

Fenton

Margery Jean Fenton (née Grylls, 1921)

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William Richard Fenton

Our earliest records show that William Richard Fenton (c1818 Colchester, Essex – 31.12.1880) married Mary Ann Bowers (c1822 Castle Pollard, Co Westmead, Ireland –29.2.1901 Mincha, Victoria) who came to Adelaide on the “Henry Porcher” 1.7.1838 with her father and four other children. South Australia, with Adelaide as its capital was gazetted in 1836 and the land between the capital and the sea of the Gulf of St Vincent was swampy and marshy, and William Richard's address at that time was “Reed Beds”, part of Adelaide.

They were married at Holy Trinity Adelaide on 31.8.1839. On 2.7.1840 Richard Fenton was born, and baptised on 23.8.1840. His father was registered as a farmer and the address was South Terrace, Adelaide.

The register of prisoners committed for trial at Adelaide Gaol refers to the committal on 19.11.1839 and acquittal 6.3.1840 of Richard Fenton on a charge of receiving stolen cattle, “age 35”. Our Richard was supposedly about 21 in that year, so there are some doubts.

The Colonial Secretary's Office includes a warrant dated 22.7.1840 for the arrest of Richard Fenton for cattle stealing on 15.4.1840, and a memorandum 11.6.1841 mentions that Fenton was “at large” in Western Australia at that time.

After some years Richard was presumed dead, and Mary married William Stevens at Holy Trinity Adelaide on 18.6.1846 and moved to Walmer/Muckleford and then on to Mincha c1877 (refer to “Copper Gold and Soil”).

On 2.3.1848 at Holy Trinity in Buckingham Tasmania by banns, William Richard Fenton (“farmer and bachelor”) married Mary Francis, spinster (1819 –1902). This family later settled at Campbell's Ck – children were William, John Richard, Mary Ann, and Charles. Later generations of both sides of these families “didn't know” anything strange when Mary Ann Stevens with her son Richard Fenton was living at Walmer near Castlemaine while William Richard Fenton's second family were living at Campbell's Ck Castlemaine. Stevens didn't move to Mincha until c1877 and certainly some of the other family were born at Campbell's Ck (very intriguing). Also, Mary Ann Dann (née Fenton) had a store at Mincha not far from Pyramid Hill, and she as the half-sister to Richard (m1) who m 1864 and lived at Mincha.

Richard Fenton and Fanny Ottrey



Fanny and Richard Fenton

Richard Fenton (2.7.1840 Adelaide –16.4.1915 Bendigo) married Fanny Ottrey (9.12.1844 England – 11.1.1919 Bendigo) at Christ Church Castlemaine on 12.2.1864, who was the 2nd child of 4 daughters and 6 sons of Thomas and Mary Ottrey (née Wake) who had come from Somerset. They settled at Mincha. Fanny became the local midwife and Richard was the local veterinarian. They had 10 children

John (1864 – 1948), Helen (1866 – 1958), Richard George (1868 – 1954), Thomas (1871 – 1926), Mary (1873 – 1952), Bessie (1875 – 1951), Fanny (1878 – 1924), Edward (1881 – 1941), Frederick (1883 – 1942), and Rose (1885 – 1977).

They settled at Mincha; near neighbours were Shipp.

Shipp family

William Shipp (22.1.1830 Collingtree Northampton – 10.10.1915 Mincha) was the eldest child of John Ship (c1807 – 28.2.1873), farm labourer of Collingtree Northampton and Hannah (née Gammage, 1807 – 18.4.1877). Other children were John (1837), Emma (1845) and Sarah (1857). William Shipp came to Australia (possibly with the Police Department in Sydney on the “Bangalore”).

At Colac 10.3.1861 he married Emma Bott, the second daughter of William and Sarah Bott (née Linstead) who arrived at Adelaide on “Ramilles” 28.3.1849 from Upwell in Norfolk. They arrived with three children (Ann 1843, Emma 1846, William 1848), and later came Robert Henry 150, John Edward 1854 and George 1857). After William Bott died 15.10.1857 Sarah married again, James Carr, and had two more children Robert and Charlotte. On the same day her daughter married William Shipp.

William and Emma Shipp settled at Mincha and had 7 children (William John 1862-1946, Mary Ann 1864-1938, Susan 4.9.1867(?) -1935, Robert 1870, Joseph Henry 1873-1948, Charlotte 1875-1914, Edith Blanche 1876-1953, Emma Sarah 1880-1975, two stillborn).

Emma Shipp (née Bott) died 10.11.1882 aged 36, leaving Susan (14½) to care for the family, Mary having left home, whose ages ranged from two years upwards. This she did until she married John Fenton in 1891.

A complication for our history was that Susan's brother John William married John's sister Helen (Nell) on 22.12.1887. Their children were: Emma Sarah 1888, Robert George 24.3.1891, Edward Thomas 5.12.1892, William Frederick 2.10.1896, twins Richard and Fanny 13.4.1899, and Helen 8.7.1908.

Mary Ann married William Eskrick 1892, son William (Bill)

Robert George died in a fall

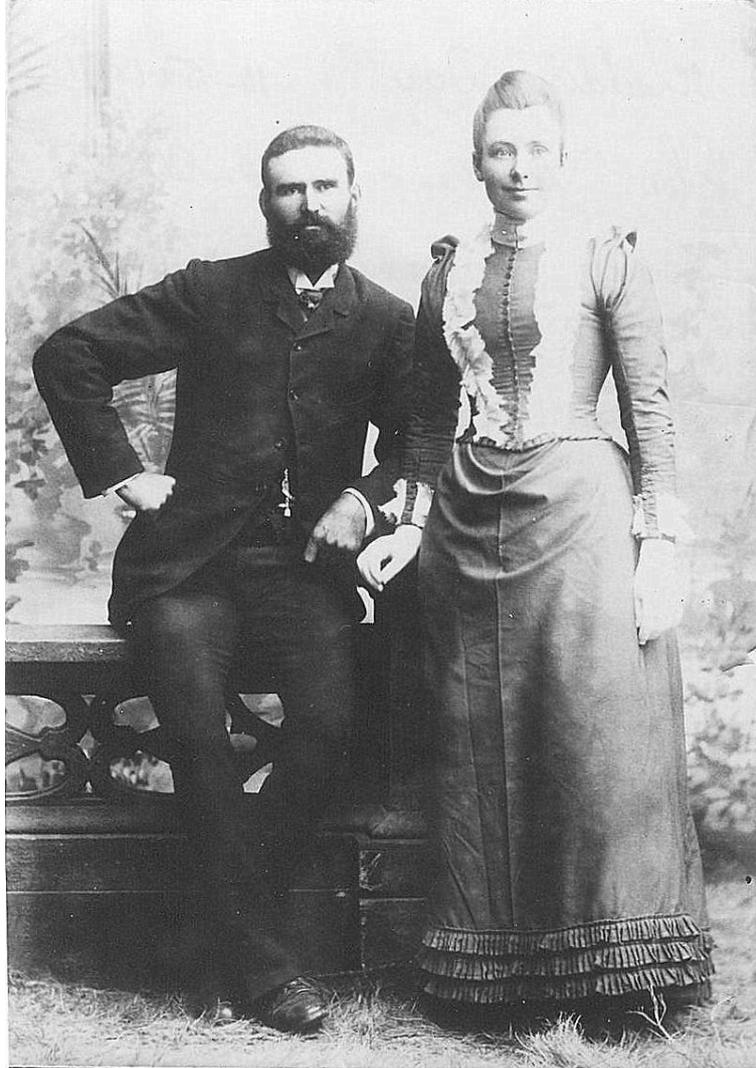
Joseph Henry m Mary (May) Blossett 1892, sons Henry (Harry) and Alan.

Charlotte Marie m Charles Brady 1901, children Charlie, Nell, and Jack.



Mary Ann Shipp (11.12.1864 – 17.1.1938, m William Henry Eskrick)
and Susan Shipp (4.9.1867 – 4.3.1935, m John Fenton)

John and Susan Fenton



John Fenton and Susan Shipp on their Wedding Day, 14.5.1891

John Fenton (8.11.1864 – 4.10.1948) and Susan (née Shipp, 4.9.1867 – 4.3.1935) lived at Langville after their marriage on 14.5.1891 at St Paul's Bendigo. John was the eldest child of a family of 5 girls and 5 boys, while Susannah was the 3rd child of 3 boys and 4 girls. When she was 15 years old, her mother died, 10.11.1882, and Susan cared for the family until her marriage.

John's family were neighbours at Mincha, where his father was unofficial veterinarian, and Fanny, his mother, the local midwife. She had been taught the skills by her mother-in-law, now Mary Ann Stevens, formerly Fenton (née Bowers). With a small farm and ten children, the elder sons soon had to help to keep the family; John had a horse team, a scoop and plough and worked on the construction of the railway line to Kerang as well as the Macorna Channel. It was said that if you wanted to talk to him, it was necessary to walk alongside. He wouldn't stop. Although he left school at an early age, he was always interested in the world about him and was always learning. He had a farm on the edge of the Wandella Creek with a sandy rise behind it, and raised beef cattle as well as growing peaches and grapes. He made his own wine (we have his wine press). His brothers, Richard, Edward, and Thomas, and his sister Mary and brother-in-law Joe Shipp all settled on this type of country adjacent to the flood plain of the Wandella Ck and Mallee country. Susan was a very keen gardener, who also loved music. John always ensured that the necessary wet cell batteries were charged for her wireless set. One of his daughters thought he was a bit cavalier in the treatment of his wife but another considered it was normal for the times in which they lived.



Family of John and Susan Fenton at the wedding of Bess and David Coghill, 17.8.1935

| | | | |
|-------|-------------------------------|------|------|
| Ethel | Rose | Will | Bess |
| Nell | Emma Campbell, Susan's sister | John | Fan |

Their children were Frances Emma (Fan) 1892, John William 1894, Helena (Nell) 1896, Ethel May 1899, Rose 1902, and Bessie Susan 1907. They went to school in a leased building owned by F. Murphy on the south-west corner of Murphy's Lake. I think it was called Meering North.

He had a dairy herd as well as beef cattle and all the family worked hard. He prospered and was able to lend money to his children to help them get started, but he expected the interest to be paid. Among his other mortgagors was A. G. Adams.

Susan had a lovely garden which included a lawn about the size of a tennis court, surrounded by shrubs and creepers. It made a lovely place when Ethel and Bert Herdman were married there. John took pride in good cattle and owned a property at Gonn along the Meran Ck in NSW, about 15km from Murrabit. His best helper was his grandson Des, who earned his only pocket money looking after the steam engine, cutting wood, and irrigating with the pump. There was a comfortable mud-brick hut which was very popular among friends and relations for fishing trips. After Susan died, John lived with his daughter Rose and son-in-law Joe Ayres at his former farm.

Bill and Eva Fenton



Bill and Eva Fenton, photo taken in 1915 just after her brother Bill left with the AIF for World War 1. She has been crying.

John William (Bill) (26.10.1893 – 14.7.1962) was the second child and only son in a family of six. Like all his siblings and cousins, he was delivered by his paternal grandmother Fanny (née Ottrey) who was a noted midwife.

Evelyn Kathleen Morrow 5.12.1894 Emu Ck – 22.10.1984 Kerang was the 11th child of a family of 13 of John William Blossett (c1843 – 1924) and Jane (née Kerr, c1853 – 2.8.1920). For details please see "[Blossett](#)". He was very mysterious about his early life, so much so that when he died his daughter Harriet didn't know the names of his parents to put on his Death Notice. Eva came to help her sister May at "Uondo" near Dingwall. She was a most attractive dark brunette with very expressive dark-brown eyes and a sparkling personality. She was courted by several but chose Bill Fenton. She was a most loyal and caring person. Des was very attached to his mother, as they cared for each other all their lives. (Note how a man treats his mother and that is an indication of how he will treat his wife).

Bill and Eva were married at St Paul's Bendigo in 1915. They lived Allotment 44, Parish of Koorangie (Dingwall). Some pepper trees and a fig tree still mark the site on the east side of Fenton's Lake. This land was owned by Bill's father and they were upset when he sold it to his brother-in-law Joe Shipp. Bill farmed land called Whitelaws, Allotment no ?? Budgerum West, until in 1919, he bought Allotments 70 and 70A, Parish of Koorangie (Normanville) from Ellen Mahar. Later he bought Allotments 49 and 50 from Sutherlands, who owned "Dunrobin" next door.

Bill was a good farmer and Eva always a hard worker. She took the responsibility of boarding the teachers from 1924 until 1944 and provided morning tea for the cream truck driver three times a week for 22 years. She and Bill were very hospitable, but one day she looked out the window to see Bill bringing in the Bank Manager for morning tea: she bitterly remarked "if another thing with a mouth on it comes on this place, I'm leaving". No wonder, after feeding the family, the teacher, the calves, the hens, the dogs, the cats and the parrot.

Eva and Bill built a brick veneer home at 12 Dunlop St Kerang but Eva still had boarders. She liked having young people in the house. Bill continued occasionally to go out to the farm and Eva enjoyed her bowls until she had a stroke which affected her speech. She told me once she never told lies as she was never afraid enough of anyone to lie. She was a wonderful mother and a very loyal person, but could lie if needed.

The Children

Desmond William (4.2.1917 – 26.3.1981), m27.5.1944 Margery Jean Grylls (23.8.1921 – 6.9.2014)

Laurence Stanley (6.11.1918 – 5.10.1987) m1955 Melva May Emmett (née Balnaves)

Jean

Marcia May Florence (3.2.1924), m14.9.1946 Donald Vincent Clark (1925 – 26.3.1999)

Rex Ormond (1.7.1925 – 21.7.2021), m4.3.1950 Judith Penhalluriack (30.6.1925 – ?.12.2013)



Tiny, Des, and Laurie



Eva, Des, and Laurie: she is in mourning for her mother



Des and Laurie



Marcia



Rex

The Bill Fenton Farm

This farm was originally owned by John King – brother of next door Ellen Mahar (née King), Allotments no 70 and 70A, Parish of Koorangie. The house was called "Glenyraffin", suggested by Rhys Hopkins.

Mr. Will Fenton purchased it in 1919. Later he purchased allotments 49 and 50 from Sutherlands, who owned "Dunrobin" next door.

The house had 6 main rooms with a verandah all round. Some of it was enclosed for a scullery, a bath room and sleep-outs. A separate wash house included a copper and a cement bath, as well as wash troughs.

Later, an underground cement tank was installed; but when it leaked, it was used as a cellar and it was cold on the hottest of days. Those who could, retreated there for the worst part of the day.

Mrs Fenton was proud of the picket fence and woe beside anyone who left bits of harness, wheat bags, teacups, etc. hanging on it.

But she didn't like the Sugar gums planted on the East side and eventually got rid of them by axe and kerosene.

Farmers seldom take photos of their own farms so the accompanying photos were taken by Miss Daisy Youl (later Mrs. Richard Shipp) when she was the school teacher at Normanville.



From the windmill, showing barn, hut, garage, and house, c1927

The tiny wooden building with a fire place is the working man's hut with the blacksmith's shop in the background.

I wonder if the wood heap is the one where Eva sat the pots of uncooked vegetables because there was no wood supplied for the kitchen! Note that it was on the way to the house, conveniently placed to pick up an armful of wood on the way in!

Mr Fenton built the large barn where the bagged wheat was stored. One year, a great proportion of the crop was stored there stacked 3 bags high (this was hard on men and the floor of the barn). It was hoped for a rise in price later in the year but, unfortunately this dropped and the wheat was sold for less. Although it was a so-called mouse proof barn, in very bad plague years they did a lot of damage. Sometimes the wheat had to be re-bagged. Wet day jobs were either patching and mending bags, or oiling harness.



The stable and a haystack, c1927

He also had the large stable built, one of the best in the district. The chaff that was cut from the adjoining haystacks was elevated into the loft above and fed into the feeding troughs below. There were up to 32 horses on the farm plus a stallion "Top Score" so there were nearly always two teams working (The Mallee roots on the south side of the stable yard were gathered and carted using a horse and tipping dray.) In the yard there were two large hollowed out logs which served as extra feeders.

Every horse had its own particular collar and harness which hung beside its stall.

Water was a problem, and in the early days it was the Sunday job to harness the wagons and cart the water from the Shire dam, 3 miles away. It was frustrating if the horses waited until they got home to have a drink.

Later Mr Fenton with his brother-in-law Mr Joe Shipp erected and used the large wind mill on the Shire dam and pumped the water to a tank in the corner of allot. No. 50, where a pipe took it across the paddocks to the house and stables, and to troughs in the Shipp's paddocks adjacent. It was a big step forward when the stock and domestic channels were built thus ensuring water to all the farms.



Three generations: Laurie and Des, Bill, and Grandfather Jack (John) in December 1945

Laurie Fenton took over the running of the Allotment No. 70A farm in 19?? and later their son Garry took over.

John Dear purchased allot. No. 70A in 19??, Graham McKenzie in 1993.