

The 'Australian Connection'

From notes that Ellen Cullum kept in an old diary, we know that her sister Eliza emigrated to Australia just a matter of a few weeks after marrying George Munt of Wheatley in 1858.

Ellen wrote“Eliza Cullum G. Munt was married May 20 1858 Left home June 2nd
Sett sail for Australia June 10 the same year”



On the back of this photo is written "Eliza Munt
nee Cullum, sister to Ellen and William etc"

There is a record of a George Munt, aged 30, and 'his wife', (unnamed), arriving at Port Philip, Melbourne in September 1858, on board the ship 'Conway' which was a 'clipper' built by Owens and Duncan at St. John, New Brunswick, Canada. (Notice of Registration is held in the Archives of Canada). Her travels are not completely documented, but she appears to have been carrying out Assisted Australian Emigration voyages from the early 1850s onwards. In September 1858 she was quite definitely in Port Philip Bay, Melbourne as two diaries of this particular journey have been transcribed, those of an 'Annie Gratton' and a 'Fanny Davis'. The diary of Annie Gratton is held in the National Library of Australia in Sydney. (The National Library of Australia Call Number for this manuscript, should anyone interested just happen to be passing through Sydney!, is MS 3304). One has to go there to view it, so it has not been obtained, but its descriptive detail confirms that the ship did indeed sail on June 10th in 1858, from the port of Liverpool. Worthy of note is that there were 280 single women on board!, but this is possibly explained by looking at the backdrop of world events around that time. The British Empire was established and expanding, but no doubt paying the price for maintaining its position of world influence in terms of 'manpower'. The lines of communication and supply would

have been stretched, and the army and navy would have absorbed many of the available able-bodied men from the British Isles for foreign operations. There had been the Crimean War from 1854-56 (35,000 casualties at the Battle of Inkerman alone!), The Indian Mutiny in 1857-58, and in China the 2nd Opium War was in progress (1856-60), and so, along with Britain's other overseas commitments, 'time at home' would have been almost non-existent for such men. Thus it's possible (probable?) that some of the single young British women of the time came to the conclusion that in order to find a husband, they had best go where there was a supply of eligible bachelors...Australia. And for some of the men who

emigrated around that time, it may have been a way to avoid being swept into the army or navy. George Munt had been a mason's labourer back in Wheatley, and with such a background was no doubt attracted to the mining opportunities in Australia. (The quarry at Wheatley was long-established, and had supplied stone for the building of Windsor Castle, Merton College Oxford, and many other buildings. It was also held responsible for the inordinate number of 'pubs' in Wheatley, no doubt a bit of a magnet for the quarrymen at the end of their day's work!)

Back in the 1960s, 'Grandfather', Harold F. Hunt, started to investigate the 'The Australian Connection' and wrote to 'The Shire of Glenelg', Shire Offices, Town Hall, Casterton, Victoria, asking for assistance. The Shire secretary replied that his 'inquiry being published in the 'Casterton News' and the 'Hamilton Spectator', (newspapers circulated in this area), Miss Alice Roulston of Coleraine....' had contacted their office advising that she was a descendant of the Munt family. This was the beginning of many years' correspondence between Miss the Cullum/Munt family in Australia. Roulston and 'Nanna and Grandfather' in the course of which she passed on various pieces of information on Her letters are still 'in the family'.



Two views of Woods Point circa 1870

The places they went to initially can be found about 100 miles to the northeast of Melbourne, towards and in 'The Great Dividing Range.'

Miss Roulston wrote

"My mother, Emily Roulston, was the second daughter of Eliza Munt, and we lived at Wannan Flat Henty until 1918, when we moved to Coleraine. My grandmother (Eliza nee Cullum) lived with us for some time at Henty, eventually going to live with another daughter near Wagga, New South Wales, where she died on September 4th 1912, aged 81 years. When they first arrived in Australia, they went to the gold diggings at Gooleys Creek near Woods Point, where their family were born, Isabella Eliza, Emily Kate, Alice Ellen and Charles Henry. They came to Melbourne by pack horse - thence by boat to Port Fairy, and on to Macarthur by bullocks' dray. All the family went to school there. Later they moved on to Karnak, near Goroke. I remember my grandmother saying that her doctor told her to come to Australia for health reasons, and so she lived to a good age. They went through very hard times these early pioneers, and many hardships."

From other research, we know that George and Eliza had another child, Elizabeth Martha, their first-born, but she only lived for a few months. The surviving children all married... Isabella, who was born in Tooberac in 1863, became Mrs. William Simpson in Mclvor, Victoria in 1882. Emily, who was born in Woods Point in 1865, became Mrs. Joseph Heywood Roulston in Woods Point in 1892. Alice, who was also born in Woods Point in 1867, became Mrs. Charles Lane in Woods

Point in 1893 Charles, who was born in Woods Point in 1869, married Mary Campbell in Woods Point in 1899.

(Maps excluded from this section, can be seen in WVA)

When comparing Miss Roulston's reminiscences with official records, one finds the odd discrepancy. However she was in her 70s when writing the letters to Grandfather, and although very lucid and generally sharp, perhaps the odd error is to be expected. She wrote that "when they first arrived in Australia, they went to the gold diggings at Gooleys Creek", but the official record of the State of Victoria states that gold was not found there until 1861. Eliza and George's eldest two children, Elizabeth (who died after a few months), and Isabella were both born in Tooberac in 1861 and 1863 respectively, and Tooberac is a very long way indeed from Gooleys Creek. The rest of the family were born in Woods Point, which was the town adjoining Gooleys Creek (3 kms away), so this indicates that George took his wife Eliza and Isabella to the gold diggings there around 1864. What he had been 'doing' in Tooberac is not known.

The official State of Victoria history of the area reads : 'Prospectors found gold at Jamieson in 1857 and Gaffneys Creek in 1859. In the middle of 1861 William Gooley discovered gold in Gooleys Creek, a few kilometres south of Woods Point. Shortly afterwards the Morning Star reef was found, and in 1862 an American, Mabilie (Harry) Wood built a store near the river. It became known as Woods Junction, later resulting in the establishment of the Woods Point township. By then the Jordan goldfields had been discovered, several 'reefs' at Woods Point were giving rich yields and the township was quickly formed. Within a few years it had a post office, a police court, a hospital, a school, three churches, three banks, two newspapers, three breweries numerous shops hotels. Prodigious wealth was earned from the mines, but it was mostly spent on costly consumer goods and on prospecting for new claims. Little was kept aside for capital investment for deep mining, and gold output fell by the 1870s, although maintained at a reduced level for several years.

In 1903 The Australian Handbook described Woods Point -

WOODSPOINT (37° 36' S. lat., 116° 15' E, long.) in the county of Wonnangntta, shire Ilowqua, electorate of Anglesey, police district of Benalla, an important, postal mining township, savings bank, money-order and telegraph station, on the Upper Gowiburn river, 112 postal miles EXE. of Melbourne, by rail *via* Healesville thence coach to Marysville, from thence by horse or coach to Woodspoint: coach from Mansfield to Jamieson, 11 miles from Woodspoint to Mansfield; or rail to Moe, coach thence to Walhalla, 25 miles, horse on to Woodspoint; road Aberfeldy, Jericho and Matlock, 42 miles, The hotels are the Keefers'. Commercial, and Globe. The hospital has 15 beds, and the Church of England and Roman Catholics have places of worship here. Post-office, Masonic, and M.U.I.O.O.F, lodges, court house, public hall, powder magazine, State school (No. 780), and police-station. The whole district is very mountainous, with beautiful scenery, and taken up for quartz and alluvial mining operations, the quartz reefs being numerous and rich. Dykes of diorite and granite are found at intervals, and these have contained much rich quartz, the yield during 1900 being about 1,041 ozs. About **9 miles** South is Jericho; 5 miles to the S. is Ross Creek, while 4 miles to the E. is Slander's Creek, Matlock's 4 J miles SW., and Gaffney's Creek, 11 miles North are important mining centres. At all these places reefs are being developed, and are yielding good returns. Expensive machinery is employed in obtaining the precious metal. About 1,500 miners find employment. The geological formation of the district is lower Silurian, with drift of shale and slate. Population, town and district, 2,000. Local paper: (*the Miner's Advocate*). (Henderson & Co.).

Alice Roulston also mentions that the family later moved to Karnak, Victoria, near Goroke, and it is there that George Munt is buried, (he died in 1893), as is his son Charles who was buried there in 1951.

From other information in the letters, 'The Australian Branch', as of the early 1970s, looked like this:

George Munt *m* Eliza Cullum

Elizabeth Martha
b 1861 Tooberac
died in infancy

Isabella Eliza
b 1863 Tooberac

m William Simpson in
Melvor,
Victoria 1882.
Lived in NSW. No
other details.

Emily Kate
b 1867 Woods Point
d 1953

m Joseph Heywood
Roulston in Woods
Point 1892. Lived on a
farm. Children: Alice, b
1897, and 3 sons, Bert,
Charles and Les, and
another daughter Grace.
Alice did not marry. Two
of the boys took over the
farm when their mother
died. Joseph Roulston
had died previously, in
1946. Her sister married
someone named Scholl,
lived at Yallourn in 1968,
and had twins Jennifer
(Jenny) and John.
Jennifer married a Colin
Scholl (same surname)
and had 2 sons, David
and Peter, by 1970 and
was living in Armidale
NSW

Alice Ellen
b 1867 Woods Point

m Charles Lane in
Woods Point in 1893.
Lived in NSW, no
other details

where her husband was a
university lecturer. Brother
Bert was living with his son
and daughter-in-law near
Adelaide in 1970, but was
dragged off to
Queensland when his son
moved there in 1973. He
also had a daughter
named Diana, married to
an Army officer. Alice's
youngest brother Les

Charles Henry
b 1869 Woods Point

m Mary Campbell in
Woods Point in 1899.
They had 3 daughters
(mentioned in the
letters), maybe other
children. Two of the
daughters were
teachers, the other a
nurse. The daughters
(unmarried?) lived in
Hamilton and also had a
house on the coast at
Port Fairy.

still had the farm then, and
had a son David, and a
daughter Kathryn, a teacher,
who married a bank clerk in
Geelong and went to live in
Melbourne.