

ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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NEWSLETTER

THE CAMERON FAMILY



“Carinya” Cameron Home - Mrs Jean Cameron with twin daughters Nell and Grace

THE CAMERON'S

Ancestors of Lorraine Coulton & Margaret Smith

James Cameron, aged 30, came to Orbost in 1882, from Geelong, after hearing of the richness of the land from his cousin, John. James was accompanied by James Thompson, and together they purchased “Bellagoogan” from John Watt. The property extended from Majors Creek Road to around

McDonald’s farm at Jarrahmond.

James’ father, Peter, came to Orbost in 1885, at the age of 69, having sold his farm at Geelong. Peter bought the property “Glen Avon” from a Mr Street. The home was situated at the bottom of the paddock, near the corner of Morley and Livingstone streets. The farm stretched from Tennyson Street to the end of Snaggers Lane and along the river frontage to

about Gilbert's Gulch. After Peter's death in 1898, the property was divided up between his three sons, James, Alexander and William.

James then sold "Bellagoogan" to McKenzie & Robertson, and in 1905 "Carinya" was built on the top corner of the property. After James' death in 1931, his son, Harry, and grandson, James, continued to farm the land. The large families of Wilkinson, Paten and Thomas, who lived in Farmers Lane, provided a ready source of casual employees for many years. It was a dairy farm until the early 1970s, when the Country Roads Board acquired the land for the new highway (opened in 1976). The dairy, which is still standing, can easily be seen from the highway corner.



Harry Cameron, aged 21

Probably the family's greatest disaster was in 1893, when a record flood took their maize crops, which were growing in the paddocks, as well as the crop from previous years, which had been threshed and bagged and stored in the barns waiting for the trip abroad. In those days their very large barns with two lofts were located on what was considered to be high ground in the vicinity of Snaggers Lane.

In the 1920s a home was built at 20 Raymond Street for the Cameron family. Various members of the family lived there, the last being Harry's twin sisters, Nell and Grace. After both their deaths in 1940, it was rented for a few years until Roma took possession after her marriage in 1944. James married Joan Hossack in 1963, and they lived in Joan's parents' home at 73 Salisbury Street.

In 2004, Peter Cameron's great-great granddaughter, Lorraine Coulton and her husband, Peter, built a home on the property - the former kitchen being used

as a workshop.

James Cameron's eldest son, Archibald, was born in 1884. He never walked and died of "hydrocephalus" (water on the brain) in 1891. Consequently Harry was born in Bairnsdale in 1889, and his twin sisters, Nell and Grace were born at Orbost in 1890, after the arrival of Dr. Kerr.

[Thanks to Margaret Smith for the above information and the photographs contained in this Newsletter.]



Grace, Lilian, James (seated), Harry and Nell Cameron

'Snowy River Mail', Saturday, June 18, 1898:

DEATH OF AN OLD PIONEER.

One by one those once sturdy pioneers who came to Australia in the forties and who with their whole hearted energy, enterprise, and perseverance, laid the foundations of an Anglo Australian race, are quietly passing off from the great drama of life. Theirs was the privilege of seeing the great gold rushes in the fifties. They saw the rapid changes by which in a few years wildernesses were transformed into charming cities. They witnessed the tremendous strides made in early agriculture and taught the world the art of colonization. The result of their political battles is that we live under one of the most liberal constitutions in the world. At about seven o'clock on Tuesday morning Mr. Peter Cameron, a resident of the Snowy River district for the last twelve years and a very old colonist who was acquainted with nearly every resident in Melbourne in 1843, died at his residence, Glen Avon, after a few days' illness, having been attacked by the prevailing epidemic of influenza. He was attended to by Dr. Kerr for a few days, but as he was very feeble his death was not unexpected. The deceased gentleman, who was highly respected in this district, was 81 years of age,

and leaves three sons and a large number of other relatives to mourn his loss.

Mr. Peter Cameron was born in Perthshire, Scotland, in 1817, and came to Victoria in 1842 to manage a sheep station at Mornington for a London company. He soon found, however, that the country was unsuitable for sheep, in consequence of which he induced the company to abandon the project. Some time after this he was engaged by Mr Hugh Glass, one of the leading men in the colony in those days, to undertake the management of two stations on the Glenelg River. While at the Bass River Mr. Cameron had sometimes seen the aborigines, who went occasionally into Gippsland and fought with the other tribes. After leaving the Bass River he took charge of station properties belonging to Colonel Anderson, who held a Government position in India, and he managed one of these stations up till 1851. One young man (a nephew of the Colonel's), who was staying with Mr. Cameron at about this time, was no other than Mr. Panton, now metropolitan police magistrate.

To give an idea of the value of property in those days it may be mentioned that on coming to Victoria, before the diggings, the Colonel offered Mr. Cameron one of the best stations on the Goulburn with 9,000 sheep and full working plant, as three year's salary. Yet, notwithstanding that salaries in those days must have been of modest dimensions, the offer was refused. At the present time, however, the same station and property would probably be worth a quarter of a million. On leaving the Goulburn Mr. Cameron went to Geelong and started farming. He was at Ballarat with his teams at the time of the riot. Later on he purchased a farm on the Moorabool and took a prominent part in public matters. He occupied a seat in the Bannockburn shire council for 15 years, during which time he had not been opposed. He took considerable interest in the Geelong and Western District Agricultural Society, and being a first-class judge of horses, his services in that capacity were in urgent request. Twelve years ago he came to Orbost and bought the property known as Glen Avon. Although Mr. Cameron took an active part in connection with the movement for the separation of Victoria and New South Wales, one of the last things he did was to present himself at the Orbost polling booth and vote for federation.

Mr. Cameron was buried in the Orbost Cemetery on Wednesday at three o'clock. The funeral was attended by a very large number of his friends and relatives.

'Snowy River Mail', Thursday, November 3, 1910:

Death Notice

CAMERON.— On the 27th October at her residence "Glenavon", Orbost, Charlotte, relict of the late Peter Cameron of Orbost (formerly of Geelong). Aged 85 years. Colonist of over 60 years.

A very old identity of Orbost passed away last week at the age of 86 years. We refer to Mrs Peter Cameron. The deceased lady, who was one of the very earliest settlers in this district, leaves three sons, who are well-known residents of Orbost. The funeral took place last Friday, the remains being interred in

the Orbost Cemetery. Mrs Cameron's husband, who went through many startling experiences in the old pioneering days, died something like ten years ago.



Mrs Charlotte Cameron

'Snowy River Mail', Wednesday, April 10, 1935:

DEATH

CAMERON.— On the 10th April, at her residence, Jane, widow of the late James Cameron Jnr., loved mother of Harry, Nell and Grace. Aged 77 years.

Regret is expressed at the death of Mrs. Cameron, widow of the late James Cameron Jr. Deceased was the loved mother of Mr. Harry Cameron and Miss Nell and Miss Grace Cameron.

[PHOTO ON NEXT PAGE]

'Snowy River Mail', Wednesday, August 31, 1949:

OBITUARY

LILIAN GLADYS CAMERON

Mrs Lilian Gladys Cameron, 59 years, died at the Bairnsdale District Hospital on Friday last. She had not enjoyed good health for the past six years. Earlier in the week she suffered an attack of bronchial pneumonia and on Tuesday, August 28, was taken to Bairnsdale Hospital.

Mrs Cameron was a daughter of the late Margaret and John Harding, of Geelong. She came to Orbost 35 years ago and resided with her sister, Mrs. P. C. Nixon, for some time, but was later joined by her mother and lived in Salisbury Street. She was employed as a manageress in Saunders General



Mrs Jane Cameron nee Moffat

Store, which was later destroyed by fire. She met and married Mr. H. P. Cameron while employed in Orbost. Mrs Cameron excelled as an elocutionist and in her younger days took part in most of the



Mrs Lilian Cameron holding James, and Jean

amateur shows produced in Orbost. A keen gardener, she devoted her time in later years to her family and her garden. Despite her ill-health, Mrs Cameron retained her sense of humour to the end of her days.

Sympathy is extended to her sorrowing husband and family, viz: Jean (Mrs J. Ralston), James and Roma (Mrs R. Smith). Three sisters, Mrs. P. C. Nixon (Orbost), Mrs. Bowey (Mont Albert), and Mrs De Coite (Footscray), also survive.

There was a very large and representative gathering at the funeral, which took place at Orbost on Sunday. Rev. L. W. Hatton officiated at the graveside and also at the church service in St. Andrew's Church, which preceded the funeral.

'Snowy River Mail', Wednesday, August 12, 1964:

SUDDEN DEATH OF MR. HARRY CAMERON

The death occurred with tragic suddenness on Saturday morning last of a well known and respected member of the community, Mr. Harry Cameron, aged 75 years.

Deceased was one of a family of early pioneers and lived his life in the district.

One son and two daughters survive.

Further details of the life of deceased will appear later.

'Snowy River Mail', Wednesday, August 19, 1964:

SON OF AN EARLY PIONEER

The passing of Harry Purchase Cameron, on August 8th, removed from our midst, a son of early pioneers of Orbost district, James and Jean Moffat Cameron, who came here in the early 1880's, and selected land known as Belegoogan (sic.) on the Jarrahmond road and grew maize until it was found the land was too low.

Where their house was situated it was necessary to look straight up to see the sun. Although quite a lot of the early pioneers left Orbost after the big flood of 1893 the Cameron family battled on against great adversity. Peter Cameron, grandfather of deceased, left Perth, Scotland, at the age of 21, in 1841, and arrived on the sailing ship, "Samuel Boddington", in January, 1842.

After leaving Belegoogan (sic.) deceased grew maize and beans and then turned to dairying on the farm occupied by him up to the time of his death.

Harry Purchase Cameron was admired for his pleasing personality and those who knew him in private life and public life, found him a most easy man to get on with. For many years a director of Orbost Butter factory, he was presented with a gold wrist watch on his retirement. He was also a member of Orbost Water Trust for several years, and member of Recreation Committee. In his younger days he was a keen follower and a committeeman of Orbost Football Club, having ridden a horse to Lakes Entrance to witness football matches on many occasions.

In later life he became a foundation member of

Orbost Bowling Club and held the club championship on several occasions. He was always a staunch supporter of the Orbost Presbyterian Church.

A keen farmer, he always journeyed to the Melbourne Show, carrying with him 12 very good cobs of maize, for which he often brought home a prize.

He was always recognised as a very good judge of dairy cattle, and noted for the cleanliness of his maize crops.

Deceased, who was 75, married Lilian Harding, who predeceased him. Members of the family are Jean (Mrs. J. Ralston), James and Roma (Mrs. R. Smith).

The funeral took place at Orbost cemetery on August 9th and was conducted by Rev. M. Clayton of the Presbyterian Church.



Roma, James and Jean Cameron, c. 1927



Back: Jean (Mrs Ralston), James, Roma (Mrs Smith); Front: Lilian & Harry Cameron