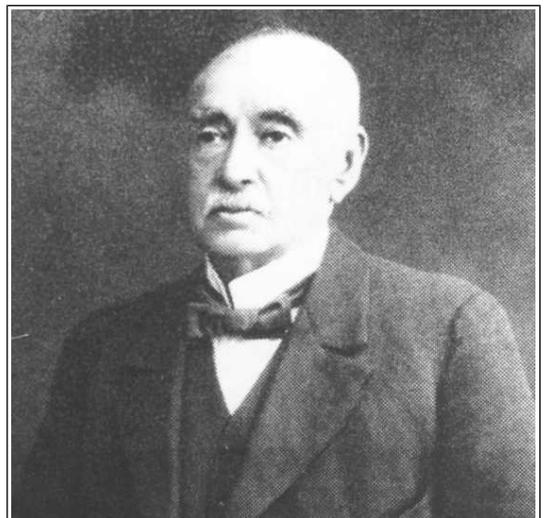
The Dobsons began by felling timber, including ships’ masts (thus the naming of “Mast Gully Road” at Upwey), and lived in the Ferntree Gully National Park area. David’s mother Susan died in 1858, and his father Thomas later married her younger sister Christina Cree. Members of the

Dobson family settled in Scoresby and carried out farming and grazing. Apparently David had his first introduction to the locality which became The Basin when working with stock from their farm “Rushdale”. At that time what is now The Basin was part of the area known as North Scoresby.

In 1867 David married Mary Ann Lum who had been born in Lambeth, Surrey, England. They had 9 children: Robert Lum born in 1868, Mary – called Polly 1869, James Henry 1871 (died 1891), Jayne 1873, Flora 1875, Charlotte 1878, Alice Maude – called Maude 1880, Agnes 1882 (died 1889) and Elsie 1885.

The Public Records Office cannot produce a file to show when David Dobson was originally licensed to occupy his selection, Crown Allotment 72A, on the corner of the present Basin-Olinda and Sheffield Roads, nor whether he leased it after the probationary period. However, his outright purchase of the 81 acres was registered on 16th December 1872. This means, that under the regulations of the day, he must have occupied it officially for at least the previous two and a half years; although a brief reference to the missing file mentions “The Land Act 1865”, so it may have been even longer.

He also bought Crown Allotment A, comprising 102 acres adjoining the northern boundary of 72A and stretching across what is now Dobson’s



James John Miller.

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Prominent Early Settlers

Creek from today's Sheffield Road to Liverpool Road (before it was straightened) and north to the present Pavitt Lane. This allotment, the title to which was registered in his name on 9th December 1872, was transferred from Emma Rachel Dorrington, the daughter of William Peverill Watson. Watson had selected the land officially in 1866, well before implementation of "The Land Act 1869", which governed most settlement in this locality; and appears to have been the first official occupier of land in what is now The Basin. However, records at the Land and Survey Information Centre show that in 1866 there was already a "homestead" towards the north-eastern corner, and a small area of "cultivation" on the creek flat (see map on page 7). Presumably Watson had been in possession unofficially prior to that date, probably from at least 1864, as he obtained title

on 9th February 1867. Emma Dorrington was registered as the owner on 2nd August that year. The purchase of this land brought David Dobson's total holding to about 180 acres.

David did not bring his young family to The Basin immediately on his obtaining land; and for a time members of the Dobson family came over from Scoresby to work there. The family home was built close to what is now Sheffield Road; and was used as the manager's residence after the property was purchased by the Salvation Army in 1897.

In February 1879, a petition prepared by David Dobson on behalf of 17 families was presented to the education authorities requesting that a school be provided in the area. The Dobson family was shown as having 5 potential students resident at the time, the Chandlers 6 and the



David Dobson and Family Circa 1905.

Back Row: Herbert Pegler, Maud Pegler, Albert Nicol, Mary (Pollie) Nicol, Henry Kleinert.

On Right: Elsie Dobson, David Dobson.

Middle Row: Charlotte, Charlotte Unthank, Jane Hodgins, Jane (Jenny) holding baby Arthur Kleinert.

Bottom Row: Albert Nicol, Gilbert Nicol, Helen (Nellie) Kleinert.

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society.

Wicks 4. As the birth certificate of Charlotte Dobson, who was born on 30th April 1878, records the local Mrs. Wade as midwife and Mrs. Chandler as a witness, it seems certain that the Dobson family was living at The Basin some time prior to that date.

David Dobson and his family carried on dairy farming and market gardening on the property at The Basin, although apparently the running of stock on the acreage was later regarded by David as his main enterprise, as he described himself as a “grazier” on his younger daughters’ birth certificates.

David’s sixth daughter, 7-year-old Agnes Susan died in 1889, and his second son James Henry died in 1891 at the age of 20.

In 1895 his elder son, Robert Lum Dobson, married Janet Wicks. As was common in those days, and in lieu of wages for his many years’ hard work on the family property, his father built the couple a home. It was situated on the western boundary of the property on Fern Glen Road (later Liverpool Road). The title to some 20 acres of the original Watson holding surrounding the new house and situated between Liverpool Road and the creek was transferred to Robert Lum Dobson in 1897 when David Dobson sold the bulk of his property to the Salvation Army. David went into semi-retirement in Bayswater, and died in 1906.

Robert Lum Dobson purchased a further area of some 40 acres, part of Crown Allotment 72, from his southern neighbour, John Yeadon; bringing the total area of his property to about 60 acres. Crown Allotment 72 had changed hands several times since the Crown Grant to Woodhouse in 1878 and was apparently purchased on terms by Yeadon from Melbourne businessman Bruce in 1898. Transfers, all signed by the Bruce family, were registered to Dobson on 30th April 1901, the Minister of Education in 1902, and (of the section to the west of Liverpool Road) to the Salvation Army in 1903. The balance was transferred to Yeadon in 1904, and eventually also sold to the Salvation Army.

Robert Lum Dobson and his wife Janet carried on vegetable growing and dairy farming, and planted fruit trees for a future orchard; but Robert died suddenly in 1902 at the age of 33. We are told his death followed a bout of rheumatic fever

which he contracted after going out to plough a paddock, in spite of being quite ill. He found he could not continue, and went to lie down under a tree on the damp ground. His subsequent death was a shock not only to his family but to the whole community. Robert had set off with a load for the market, but when fellow growers who had arrived earlier noticed his wagon approaching, and went to greet him, they found he had died during the trip, his horse having completed the journey unaided. Good neighbour Harry Chandler arranged the sale of the wagon load of produce.

Robert’s wife Janet was left with three little children, Janet Mary (Jean) aged 5, James David (Jim) 3, and Robert John (Bob), less than 2 months old. Janet, a determined and independent lady, set about ensuring that her family kept the property her husband had worked so hard for. She employed a “hired man”, in the face of disapproval from some local residents who believed it was improper for a widow to have a male person resident on her property; and ran the farm with his help and that of her children. Joe, the farmhand, was a hard worker and reliable not only with the everyday farm work, but in the continuing clearing and draining of the property. His only recorded failing was of a tendency to stay overly long at Dodds’ wine saloon at the corner of Mountain Highway and Bayswater Road on his way home from market, or after carrying out farm business in Bayswater.

For about 4 years following Robert Lum Dobson’s death, one of Janet’s unmarried sisters, Emily Wicks, spent most of her time at the Liverpool Road property. The two families had a reciprocal arrangement which included Janet’s farmhand spending time working on the Wicks property, and Janet’s brother Jack assisting on the Liverpool Road farm, including pruning fruit trees (which he subsequently taught Joe to do), and killing animals for meat. Both properties grew large quantities of potatoes, and two men were required to dig and bag them. Also, from time to time Janet helped her sisters pick berries and other fruit on the Wicks farm.

Janet kept a diary for a number of years after her husband’s death; commenced, we are told, in an attempt to alleviate the loneliness of her evenings. Although it was a “farm diary”, recording times of plantings and market prices, it did in-

Prominent Early Settlers

clude personal entries. Those concerning children's illnesses illustrate one of the many disadvantages of the pioneering life – the distance from medical assistance. Janet tells of one occasion when "little Bobby" was seriously ill, and of having to be driven in the wagon to Ringwood before travelling by train to the doctor (probably either at Box Hill or Hawthorn), while the baby had convulsions. Her diary outlines not just Janet's eventually successful struggle to keep the family farm; but the neighbourhood's co-operative attitude, where members took each other's produce to market, lent horses and farm supplies, and supported each other in times of illness and bereavement.

Janet's children assisted with the farm work from a very early age, Jim and Bob milking the dairy cows by hand before school. The main farm income at first was from vegetables and dairy farming. Janet also sold meat, poultry, butter and honey. As the orchard trees matured, the main emphasis of the farm's production moved from dairy (for which the land on the flat was unsuitably wet in winter) and vegetables to the fruit growing. Janet recorded in 1903 that apples, cherries and plums were being marketed. Jim and Bob

worked together on the farm until Jim's sudden death in 1939 at the age of 41. Although Bob then ran the farm, Janet continued to be involved with day to day work almost until the time of her death in 1946.

A second home was built on the Liverpool Road property in 1944. This was occupied by Janet and her sister Emily Wicks. Bob, who had married Kathleen (Kit) Burden in 1932, moved with his family from the Wicks House on what is now the Basin-Olinda Road, to occupy Janet's former home. In 1972 this house, at the time being used as a store shed, was burnt down by an arsonist.

Bob Dobson died in 1959, having been in ill-health for some time. His son James David (Jim), then aged 16, took over full-time management of the farm with the support of his mother Kit.

John James Miller

James John Miller, originator of "Miller's Racing Guide" and founder of a well known printing business, is known to have first purchased land at The Basin as early as 1872. His two main holdings were Allotments 71 (205 acres) and 74 (114 acres) which he secured title to in 1877 and 1879 respectively. New Forest Road was blazed through Allotment 74 and The Basin shopping centre is situated on part of it.

Miller's first home "Bayswater House" was built close to the present Batterham Reserve. This house, which gave Bayswater township its name, had a garden of walnut, chestnut, cherry, peach, fig, plum, filbert, apple and pear trees.

In 1888 a second house was built, a typical gentleman's residence known as "Melrose House".

Miller, a printer and bookmaker, bred horses and trained them on two specially built trotting tracks, the remains of which have been wiped out by residential development in the Batterham Reserve area.

Miller liberally supplied fireworks at Christmas times and the youngsters, in particular, appreciated the tremendous show. The display was held on his trotting track for the purpose of publicising The Basin.

In 1888, he was one of many well known promoters of a proposed tramway to run from



William Chandler
Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Bayswater to Olinda through The Basin. The scheme was to take advantage of the recent extension of the rail link to Ferntree Gully.

A progressive active man, Miller, despite blindness, became first President of the Shire of Fern Tree Gully in 1889 and was driven about by his son Fred in a horse drawn buggy.

Miller operated a sweepstakes in which tickets cost £1 and the prize was £5,000. This was one of his main sources of income. In the 1890's the Government made it illegal to operate sweepstakes as a private enterprise. He continued to operate the sweepstakes, was raided many times by police, but was rarely caught. Eventually, he was caught, lost his business and was forced to sell his property in 1897 due to financial losses.

John James Miller died in December 1922 at the age of 91.

Edmund and Janet Wicks

Janet Russell (see photo on page 28) was born in England. In Melbourne in 1869, at the age of 30, she married 39 year old widower Edmund Wicks, also English-born (see photo on page 30). They lived in Moonce Ponds; and the births of their children, John Herbert (Jack) in 1870, Janet in 1871, Annie Victoria in 1873 and Emily in 1875, were recorded at Essendon.

On the 1st May 1877 Edmund, described as a "gardener," living in Moonie Ponds, was licensed to occupy a selection of approximately 259 acres in "North Scoresby via Ringwood." The licence was unusual in that the area covered was in two separate parcels – about 210 acres in what is now Ferntree Gully, and about 50 acres in present-day The Basin.

The 210 acres in Ferntree Gully was first selected by William Edwards who was granted a licence in 1872. He stated his profession as a gold and silversmith and his address as 85 Collins Street, East Melbourne. In 1874, Edwards forfeited his licence because of non payment of rent.

A Peter Miller, who gave his address as c/o Mr R. Bain, Berwick, applied for "a portion of the land lately occupied by Edwards in Parish of Scoresby" but his application was rejected.

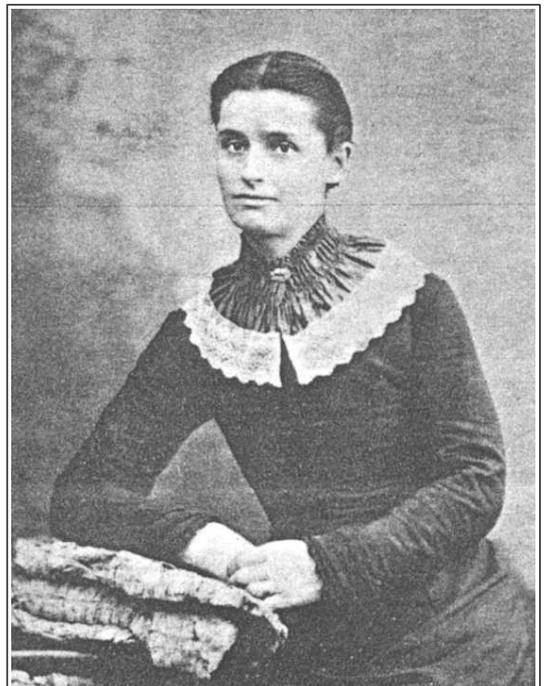
The 210 acres was initially offered for sale by public auction but was passed in. In 1875, Ed-

ward Perry Amesbury negotiated with the authorities and applied for a licence to occupy the 210 acres forfeited by Edwards and in addition the 50 acres mentioned earlier in The Basin. A business card indicated that Amesbury was a Surgeon Major in H. M. Indian Army but on his licence application he stated his occupation as a farmer. He stated his address as "Ferntree" in St Kilda. His application was granted. A section of the Western end of the 50 acre property was exercised in 1875 for a road marginally reducing the size of the property.

In 1876, Amesbury alerted the authorities that, due to his wife's ill health, he is compelled to be absent from his selections and that they be offered for sale by public auction. He valued his improvements at £150 which included a residence.

Edmund Wicks expressed an interest in the 2 allotments and after considerable negotiations with the government departments concerned and the departing licensee, he applied for, and was granted a licence for the 2 allotments in 1877. He paid £150 to Amesbury for his improvements.

The Wicks family went to live on The Basin



Kate Chandler

Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Prominent Early Settlers

land; and the four children were recorded as existing residents in a petition to the “Minister of Public Instruction” prepared by David Dobson and dated 28th February 1879.

On 29th April 1880 Edmund, in his application for a lease, reported that the value of “improvements” on the combined acreage then totalled 635 pounds; and consisted of a five-roomed 25 foot square slab and weatherboard home with galvanised iron roof and two brick chimneys, a stable, cow house and piggery. He also reported having sunk 2 dams, put 11 acres under cultivation, planted 339 fruit trees, rung 30 acres of timber, cleared a further 20 acres of scrub, and erected many chains of fencing of various kinds.

On 18th May 1880 Edmund was granted a lease to the total acreage; but on 29th November 1880, at the age of 50, he died of a stroke. After Edmund’s death, Janet sought to rationalise the estate by applying to the authorities for permission to sell the leasehold interest and improvements on the Ferntree Gully property, and to allow her to purchase a freehold title to the property at The Basin. The reason she gave on her submission was “*to close the administration in the most advantageous way.*” Janet, described as “*administrator*” of Edmund’s estate, was granted title to

the property at The Basin on 3rd June 1881 at the going rate of one pound per acre.

The lease on the Ferntree Gully land was taken over by Ephraim Hansen, who received title to it on 10th March 1887. “Ambleside Park”, the home of the Knox Historical Society, is situated on a remnant of this land.”

Janet Wicks worked the property herself, with the help of her children, by that time aged about 10, 9, 7 and 5 years. The farm, watered by two creeks crossing the property, produced flowers, vegetables, berries and other fruit. Aided by the natural fall of the land, irrigation was possible to the lower sections without pumping or digging dams. The fruit orchard was established on what is now the eastern section of Wicks Reserve; and in later documentation Jack is described as a “fruit grower.”

When reminiscing during the 1940s, Janet Wicks’ eldest daughter Janet Dobson told her grandchildren how from the time she was about ten years old she stayed at home looking after her two little sisters while her mother and brother drove to the market in Melbourne. She prepared their meals, including boiling the big kettle to make oatmeal porridge for breakfast. The girls were not nervous of being alone, except during thunderstorms. On hearing of this, Mrs. Chandler, their neighbour on the opposite hill, would send one of her big boys to stay on market nights if thunderstorms threatened.

The preparedness of Janet Wicks to run the farm herself, to the extent of doing her own marketing, illustrates the character of this woman. However, the family suffered a severe financial setback when banks “crashed” in the 1890s. An emergency dash to Melbourne was not in time to withdraw their money before the bank closed its doors.

The first home occupied by the Wicks family was towards the front of the property not far from the (now Basin-Olinda) road. In October 1905, as recorded in Janet Dobson’s diary, work commenced on the large attractive weatherboard home further up the hill away from the road, and the building work was sufficiently advanced for Annie’s wedding to be held there in January 1906. This became known as “the Wicks House” (see photo on page 32).

In 1895 Janet Wicks’ eldest daughter Janet

John James Miller Family

Born: 13/05/1831 at Bayswater (England)
Died: 30/11/1922
Married: Maria Frances Standeven in 1856
Maria died 1863
Children: James Arthur born 1856

Married: Rebecca Maria Sayers in 1864
Rebecca died 1881
Children: Rebecca Maria born 1865, died 1865
Rebecca Maria born 1866, died 1957

Married: Clara Agnes Robinson 1883
Clara died 1941
Children: Frederick Francis born 1884
Clara Maud born 1886
died 1972 (Mrs Del. Sante)
Ruth May born 1887
died 1959 (Mrs A Davey)
Gwendoline Eleanor born 1892
died 1983 (Mrs W Blogg)
Winifred Jessie born 1896,
died 1971 (Mrs L Wilson)

married Robert Lum Dobson, the handsome elder brother of her friend Polly (see photo on page 31). They took up residence in a new home on Fern Glen (later Liverpool) Road which had been built for them by Robert's father David on the south-western boundary of his property. The couple had three young children, Janet Mary (Jean) who was 5 years old, James David 3 years old, and Robert John (Robbie and later Bob) less than two months old, when Robert died at the tragically young age of 33. However, Janet refused to give up the farm, which by the time of her husband's death had been increased to about 60 acres.

Annie later married Arthur Harris, the caretaker of Ferndale; and they had three children, Janet Emily (Millie), Arthur and Edgar. In 1925 Millie was killed in the tragic railway crossing accident at Bayswater when a wagon driven by Ferndale's owner, Mr. Griffiths, also claimed his life, that of his wife and of another passenger. It is said that Arthur senior, whom they were travelling to meet, found his daughter's body in the wreckage.

From the time of Janet Dobson's widowhood in 1902 until Annie's marriage in 1906, Emily Wicks, who did not marry, spent most of her time at Janet's Liverpool Road home. She then returned to the Wicks House, to help her mother and brother Jack, who also remained single.

Janet Wicks died in 1917 at the age of 78; and the farm became the property of Jack, who lived only another four years, before he died in 1921 at the age of 51 years. Jack served as a Shire of Ferntree Gully councillor for a number of years up until his death. Probate of his will was granted to his sisters Annie and Emily. By this time the Wicks holding included a triangular section of land to the west of the original selection along what is now Wicks Road.

After Jack Wicks' death some farming was done on the property by Janet Dobson's sons; although they were mainly occupied in the running of their mother's farm in Liverpool Road. From the time of his marriage in 1932, and up until 1944, Robert John (Bob) Dobson, Janet's second son, and his family occupied the Wicks House, Emily having moved in with her sister Janet. At that time the site of the first Wicks house, in the front paddock, was marked by a lovely red and white camellia and flowering bulbs. Foxgloves

and heather, naturalised from the earlier days, flowered on the property each year. In fact remnants of the heather and an occasional foxglove may still be seen in the area to-day.

In 1944, the developed 30 acres of the Wicks farm was sold to nurseryman John William Robinson, members of whose family took up residence there. In 1948 Annie Harris, the surviving daughter, sold the eastern bush section of the property to Frank William Parr. In 1950, the remainder of the western section was subdivided and sold. It was situated between Mountain Highway and the Basin-Olinda Road, including today's Walker Street and two large blocks on the top side of Mountain Highway.

The Wicks House was destroyed by fire in 1962.

William and Kate Chandler

When William Chandler was 25 years of age he married Kate Timewell, a tailor of Hotham, Melbourne, at the Gardiner Congregational Church on 15th December 1869. His occupation was shown on the marriage certificate as that of gardener.

His bride, Kate Timewell, was born in Kingsbridge, Devonshire, on 15th November 1848, and came out with her family to Australia at the age of four years. Her mother, Louisa Kate Timewell,

Griffiths Falls

About 500 Metres upstream from where the eastern most creek runs through "The Ravine" is a small waterfall. These falls are known as "Griffiths Falls" and the creek is known as "Griffiths Creek" (see photo on page 23).

This area was part of the original Ferndale Property owned by James Griffiths. He made many walking tracks through the property that included the falls in the route. He constructed a bridge across the creek and some seating down beside the falls. At one time there was a large kettle there enabling walkers to make a fire and boil water for tea (even though Griffiths was of "Griffiths Tea" fame – he apparently did not supply the tea).

The falls were also accessible from the 1 in 20 road (Mountain Highway). In later years, they were a regular haunt for young lovers. In later years, most tracks have disappeared except for the one which follows the creek from The Ravine up to the Falls and beyond.

In the late 1960's, The Basin Progress Association approached the local Council with a plan to improve access to the waterfall, but this was never implemented. The falls have also been known as "Ferndale Falls" and "The Basin Falls".

Prominent Early Settlers

wrote a fascinating and historically valuable account of the journey out from England in the sailing ship "Birmingham" in September 1852. She was preoccupied with the difficulty of preparing food, which each family had to provide for itself, and cook throughout the journey. They arrived during the gold rush period when there were 100 ships in "Melbourne Bay"; and she gave a detailed account of prices and housing conditions in "a village called Collingwood" where the family managed to get three rooms for 35/- a week on their arrival.

William and Kate Chandler had eight sons and three daughters, the three eldest children being born at Malvern, and the remainder at The Basin. They were William Thomas, born 8th October, 1870; Henry Rupert, born 17th November, 1871; Alfred Elliott, born 1st June, 1873; Archibald Charles, born 27th January, 1875; Percival Bertram, born 15th July, 1876; Lawrence Wreford, born 20th February, 1878; Herbert Theodore Septimus, born 26th February, 1880; Louisa Kate Elizabeth, born 15th October, 1881;

Gilbert Edwin, born 7th March, 1884; Esther Marion, born 22nd October, 1885; and Kitty, born 12th July, 1887.

In the early 70's, William felt the need to look for a property of his own, and he discovered land suitable for horticulture below Mt. Corhanwarrabul in the Dandenong Ranges, in the area known as The Basin. He may have been influenced in his selection of the district by Baron Ferdinand Von Mueller, probably well known to his father because of their common horticultural interests. Von Mueller had visited the locality as early as 1853 and during the next 20 years found a variety of plants growing in the hills and on the fertile creek flats of "the basin" formed by the hills. William may have even visited the miner Billy Young, who raised seed for his father on the Olinda edge of the forest just above The Basin.

Whatever the reason, William's choice was a good one, and on 12th February, 1872 he applied for a licence for 40 acres, as yet unsurveyed, "east of Turner's 42nd Section known as" The Basin". He signed himself "William Chandler Jnr., Nurs-



Chandler Family with housekeeper. Circa 1890. Photo courtesy Dobson Family.

eryman, Main Dandenong Road, Gardiner”. On 21st May, he received licence No.11630 for the land, which was surveyed in July.

He first occupied the land in November, 1872. This is evident from a declaration under oath, dated 16th June, 1875, made in support of his application for a lease, which was the second stage in the procedure to be adopted before a title for Crown land was granted. In this, Chandler stated that within six months of gaining the licence to occupy the land (as we have seen, 21st May, 1872) he resided on the allotment “in his own proper person” for a period of two and a half years. He also stated that he had fulfilled other conditions regarding fencing, cultivation and improvements to the property. On the strength of this declaration he was granted a seven-year lease at a rental of 2/- per annum (see plan on page 24).

Chandler’s “substantial improvements” consisted of three buildings “attached to the soil”, total value £210. His first house, built down on the creek flats close to water, was a four-roomed hut measuring 24 ft. square. It was made of weatherboard and galvanised iron and valued at £80. The other two buildings, stable and cowshed, were greater in length, if not in width, than Chandler’s house. The four-stall stable and cowshed, each measuring 27 ft. by 10 ft., were made of wood and bark-total value £8.

Other improvements for which William gained credit were 95 chains of post and rail fence at 9/6d. per chain; chock and log fencing at 3/- per chain, drainage works (slabs laid four feet deep at a cost of 6/- per chain) and the clearing and sowing of six acres with rye grass and clover.

In his declaration given on 17th June 1875, William explained why he had not observed the condition of continuous residence. He says; “I was unable to get the land surveyed until July 25th 1872. It was then too late in the season to fence, clear, dig and drain the ground I wanted for my stock, which consisted of flowers and a general collection of nursery stock so that I had to cultivate on the ground I then occupied. In the meantime I kept men at work on this allotment. I resided on the land with my family the following season and have since resided there continuously”.

William Chandler prospered at The Basin. Probably his greatest difficulty was getting pro-

duce out to market along the rough bush tracks which were often water-logged because they traversed the fertile land deliberately chosen close to creeks. In the very early days, goods were carried in and out by pack horses, but later spring carts were generally used.

Despite the difficulties, carts loaded with produce travelled between The Basin and Victoria Market two or three days a week during the season. The trip was usually made during the night, but sometimes William started in the afternoon and arrived in Melbourne about 8 pm. He would then back into the kerb in Bourke Street in front of the well known Cole’s Book Arcade, and sell part of his load before going onto the market. Dating from very early days, the Chandler family had a stall in “C” shed at the Victoria Market and when in later years they were asked to transfer to “E” shed they declined to do so-ostensibly for sentimental reasons, but in reality because it was a very good position.

Around 1900, the nursery system of selling plants did not exist. For some 35 years, from



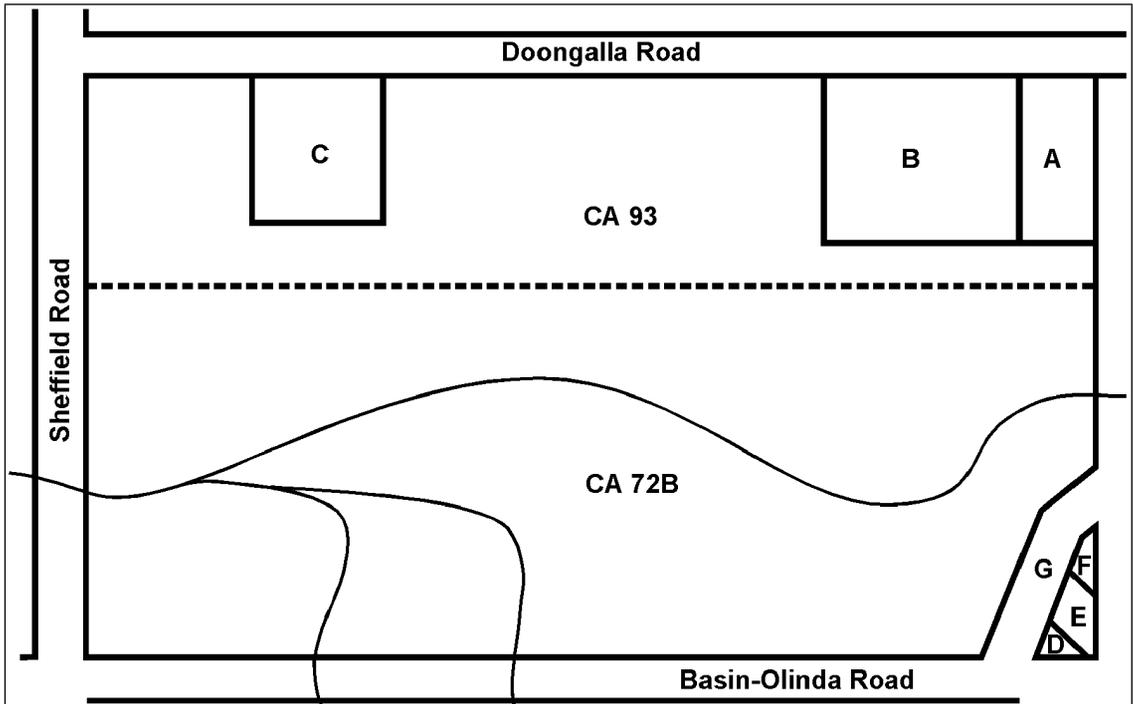
Griffiths Falls. Circa 1913. Note dog below man on the right and the bridge across the top of the falls. See inset on page 21 for further information. Photo courtesy Fergus Chandler

Prominent Early Settlers

about 1900 onwards, the family took a load of plants to the city to be put up for auction at Beauchamp's or at Geelong (in William's day) and later at Bailey & Company's until the time of the First World War. About 1914, a wagon load of flowers was delivered to Ronald's, Melbourne florists, every week during the season.

William Chandler was one of the first people

to grow *Boronia megastigma* commercially. In the early days everything grew well, as there were no diseases or insects to destroy the plants. One exception was a green beetle which infested "Como" every fourth year and stripped the leaves off the fruit trees in spring. Wallabies, possums and parrots were the main problem in the early days, *Boronia* was grown commercially at



*Plan of William Chandler's Land Holdings in The Basin
Being Crown portions 72B and 93 in the Parish of Scoresby.*

CA 72B Comprising 40 acres. Feb. 12, 1872, William Chandler applied for a Licence under Part 2 of the Land Act 1869. Licence number 11630 was granted on May 21, 1872. William occupied the allotment in Nov. 1872. Seven year lease commenced May 21 1875 rental 2 shillings/acre/annum. Feb. 23, 1882 Williams application for Crown grant approved. Purchase price £42.

CA 93 Comprising 15 acres. Licence number 4270 granted Oct. 1, 1877. Title granted Mar. 2, 1886.

A Sold by William to Education Department for £1. Site of State School 1880 – 1899. Repurchased by William for £3 in Aug. 1902.

A & B Transferred by William to Herbert Theodore Septimus, Jan 1909.

C Sub-divided from Crown allotment 93 in May 1919 at time of the dissolution of partnership of Wref. And Bert, becoming the property of Wref. The balance of CA 93 and 72A became the property of Bert. About 1924 Wref sold back C to a Mr. Courier. About 1944, Bert purchased area giving it to John in 1945.

D Transferred by William to Janet Wicks on 22 Jan. 1904.

E William granted easement to James Griffiths on 14th Dec. 1906.

E & F Transferred to Percival Bertram on 20th June 1907.

G Transferred to Shire of Fern Tree Gully on 3rd Mar. 1903 to be used as a road.

Information taken from the book "Family of William Chandler horticulturist"

“Como” by William and his sons until the time of the First World War, when 100 acres-the entire crop-was lost overnight as a result of the disease. Shade houses were in use in this period and elk horn ferns from Queensland were grown there.

William was also one of the first to import magnolias, camellias and bulbs from Japan, and he developed this trade over the years. As the family grew up, they helped in the working of the property and when about 1894, William bought his first camellias from Yokohama Nurseries, it was the task of his sons, Bert and Arch, to layer the camellias in beds specially built for the purpose in the rich creek flats. These flats were naturally subject to flooding and hundreds of plants were washed downstream in the big flood of 1891, when a landslide occurred at Montrose. Many of the plants ended up in the “Bayswater flats”, and some enterprising residents managed to sell them back to William Chandler.

During the early 1900’s, William grew huge peaches, so large that they were packed and sold four or five to a tray and carried in this way by spring cart to Melbourne. Keiffer pears, which kept well and were in great demand during the First World War, were also grown in quantity at this period, while the main market garden produce consisted of beans and cucumbers.

In those days apple trees were allowed to grow much bigger than they are today and one year 52 cases of Statesman apples were picked from the same tree.

When William brought his family-then consisting of a wife and three children-to live at The Basin in the season of 1873, they were at first accommodated in the weatherboard building (mentioned in his application) built on the creek flats, well in from the existing corner of The Basin-Olinda and Doongalla Roads.

The house was built from straight manna gums and messmate timber found on the property. The timber was pit-sawn, even to the weather boards, and had another refinement lacking in most other bush dwellings-3 galvanised iron roof instead of shingles. Arch Chandler was born in the original house in 1875, and was then thought to be the first white child born at The Basin. Legend has it that the large oak tree still standing in Doongalla Road was planted to mark the occasion. It was certainly planted at the time the fam-

ily occupied the original home.

As William’s family increased, he built a more substantial house further up the hillside, constructed from bricks made on the property. Chandler’s property was originally known as “Fern Glen”, but when George Bruce’s house higher up the mountain was named “Ferndale”, William re-named his property “Como”, after the famous Italian beauty spot, in order to avoid confusion. The brick house was first occupied in 1878.

William’s eight sons and three daughters were brought up at The Basin, then an isolated area. The nearest doctor lived at Hawthorn, 18 miles away, and this was also the site of the nearest railway station.

The Chandler family, being mainly boys, occupied themselves with robust pursuits, including swinging through the hazelwoods, dogwoods and low-growing scrub to see how far they could travel without touching the ground, in the manner of possums. Sometimes two boys would wrap themselves around the wheel of a cart (feet braced on the rim at one side, head pressed back against the other, arms clasping the spokes) while two others took the shafts of the cart and ran down to the bottom of the hill.

As already mentioned, cricket was a favourite family sport and on one occasion five of the brothers played for the Bayswater side.

They once challenged the Club to a match and won easily, mainly because the Chandler boys were the Club’s best bowlers. On another occasion, William and his brother Tom took a team to Malvern to compete against that side-they travelled in a two-horse market wagon-and won the match by 25 runs.

As the family grew, William became concerned about their education, which was being rather sketchily undertaken by a busy mother and servant girl. Chandler, hoping to encourage the Education Department to send out a teacher, built a brick school on part of his land and offered it to the Department which-possibly to protect itself against such pressures in a growing State-rejected the offer, but agreed to pay one pound for a block at the north-eastern corner of William’s land, on which a school was built soon afterwards. The original brick building was later used to house the foreman and later again as a storehouse. This

Prominent Early Settlers

school, known as the Dandenong Ranges School No.2329, was opened on 15th December, 1880 under the care of James Maddern. About 40 pupils attended at this time, as it was the first school in the area. In 1883, District Inspector Gamble recommended that the school should be known as "The Basin State School No.2329, North Scoresby", the latter title being generally in use for the present Bayswater district at about this period.

There are some interesting school books dating from this time in the possession of the family. One of Alf Chandler's exercise books dated 1886 shows the name of the school as "Scoresby North School 2329" and its contents-particularly geographical notes-make interesting reading. Other books dated 1893 contain copperplate writing and old-style dramatic ballads.

In 1895, when nearby localities had become more populous and other schools were built, attendances fell off to such an extent that the school was threatened with closure.

It is interesting to speculate whether William's transfer of portion of Crown Allotment 92 to his brother Robert Charles had anything to do with the need to bolster school attendances, as in March 1893, soon after Charles came to live at The Basin, seven children attended the school. Five of these were William's and two belonged to Charles. At the end of the same year, Bert left school and Leslie (Charles' youngest) started, and in this way the number remained steady at seven. At one stage little Kitty Chandler was sent to school at the age of two years and ten months in an effort to keep the school open. After roll call she went out and stayed with the teacher's wife.

The position was critical by 1898 when only four Chandlers attended and in June 1899 the school was closed. For a short time the building was used on Sundays for Methodist services. When it was finally moved to the corner of Mountain Highway and Liverpool Road in July 1900, the building was carted through William's property because the road was then impassable. The land which the school was located on reverted to Chandler in 1902.

William Chandler continued to prosper and was able to add to his holdings of land in the district. His original block consisted of 42 acres, part of crown allotment 72B, located on the creek

flats. His second purchase was land on the hill above the creek, approximately 15 acres of Crown Allotment 93 for which he obtained a licence on 1st October 1877 and finally secured title in 1886. The brick home erected in 1878 was built on this part of the property, and later again the homes of H.T.S. (Bert) Chandler and his son Fergus. Until 1988, when the business was closed, the packing sheds, glass houses and display area of Como nurseries was located on the hillside portion of William's land.

In 1883 he bought Crown Allotment 92 on the One-in-twenty Road, (now Mountain Highway) and ten years later transferred half this to his brother Robert Charles, who built "Clevedon House" and lived there for some years. In the same year William purchased Crown Allotment 79 further up the hill towards Olinda.

The most important of his many land transactions included ownership of whole of C.A. 70 known as Head's selection, at present Boronia, to which he secured title in 1889 (later given to members of his family), and ownership from 1896 for a few years of 47 acres of the old Dandenong Creek pre-emptive Right at Bayswater, also his acquisition in 1904 of 49 acres of Crown Allotment 80, in Doongalla Road, opposite "Como".

In 1884 William bought his first piece of land in the area now known as Liverpool Road, Kilsyth. It was 147 acres (C.A. 48), which had become available due to the death of the original selector Edwin Wade, who had planted a cherry orchard there. Shortly afterwards he bought several more blocks adjoining each other in Liverpool road and used these blocks to set up his sons when it came time to marry.

Although the boys worked on "Como" while they were growing up, they received no wages but had everything found, and following the accepted practice of the time, were thus financially dependent on their father. Three of the Chandler sons were given land in Liverpool Road, and it might said that this was the "cradle" of many of the fourth generation of the Chandler family. The area was not far from "Como"; and cattle were often driven across the intervening depression from one property to another. Each family killed a sheep in turn and this was shared amongst the various households.

William Chandler and his family were well established at The Basin by late 1880's, at a time when The Basin-Scoresby-Fern Tree Gully area was included in the Scoresby Riding of the Shire of Berwick. Dissatisfaction with the remoteness of the seat of local government led to moves to have Scoresby Riding created a municipality in its own right and the Shire of Fern Tree Gully was created in May 1889.

William Chandler was one of the foundation councillors of the North Riding of the new Shire, and entered Council in August of that year. Monthly meetings were held in Dobson's Hall, Fern Tree Gully, on the Saturday following the full moon, since all the councillors either travelled on horse- lack or in buggies.

William was elected Shire President for two consecutive terms from August 1894 but before the second term had expired took the unusual course of resigning the position "because it interfered with business". Perhaps William's most notable achievement in Council was his advocacy of the introduction of the road machine- forerunner of the grader. In 1892 he moved that the owner of such a machine be hired to operate it

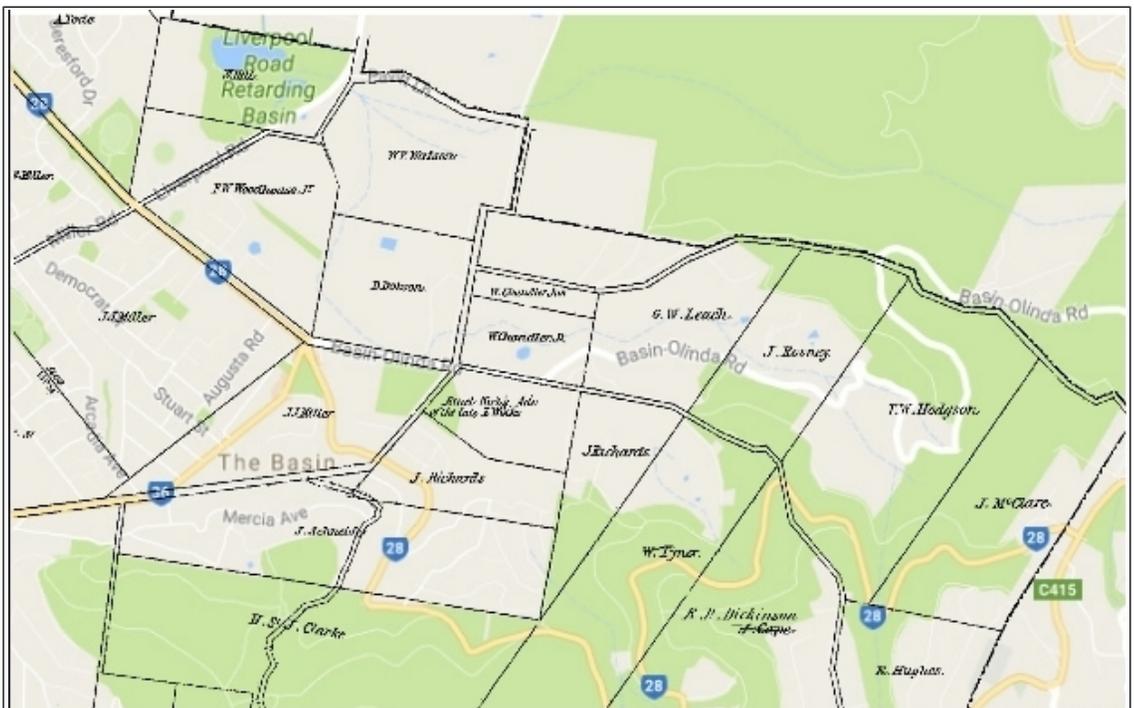
'as an experiment". This was too much of an innovation for his fellow councillors, and he was permitted to withdraw the motion, the Engineer being instructed to investigate and report to next meeting instead. William persisted and the first road machine was bought for £40 later in the year.

William's election as an original councillor of the Shire of Fern Tree Gully started an era of almost unbroken family representation spanning the next 70 years. William himself sought re-election in 1898 and served another three-year term, being replaced by his son Alfred in 1901.

Around the turn of the century William's sons, William Thomas, Harry and Arch, were settled on land in the Liverpool Road area. William Thomas received title to his property in 1900, and Harry and Arch in 1902, although all had settled on the land long before this time.

William's third son, Alfred was given 47 acres at the corner of Boronia Road and Albert Avenue, to which he received title in 1901/2, and here on Head's former selection he founded "Everson Nursery".

William's fifth son, Perce, was given part of William's original creek selection (C.A. 72B)



A circa 1880 plan of allotments, roads and land owners in The Basin area overlaid on a modern map

Prominent Early Settlers

abutting on to the Old Coach Road at The Basin.

Two other sons, Bert and Wreford (known in the family as "Wref") remained on at "Como" when the other boys left home, and were jointly given nine acres of land in Liverpool Road in 1908. For some years these two sons ran the nursery with their father. Each had a third share-until William Chandler's death in 1911. Wref lived on in the old home when William's wife and daughter Kit decided to move to Point Lonsdale in 1915, and soon after he enlisted for service in the First World War. Wref owned in his own right 20 acres of land immediately adjoining his father's on the east along the Old Bullock Road towards Olinda, but included this in the partnership and in return received title to the old family home. (He later sold the home out of the family but Bert bought it back afterwards and gave it to his son John, also selling Wref's former 20 acres to Ferguson.

When Wref returned from the First World War the partnership was dissolved. Bert bought out Wref's share, raising a mortgage to do so, and Wref bought land in Blackburn South and began growing flowers there. Bert then carried on 'Como' alone.



*Janet Wicks circa 1910
Photo courtesy Dobson Family*

Gilbert, youngest son of the family, worked at "Como" until 1904, when he went to America and trained to become a Church of Christ minister. This was largely due to the influence of "Old Mr Gilmour" of The Basin, who, although Church of Christ by conviction, conducted the Methodist Bible Class at The Basin. (This was attended by the Chandler family, although their mother was originally Baptist.)

Harry Chandler married a Gilmour in 1902 and went to the Montrose Church of Christ, and such was influence of the Gilmours that all the remainder of the family living at home, Gilbert, Louisa, Esther and Kit, became Church of Christ and were strengthened in this decision by a Mission conducted at Bayswater about this period. Gilbert's return to Australia as an ordained minister led to the keen participation in the building of a Church of Christ at Boronia.

The three girls of the family, Esther, Louisa and Kitty, helped with the domestic work involved in feeding and housing such a large family during and the season helped with the picking of daffodils and boronia. Each of daughters was given land. In 1913 Esther and Kitty received title to 50 acres Miller's Road, The Basin, and in 1903, the year she was married, received 25 acres in existing Mount View Road, and in 1911 William gave her husband John Maguire another 24 acres at the corner of Forest and View Roads.

James and Emily Griffiths

James and Emily Griffiths (see photo on page 31) came to Australia after the cold English climate threatened Emily with consumption. Griffiths was associated with the well known brand of Griffiths Tea which at the time was known as Signal brand. He first settled in Kew and built a prominent building in the area.

In 1888, Griffiths purchased 184 acres of land in The Basin. The land he purchased was first leased by William Tyner in 1878. Tyners leasehold was transferred to James & John Moore Griffiths in 1888 and he was then granted title. On this land Griffiths erected a magnificent Swiss-style building which he named "Ferndale".

Griffiths was widely known as a benefactor in the local community. He erected the first Sassafras Mechanics Hall at his own expense on con-

dition that any Protestant denomination should be permitted to use the building free of charge for religious services. He provided financial assistance to help erect the Sassafras Church of England. He was also instrumental in helping families survive during the Village Settlement era of the 1890's, when poverty stalked the hills. He practically kept several poor families and whenever possible provided work for settlers. Unfortunately, a few opportunists took advantage of the man's generosity. A typical case concerns one settler who saw the local benefactor and pitched a tale about his hungry family. Griffiths left one pound at Dodd's Olinda store with instructions that the family should receive groceries to that value. When eight shillings had been spent (there are 20 shillings in a pound) in provisions, the settler sent his children to collect the balance in cash but the shop keeper, knowing the man better than Griffiths, refused the children the money.

He was a religious man who held daily services for his staff and family at Ferndale and preached at services held in The Basin School, The Basin Methodist Church and at Mernda Methodist Church which was then located near Olinda and opened in 1901, one of the first Churches in the hills.

Griffiths held a "Carols by Candlelight" in the gardens at Ferndale for many years which was very popular with young children. A band from the Salvation Army used to march across and accompany the singing of the assembled group.

In 1925, James and Emily Griffiths and two others in a party of five were killed at the Bayswater level crossing after a collision between their wagonette and a steam train. At the time James was 75 and Emily was 83.

Other Early Settlers

The 1869 Land Act

Most of the land in and around The Basin was selected under the 1869 Land Act, Sections 19 and 20.

The Act enabled the selector to peg out no more than 320 acres, then request to have the land surveyed and apply for a licence of occupation of the land for three years. During that time a rental of two shillings per acre per annum was payable.

The selector was required to cultivate ten per cent of the land, completely fence it and prove residence for two and a quarter years unless the licence was for non residence. In The Basin area and below Mount Dandenong, fencing a selection would have been difficult due to the steep terrain and thick timber.

If the above conditions were met, the selector had two options they could pursue.

1. They could apply for a Crown grant immediately if they paid the outstanding portion of the purchase price.
2. Alternatively, a lease for seven years could be granted during which time the remainder of the purchase price could be paid at the same rental as the licence (two shillings per acre per annum). The lessee could apply for a Crown grant at any time during the term of the lease if the amount owing was paid off.

Land Selection Files

Documents pertaining to the selection of land and up to a grant of title are contained in Land Selection Files held by the Public Record Office in Victoria. The links to the file numbers are obtained from Crown Plan allotment maps and "Put Away" plans. In The Basin area, some files could not be located and sometimes not all documents were contained in the file. For example, files for Turner, Miller, Watson, Woodhouse and Dobson could not be located but this may be because they were subject to a land act earlier than 1869.

A common theme in Land Selection Files for settlers in The Basin was that of road access. Most files contain letters from landholders, the Government or the Berwick Shire raising the issue of inadequate road access.

Woodhouse

About 1875, F. W. Woodhouse selected 127 acres of land in the area where The Basin Primary School is now located. A portion was later owned by J. L. Yeadon.

Samuel Collier

Samuel and Emma Collier settled on part of

Other Early Settlers

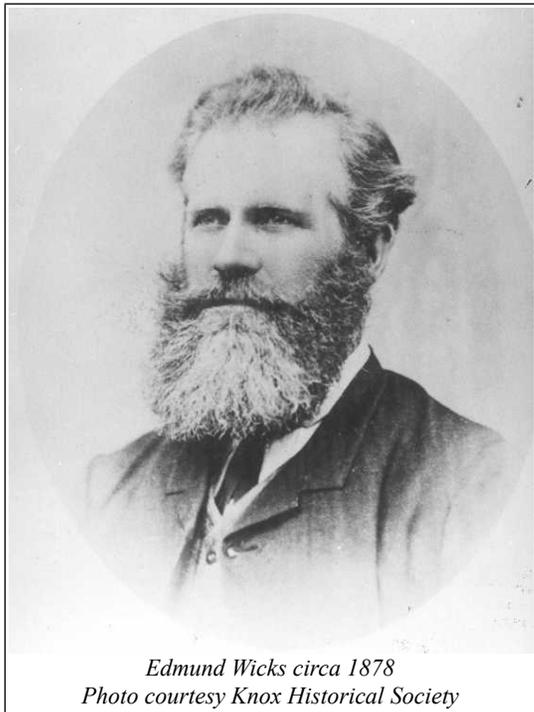
Woodhouses's selection in 1877. They later purchased land East of Colchester Road from J. Chambers, who selected it in 1882. Although Collier's main land purchase was not in The Basin area, his family had a significant influence in local affairs and his descendants lived in the area for a long time.

Samuel Collier was born on the banks of the Merri creek in 1842 and purchased considerable land in the Bayswater and Basin district in the early 1870's. He was elected to the Berwick Council in 1877-1879, and to the Fern Tree Gully Council in 1900, 1901, and 1909-1916, the latter period serving as Shire President.

The Colliers had eight children, five sons and three daughters. The children were Frank (b 1873), Mary, Jessie (b 1888), Elizabeth, Jack (b 1868), Albert, Ernest (b 1891) and Bill (b 1871). Samuel died in 1933 and Emma died in 1920.

John & Mary Barns

In 1878, John Barns applied for a licence to occupy 230 acres on a steep allotment running up the side of Mount Dandenong which included the area later known as Barns Lookout. Although the land was not in The Basin he had a large influence on local affairs. The area he applied for had



Edmund Wicks circa 1878
Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

originally been reserved for State Forest. A licence was granted for allotment 60 for which he paid £1. He stated on his application that he was a carpenter and resided at 48 Swan Street Richmond.

In 1879, he was a signatory to the petition for a school in The Basin and promised two children would attend if a school was opened. The children were Amy (11) and Minnie (9).

In 1881, he applied for, and was granted, a lease. His application stated that he had partly fenced the property, built a house 14 feet by 24 feet with paling sides and shingle roof, a men's hut and had 45 acres under cultivation.

In 1888, he applied for, and was granted, freehold title.

Freehold title to a second allotment 52A, adjacent to the allotment 60, was granted in 1887, on which a house named Torwood was erected on what is now near the corner of Sheffield and Glasgow Roads in Kilsyth. The house was built mostly by John using hand made bricks made from clay on the site. Torwood was completed in 1894 and the family retired there to live.

Minnie Barns later married David Dobson, son of Thomas Dobson Junior of Ferntree Gully. She quoted her birth date as 1871.

John Barns is quoted many times in the Dobson diaries.

George Bruce

In 1878, George Wilkinson Bruce applied for a non resident licence to occupy 237 acres of land on a steep allotment below Mount Dandenong. His application stated he was a draper residing at 22 Dundas Place, Emerald Hill (South Melbourne). His licence was granted for allotment 55.

He was a prominent businessman and often travelled to England. As early as 1883, he was in danger of forfeiting his licence because of non compliance. However, his brother John alerted the authorities that George would attend to the matter when he returned from England.

In 1884, he applied to surrender his licence under Section 19 and reapply under Section 20. This was approved.

In 1886, he applied for a lease stating improvements of a 10 room wood & brick house, another 4 room house, stables and a shed. He had

20 acres of grass, 25 acres under cultivation and an orchard of 5 acres. He also stated *“Clearing and burning off dead timber and undergrowth and cutting road from boundary to residence and several other improvements such as fowl house piggery stockyard etc and orchard kitchen garden etc.”*

In 1887, some of Bruce’s neighbours applied to the Berwick Shire Council for a road through his property to service their properties. A plan was drawn up but he objected and the road never eventuated.

In 1888, he was granted freehold title.

John Bruce

John Munro Bruce was granted title to allotment 56 in 1888, an area of 131 acres. However, he was not the original selector of this allotment.

In 1878, Henry Lum applied for a licence to occupy the aforementioned 131 acres on a steep allotment on the South Western slopes of Mount Dandenong. Bordered on the South by the Dandenong Creek and on the North near the summit of Mount Dandenong. The area had been originally selected as State Forest. His application was granted and he paid £1 for a Certificate of Registration. He stated his occupation as a farmer residing in Mulgrave.

In 1882, he applied for a lease on the property stating his improvements as fencing, a 4 roomed 23 feet by 30 feet dwelling, 10 feet by 10 feet hut, 30 acres of grass, fruit trees and 4 acres of potatoes. He had no family. He stated he was unable to fully comply with the licence requirements because the land was too hilly and the adjoining selectors had not done their share of fencing. Nevertheless, he was granted a lease.

Henry Lum died in 1884 and via his executors David Dobson and John McLean Anderson, his lease was transferred to John Munro Bruce in 1885.

James Richards

James Richards was the first selector of two parcels of land in The Basin.

In 1877, he applied for a licence to occupy 60 acres of land later marked as allotment 92. One side of the land was bounded by what is now Old

Forest Road. His application was successful.

He is shown on the petition requesting provision of a State School for The Basin district in 1879 as having three school age children residing on the land.

In 1880, he applied for a lease on the land. His application stated that he had fenced most of the property, built a 25 foot by 11 foot paling house with shingle roof and cultivated barley, potatoes, peas and oats. He stated his occupation as a farm labourer.

In 1882, he applied for freehold title and this was granted.

Jacob Schneider

Jacob Schneider was granted a licence to occupy 176 acres on allotment 91 in The Basin in 1878.

He is shown on the petition requesting provision of a State School for The Basin district in 1879 as having five school age children that would be residing on the land shortly.

By 1881, he had some area under cultivation, built fences and some buildings and applied for a



James & Emily Griffiths
Photo courtesy Knox Historical Society

Other Early Settlers

lease which was granted. It was not until 1888 that he obtained a crown grant.

In his land selection file, there are letters from Schneider and his neighbour, H. S. J. Clarke, who selected land uphill from Schneider towards One Tree Hill. The surveyor who marked Clarke's original selection had not made provision for a navigable road up to One Tree Hill through either properties. Both Schneider and Clarke agreed that a navigable road was desirable and both selections were re-surveyed with a road annexed through the properties up to One Tree Hill. That road is now known as Government Road and Outlook Drive. The road annexure reduced Schneider's selection to 170 acres.

Schneider's 170 acres of land later became one of the first major land subdivisions in The Basin. It was first known as "Schneider's Estate" encompassing the areas of Mercia Avenue, Bayview Crescent and "The Ravine".

Thomas Hodgson

In 1878, Thomas Walsh Hodgson was granted a licence to occupy 199 acres of land on allotment 83 bounded on the North by Range Road (now

closed) and on the South by the Old Coach Road to Sassafras.

He is shown on the petition requesting provision of a State School for The Basin district in 1879 as having one school age child residing on the land.

By 1881, he had built a fence around the property, was growing crops, raising animals and had built a six room house for his family. Many other improvements are listed in his land selection file.

He is shown on the petition requesting provision of a State School for The Basin district in 1879 as having one school age child residing on the land.

Having met the required land improvements he applied for, and was granted, title in 1881.

Hodgson was in dispute with one of his neighbours, John Rosney, who objected to a road through his property that serviced Hodgson's land. Hodgson attempted to negotiate and both wrote letters to the Secretary of Lands. Eventually the dispute was resolved in Hodgson's favour.

Another house he built later became known as Hazel Dell and was situated along one of the main pack-horse routes from The Basin to Olinda.



*Wicks House on The Basin-Olinda Road. Built in 1906. Destroyed by fire in 1962.
Photo courtesy Wicks Family.*

In the 1890's, Hazel Dell was used as a kind of half-way accommodation house for settlers on their journey between the plains and the hill top.

John McClare

In 1878, the borders of the Dandenong State Forest on the Northern and Western facing slopes were moved up the hill and land on the slopes below the Ferny Creek-Sassafras ridge was opened up for selection.

John McClare also settled on this newly opened land just below Sassafras taking out licence in 1878 to occupy 137 acres on allotment 84 bounded on the North by Range Road (now closed) and on the South by the Old Coach Road to Sassafras.

By 1884, he had built a shack with 4 rooms, cultivated 6 acres, cleared some bush, built some fencing and was granted a lease. His house was destroyed by bush fire around 1899 and for a while he and his family lived in a lean too. After the loss of his home, he had trouble meeting his rent payments but was granted title in 1900. Eventually, most of his land was reclaimed by the Government and restored as State Forest.

Selectors on the newly opened land in Sassafras above McClares land soon realised that they had no practical road to and from their selections. Forty five selectors signed a letter to the Minister of Lands requesting an extension of the Bayswater road through McClares land. The request was granted and a road was annexed and cut through McClares land. The road later became known as Old Coach Road (now closed).

The thick bushland provided excellent cover for illicit stills, one of which was situated near McClare's property. So potent was the whisky that one settler is said to have carried a coffin to a funeral on his wagon and brought it back again!

The section of Old Coach road that passed through his land was know as "Mcclare's Hill" and is shown on early maps. It is claimed that the hill was so steep that some lower class coach passengers had to help push the coach up this hill.

George Leach

In 1878, George William Leach applied for a licence to occupy 142 acres which was later split

into 2 allotments 80 and 81. His application was granted. Lot 80 was bounded on the West by what is now Sheffield road and bounded on the South by what is now Doongalla Road. Lot 81 was bounded on the North by Doongalla Road and on the South by what is now the Basin-Olinda Road. Doongalla Road ran between the 2 allotments.

In his licence application, he stated that he was a farmer residing in Scoresby and already owned 74 acres there which he obtained in 1865 and subsequently purchased.

In 1881, he agreed to exercise a small section of his land to his neighbour, John Rosney, to enable him better access to his land.

His land selection file has many letters from Government officials and in particular, his neighbour, John Rosney (who wrote many letters), indicating that he had trouble meeting the conditions of his lease. Nevertheless, he eventually built a small slab house on the corner of Sheffield and Doongalla Roads, completely fenced lot 81, partly fenced lot 80 and was granted title in 1887.

John Rosney

John Rosney occupied allotment 82 in The Basin, an area of 101 acres. His land selection file has no details about his license or lease. However, he was granted title in 1881 and was therefore one of the earlier settlers in that area.

His neighbours land selection files refer to him in many letters, primarily concerning road access through their properties. The Berwick Shire Council even became involved. A letter from the Berwick Shire Secretary (Mr Robinson) to the Secretary of Lands dated 17th June 1881 stated "*I have the honour by direction of the Council to request that the issue of the leases under the 19th Section of Land Act to G W Leach, J Rosney, T W Hodgson and J McClare be withheld until the Council complete the opening of the new road through these blocks*".

It is not known if the issue of leases was withheld but a map in Rosney's land selection file shows the location of the new road through the blocks. This road later became known as The Old Coach Road (now closed).

Rosney complained in many letters about his neighbour, George Leach, and how he was not complying with his lease conditions. In 1882, he

Other Early Settlers

proposed to the Minister of Lands that Leachs lease on allotment 81 be forfeited and he be permitted to take over the lease. In one letter he stated "*Referring to Mr G. W. Leachs selection at Scoresby I have again the honour to make application for it he has not cultivated One Acre on the whole selection and why he should be allowed 4 years and 8 months to comply whilst other selectors are compelled to within the conditions of the act*". He also complained in another letter that "... *and has not complied with the act with regard to improvements in its present state it is most injurious to me it is a cause for vermin to come and destroy my crops*".

William Tyner

In March 1878, William Tyner applied for a licence to occupy 320 acres of land within the Dandenong State Forest near One Tree Hill and he was given a "Certificate of Registration" for which he paid £1 for. The area applied for was roughly shown on the Dandenong State Forest map drawn by John Hardy.

However, that same month, the District Surveyors Report for the land applied for by Tyner shows a smaller area of 194 acres located closer to The Basin on what later became allotment 87. Later surveyor maps reduced his land to 184 acres because a small section near a road was removed from Tyner's land and added to H B Dickensons land for reasons unknown.

In 1881, Tyner requested that an outlet (road) be made available through Murphy's land near One Tree Hill. However, Tyner and Murphy could not agree on the matter and the request was refused.

In late 1881, after holding the license for two and a half years, Tyner applied for a lease on the land. He had fenced the allotment, built a 3 room house in which his family resided and grown various vegetables. The lease was granted.

In 1884, an outlet onto One Tree Hill was excised and Tyner requested permission to use it but a response was not forthcoming.

In 1888, Tyner's lease was transferred to James and John Moore Griffiths.

George Dodd

In 1878, George Dodd applied for a license to occupy land near the head of the Dandenong creek just below Sassafras. Although not in The Basin area, Dodd was involved in the affairs of The Basin for many years.

His application was granted and a certificate of registration for 240 acres of land was issued on 26th March 1878 for which he paid £1. Later documentation shows that the land area was actually 111 acres.

In February 1885, Dodd applied for a lease on the land stating that his improvements included fencing, 20 acres cleared & grassed, a 5 roomed dwelling 30×15 feet (2 rooms slab with shingle roof & 3 rooms weatherboard with shingle roof), 6 acres of fruit trees, sheds, fowl house, and a pig sty. A lease for 14 years was recommended.

Dodd passed away on 19th October 1892. He left a will leaving his estate to his wife Margaret and in the case of his wife "passing" leaving the estate to his 8 children James Dodd, George Straughan Dodd, Henry Edward Dodd, Thomas Alexander Dodd, Jessie Mary Dodd, John William Dodd, Allan Percy Dodd and Frederick Charles Dodd. Strangely, on the 22nd April 1893, Dodds leasehold was transferred to his executor, Frederick Weber. A crown grant was issued later that year.

It appears that Dodd had problems meeting his rent payments throughout his tenure. A report for the crown lands bailiff in 1881 showed that he was short of money because 2 horses had died. In 1892, The Secretary for lands wrote to Dodd informing him that unless he paid the outstanding rent lease payments his holding may be forfeited.

After his death, the Australian Widows Fund wrote to the Secretary of Lands requesting details of the amounts owing in rent arrears and they paid some of the arrears.

William & Richard Murphy

Two brothers named William and Richard Murphy were granted land in 1888 of 150 acres and 138 acres respectively on the Northern slopes of One Tree Hill. Their titles were separate but

granted within a few months of each other. Both selections were on steep, heavily timbered land.

William was employed as Crown Lands Bailiff and received the sum of 1 pound for patrolling an area as far as Kalorama and Wandin. His main task was to protect the Forest reserve from illegal use including cutting timber without a licence. Jane Murphy, the wife of William, was known as a strong woman. It is claimed she roped a 200 pound sack of flour to two sticks and with the aid of another person carried it up the hill from Fern Tree Gully.

The Murphys built the "Mt Erin Tea-gardens" and a Refreshment Chalet near the summit of One Tree Hill. The Tea-Gardens and the Refreshment Chalet were close together, with the Chalet being on the corner of Hill St and One Tree Hill Rd, and the house being at the corner of One Tree Hill Rd and Mt Erin Rd.

Richard Murphy was granted a licence to occupy his selection in 1878. In his application, he stated his occupation as a "Cabman" and his address as 4 Vine Street, Windsor.

He had trouble meeting the conditions to convert the licence to a lease. Numerous correspondence between Murphy and the Lands department show that he was forced to seek employment (as a cab driver) in Melbourne to meet his lease payments and school his children. Therefore, he was not a full time resident on the land which was one of the requirements of a licence. In his correspondence, he stated that his wife and 8 children had resided on the land full time and he had fallen on hard times with the loss of 7 horses and 8 cows. A report by a mounted constable in 1884 stated that his improvements consisted of some fencing, a 3 roomed cottage with verandah & chimney lined, a small well near a spring, fowl house, shed, stables, cleared land and a fruit orchard.

He was eventually granted a lease and in 1888 given title.

Research Notes

Both Helen Coulsen in her publication "Story of the Dandenongs" and Muriel McGivern in her publications "History of Croydon" and "Founder of the Dandenongs" have numerous references to William Turner.

Neither author refers to a series of letters between William Turner and Government Officials discovered in the Public Record Office Pastoral Run files which provide valuable information about where he lived and when. The letters which have been reproduced here have been copied from faded handwritten copies and translation may not be accurate. Letters are copyright The Public Record Office.

Neither author mentions the Pre-emptive right application by Turner listed in Marjorie Morgan's "Crown Lands Pre-emptive Right Applications: Victoria 1850 – 1854" publication.

The instructions to Assistant Surveyor H.B. Foot to "*mark lots for Turner and Thompson....*" are cited by both authors from Hoddles letter book. McGivern cites that Hoddles letter book also states the survey was completed. I have not checked these citations.

Coulsen writes that Turner selected land in The Basin and indicates that the selection may be linked with the 1851 instruction to Surveyor Foot. Letters 2 and 3 mentioned above from the Public Record Office Pastoral Run files have made it clear that the 1851 instruction referred to land found to be on John Thompson's run. Also, an entry in the "Applications Register for the purchase of Land under Pre-Emptive Right" held by the Public Records Office confirms this.

McGivern writes that "*In 1851 Turner was satisfied with 81 acres of land on his homestead site in The Basin as he had applied for and obtained a licence to 'east of Rourke Bros run at Bayswater' so described*". The references to "1851", "81 acres" and "*east of Rourke Bros run*" are explicit but I have been unable to find evidence to support the claim in 1851. However, the 81 acres mentioned is the same size as Allotment 72A in The Basin which is east of Rourke Bros run. Turner mentions similar land in letter 5 but the letter is dated 1858. McGivern may have had an incorrect date and "Bayswater" was not a term used in 1851.

When William Chandler applied for a licence of 40 acres, later surveyed as allotment 72B, he described the land as "east of Turner's 42nd Section known as The Basin". The 42nd Section applied to land acquired under the 1865 land act so it is assumed Turner had applied for a lease this land earlier than 1865.

Turners elder son, William, took over The Basin leasehold on Allotment 72A but he lost the licence for encouraging “illicit distillation”.

McGivern also refers to a lease by Turner of 320 acres in the forest just below Sassafras. Many “put away” 1868 maps of the Dandenong State Forest area by John Hardy show handwritten annotations referring to an area of 320 acres just below Sassafras. On one map, “Wm Turner” is written on the map but no land area is shown. Other maps refer to “Thomas Turner” (Wm Turners son) and rough boundaries of the area have been drawn. The land appears to be in the same area as land later held by Rosney and Hodgson with an additional section located North East, crossing the Dandenong Creek and finishing below Mount Dandenong in the area later granted to George Dodd. If Turner held land in the area that Hardy proposed as State forest then it is possible that his licence or lease was revoked. However, no official records have been located that confirm any licences or leases in that location.

The 1868 map of the Dandenong State Forest by John Hardy was also used extensively by the surveyors who first surveyed land under the 1869 Land Act. Many maps in the land selection files of The Basin settlers used the Hardy map to indicate the location of the surveyed land on a larger map.

I have located two William Turners that were active in Victoria around the same time as the William Turner who settled in The Basin. One had holdings in Northern Victoria and the other is included in a montage of early explorers and colonists of Victoria held by the State Library of Victoria. The dates ascribed to the Turner in the montage match those of the William Turner who settled in The Basin but the photograph is different to that provided by the descendants of William Turner.

Turners descendants supplied me with a “Will” dated 1884 in which William Turner left all his real and personal estate to his son William Hector Turner who was also the executor. However, a Grant of Probate was never issued.

There are many references to William Turner in The Melbourne Argus. He was made insolvent a number of times (see articles on 28th January 1848, 10th July 1862, 20th June 1874 and 3rd October 1878). The 20th June 1874 insolvency docu-

ment is available from the Public Record Office. The 1878 insolvency resulted in an auction of his tailors stock at his Elizabeth Street, Melbourne premises on 11th October 1878. On 6th November 1888, his land at Lilydale was put up for auction.

Sources of Information

- “The Basin Centenary booklet” - Ron Ikin.
- “Fire on the Hill, Flowers on the Valley” - Rick Coxhill.
- “History of Croydon” and “Founder of the Dandenongs” - Muriel McGivern for information on William Turner.
- Interviews with Muriel McGivern for information on William Turner passed on by his descendants.
- “The Book of the Dandenongs” - John Larkins for information on Daniel Bunce and Alan Dodd.
- “Family of William Chandler horticulturist” - Helen Coulsen for information on William Chandler.
- “Story of the Dandenongs” - Helen Coulsen for information on William Turner and early settler information.
- VPRS 5920 Microfiche of Pastoral Run Papers (fiche 55) - Public Records Office of Victoria for William Turner letters.
- “Crown Lands Pre-emptive Right Applications: Victoria 1850 – 1854” - Marjorie Morgan for information on William Turner’s Pre-emptive right application.
- State Library – Handbook for electors. LTP 324.6 H19, Map of Electoral Districts. MAPS 820 FBE 1855 – 1856 for information on 1856 election.
- Local Library – 1856 electoral information on microfiche.
- Public Records Office of Victoria for extract from “Applications Register for the purchase of Land under Pre-Emptive Right”
- Land data website for early Surveyors field books and put away plans.
- Public Records Office of Victoria and Titles Office of Victoria for early settlers land selection information.
- Trove for newspaper articles and clippings.
- Various newspapers for articles and clippings.
- Descendants of William Turner for various information. In particular, Carol Turner and Ian

Heatley for his will, family tree and newspaper articles.

Mr A. Collier, The Basin, dies at 80

The son of an early settler at The Basin, Mr Albert Charles Collier (after whom Albert Ave. was named) died last Sunday aged 80.

He was the son of Samuel Collier, who bought land in Colchester road (which was named after him) in the 1880's and represented ratepayers on the Ferntree Gully council until 1916. Albert worked that same property all his working life.

He is survived by four married daughters — Mesdames Ireland, Jones, Taylor and Wiggins — and a son, Horace, also 11 grand-children and 11 great-grandchildren

BAYSWATER 'ACCIDENT.

DANGEROUS CROSSING.

MR. GRIFFITHS'S SLOW WATCH.

PROBABLE CAUSE OF MISHAP.

Tea can be grown and cured in Victoria quite as good as tea grown in Ceylon, India, China or elsewhere. This has been demonstrated by Mr James Griffiths; of Griffiths Brothers who for years has been cultivating the tea plant (*thea sinensis*) on his property at Bayswater. The prepared leaf has a fine flavour and good aroma.

Geraldton Guardian 21 October 1919

OBITUARY

H.T.S.(Bert) Chandler

A link with the very beginnings of The Basin was broken with the death of Mr. H.T.S. (Bert) Chandler of Como Nurseries. He died on February 17th, leaving three sons, Fergus, Geoff and John.

Mr. Chandler was one of the eight sons of William and Kate Chandler who settled at The Basin on 54 acres beside the Dandenong Creek in 1873. He followed in his father's footsteps as a nurseryman and his chief triumph was the receipt of one of the two gold medals ever awarded by the Nursery and Seedsmen's Association of Victoria for his *Andromeda* or to be botanically correct *Pieris Japonica* which is known as the Bert Chandler.

Mr. Chandler had a rewarding and very full and happy life. He was within 10 days of his 90th birthday. He is survived by his second wife, Helen.

Alphabetical Index

Allotment A.....	
map of 1866.....	7
Ambleside Park.....	
home of Knox Historical Society.....	20
Army flats.....	
early name for the low area west of the Salvation Army building.....	6
Barnes, Amy.....	
Daughter of John & Mary.....	30
Barnes, John & Mary.....	
owned land near The Basin.....	30
Barnes, Minnie.....	
Daughter of John & Mary.....	30
married David Dobson.....	30
Batterham Reserve.....	
close to John James Miller's original house.	18
Bayswater.....	
how named.....	18
Bayswater House.....	
John James Miller's first home.....	18
Bennet, Rob.....	
leased Stringy Bark Forest Run.....	9
Blue Pincushion.....	
the Basin Symbol.....	6
Bruce, George Wilkinson.....	
early The Basin land holder.....	30
Bruce, John Munro.....	
early The Basin land holder.....	31
Bullock Track.....	
shown on Hardy map - 1868.....	14
Bunce, Daniel.....	
early The Basin visitor.....	4
Burwood Highway.....	
boundary for Dandenong Creek Run.....	6
Carols by Candlelight.....	
held at Ferndale 1900's.....	29
Chandler family.....	
photo.....	22
Chandler Oak tree.....	
planted.....	25
Chandler, Helen.....	
distinguished resident.....	2
Chandler, Kate.....	
photo.....	19
Chandler, William.....	
Baron Von Mueller established camp near his property.....	6
died 1911.....	28
early The Basin settler.....	5
foundation councillor in Shire of Fern Tree Gully.....	27
horticulture activities.....	
disease and pests.....	25
flooding problems.....	25
flowers.....	25
fruit.....	25
grew Boronia.....	25
problems with access tracks.....	23
sold goods at auctions.....	24
sold goods at Victoria Market.....	23
instrumental in establishing The Basin first school.....	25
land holdings.....	
Bayswater.....	26
Boronia.....	26
Kilsyth.....	26
near Olinda.....	26
The Basin.....	23, 26
married Kate Timewell.....	21
photo.....	18
plan of land holdings.....	24
president of Shire of Fern Tree Gully.....	27
Chandler, William and Kate.....	
children.....	22
first house in The Basin - Fern Glen.....	23
second house in The Basin - Como.....	
description.....	25
Chatterton, Goliath.....	
brickmaking works with William Turner.....	9
Clow, James (Rev.).....	
first pasturing of stock in The Basin.....	6
leased Corhanwarrabul run.....	6
Cobblestone Road.....	
route shown on Hardy map - 1868.....	14
Cole, William.....	
leased Stringy Bark Forest Run.....	9
Collier, Samuel.....	
Berwick Shire councillor.....	30
early The Basin settler.....	30
Fern Tree Gully Shire councillor and President.....	30
purchased land East of Colchester Road.....	30
Corhanwarrabul.....	
first known to aborigines.....	3
Corhanwarrabul run.....	
defined.....	6
Coulsen, Helen.....	
see Research Notes.....	35

Alphabetical Index

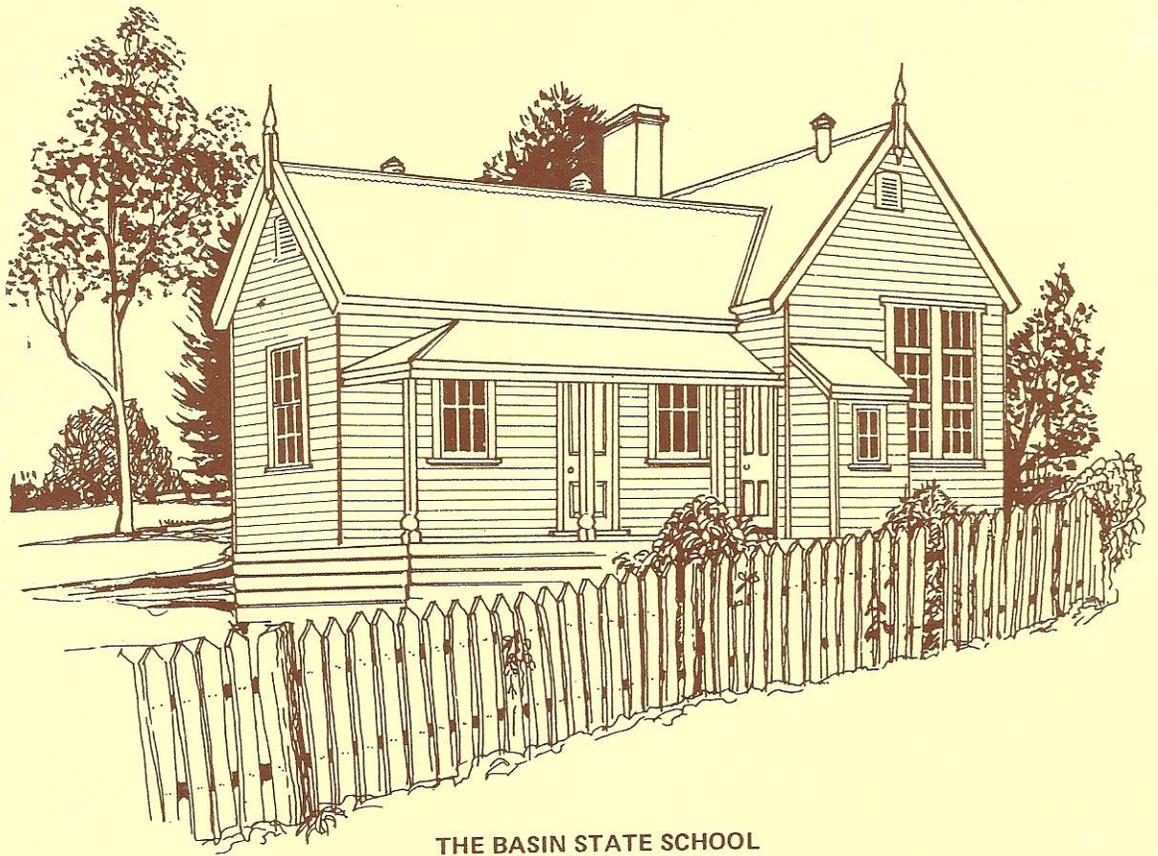
- Dandenong Creek.....
 boundary for Corhanwarrabul run.....6
 boundary for Dandenong Creek Run.....6
 sources in “Dodds Gully”.....4
- Dandenong Creek Run.....
 closest run to The Basin.....6
 held by Hugh and Henry Rourke.....12
- Dandenong Ranges School.....
 changed name to The Basin State School.....26
 established by William Chandler.....26
 first name for The Basin Primary School.....6
- Dandenong Sate Forest.....
 1868 map of.....12
- Dandenong State Forest.....
 boundaries moved in 1878.....33
- Depasturing Licence.....
 described.....3
- Dick.....
 leased Stringy Bark Forest Run.....9
- Distinguished resident.....
 Helen Chandler.....2
- Dobson, Agnes.....
 daughter of David and Mary Dobson.....15
- Dobson, Alice Maude.....
 daughter of David and Mary Dobson.....15
- Dobson, Annie Victoria.....
 married Arthur Harris.....21
- Dobson, Charlotte.....
 daughter of David and Mary Dobson.....15
- Dobson, David.....
 background.....15
 died - 1906.....17
 early Basin settler.....15
 father and mother.....15
 first introduction with The Basin.....15
 first lived in Ferntree Gully National Park area
15
 land occupation in The Basin.....15
 married Mary Ann Lum.....15
 petition requesting school in The Basin. 17, 20
 photo - family.....16
 siblings.....15
- Dobson, David and Mary.....
 children.....15
- Dobson, Elsie.....
 daughter of David and Mary Dobson.....15
- Dobson, Flora.....
 daughter of David and Mary Dobson.....15
- Dobson, James David (Jim).....
 son of Robert and Janet Dobson.....17, 21
- Dobson, James Henry.....
 son of David and Mary Dobson.....15
- Dobson, Jane.....
 daughter of David and Mary Dobson.....15
- Dobson, Janet.....
 diaries.....18
 difficulties after husband died.....17
- Dobson, Janet Mary (Jean).....
 daughter of Robert and Janet Dobson.....17, 21
- Dobson, Mary (Polly).....
 daughter of David and Mary Dobson.....15
- Dobson, Robert.....
 died.....21
 son of David and Mary Dobson.....15
- Dobson, Robert and Janet.....
 children.....17, 21
 first house built by David Dobson.....21
 wedding photo.....21
- Dobson, Robert John (Bob).....
 son of Robert and Janet Dobson.....17, 21
- Dobson, Robert Lum.....
 died in 1902 (33).....17
 married Janet Wicks.....17
- Dodd, Alexander.....
 son of George Dodd.....34
- Dodd, Allan.....
 son of George Dodd.....4, 34
- Dodd, Frederick.....
 son of George Dodd.....34
- Dodd, George.....
 early The Basin settler.....34
 purchased land in “Dodd’s Gully”.....4
 son of George Dodd.....34
- Dodd, Henry.....
 son of George Dodd.....34
- Dodd, James.....
 son of George Dodd.....34
- Dodd, Jessie.....
 daughter of George Dodd.....34
- Dodd, John.....
 son of George Dodd.....34
- Dodd, Thomas.....
 son of George Dodd.....34
- Dodd’s Gully.....
 area near The Basin.....4
- Dorrington, Emma Rachel.....
 daughter of W. Watson - first freehold land
 holder in The Basin.....16
- Dorset Road.....
 boundary for Dandenong Creek Run.....6

bounded William Turner's first land.....	11	early The Basin land holder.....	32
Election 1856.....		Holden, George.....	
collector for Division of Evelyn.....	11	timber cutter above The Basin.....	14
collector for Division of Mornington.....	11	Hovell, W. H.....	
collectors of eligible voters.....	11	first white visitor to The Basin.....	3
electoral roll listings for William Turner.....	12	Killean, Margaret Jane.....	
how organised.....	11	married William Turner.....	9
Fern Glen.....		Leach, George William.....	
William and Kate Chandlers first home.....	25	early The Basin settler.....	33
Ferndale Property.....		Lum, Henry.....	
Carols by Candlelight in 1900's.....	29	early The Basin land holder.....	31
Ferntree Gully Coat of Arms.....		Lum, Mary Ann.....	
chosen by J. J. Miller.....	14	wife of David Dobson.....	15
First.....		Macauley.....	
freehold land holder.....	14	original name of Bayswater.....	6
inhabitants.....	3	Mast Gully Road.....	
pasturing of stock in The Basin.....	6	ships masts felled there.....	15
residents of The Basin.....	8	McClare, John.....	
white visitor to The Basin.....	3	early The Basin settler.....	33
Foot, H.B. (Surveyor).....		illicit stills.....	33
instructed to survey William Turners lot.....	10	McClare's Hill.....	
Founder.....		Steep section of Old Coach Road.....	33
of The Basin.....	14	McGivern, Muriel.....	
Griffiths Falls.....		see Research Notes.....	35
described.....	21	Melrose House.....	
photo.....	23	John James Miller's second home.....	18
Griffiths, James.....		Miller, John James.....	
benefactor.....		died in 1922.....	19
erected Sassafras Mechanics Hall.....	29	fireworks at Christmas.....	19
helped village Settlements in 1890's.....	29	first home.....	18
owned Griffiths Tea.....	28	first Shire of Fern Tree Gully President.....	19
preaching.....		Miller's Racing Guide.....	18
Ferndale.....	29	photo.....	15
Mernda Methodist Church.....	29	ran illegal sweepstakes.....	19
Sassafras Church of England.....	29	second home.....	18
Griffiths, James & Emily.....		tramway proposal.....	19
early The Basin settlers.....	28	Trotting tracks.....	18
killed in level crossing accident - 1925.....	29	was blind.....	19
Photo.....	31	Mount Dandenong Road.....	
Hardy, John.....		bounded William Turner's first land.....	11
field book entry showing The Basin.....	6	Murphy Brothers.....	
prepared 1867 plan showing The Basin.....	6	early The Basin settlers.....	34
survey map of Dandenong Ranges - 1867....	13	Mt Erin Tea Gardens One Tree Hill.....	35
Harris, Arthur and Annie.....		Refreshment Chalet One Tree Hill.....	35
caretakers of Ferndale - children.....	21	Murphy, Jane.....	
Hazel Dell.....		early The Basin settler.....	35
built by Thomas Hodgson.....	32	Murphy, Richard.....	
Hodgkinson, Clement.....		early The Basin settler.....	34
surveyed William Turner's lot.....	10	Murphy, William.....	
Hodgson, Thomas Walsh.....		early The Basin settler.....	34

Alphabetical Index

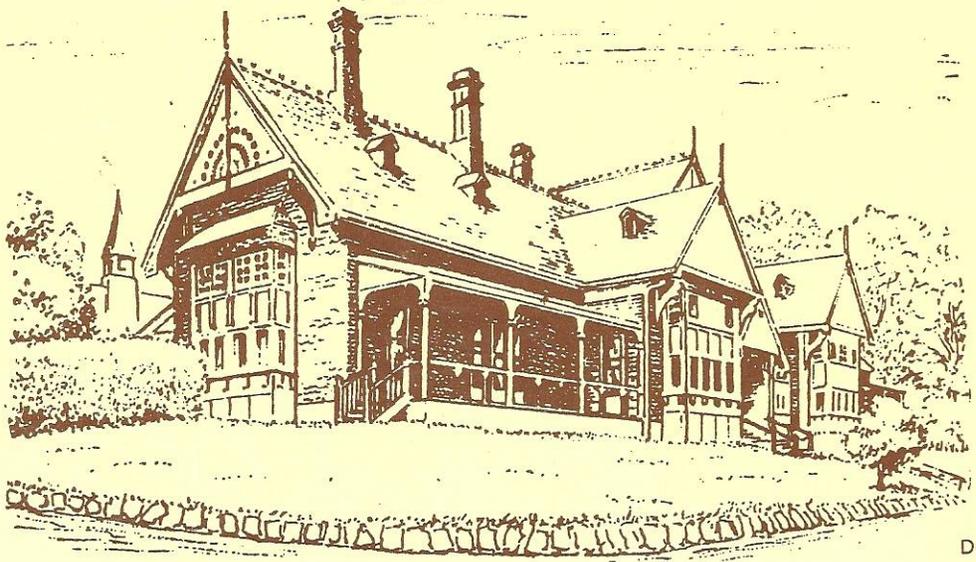
early The Basin settler - employed as Bailiff	Veronica.....7
.....35	other The Basins.....7
Narre Warren East.....6	symbol - Blue Pincushion.....7
boundary for Corhanwarrabul run.....6	The Basin Methodist Church.....
North Scoresby.....	James Griffiths helped establish.....29
early name for The Basin area.....6, 15	The Basin Primary School.....
North Scoresby via Ringwood.....	first named "Dandenong Ranges School".....6
early name for The Basin area.....19	James Griffiths preached there.....29
One Tree Hill.....	The Basin State School.....
entry in John Hardy's field book.....6	building moved - 1900.....26
first settled by the Murphy Brothers.....34	closes in 1898.....26
Pre-emptive right.....	used for Methodist services 1898 - 1900.....26
described.....11	The Basin Symbol.....
Range Road.....	blue pincushion.....6
previously the Bullock Track.....14	The Big Basin.....
Richards, James.....	early name for The Basin.....6
early The Basin land holder.....31	The Little Basin.....
Rogerson.....	early name for The Basin.....6
leased Stringy Bark Forest Run.....9	The White Flats.....
Rosney, John.....	defined.....10
early The Basin land holder.....32	The Wide Flat.....
early The Basin Settler.....33	defined.....11
Rourke, Henry.....	Thomson, John.....
pre-emptive right application for land in	depasturing licence.....10
Bayswater.....12	William Turner's first land inside his run.....11
Salvation Army.....	Timewell, Kate.....
carols by candlelight at Ferndale in 1900's...29	early history.....22
Saw mill.....	married William Chandler.....21
operated by William Turner.....11	Timewell, Louisa Kate.....
Schneider, Jacob.....	mother of Kate Timewell.....22
early The Basin land holder.....32	Torwood.....
Stringy Bark Forest Run.....	home of John & Mary Barnes.....30
leased by Dick.....9	Turner, Annie.....
leased by Rob Bennet.....9	child of William and Margaret Turner.....9
leased by Rogerson.....9	Turner, Catherine.....
leased by William Cole.....9	son of William and Margaret Turner.....9
The Basin.....	Turner, Hector.....
emblem.....	son of William and Margaret Turner.....9
Eastern Rosella.....7	Turner, Janet.....
emblem - Eastern Rosella - picture.....6	daughter of William and Margaret Turner.....9
name.....	Turner, Joshua.....
earliest recording.....6	son of William and Margaret Turner.....9
first use of by William Chandler.....23	Turner, Louisa.....
move to change.....7	daughter of William and Margaret Turner.....9
other proposed names.....	first known white person born in The Basin...9
Echo Valley.....7	Turner, May.....
Eigenia.....7	daughter of William and Margaret Turner.....9
Eurimbla.....7	Turner, Rose.....
Lower Sassafras.....7	daughter of William and Margaret Turner.....9
South Sassafras.....7	Turner, Thomas.....

son of William and Margaret Turner.....9	16
Turner, Tom.....	Wicks Family.....
claim of living in The Basin.....8	first home.....20
guided John Hardy in creating survey map. .13	second home.....20
son of William and Margaret.....8	Wicks Homestead.....
Turner, William.....	destroyed by fire - 1962.....21
background.....9	photo.....32
brick-making works with Goliath Chatterton.9	Wicks, Annie Victoria.....
cutting timer without licence.....14	daughter of Robert and Janet Dobson.....19
Depasturing licences.....	Wicks, Edmund.....
Stringy Bark Forest.....9	died - 1880.....20
unnamed.....9	land occupation in The Basin and FTG.....19
Western Port.....9	married Janet Russell.....19
first land and house in Croydon South.....10	photo.....30
first tailors shop in Melbourne.....9	Wicks, Edmund and Janet.....
leasehold below Sassafras.....14	children.....19
map.....	early The Basin settler.....19
showing first land in Croydon.....11	Wicks, Janet.....
showing his lot in Thompsons run.....7	applies for freehold title in The Basin.....20
showing saw mill he operated.....11	daughter of Robert and Janet Dobson.....19
married Margaret Jane Killean.....9	died - 1946.....18
ordered off land.....10	married Robert Lum Dobson.....17, 21
photo.....11	photo.....28
pre-emptive right application.....	works land in The Basin after husbands death
in Croydon 1851 - Official details.....1020
in The Basin 1858.....12	Woodhouse, F. W.....
instruction to surveyor H. B. Foot.....10	early The Basin land holder.....30
Turner, William and Margaret.....	Wurtenburg, King of.....
children.....9	and Von Mueller.....5
first long term residents of The Basin.....8	Yeadon, J. L.....
letters.....8, 9	early The Basin land holder.....30
moved to Croydon.....14	
photo - house circa 1860.....4	
possible other children.....9	
Turner, William Junior.....	
leasehold in The Basin.....13, 15	
lost leasehold in The Basin for illicit	
distillation.....13	
son of William and Margaret Turner.....9	
Tyner, William.....	
first leased James Griffiths land.....29	
Von Mueller, Baron.....	
director of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens 5	
early The Basin visitor.....5	
explored The Basin area.....22	
knighted.....5	
named The Basin.....6	
said to have introduced the blackberry.....5	
Watson, William Peverill.....	
first freehold land holder in The Basin. 12, 14,	



THE BASIN STATE SCHOOL

The original building after removal to the new site on the corner of Mountain Highway and Liverpool Road.



Doongalla