Section Two: Pastoralism, Truth-Telling, and Sugar

5. Domestic Life on Pastoral Stations

Plate 5.1: Wilhelmina (Mina), wife of Lancelot (Lance) Rawson, and Winifred (Wini), wife of Charles (Charley) Rawson, with their dog, goats and chooks at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Assessing Domestic Life

When I was in my teens, I can remember being told that Alan Shannon at Saltbush Park station (founded in the 1860s, inland from present-day Clairview on the coast), in the 1970s used his small plane to go and pick up the weekend newspapers. When telephones were first installed on pastoral properties and farms, this link with the outside world was a single wire 'party line' connected to several other users, which often failed to work, and anyone could eavesdrop on conversations. It impressed me at the time, but now I can see that it was all part of domestic life in isolated rural areas. Through research we can trace the size of the pastoral stations and get some idea of the finances needed to run them, but domestic life on these isolated properties is most often relegated to family historians or remains as oral history told around dinner tables. Like the Shannons in the 1970s, back in the nineteenth century, pastoralists never played by urban rules.

There are many good published but neglected descriptions of domestic life on early Queensland pastoral stations. Rachael Henning's letters from the 1860s are an excellent regional source, as are the 1870s diaries, photographs and sketches from the Martin and Rawson brothers at Hamilton, Hopetoun, and The Hollow runs at the western end of the valley, and Harold Finch-Hatton's 1880s account of Mt Spencer station in the ranges to the south-west. Many of the descriptions in this chapter apply just as much to later rural settlers, the difference being only in the scale of their domestic circumstances. The chapter uses an unusually large number of photographs and sketches, mainly from the Rawson family archives, an astonishing trove that has no equal for the district. Although the images are mainly from the 1870s, they encapsulate much about the whole second half of the nineteenth century for the Pioneer Valley and all of rural Queensland.

Pastoralists usually arrived with their herds and one or two bullock drays packed with enough possessions to make a new start. The first thing they needed was shelter from the elements and from attack by Aboriginal people. Women seldom travelled with the first arrivals. One who did was Mary Ready, who arrived with her husband James, a wagon driver in Dick Spencer's party which travelled from Fassifern station to establish The Retreat, later part of Mt Spencer station. She was the cook, and famously gave birth to her second child, a daughter—the first White child in the district—on 28 January 1862 while sheltering under a bullock wagon at Connors River on Connors Range. A few years earlier, in 1858, Rachael and Annie Henning arrived with their brother Biddulph at Marlborough station at Broadsound. The sisters moved with him to Exmore station in South Kennedy in 1862. However, in most cases it was a totally male affair until some semblance of domesticity had been achieved. Wives and families often followed six months or a year later, and in some cases not until several years later.

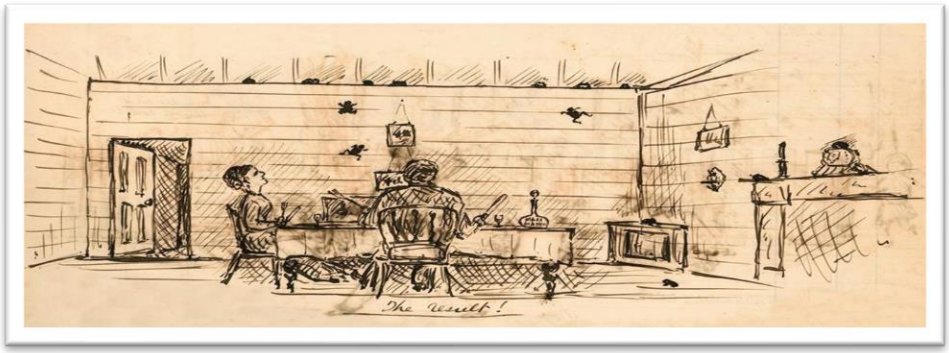
Whereas most new arrivals had to build their own accommodation, John A. Macartney arrived at Waverley station with rare luxury—two prefabricated cottages of American origin. Usually, the roofs of the first huts were made from pieces of calico stretched over poles placed on top of two forked saplings. The walls were constructed from sheets of box-tree bark six to eight feet (1.8 to 2.4 m) high and four to five feet (1.2 to 1.5 m) wide, cut off the nearest tree of the correct type. The structures were secured by strips of green hide. If it rained everything inside got wet. An early improvement was to add canvas or large bark sheets to the roofs. The next improvement was rough cut wooden slabs for the walls. These slab structures were stronger and were used for defence if the area was subject to attack by the Aboriginal inhabitants. An example from Hamilton station is discussed in Chapter 6.

The early homesteads usually had rough slab walls and bark roofs, enlargements of the first primitive buildings. Round corner posts were sunk about three feet into the ground, then split-slab walls were erected, with rafters made from Eucalyptus stringy-bark saplings. Sometimes walls were built from 'wattle and daub' (branches imbedded in mud mixed with straw) which could also be covered with lime render for white-washed sophistication. The first floors were often made from the ant mounds (inhabited by termites, or white ants) which dotted the countryside. There are several types of anthills (as they are commonly known): some are higher than a man, with broad sides which always face east-west, with their tops aligned north-south. Others were pointed and only about twelve inches (30 cm) high. The best type for floors came from round or dome-shaped anthills. Early settlers pulverized these ant nests, mixed them with water, then spread the mud mixture over the ground inside the houses. The mud set as hard as concrete. This method was used to seal the ground underneath houses set high on wooden stumps in many areas of colonial Australia. Indeed, the 1920s high-set house I was brought up in at Mackay had 'anthill' spread underneath, not concrete. The only disadvantage was if it got wet in a flood, the 'anthill' floor needed smoothing again.

After the first decade or so of roughing it, the main homestead houses became comfortable and part of small villages of buildings, all with different purposes. In the first houses, stone or slab fireplaces jutted out from the ends of the buildings, with split hollow logs as a safety feature, which functioned as a gutter where the fireplaces joined the walls (Plates 5.22, 5.37–38). Later, these were replaced with separate kitchens. The houses also gained wooden floors.

The homestead complexes consisted of the main dwelling house, usually with verandahs screened from the sun by creepers and latticework screens, and a separate kitchen close by the back of the main house, but far enough away to lessen the risk from rogue fires. They evolved into what are now called 'Queenslanders'—wooden houses built on stumps, with hardwood floors, VJ hoop pine walls (often only one layer with the studs left exposed) and galvanised ripple iron or wooden shingle roofs, surrounded by wide, open verandahs with wooden railings and vertical dowel rods, and ornate brackets on tops of the verandah posts. Air flow was essential, through the cracks between floorboards and the fretwork screens above doors to aid circulation. Partly adapted from the colonial architecture of British India, these buildings remained cool even on the hottest days, and, if the house was built high enough the enclosed ground levels were the best place for an afternoon siesta. Next to them was an assortment of buildings used as quarters for employees, stores, a saddle and harness room, and stockyards where drafting, branding, and spaying took place. There were usually paddocks near the house to keep horses and stud cattle safe. Early on, ceilings were usually non-existent, although calico or cretonne (a white heavy fabric with a hempen warp and a linen weft) was often strung up to keep at bay snakes, frogs, goannas, lizards, centipedes, scorpions, spiders, other insects, and bats. Nets were used, tucked in around beds, to combat mosquitos and keep other wildlife out.

Lighting was from the fireplace and fat-lamps—custom made for the purpose, or just empty meat tins or glass bottles filled with tallow, with a wick. Onwards from the 1850s and 1860s, the well-to-do had hurricane lamps powered by kerosene, with the addition of burner-cones (the lamp glass) later still. Settlers also made their own candles, purchasing tallow from the local boiling-down works.



Plates 5.2–3: Sometimes unwanted elements of nature came inside, such as this 1870s frog invasion of The Nyth, on The Hollow station. The drawings show Ned and Decima Rawson dealing with the problem. The illustrations also show that they had a piano.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.4: Outbuildings at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Life on the frontier could be quite comfortable, as long as the colonists planned ahead. Evelyn Maunsell's 1910s description, used below, of the logistics of ordering station supplies in the Gulf country, comes from a few decades later. Nothing much had changed since the 1860s and 1870s. Like many others, she moved from a comfortable London home to a

homestead with an unlined roof and antbed dirt floors. The station was cut off from the outside world for several months each year during the wet season, and she spent lonely weeks when the men were away mustering, with only Aboriginal staff for company. Her supplies arrived every six months, packed onto bullock drays. She was doing well. Edmund and Charlotte Atherton, at Cliftonville station on the coast south of Mackay in the 1870s, only received supplies every twelve months, delivered by a coastal trading vessel to a nearby creek, where they had to be put on bullock drays to get to the homestead. The same occurred at St Helens station further north. There, the owners used a small cutter to bring supplies from Mackay to a local creek bank, then they were shifted onto a dray for the trip to the station.

The Maunsell's flour came by the ton in fifty-pound bags. Invariably, it became full of weevils and had to be placed onto iron sheets in the sun to drive out the vermin, scooped up with saucepans, and sieved. Meanwhile, the bags were washed, dried and sunned, then the flour was replaced. Dealing with tons of flour was a slow process. Coarse salt, essential to cure meat, arrived one ton at a time, along with a smaller amount of fine salt to use as a condiment. Sugar arrived in seventy-pound bags, usually about a dozen at a time. A bag or two of brown sugar was also needed to make spiced beef, a form of salted beef cured with brown sugar, black treacle, and vinegar, encrusted with spices such as pepper corns, juniper berries, cloves, salt and saltpetre (potassium nitrate), then cured for a few days and braised or boiled. Many items needed to be protected from vermin: once cleaned, flour was placed on a mouse-proof stand, and covered with layers of tea-tree bark, melaleuca, and paperbark, which kept it free of weevils. Sugar was also placed on high stands to keep it ant free. Table and cupboard legs were placed in small tins of water to discourage ants.

There were sacks of potatoes and onions. Tea came in large plywood-walled chests each holding about 90 to 120 pounds weight. Raisins, currants, and sultanas arrived in 28-pound cases. Cream of tartar and bicarbonate of soda for making bread and damper came in 20-pound packs. Jam and treacle came in tins packed in wooden cases. Golden syrup arrived packed in 200-pound tins. There was also polished and unpolished rice from Asia, and usually a large cask of curry powder. Other condiments were Holbrooks and tomato sauces. Lemon and vanilla essence provided more flavours. Epsom salts (a crystallized form of Magnesium Sulphate) was the most common purgative and laxative. In addition, the supplies included several 40-pound cases of plug tobacco, a case of wooden pipes, another of clay pipes, and large cases of Bell and Black's wax matches, each with 144 dozen packets, and each packet containing twelve tins of matches. There were four cases of four-gallon cans of kerosene for lighting. The pine-wood boxes that housed the tins were recycled to make furniture, and the empty cans were used to carry water from creeks. The supplies also included dozens of fishing lines, and a box of mixed fishhooks.

The horses and bullocks had to be harnessed, which required a lot of leather, some of it produced on the station and some manufactured elsewhere. There were hobble chains, different-sized buckles, packets of horseshoe nails, several pounds of beeswax for preserving leather, balls of twine, leather of different weights and types for making harnesses, yellow serge for lining saddles, and blankets, cretonne, and other fabrics to make clothes. As well, there was a large range of riding boots, shirts, and trousers for the Aboriginal and European workers.

The stockmen made their own whips from hide and spent their spare time plaiting, then covered the handles with kangaroo hide. The crackers for the ends were made from silk or horsehair. Saddle and harness making, and repair was a specialised task. Horsehair was processed into taut coils to give the spring to saddles. There were travelling repairers who made their living moving from station to station, renewing these essential items.

Pastoral stations, plantations and farms had 'meat houses' where animals were butchered, and meat was preserved. These buildings usually had antbed floors and the waste

blood created unpleasant odours. With no refrigeration, fresh meat was either cooked and eaten immediately, or preserved with salt and spices, or smoked or dried. Salting meat was an art, but quite essential to life on the stations, as fresh meat, even if stored in screened butcheries, only lasted a couple of days. Meat from slaughtered animals was laid out in the meat house on a bench raised at one end. Coarse salt was rubbed in, the brine drained off into a hogshead cask at the lower end of the bench, and the meat placed inside. If the weather was too hot, salted meat could go bad as well. Every three days, meat preserved in brine had to be taken out of the cask and put on the bench to drain, the brine boiled up, skimmed, allowed to cool, and the meat put back inside. A more drastic solution was smoking and dehydrating the meat. It was smoked by being hung in a closed kitchen overnight with the fire stoked up and the lids off the oven, making the building into a furnace. Quite a few kitchens burnt down during this process. The result was meat as hard as wood, which had to be soaked in water to soften it for use. The salt meat could also be dried by laying it out on a sheet of iron in the sun and turning it constantly. Often this is called jerky: the McCrossin–Mackay expedition, which entered the Pioneer Valley in 1860, loitered for several days at Rockhampton on their way north, making beef jerky (marinated dehydrated steak).

Meat was also smoke-cured, particularly to prepare hams and bacon, and brisket of beef was salt- and spice-cured (corned) in water. Smoke houses were erected over large slow-burning sawdust pits covered with netting and empty corn and potato sacks, with a galvanised iron tent-like structure on top. A plank ran the full length (about 12 feet (3.6 m)) from a door, and the meat was hung on hooks from the ceiling. The smoking sawdust came from fragrant woods, producing succulent cured meat.

The night meal was usually roast or corned beef, poultry, or goat, vegetables, and a pudding. Green vegetables were in short supply, although local varieties of pigweed were eaten, as were types of indigenous spinach. European fruit was non-existent unless it was tinned, or from trees planted around homesteads. Plant foods typically accounted for 30 to 50 percent of Aboriginal diets. Eventually, the settlers learnt that there were many seasonal indigenous fruits, vegetables, and edible seeds available. They added some of these delicacies to their diets.

As pastoral life became more established, homesteads became larger and grander, particularly once women made their mark on the earlier rough masculine domesticity. The more basic living rooms became drawing rooms, and wide shady verandahs were added. The homesteads had domesticated animals such as goats, fowls, dogs, cats, and birds. In her 1878 cooking and advice book for rural women, partly based on her experience on The Hollow station, Wilhelmina (Mina) Rawson spent 33 of her 143 pages giving advice on keeping poultry, which was a staple part of the diet, used by most households as a ready source of eggs and meat. Houses were surrounded by vegetable gardens and fruit trees, and beautiful tropical flower gardens with frangipani and bougainvillea trees, ferneries, and orchid houses. The presence of European women on the stations ensured that the initial basic bachelor styles faded away, although men out mustering maintained the simple lifestyle well into the twentieth century.

Colonists made their own bread, and damper and Johnny cakes (unleavened bread made from flour, water and salt, and baked in wood ashes). ‘Camp ovens’ (big caste-iron pots with lids) only required a fire to hang over and were the most common devices for making bread, dampers, and stews, even for the poorest settlers. More established homes used full sized ovens.

Lifestyles on Mackay region pastoral stations in the 1870s

Considering the number of highly literate people of gentry origins who lived in the valley in

the nineteenth century, some like Dyson Lacy who attended Rugby School, or the Rawsons and John Ewan Davidson with university education, very few family archives have survived. Luckily, several of the early pastoral families have ensured that their papers have been preserved. The most extensive are the Cook family papers mainly from their Balnagowan, Greenmount and Wandoo stations between 1862 and 1947, deposited in the State Library of Queensland. Lady Catherine Macartney's personal diary from her years on Jolimont and Forrest Hill stations has survived, still in private hands. Two of the 1860s and 1870s pastoral families—the Martins and the Rawsons—have left us substantial pieces of writing in the form of station diaries. James Martin's Hamilton station diaries from 1876 to 1879 are deposited in the Mitchell Library section of the State Library of New South Wales, and a variety of papers and images from the Rawson family are held in the John Oxley Library section of the State Library of Queensland in Brisbane. The latter include Charley Rawson's 1871 Shamrock Vale (The Hollow) diary augmented by other diary material from the 1870s, plus photographs and sketches. The often-humorous pen sketches seem to have been by his wife Wini Rawson. They tell us more about day-to-day station life than the all-too-brief daily diary entries. The concluding section of this chapter will concentrate on the Martin and Rawson archives and some of the writing of Mina Rawson, to provide a word and pictorial essay on the lives of these two families. I have also used Geoffrey Blainey's *Black Kettle and Full Moon: Daily Life in a Vanished Australia*, and Marion Houldsworth's *Barefoot Through the Bindies*—based on North Queensland oral testimony from the 1890s and 1900s—to provide further context.

Plate 5.5: In May 1877 a group of pastoralists met at The Nyth after going fishing for barramundi (then called Palmer) in the Pioneer River. They are, L to R: on the verandah, Henry Finch-Hatton (partly obscured), Decima Rawson, Winifred Rawson, and Charles Rawson (partly obscured); on the top step, Francis Meynell and Robert Walker; on the middle step: Graham Turnor, and David Dalrymple; and on the bottom step, Reginald Pole-Carew, and Charles Stansfeld (Paddy) Rawson.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

Pastoral Wives

It was all very well to obtain pastoral leases on the frontier, but the men were either fated to

life as bachelors or had to find a suitably adventurous wife in the southern colonies, or back in Britain. There can be no doubt that there were also liaisons with Aboriginal women, which often remained unacknowledged or were hidden once their European wives arrived on the scene. We know very little about same-sex relationships, which must also have occurred.

The pastoralists were concerned to marry into a similar class. The daughters of existing pastoralists were in demand. Victoria and the Darling Downs were suitable hunting grounds. These marriages united families, properties and finances, and women brought up on stations were deemed capable of existing in isolated bush settings. The Miller sisters from a Victorian pastoral family married two partners from the St Helens stations. There are many interconnections between the nineteenth century pastoral and plantation families around Mackay. The Rawson and Macartney families became connected by marriages, as were the Bell, Atherton, Turnor, and Cook families. The sugar plantation owners also made marriage links with the pastoralists and amongst themselves. For instance, Bessie Tyser, William Macartney's wife, was a niece of Thomas Fitzgerald, who planted the first sugar cane at Mackay and became a leading plantation owner. Although European women were quite rare on 1860s pastoral stations, diary evidence from the 1870s suggests that they were by then well ensconced, learning to adapt to the local environment and experimenting with using local vegetables and fauna in their cooking.

Often the family units were large and inter-related. For instance, between them, the Plane Creek Bells and Athertons produced 26 children. Married in 1861, Alice Atherton and Henry Bell had eight children. Edmund Atherton married Charlotte Patterson (*ca.* 1844–1905) in 1865 and they also had eight children. In 1870, Richard Atherton married Letitia Jane Orr (1849–1934) from Ulster in Northern Ireland, the only daughter of Rev. J.S.C. Orr. They had 10 children, eight surviving to adulthood. In 1908, their daughter Althea (Vida) married Albert Alfred Cook, a son of John Cook of Balnagowan and Greenmount stations, linking the two Mackay district pastoral dynasties. In 1912, Richard Atherton joined Albert Cook in partnership at Wandoo and Blue Mountain. Through a 1913 marriage of Alan, a son of Richard Atherton, to Charlotte Turnor of Bolingbroke station, the Athertons also linked to the Finch-Hattons. In 1915, the Cook's built a new homestead at Greenmount, on the site first chosen by John Mackay in 1862.

While this chapter is about the whole domestic sphere, I have tried to feature the women, who are too often left out of depictions of life on pastoral stations. I have attempted something a little unusual, in that I have included information on family origins in the British Isles, and, where possible, used photographs or paintings of their ancestral homes, by way of comparison with their lifestyles in Queensland. While many of these houses have now been demolished or become historical buildings on the tourist trail, hotels, or even B&B establishments, they help illustrate the origins of the families. These vignettes are a continuation of the property and financial-oriented descriptions of the stations in the previous chapter.

The Cooks at Balnagowan

The origin of the first Balnagowan herd was from Turanville station at Scone, run by John Cook's brother Thomas, and possibly also from his father Samuel's Nemingha station near Tamworth. We can also surmise that other Balnagowan finances came from these sources. When he died in 1883, Samuel also owned 300 acres of sugar land in the Mackay district, having done his own investing in the industry.

In 1860, John Cook married Elizabeth Cormack Ross in Tamworth, New South Wales, the daughter of Scottish immigrants Robert Ross and Margaret Sutherland from Wick, Caithness, in Scotland, where she was born in 1834. Their first three children were born at

Nemingha, John's father's station, an indication that Elizabeth did not shift to Balnagowan immediately. Even with the dispute with her brother over the ownership of Balnagowan (outlined in Chapter 4), Elizabeth moved to the frontier settlement in 1865, leaving her comfortable existence on the New England Tableland. The next five children were born in Mackay between 1868 and 1878.

Like most of the early pastoralists, the Cooks' first home on Balnagowan was a small, fortified house constructed from wooden slabs, which was later replaced by a sawn timber homestead that grew grander as the decades progressed. The house was totally replaced in 1907 and extended in 1912. Not everything went smoothly. Elizabeth suffered the death of four-year-old Alexandra in 1867 when the girl's dress caught fire while they were washing clothes on the bank of the Pioneer River. Medical assistance—only the Mackay pharmacist—was 12 miles away. The child did not survive the accident, and Charles, her sixth child, died a week after birth. Although the local pharmacist had some medical training (having failed his medical degree) there were no medical doctors in Mackay until Dr Robert McBurney arrived in 1869 and no hospital until a small two-roomed structure was built in 1872 on the river-side hospital reserve. The relationship between her husband and her brother Lewis would have been tense due to financial and legal disagreements, then her brother drowned in 1870 while crossing the river. There was no school in Mackay until 1871, and it was too far away for the children to attend. Elizabeth became the teacher for all of her children, using a schoolhouse (Plate 5.8) built for this purpose at Balnagowan.

In many ways, the Balnagowan homestead pattern is typical of the lives of other pastoralists. In 1912, the Cooks purchased Greenmount, on the opposite side of the river, and had a substantial homestead constructed there in 1915, which still stands. Like the other stations, Balnagowan and Greenmount were small villages of houses and outbuildings. Photographs show the main Balnagowan house decorated in typical cluttered Victorian style. Several of the Balnagowan outbuildings were dismantled and shifted to Greenmount.

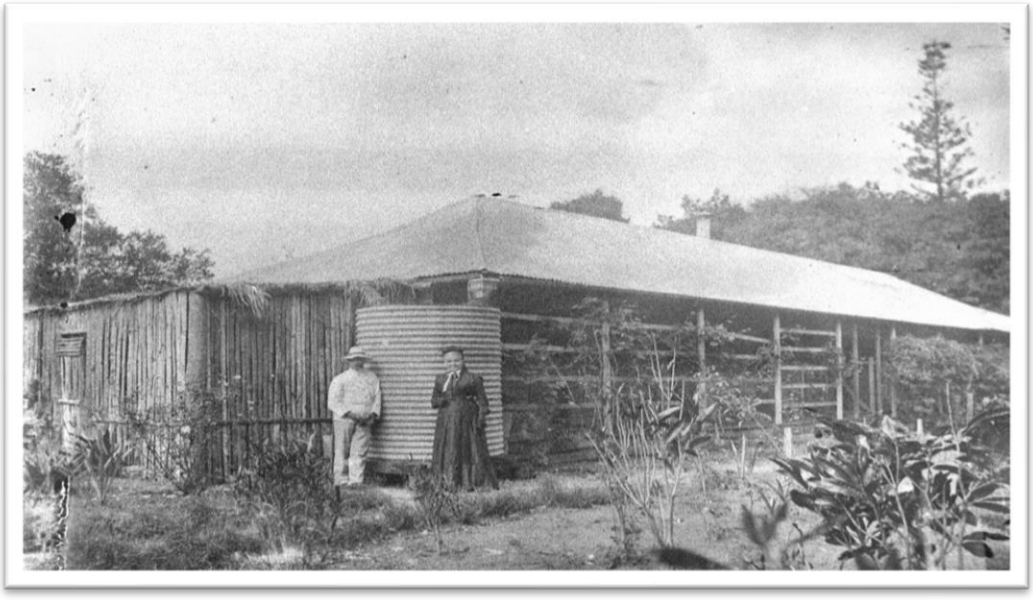


Plate 5.6: The Balnagowan homestead in 1885, with Elizabeth Cook and Alfred McCready standing near the fern house.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.7: Florence Reid, daughter of John Cook, in the fern house at the Balnagowan homestead, 1880s.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

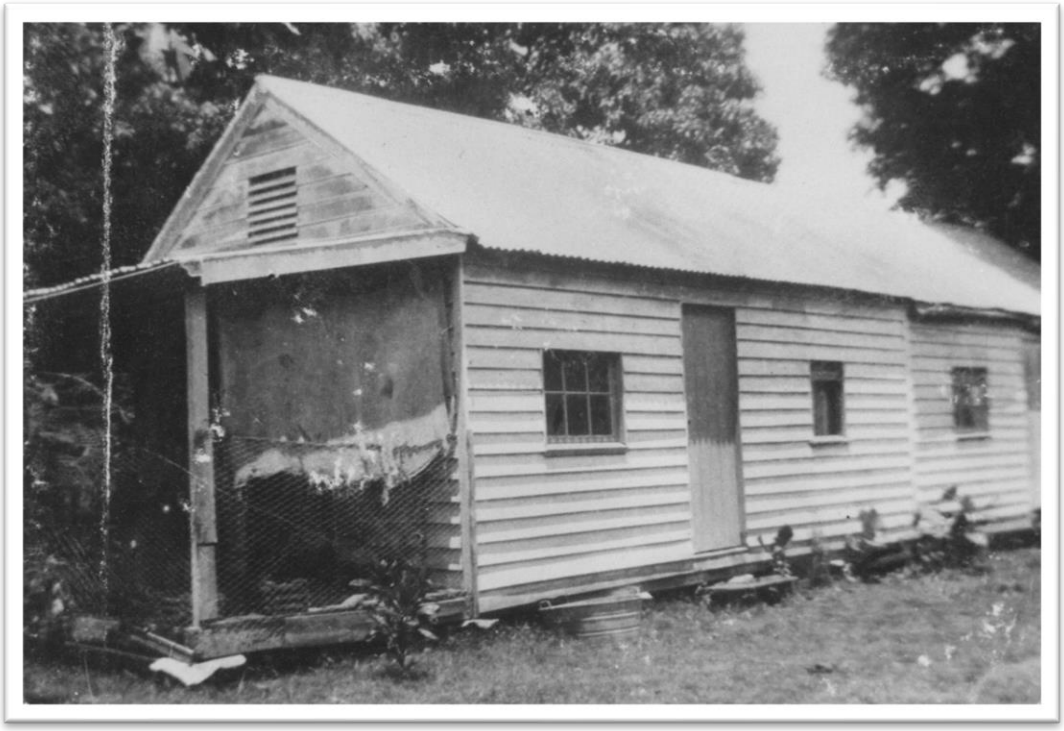


Plate 5.8: The schoolhouse at Balnagowan where Elizabeth Cook educated her children.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.9: The Cook family at Balnagowan in 1898. Sixty-year-old John Cook is seated on the verandah.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.10: The cluttered Victorian drawing room of the first Cook family Balnagowan homestead, showing photographs, substantial books, and knick-knacks from travel.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

The Cooks were the most successful long-term pastoralists in the district. They had no substantial British gentry pedigree to match some of their fellow pastoralists, yet in the end they succeeded where others failed. They made a strategic marriage link with the Atherton family, and business links with the Michelmore family. The Greenmount homestead, home to the Cooks for 67 years, has remained unchanged since the 1920s. John Cook's son Albert (1875–1948) took over the family's pastoral and agricultural interests after his father died in 1901 and was responsible for building the house in 1915 (Plate 4.7). Control passed to his son Thomas (Tom) Cook, who died in 1981. There were no children, and his widow Dorothy died in 1995. In 1983, the 28-acre (11 ha) site and the homestead were gifted to the Pioneer Shire Council (now included in Mackay Regional Council) and operates as a museum.

One of the interesting features of the family was their belief in spiritualism, a religious movement based on the belief that the spirits of the dead exist and can communicate with the living. Spiritualism was at a peak between the 1840s and 1920s. The spirit world is not viewed as static but evolving and providing knowledge about moral and ethical issues, as well as about the nature of God. Spiritualists were inclined to keep their beliefs private as they often faced allegations of fraud and charlatanism. How far back the beliefs went in the family is uncertain, but they were strong in the twentieth century generations. Tom Cook always set a place for his long dead father at the Greenmount dining table and consulted him regularly. When his sister, Althea Atherton Parsons, died in 1976, her living room at Bucasia was full of books on spiritualism. I can confirm this as I saw them there. These family practices are confirmed by other Mackay residents, and by Gloria Arrow, Greenmount's live-in maid and later caretaker between 1958 and 2021.

Plate 5.11: The second Balnagowan station homestead, built in 1907.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

Spencer, the Rices and Finch-Hattons at The Retreat and Mt Spencer

As outlined in Chapter 4, Spencer's The Retreat station came to nothing. However, it provided three of the Mackay district's founding settler families.

Four members of Spencer's 1862 party became well known in the district and today their descendants are the oldest settler families. James Ready was a bullock dray driver, and his wife Mary, from County Tipperary, Ireland, was the cook for the Spencer expedition. At the age of twenty-one, her parents dead, she had migrated to Sydney where she met James Ready, an Irishman from Limerick. They married on 10 April 1858. The couple were working on Gordonbrook station on the Clarence River when their first child, Charles, was born in 1860. Like many others, they decided to try their fortune further north and travelled to Fassifern station where Dick Spencer was putting together an expedition to drove cattle to the headwaters of Denison Creek. One of Ready's tasks was to get the wagons over steep Connors Range. It was here that Mary's second child was born. By 1863, Ready was working on Greenmount station; their third child was born there. Soon afterwards, the family settled on the southern bank of Black Waterhole Creek (now the small hamlet of Hasledean) on the top of the Eton Range. They built a slab hut that became the Travellers' Rest Hotel (later the Retreat Hotel), first licensed in 1864. Their fourth child, Mary, was born there in 1867. It was also where they reared Johanna (Judy) Hazeldine (*sic*.), the Aboriginal child who survived the 1867 massacre of Yuwi people at The Leap, described in Chapter 6. James Ready continued to work as a teamster and Mary was often left alone to run the hotel. The Readys owned the hotel until 1872, later owned a butchery and hotel in Mackay, and part of the original Fort Cooper station.

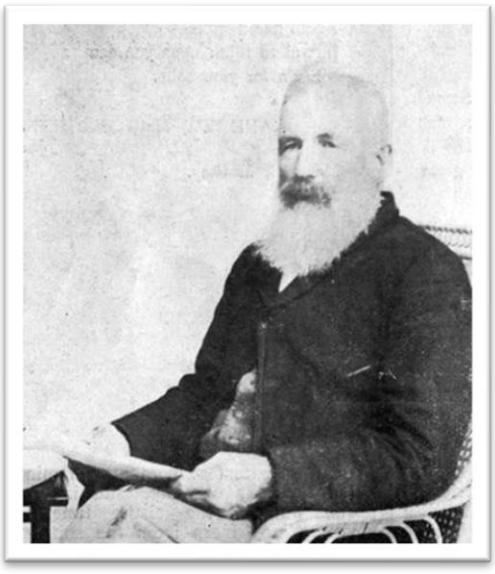


Plate 5.12: James Ready
Source: State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.13: Mary Ready

Ben Reynolds, another of Spencer's men, was with James Ready when he became the first to drive a bullock team and dray over the Eton Range to Mackay. Reynolds chose to stay in the district and began the Fort Cooper Hotel at what is now Nebo. He died in 1867, although his son William Thomas Reynolds was born there and became well-known in the Pioneer Valley, working for many years for E.M. Long at Habana plantation. In 1898, he married Edith Johansen (also Johannesson), whose Swedish father worked as a butcher at

Long's Habana until the mill and butchery closed in 1902. Their son Anders Johannesson married English-born Jane Anderson in 1875. The family shifted to The Oaks cane farm at Rosella.

William (Billy) Coakley, an anomaly of early settlement, also arrived with Spencer. Often called 'Spencer's Billy', and mistaken for an Aboriginal Australian, he was of African ancestry, born in Orange Bay, Jamaica in 1846, to Harry Chambers Coakley and Letita Mick. When he arrived with Spencer, he was 16 years old, remaining in the district until his death in 1918, when he drowned at Farleigh during a cyclone. In the 1870s, he worked punting sugar to the port from Foulden plantation. Later, he had a dairy farm at Mt Bassett, with a house called Bassett Hall, and a cane farm at Farleigh. Billy Coakley was Catholic and in December 1881 married Bridget Barrett, a Catholic from County Cork, Ireland. They had 12 children between 1882 and 1903. How he reached Australia is unknown, although there were many colonists of West Indian descent, usually of European origin. The Coakleys were generous in making land grants to the Farleigh Catholic church, and the Anglican South Sea Islander community for their church at Pioneer. The Coakleys always assisted the Islanders. His son, Seaborn, married a Solomon Islander, Ivy Malayta (Malaita), and a granddaughter, Teresa, married a third generation Malaitan, Christie Fatnowna.

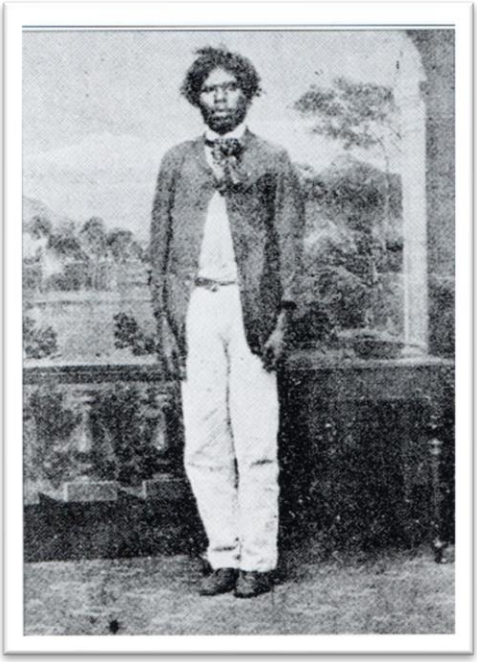


Plate 5.14: William (Billy) Coakley, the young Jamaican member of Dick Spencer's expedition.
Source: *Mackay Mercury Jubilee Edition*, 1912.

The Rice, Finch-Hatton, and Turnor families are remembered as the most famous residents southwest of the Pioneer Valley. These families occupied stately homes in England, and while life at Mt Spencer and Bolingbrook stations in the 1870s and 1880s was comfortable by the standards of colonial rural Australia, it hardly compared with their origins. Pictures of the current Turnor home, the Rice home (now a hotel), and the Finch-Hatton home (now a ruin), give some idea of their high social standing (Plates 5.16–18). Mt Spencer was a largely bachelor station, which seems to have operated like a *Boy's Own Paper* colonial adventure story—a place for English gentry men to experience working in the Australian bush, while living in relative comfort.

The first residents of note were Lionel Knight Rice (1844–1929) and his older brother Charles Augustus Rice (1828–1905), whose family owned Godinton Park in Kent, a mansion in part dating back to the Elizabethan era. Lionel Rice was the last of the 15 children of Elizabeth Austen Knight and Edward Royd Rice (1790–1878), parliamentary Member for Dover (1847–57). In most large aristocratic families, being the last child meant that there was not much money to spare, or at least, that the patrimony was rather stretched. His brothers included an admiral who was knighted, a major-general (Charles, mentioned above), a lieutenant-colonel, a commander, a captain, and an Anglican minister. His sister Marianna married an Anglican minister and baronet. His sister Frances Margaretta (Fanny) was the third wife of George W. Finch-Hatton, 10th Earl of Winchilsea and 5th Earl of Nottingham, which explains why the Finch-Hatton's sons, Henry Stormont (1852–1927) and Harold Heneage (1856–1904), later became partners in Mt Spencer. Rice was also a great-nephew of Jane Austen, his mother's aunt. It would be hard to find a better British military, aristocratic, church, and literary pedigree.

Lionel was educated at Cheltenham College, then, as soon as he was able, set off for adventure in Australia. Six foot three inches (190 cm) tall, and broad in proportion (Plate 4.8), in 1876 Lionel Rice married Eleanor Augusta (1850–1938), daughter of Elizabeth Gregson and Robert Hay Murray J.P. D.L., descended from the Earls of Kinnoull and the Dukes of Atholl in Scotland. Devoted to each other, Lionel and Eleanor had no children. His name remained on the Mt Spencer leases from 1869 to 1883. Presumably, Eleanor spent some of that time at Mt Spencer. Her closest neighbours would have been the Martins at Hamilton, the Macartneys at St Helens, and the Rawsons at The Hollow.

Plates 5.15–16: Godinton Park, showing the exterior and the entrance hall. It was the home of the Rice family, near Great Chart, in Kent, England. Lionel Knight Rice was a partner in Mt Spencer. The oldest part of the house is Elizabethan and there were extensive estates.
Source: Courtesy of Historic Houses, www.historichouses.org/resources/all-resources/godinton-house-gardens-in-kent; www.artnet.com/artists/charles-jenyns/godinton-park-near-great-chart-kent-KTVTIiF3NgdFoBRVVlyw0Q2.

Plate 5.17: Haverholme Priory in Lincolnshire, the home of the Earls of Winchilsea and Nottingham between the 1830s and 1920s. The house had 30 bedrooms and four reception rooms. Henry and Harold Finch-Hatton, sons of the 10th Earl, were partners in Mt Spencer.
Source: Courtesy of www.ipernity.com/doc/buildings/36080553.

Plate 5.18: Stoke Rochford Hall in Lincolnshire, home of Christopher Turnor, an investor in Mt Spencer station. He was married to a sister of Henry and Harold Finch-Hatton. His son Graham owned Bolingbroke station, near Mt Spencer.
Source: Courtesy of Patrick Mackie, CC BY-SA 2.0, https://common.

The next Mt Spencer marriage was that of Henry Finch-Hatton, fourth son of the 10th Earl of Winchilsea and 8th Earl of Nottingham, resident from about 1875 and into the 1880s. Educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, he returned to London to marry Anne Jane (Nan) Codrington on 12 January 1882, daughter of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry J. Codrington.

A few days after the ceremony, the couple set sail on the *Chyebassa*, arriving at Mackay on 8 May and travelling to isolated Mt Spencer homestead. Not far off the road between Mackay and Nebo, the homestead, set on a small lake, was substantial by 1880s bush standards—it even had a piano. There were three children from the Finch-Hatton marriage. Given that they were all born in England, and that the first, Gladys, was born on 8 December 1882, Nan probably only lived at Mt Spencer for a few months in that year. The next, Guy, was born in 1885, presumably meaning that his father made a trip home in mid-1884. The third, Denys (1887–1931, made famous in Karen Blixen's 1937 book *Out of Africa*), was born in London after Henry returned permanently to England in about September 1886. Henry's brother Harold never married.

Plate 5.19: Mt Spencer homestead and some of the outhouses in July 1877.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.20: Henry Finch-Hatton, staff and friends on the front steps of Mt Spencer station homestead in July 1877. L to R: Henry Finch-Hatton, George Craks, P. Craks (top of steps), Reginald Pole-Carew (mid steps), and manager and part-owner Charles W. Toussaint (standing on the steps). Harold Finch-Hatton or Lionel Rice may be the photographer.
Source: Courtesy of the Jim Foley Collection; image provided by Bryant Wright.

Plate 5.21: Part of the living room on Mt Spencer station.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

Harold described the house, and its surrounds in the 1880s:

The station itself was quite a small village of houses. The big house stood a little way apart, in a garden with a paling-fence round it, about eighty yards square. Unfortunately, it was right on the top of a quartz ridge, where there was very little soil, so that it was difficult to get trees of any size to grow; but all sorts of creepers throve wonderfully. In front of the house were one or two Poincianas, and a very pretty bunya, a sort of fir-tree; and round every pile of the house grew masses of scarlet geraniums, which are supposed to possess the virtue of keeping away snakes. At the back there was a rockwork covered with beautiful ferns, and beyond that a small pond with dwarf bamboos round it, where the tame wild ducks lived.

The house itself was an amazingly comfortable building, two stories high, about sixty feet long and thirty-five feet wide, built upon round piles seven feet high, with an eight-foot verandah all round. Down below was the dining-room, with a huge brick fireplace, the pantry, a small store, an office, and a bathroom. Over the dining-room was the sitting-room, also with a large fireplace, and with "French-lights" opening on to the verandah, and, on the same floor, four very comfortable bedrooms. The house, with the exception of the chimney, was built entirely of wood, the walls being made of iron-bark slabs, dressed very smooth, and laid horizontally; and the roof covered with shingles, which are small pieces of wood, eighteen inches long and about four inches wide, split out of iron-bark or stringy-bark wood. If properly laid on, with sufficient pitch, shingles make about the best roof possible for a hot climate; they are perfectly water-tight, keep out the heat, and last for many years. But there is a good deal of art in laying them on, and unless it is done scientifically, they let the water through like a sieve. The sitting-room was very well furnished, with any number of tables, pictures, book-shelves, armchairs, and above all an excellent piano. Rice and my brother had been there for some years, and had made the place very comfortable, and altogether hardly what one would expect to find in the Bush.

Near the house stood the kitchen, with a cook's room adjoining, and a little covered way all overgrown with creepers, leading from it to the house.

About a hundred yards away were the rest of the station buildings, consisting of two stockmen's houses, a store, a meathouse, the spare hut in which I camped, the men's kitchen, the blacksmith's forge, and the black boys' hut, all slab buildings with shingle roofs; also a large dovecot and a row of fowlhouses, surrounded by wire-netting yards, and beyond these again the milking-yards, killing-yard, calf-pens, and horseyards.[1]

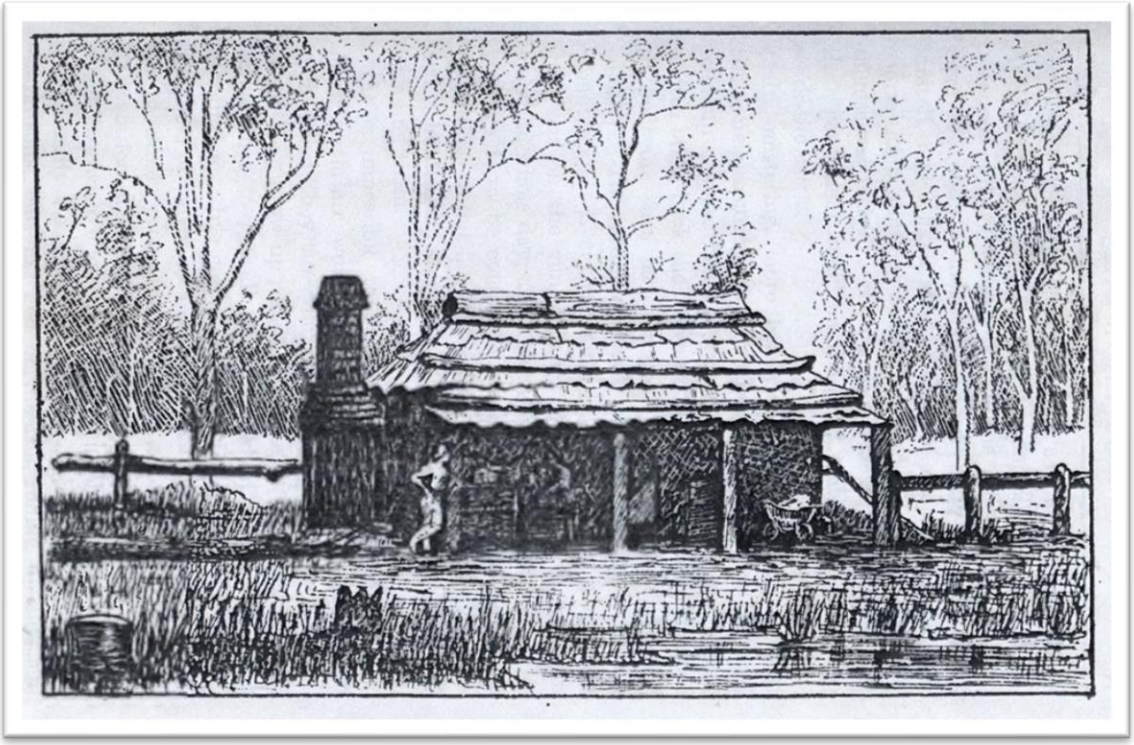
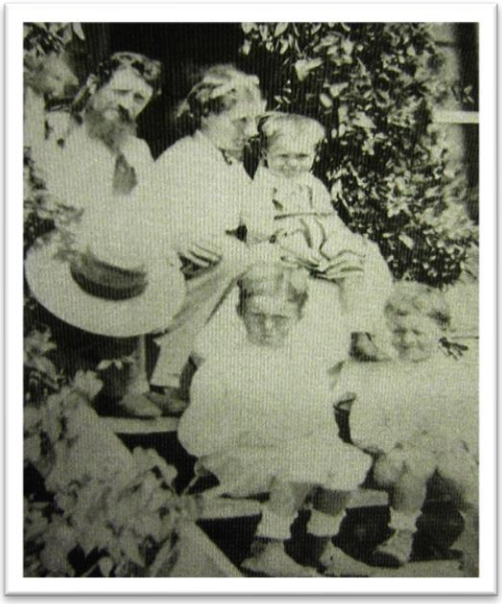


Plate 5.22: A workers' house at Mt Spencer in the 1880s. The house is typical of many early settler homes, with an exterior chimney.
Source: Finch-Hatton 1886, 54.

John and William Macartney, and Robert Graham, the Miller Sisters, and Bessie Tyser

The Macartney brothers, John and William, along with their partner Robert Graham, established the four St Helens runs in the early 1860s. Their move to the St Helens properties was typical of investments from Victoria in the Queensland pastoral industry. John B. Macartney and Robert Graham married sisters from Victoria. The Queensland marriage connection appears to be through John Macfarlane, partner with Alexander Miller in the second half of the 1840s. The partnership ended in 1853 when they divided their Murrindindi station in Victoria. In 1858, Macfarlane married a neighbour, Eliza Callender. By 1865, John Macfarlane had dissolved his partnership with his older brother Peter, and as part of a Melbourne company had become the resident partner on Oakey Creek station (Oakey Creek Squatting Co. Ltd) on the Mackenzie River in the Leichhardt district. The Millers were also partners in the Oakey Creek venture. Macfarlane, born in Scotland in 1823, became mayor of Rockhampton (1876–78), Member for Rockhampton (1877–78), and Member for Leichhardt (1879–80). Several members of the Macfarlane family lived at Oakey Creek and may have been the introductory link for the two marriages. John B. Macartney married in September 1865 to Catherine (1845–1904), the twenty-year-old daughter of Alexander Miller of Merindindi. In 1870, Graham married her sister Maggie (1843?–1917). Then, in 1872, William George Macartney married Elizabeth (Bessie) Anne Tyser (1851–1944), born in Wellington, New Zealand. Her parents were Emily Isabella Fitzgerald (1815–61) and Robert Bayley Tyser (1821–54). William's marriage to Bessie is more straight forward as she was a niece of Thomas Henry Fitzgerald, an early Mackay surveyor, sugar planter and politician. He had 11 children of his own and it is likely that his niece was visiting when the match was made.



Plates 5.23: Sir John and Lady Catherine (née Miller) Macartney and some of their 11 children.
Plate 5.24: Maggie (née Miller), wife of Robert W. Graham.
Source: (5.23) Desmond Dunn Collection; (5.24) Deirdre Morrish Collection.

The first St Helens homestead was a three-room slab hut with a dirt floor and bark roof, built near the mouth of St Helens Creek on St Helens No. 2 lease. Holes were bored in the walls to shoot through when attacked by the local First Nations people, much in the style of the fortified slab hut from Hamilton, pictures of the remains of which appear in Chapter 6 (Plates 6.5–7).

The Jolimont and St Helens' homesteads seem to have been rather primitive in the early years and it is not entirely clear when the Miller sisters settled there. J.B. Macartney, who inherited the family baronetcy in 1867, would have been considered one of the most eligible bachelors on the northern frontier. In the 1870s division of the four St Helens leases, he kept Jolimont (St Helens No. 1) in the south, which bordered Balnagowan and Hamilton. The Miller family historian, Deirdre Morrish, concluded that Maggie Graham (née Miller) did not live permanently at St Helens until the early 1870s, which may also be the same for her sister Catherine.

Although they had both been brought up in comfortable houses, not slab huts, various women on the 1860s and 1870s frontier—for instance the Henning sisters in the 1860s and the Rawson and Martin women—had braved it out on isolated pastoral stations. The Miller sisters may have chosen to move back and forth from Victoria until the early 1870s, by which time life at the St Helens' homesteads was more comfortable. Even William's wife had the option of staying with her uncle, at least until he left the district in 1876. Surviving business and family records from these pastoral families show many connections. When at Jolimont in these early years Lady Catherine wrote constantly to her Murrindindi family. Life with Sir John, who had a drinking problem, was never easy.

Catherine Macartney's first son William seems to have been born at Mackay, but her second son, Alexander (Alick) Miller Macartney, was born at Murrindindi in 1869 when she and Sir John were visiting her family. Their next three children were born in the Mackay district. Four of their children died in infancy. Bessie Macartney had four children, two boys and two girls, between 1872 and 1882. Interestingly, the first was born at Branscombe plantation, not far out of Mackay, a much safer place than Jolimont if medical care was needed. Maggie Graham had no children.

The Martins and Dalrymple of Hamilton, Hopetoun and The Pinnacle

It is difficult to get a firm grasp on the origins and finances of the Martin brothers of Hamilton and Hopetoun stations. James (1836–79) and Robert (1840–98) were born in Leadhills, a silver and lead mining village in South Lanarkshire, Scotland. It is the second highest village in Scotland and its subpolar climate makes it among the coldest places in the British Isles. The environment is barren and rocky, covered with short heath. Once a gold mining area, it became known more for silver and lead mining, which carried with it an unhealthy result. Animals often died from arsenic and lead poisoning and the miners also became ill. James and Robert's father was born in Leadhills. He was the local medical doctor, and the son of a bailie to the Earl of Hopetoun, who owned the mining rights at the village. In the seventeenth century, the Martin family had lived in Biggar, then shifted to Leadhills (29 km away) because of a marriage link. There were five boys; one became a church minister, and another, Dr James Martin, was the father of the Hamilton and Hopetoun brothers. Little more is known about their background, although one can surmise that the family was upwardly mobile onwards from the middle of the eighteenth century. Leadhills itself was also upwardly mobile in its own way: founded in 1741, the Leadhills Miners Library is the oldest subscription library in the British Isles. In 1821, there were 1,500 books in its catalogue, which had risen to 3,805 in 1904.

Dr James Martin's wife, Eliza Mary, was born in Jamaica, which may indicate an infusion of Caribbean plantation money into the family. They had six children, three girls and three boys, one of whom died in childhood. The couple died in 1874 and 1875, and all five of their children were living in the Pioneer Valley by the 1860s and 1870s.

This well-to-do newly middle-class Scottish family took up Hamilton and Hopetoun runs. As noted in Chapter 4, James Martin had been in New South Wales and was employed to drove a herd of sheep north in 1862–63. He was looking for land to lease, and located what became the Hamilton run, which his brother Robert took up in 1863. In December 1865, Robert and James jointly applied for neighbouring Hopetoun, between the upper reaches of the Pioneer River and Cattle Creek, backing onto the rainforest covered Clarke Range. The lease was granted in September 1867.

Their two sisters and another brother lived in the valley at various times. Jane (born in 1834) joined them, marrying a stockman, Frank Kinchant, although they separated before her first child was born. Reading between the lines, it was an unfortunate relationship, motivated by pregnancy, not suitability. Polly, another sister, lived with her brothers at Hamilton. Their sister Mary also lived in the valley, spending most of her time with the Spillers at Pioneer plantation. Tall and lean (he was 6 feet 4 inches (193 cm)), James Martin married Mary Rhodes in about 1873.

As noted in Chapter 4, James and Robert fought over the ownership of Hamilton and Hopetoun. Robert shifted away, first to a house at Palms Estate, then to a small property called Mandurana, on the boundary between Balnagowan and Jolimont, south of The Leap mountain. In January 1876, Robert married 29-year-old Elizabeth (Lizzie) Watt Pringle at her brother's home at Wood Green near London. Their first child was born at Mandurana in October. The next year, the brothers were visited by their 17-year-old brother Alexander Charles (Charlie) Martin (1850–98) who seems to have been on a colonial adventure after the deaths of their parents. As most of his siblings were at Mackay, it was a logical move. He later moved to South Africa, became a banker, married there, and died in 1898.

Plates 5.25: Mary Martin, wife of James J. Martin and her son Jim.
Source: Greenmount Homestead Collection; Mackay Regional Council.
Plate 5.26: Euphemia M. (Effie) Dalrymple.
Sources: State Library of Queensland.

David (Dal) Hay Dalrymple, a Mackay-based friend, entered into a partnership with the Martins between 1870 and 1876, after which he took up his own run nearby, buying back into Hamilton in 1885. In 1880, he married Euphemia Margaret (Effie) McLean, two decades his junior and the daughter of a pastoralist. She was born in 1860 at Rawbelle station in the Burnett district, to Jonathan McLean (1826–78) from the Isle of Sky, Scotland, and Isabella Clow (1828–75), also from Scotland. Effie had 12 siblings. McLean had arrived from Skye, gained his colonial experience in New South Wales, then joined his uncle on Acacia Creek station near Warwick, managed his uncle's Rawbelle station, and in 1865, with James Rae, went on to own Bindango station in the Maranoa. David and Effie had four children between 1883 and 1887. Although David Dalrymple was a constant visitor to Hamilton and The Pinnacle, often helping with the cattle, it seems that neither he nor Effie lived there permanently until later in life. They seem to have had two main homes, one in Mackay, and a rural retreat at Wallingford. One of their daughters married John Michelmore, the son of leading Mackay businessman, who also diversified into pastoralism with Albert Cook of Balnagowan. D.H. Dalrymple represented Mackay in Parliament between 1888 and 1904, serving in several ministerial portfolios.

The picture one gets is of a Martin family migration in the decade before and just after their parents died. Descriptions of Leadhills make it seem the classic place to want to leave. Their father made a good living in the mining town, but what future was there for his family once their parents died? Like many Scots, they chose to emigrate to the Australian colonies, and to South Africa, with sibling following sibling in a chain migration. Their lifestyle does not seem to have been as grand as that of their Rawson neighbours at The Hollow.

The Rawsons of The Hollow

The Rawson ancestry reputedly goes back to the Doomsday Book in the eleventh century where they are recorded as landowners. In the eighteenth century they lived in Bingley, a market town now absorbed into the city of Bradford and had grown rich from the textile trade. In the early nineteenth century, they ran Rawson's Bank based in vast Somerset House

(originally Stoney Royd House) in Halifax, west Yorkshire.

The three English gentry brothers, with banking, textile manufacturing and East India Company connections, appeared on the Pioneer Valley's pastoral scene not long after the Martins. Their father was Charles Stansfeld Rawson, once of the East India Company, who was married to Octavia Collinson. The couple lived at Stony Royd House, Halifax, in west Yorkshire, a Rawson family home built in the 1760s for Christopher Rawson, the third son of John Rawson of Bolton, who later resided at Wesdale Hall in the Lakes District in Cumberland. Christopher Rawson of Halifax was a well-known merchant in the East India Company and a great-uncle of the Rawsons of The Hollow. Admiral Sir Harry Rawson, Governor of New South Wales (1902–09), was their distant cousin. We can get some idea of the family background by examining their houses in England (Plates 5.27–29). They lived in great comfort. Five children survived infancy, two girls, Charlotte Elizabeth and Katherine Emily, and the three boys who migrated to Australia: Charles (Charley) Collinson (1840–1928), Lancelot (Lance) Bernard (1843–1919), and Edmund (Ned) Stansfeld (1845–1911). Charley was born in the Boldon Valley, Durham, and Ned was born at Gaylesyke, Yorkshire, while other details suggest that at some stage the family lived at Wasdale Hall in the Lakes District in Cumbria.

Plate 5.27: Wasdale Hall, the Rawson's home in the Lakes District, England. It was a long way from this ivy-covered comfortable residence to conditions at The Hollow and The Nyth.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.28: Otterburn Tower, home of cousins of the Rawsons of The Hollow, Thomas James and his son Harry Redesdale James. Harry had a financial interest in The Hollow and lived there in the early 1870s.
Source: Courtesy of www.Wowcher.co.uk.

Christopher Rawson (1816–49) was their most illustrious immediately preceding ancestor. From a wealthy Halifax family, disinherited when young because he refused to enter his father's banking business, he ran away and joined the East India Company's Navy in the China Seas, proceeding up the ranks to become a lieutenant. He returned home in 1805, and three years later his mother, Nelly, a daughter of David Stansfeld, a wealthy Leeds cotton merchant, and wife of John Rawson of Stoney Royd, across the valley, paid 1,000 guineas to buy back her father's home, Hope Hall, for Christopher as a wedding gift. By 1811, he had redeemed himself by becoming a partner in Rawson's Bank, going on to become chairman between 1836 and 1843, a Magistrate, Deputy Lieutenant of West Riding, and owner of the manor of Southowram. He also owned local coal mines. Christopher lived in Hope Hall, then in the 1830s, purchased Cragg Vale estate and began to rebuild Old Cragg Hall as a shooting lodge and country residence. His wife died childless in 1836. Christopher Rawson was an early investor in the South Australia Company and was, for many years, a director of the Union Bank of Australia. The family was wealthy, and money was available to invest in The Hollow.

Plate 5.29: Stoney Royd or Somerset House in Halifax, built between 1762 and 1765 for John Royds, a merchant in the textile trade. It is near the town centre. The front (in the photograph) was once the back. The original front had gardens which swept down to the Hebble Brook. Wings on both sides of the main house were once used as stables and a warehouse. It was sold in 1807 to William and John Rawson for use as a bank, which it remained until 1898. It was the Huddersfield Building Society, then the Halifax & Huddersfield Union Bank, but often called Rawson's Bank. It is now the Albany Club. The warehouse and stables wings of the house were sold separately.
Source: Courtesy of Historic England, discoverhalifax.co.uk/hope-hall/; https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1133901.

Charles is said to have been educated on the Isle of Man (between England and Ireland), and to have arrived in Australia at the age of 17 in 1857. If his younger brothers arrived with him, Lance would have been 14 and Ned only 12. As outlined in the previous chapter, they are said to have gained colonial experience as 'new chums' on properties in western New South Wales, but there seems to be a piece of the jigsaw missing as they are rather young to have travelled across the world without a guardian. Perhaps the younger brothers joined Charles a few years later. Other evidence suggests that Ned emigrated to Queensland in 1864 at the age of nineteen, which is more realistic. However, he is also said to have been an undergraduate at Cambridge University, which is possible, just. If Lance came with him, he would have been 21 years old.

Plate 5.30: Charles and Wini Rawson resting on the verandah at The Hollow.
Plate 5.31: Edmund and Decima Rawson.
Source: (5.30) Greenmount Homestead Collection, Mackay Regional Council; (5.31) Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.32: Lance and Mina Rawson and their children, in Rockhampton in the 1880s.
Source: Courtesy of Ken Swanwick, via Deirdre Morrish.

Charles is also said to have been an undergraduate at Cambridge University, which is unlikely on grounds of age, and was artistic. Just as occurred with the St Helens partners, Charley and Ned Rawson married sisters. In 1870, once their pastoral property was established, Charley sailed for England to look for a wife, marrying Winifred (Wini), daughter of Rev. W.G. Harrison of Essington, Durham, England. Their first three children, all boys, were born at The Hollow between 1872 and 1875. Their fourth boy was born at Tynemouth, Northumberland (now Northumbria), in 1879 during a family visit there. Wini's reports home must have been favourable as in 1875, Ned Rawson married her sister Margaret Decima Crawford Harrison (*ca*. 1849–?). Their children, all girls, were born between 1876

and 1884, the first two at Mackay, another in 1874, and the youngest born in 1884 during a family visit to England.

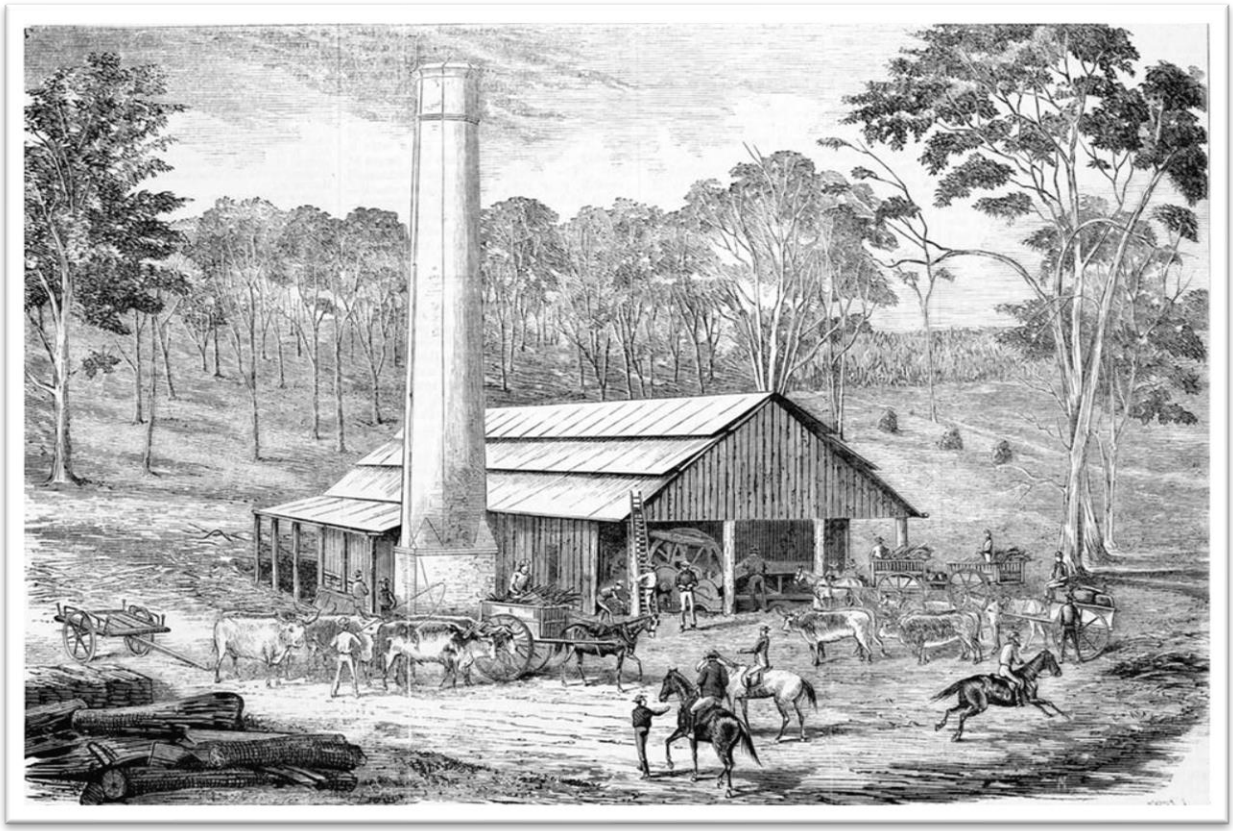


Plate 5.33: Kirkcubbin sugar mill, Maryborough, 1870s, part-owned by Lancelot Rawson.
Source: State Library of Queensland.

Meanwhile, in 1872, Lance married 23-year-old Wilhelmina (Mina) Cahill (1851–1933), daughter of an ex-Dublin solicitor, then living in Sydney. Her middle-class Sydney life ended when her father died, and her mother re-married, to a pastoralist on a sheep station near Tamworth. Between 1872 and 1876, they lived at The Nyth, within sight of The Hollow, the main homestead house. She appears in a few photographs from The Hollow in the 1870s. The three wives were all independent and adapted to life in the bush, but it was Mina who achieved fame for her skills.

Lance and Mina Rawson left The Hollow in 1876, buying into a partnership at Kirkcubbin plantation on Tinana Creek, eight miles (13 km) from Maryborough. The first two of their children, sons, were born at The Nyth in 1873 and 1874. Next came three daughters, two born on Kirkcubbin in the late 1870s, and the last born in 1880 at Boonooroo at Wide Bay. Like many other small plantations in the district, they operated Kirkcubbin as a juice mill, piping sugar juice to storage on punts which carried it to Yengarie mill to be processed into sugar crystals. Part of the deal to buy into the partnership on the plantation was that they pay it off in three years at 9 percent interest, which proved impossible. By that stage, Lance Rawson had been declared insolvent and the family was close to destitute.

If Lance's brothers or wider family provided any assistance, it was very minor. The family managed to trade their way out of insolvency by the end of 1881, in part due to self-sufficiency and Mina's efforts in writing and millinery. Mina's first of many cookbooks was published in Maryborough in 1878. In 1882, the family moved to Maryborough where Mina

ran a boarding house, then to Rockhampton when Lance became a Crown Lands Ranger (not a prestigious position). In 1888, Mina taught swimming to girls at the Rockhampton baths and held cookery classes, publishing her second cookbook. In 1889, she tried unsuccessfully to run similar swimming classes in Brisbane. Forays into journalism followed, with two more books of household hints and cookery in 1894 and 1895. Lance became ill and died in 1899, his son taking over his Crown Lands Ranger position. Mina became women's editor of the *People's Magazine* in Rockhampton, until she left for Sydney to work as a journalist in 1902. The next year, she travelled to England and married Frank Ravenhill, one of the Kirkcubbin partners. (Indeed, it was his empty beach house at Boonooroo to which Lance and Mina fled in 1880.) Mina and Frank returned to Sydney in 1905, Frank dying the next year. Left to her own devices, she began to publish a column in *The Queenslander*, which in 1919 and 1920 included her memoirs. She died in Sydney in 1933 at the age of 81.

Analysis of Mina Rawson's writing, even though she only spent five years at The Hollow in the 1870s, shows the gendered practices of the time. The emphasis is on kitchen work, and upkeep and maintenance of housing and clothing. She knew much about remote rural life, while exhibiting views on servants and class that were typical of her upbringing.

Domestic life in the bush

Looking through the illustrations in this chapter, one striking thing is the way the women dressed, in long, quite ornate dresses. There is no evidence that they simplified their way of dressing to cope with life in the bush. Their clothing must have been hot and cumbersome. For them, the standards of Victorian England were maintained on the frontier, although men dressed more simply and sensibly, in long trousers and open shirts.

The pictorial essay that follows gives a good outline of bush domesticity, at least for the more well-off settlers. What the pictorial evidence does not display is the day-to-day issues of how to cope with isolation, and the ingenuity necessary to rethink European domestic skills in a bush setting. Mina Rawson provided advice on achieving frontier domesticity—an antidote for the masculinity of most frontier accounts. If you needed advice on how to cook a flying fox, bandicoot, kangaroo rat, wallaby, or paddy melon kangaroo, Mina was Australia's Mrs Beeton, the English author famous for her 1861 book on household management. Mina had practical experience from her years at The Nyth and The Hollow, and around Maryborough, Rockhampton, and Brisbane. Her precarious finances meant that she knew how to live cheaply with no frills.

Plate 5.34: Mina Rawson, who lived at The Nyth with her husband Lance Rawson from 1872 to 1876. After a period of poverty, Mina became famous for her cookbooks and her journalism.
Source: Courtesy of Fraser Coast Libraries Local History Blog.

Servants

One aspect of middle-class rural life was coping with domestic servants, often of dubious quality. Mina Rawson, never frightened to give advice, thought they should be housed and treated fairly but that the mistress of the house should not become too familiar with, nor overpay them. She suggested pegging their wages between 6s. a week for nurse maids, 8s. for housemaids, and 10s. for general servants, and cooks.

> Servants of late years have certainly become a perfect *pest*, particularly in Queensland. Many of those who come as immigrants are the very scum of large cities, who find it *convenient* to come to Australia, and these often contaminate good and honest girls who are coming out to earn their living. Many of those who come as emigrants are no more fit for their business than if they came to be ploughmen; but the fault is not so much theirs as those who send them, or allow them to come. On an average, we don't get more than eight or ten good, competent, single girls in each ship… . No mistress will object to teach a girl who is willing to learn and does not ask exorbitant wages.
>
> I have known a cook and laundress ask as much as 18s. per week and indignantly refuse 14s. Fifteen shillings is the common wage asked by a general servant in north Queensland, be she good, bad, or indifferent. [2]

At Hamilton in 1877, there was a French nurse who was initially charming, then became far too demanding. At The Hollow, Mrs Jones, the cook, proved to be an alcoholic, confirmed

when she was found lying drunk on her kitchen floor. And Wini Rawson had to steel herself to sack another inadequate servant. Afterwards, she illustrated the event in the station diary.

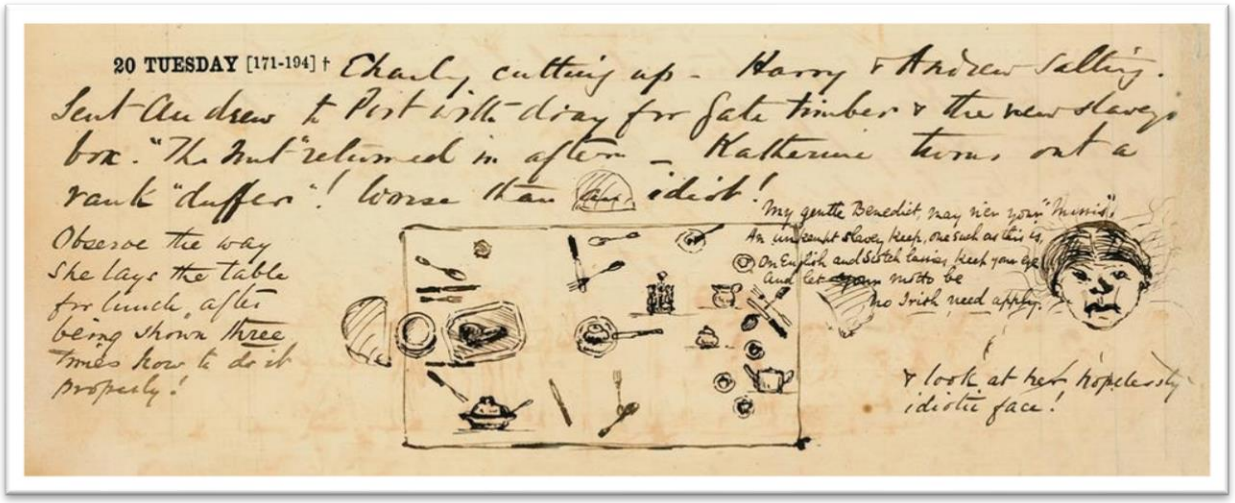


Plate 5.35: Charles Rawson was upset when a servant seemed to have thrown the cutlery onto the dining table.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.36: Wini Rawson working herself up to give her 'slovenly, slow' servant notice to leave.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Back home in England these families had been used to dedicated and faithful servants who had been with them for many years. In North Queensland, domestic servants never seem to have stayed long with one household. As Mina lamented: 'Something will have to be done soon, or every lady with small means will be reduced to doing her own work.'[3]

Bush Cooking

Mina Rawson recommended the basic equipment necessary in any kitchen and gave practical advice on how to clean moleskin trousers, get stains out of pillowcases, and gentlemen's underwear. She also gave advice on making potholders out of old coat sleeves, quilts and rag carpets from used clothes, and how to make soap. Mina's main forte was making almost any variety of food, from sultana pudding, and carrot pudding, to pigweed salad, tomato jam, or

sausages, and how to cook cow's heels, calf's heads, and stewed eels. One of her most interesting observations relates to learning from First Nations Australians about eating 'native' vegetables and animals, something which must have been common in many rural households.

> In the far Bush the house wife is very often at her wits end to know what to do for a change of diet. In a time of drought, or should there be no vegetable garden attached to the station, she has generally to fall back on preserved and tinned vegetables, and which I may mention can all be used in the same way as the fresh grown roots and greens, except for salads—one must have them fresh, crisp, and freshly picked for that purpose.
>
> For salads, the young pig weed is a good substitute for lettuce, and the fresh young shoots of the rough-leaved native fig make excellent spinach. As a rule there are far more edible roots and plants close to the seacoast than there are further inland, but in every district there are some that can be used by the white settlers. Whatever the blacks eat the whites may safely try. Speaking personally, I am beholden to the blacks for nearly all my knowledge of the different edible ground game, recipes for cooking of which have been given in this and any of my other works on cookery. Many people are disgusted at the mere idea at eating the white wood grub which the blacks are so fond of. As a matter of fact, there is nothing nasty or disgusting in these soft white morsels, any more than there is in an oyster. It is all a matter of taste. Both are swallowed alike; for my own part I prefer the grubs parched before eating. If done over a clean fire, one piece of tin or a flat stone, they are delicious. I have never tried them in a curry, but feel sure they would be excellent.
>
> Cobra [worms] are another Bush delicacy white men soon acquire a taste for. There is also a large brown grasshopper, which is edible and very good when parched. I know nothing better than the tail part of a young Iguana. Either cooked on the ashes or cut up and curried, it is as a nice dish as I would wish. Any size up to three feet they are good, but over that they may be course and rank, though I have eaten them when much larger and found no unpleasant taste. It all depends on the season, and the best time for Iguanas is when the birds are nesting and they have been living on birds eggs and the myriads of insect life peculiar to the early spring. Carpet snake is very good roasted; unfortunately, there is not much on them.
>
> Of the larger game, bandicoots, wallaby, and kangaroo, few people in the Bush nowadays are prejudiced against their use. I have used kangaroos and wallaby, salted and cured, the same as beef, and, save for the absence of fat, consider them almost as good; very much better than what is commonly styled "salt horse" six months old.[4]

We have good pictorial evidence of the lives the Rawsons led. Charles was a good artist, painting watercolours. His wife also sketched. Charles and Ned took and developed their own photographs, and collected others, providing an excellent pictorial view of the lives led by well-off pastoralists in the 1860s and 1870s. Charles contributed to the local newspapers, usually articles of a humorous nature.

The Rawson's first home was at Shamrock Vale (also known as Abington, or The Hollow) on the banks of the Pioneer River in 1866. The first house was quite small, built for the brothers before there were wives and families. A photograph and two watercolour paintings of the original house have survived (Plates 2.2, 5.37–38). Their second house was built nearby, larger and with several outhouses (Plates 5.40–72). The separate kitchen was actually the original house. There was a fern house next to the main house and a rather palatial fowl house (Plates 5.56, 82). One of the outhouses served as a dark room to develop their photographs. After he married, Ned moved to The Nyth, the Rawson's third house

(Plates 5.73–81), which was close enough to be communicated with by using signal flags. These are evident in the drawings of the arrival of the annual 'Box' from England, their lifeline with home (Plates 5.52–53). In 1881, The Nyth was moved to be part of The Hollow homestead village, used as quarters for bachelor staff. Charley returned to England at about this time, which left Ned and family in the main house at The Hollow.

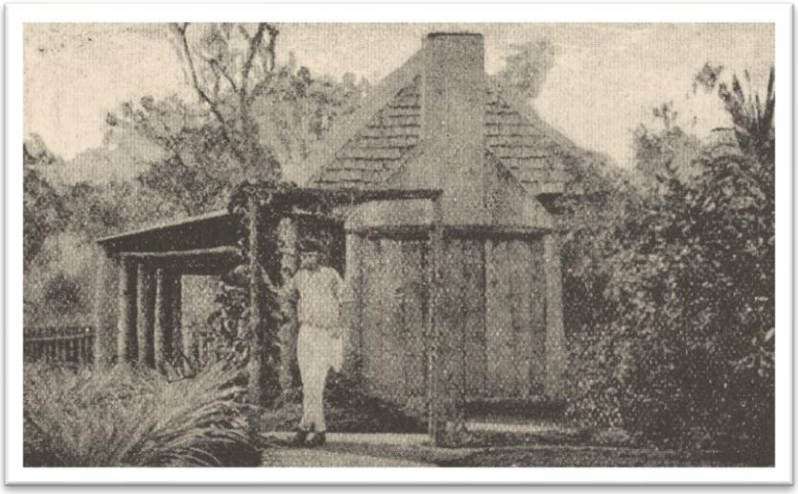


Plate 5.37: The original rough slab house of Charles, Lance and Edmund Rawson at Shamrock Vale, usually known as The Hollow (Sleepy Hollow), built in 1866. This house later became the kitchen for the new house.
Source: Roth 1908, 57.

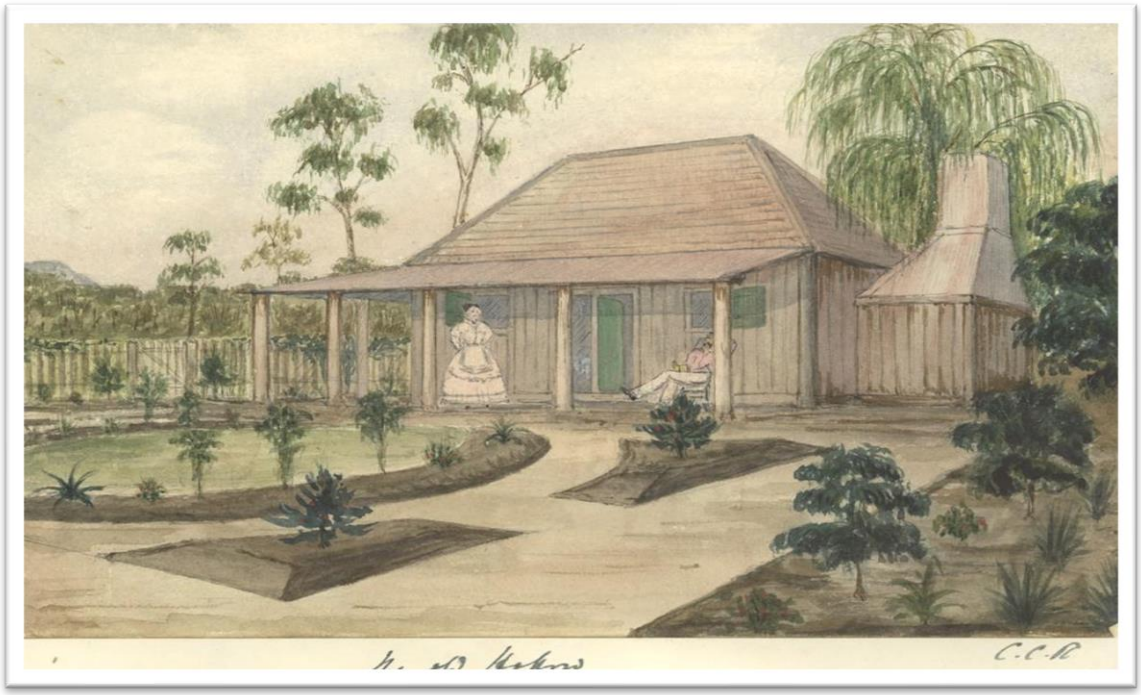


Plate 5.38: Charles Rawson's watercolour painting of the original house built at Shamrock Vale (The Hollow) in 1866. Note the attached chimney. Later houses had separate kitchen areas. Another watercolour painting, of the interior of the living room of the house, appears in Plate 2.2.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.39: The second homestead house at Shamrock Vale (The Hollow), a watercolour painting by Charles Rawson, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.40: The Hollow, the Rawson's second homestead, is on the left. The fowl house (Figure 5.83) is on the right.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

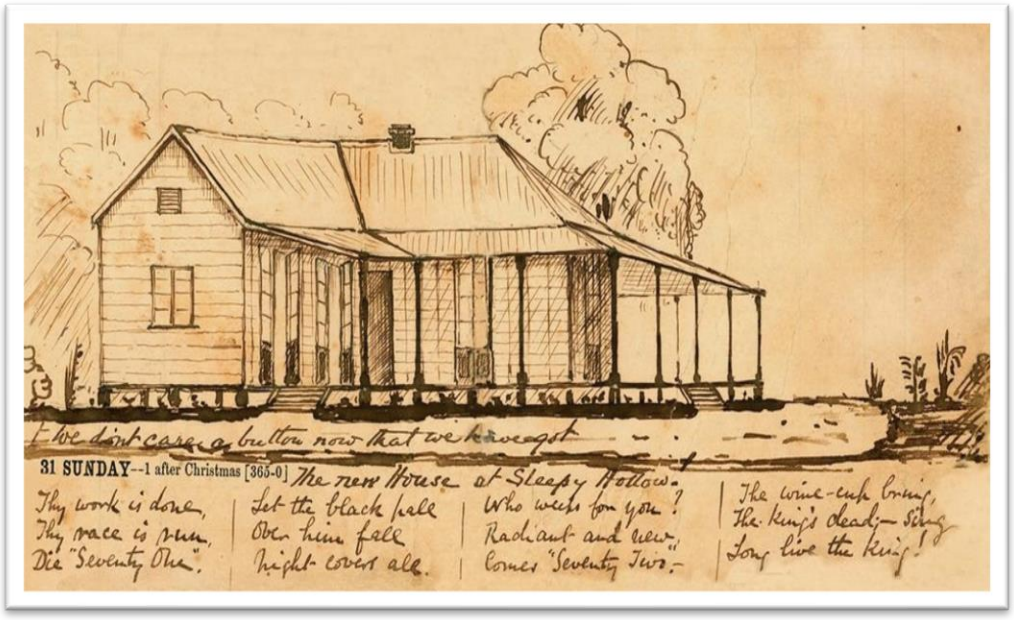


Plate 5.41: The second homestead at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.42: The drawing room of the second house built at The Hollow in the 1870s. The room is furnished in a tropical Victorian style, its walls cluttered with memorabilia. The sketches below (Plates 5.43–46) name some of the items.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

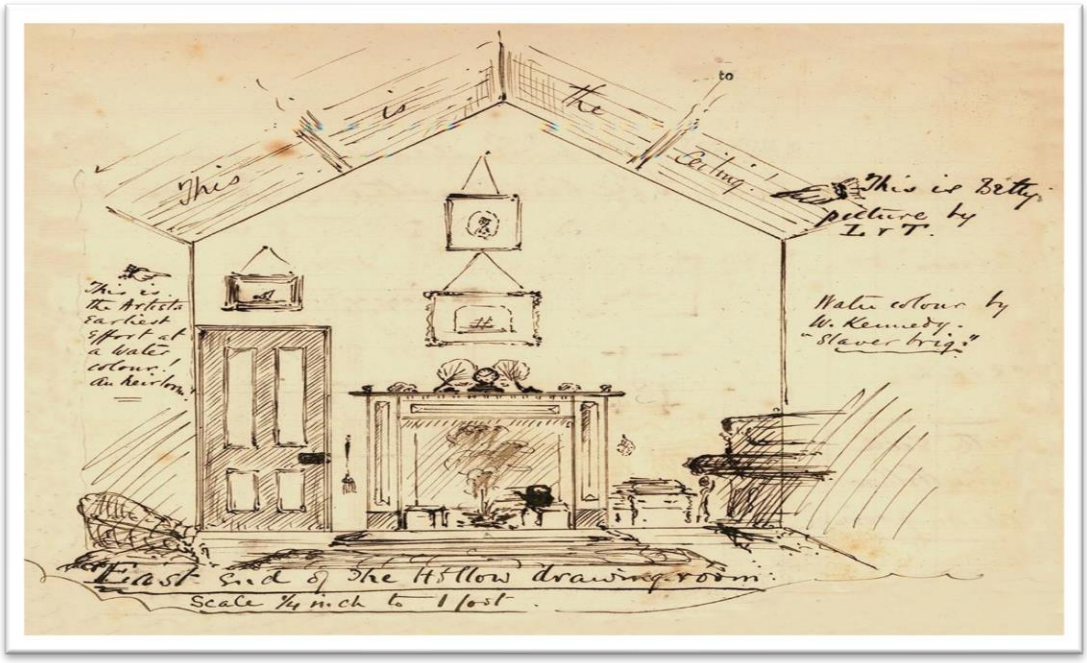


Plate 5.43: East end of the drawing room at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

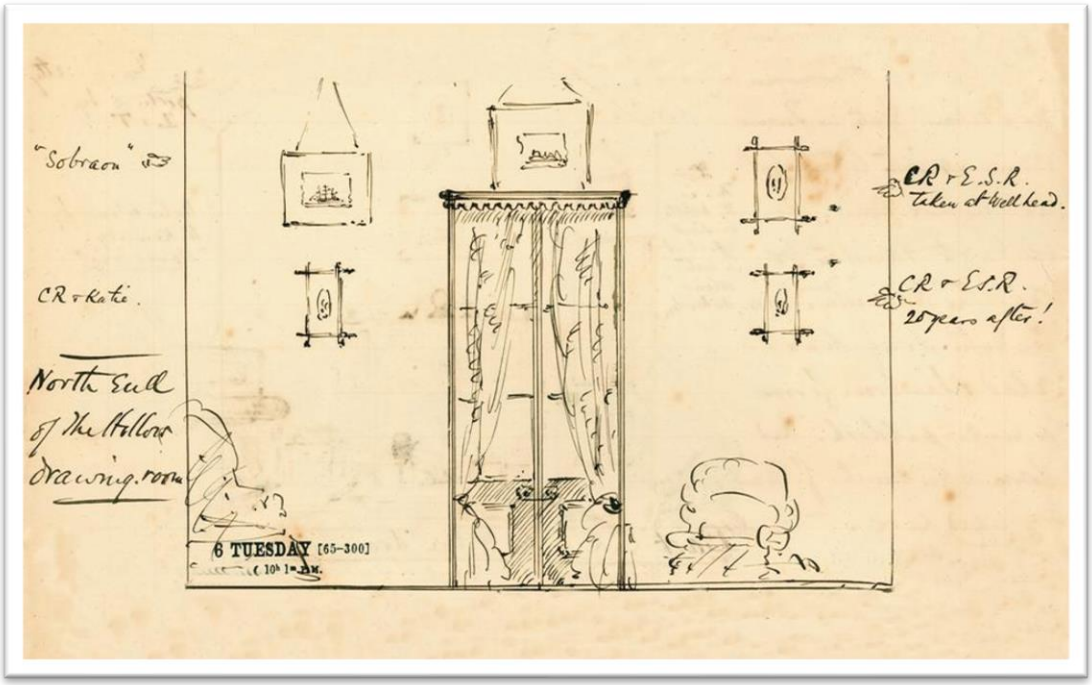


Plate 5.44: North end of the drawing room at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

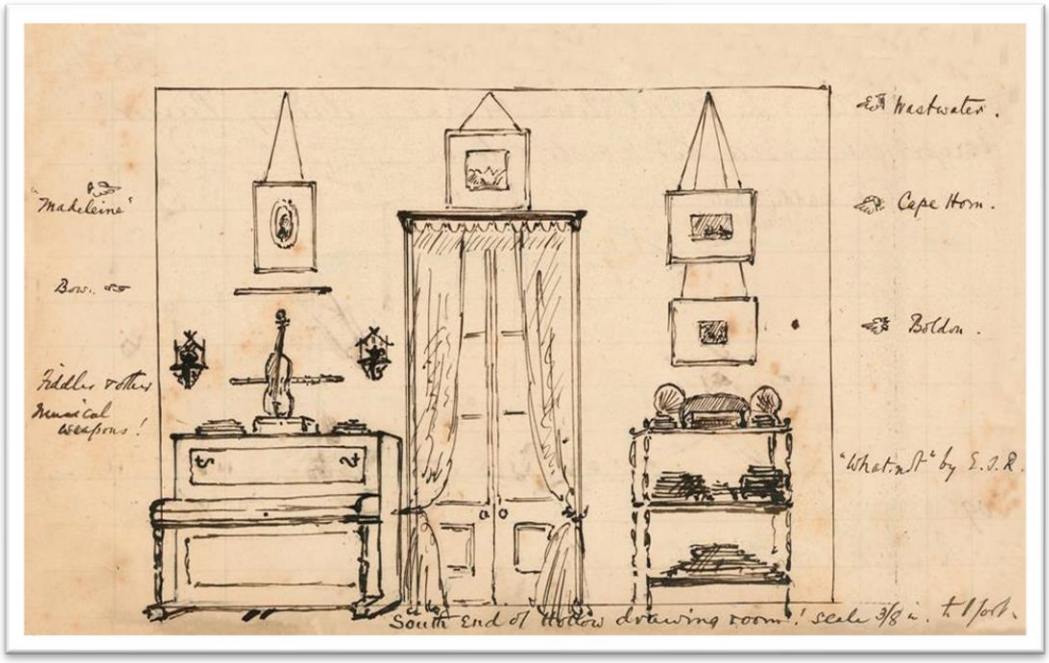


Plate 5.45: East end of the drawing room of The Hollow, 1870s. The piano on the left is partly sketched in Plate 5.43.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

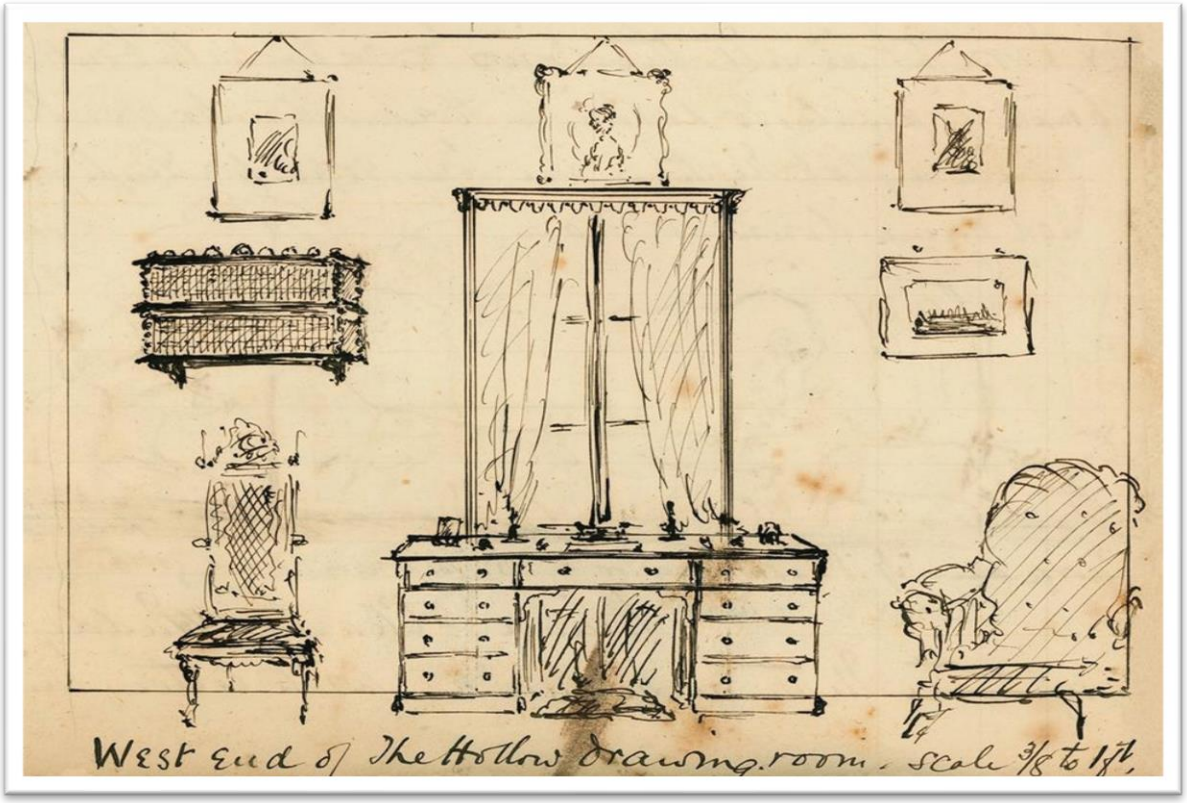


Plate 5.46: West end of the drawing room at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.47: Photograph of the same western end of the drawing room at The Hollow, 1870s. Some of the pieces of furniture, such as the desk, were substantial.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.48: The verandah outside the drawing room of The Hollow, 1870s, with a bunch of bananas hanging to ripen. Note the outside desk and safe.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.49: Two women on the verandah of The Hollow, 1870s. Note the width of the verandah, which appears to be about 15 feet. Verandahs provided shade and shelter from the elements and, as this photograph shows, were outside living rooms with comfortable chairs and even a desk. The fernery is adjacent.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

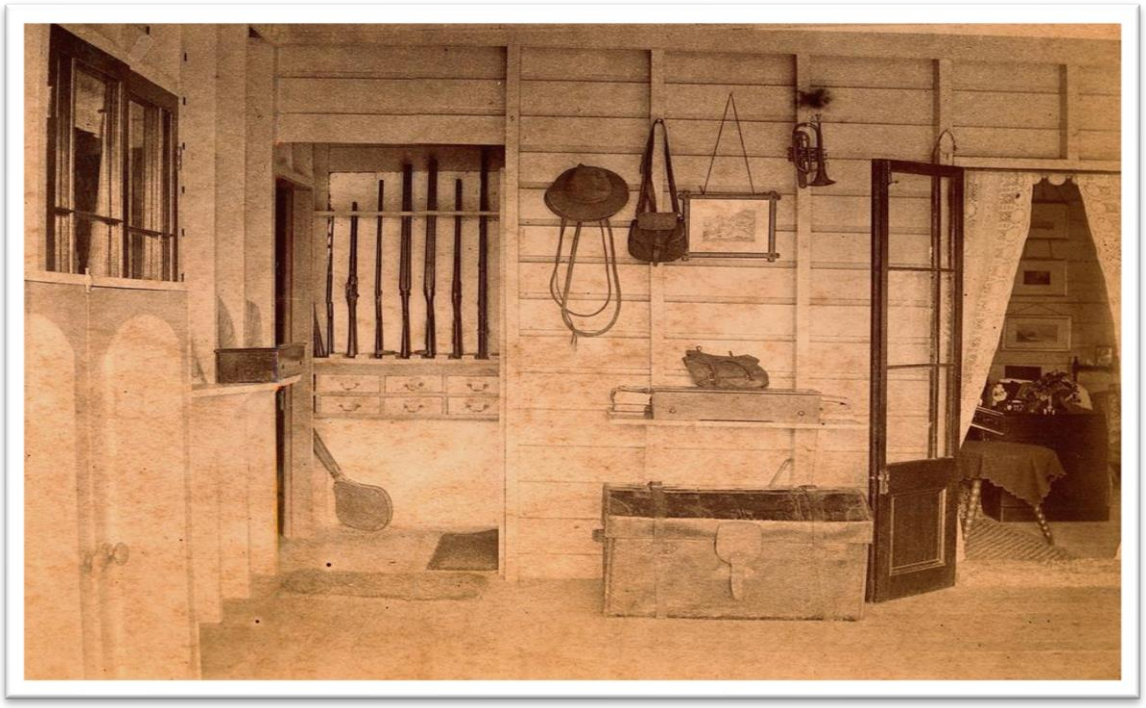


Plate 5.50: A storage area and a gun rack on the verandah outside the drawing room at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.51: Charles and Edmund Rawson at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

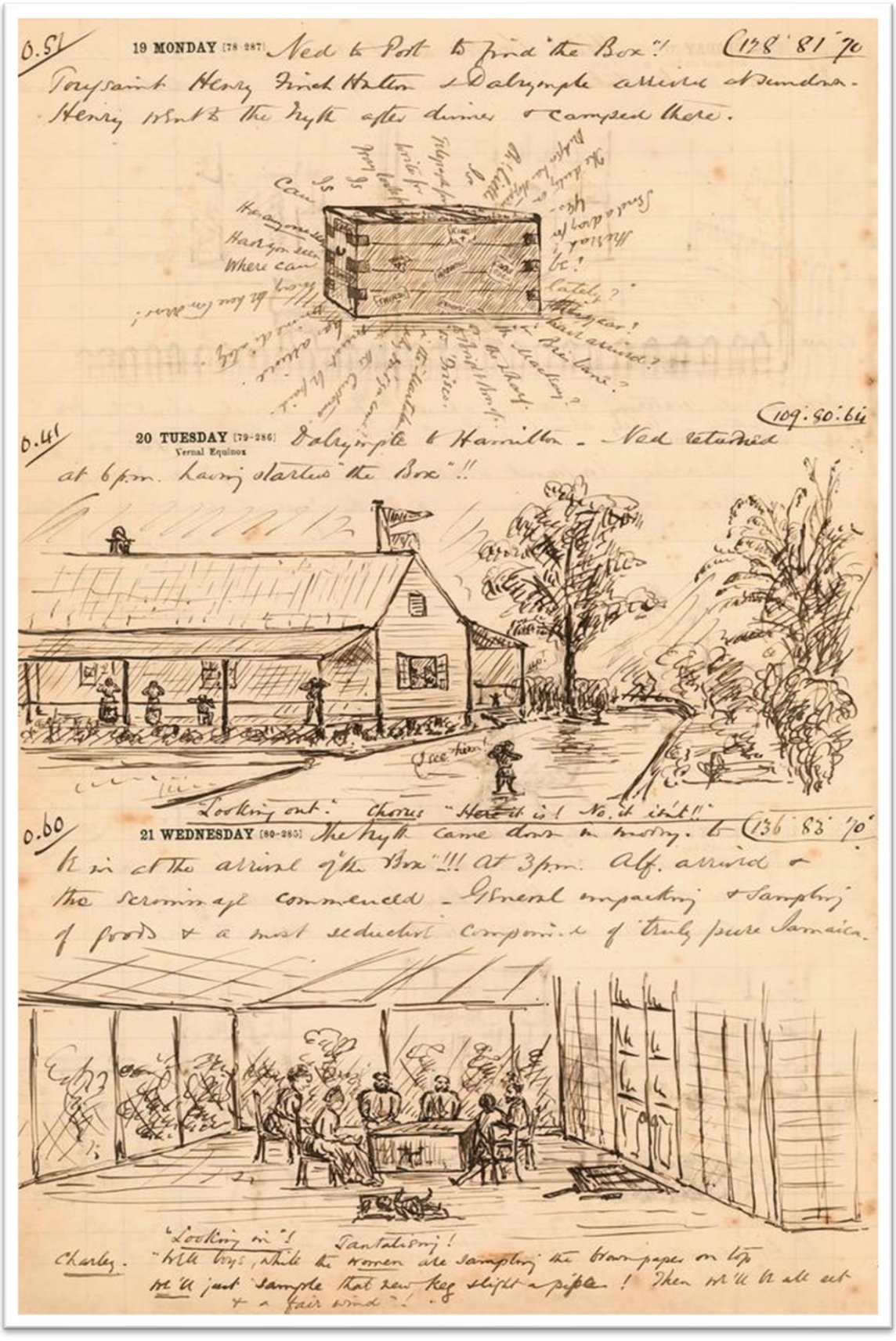


Plate 5.52: The annual arrival of The Box of presents from England was much looked-forward-to. In this sketch, the event was attended not only by the Rawsons but also Henry Finch-Hatton, Charles Toussaint from Mt Spencer station, and David Dalrymple from Hamilton station.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

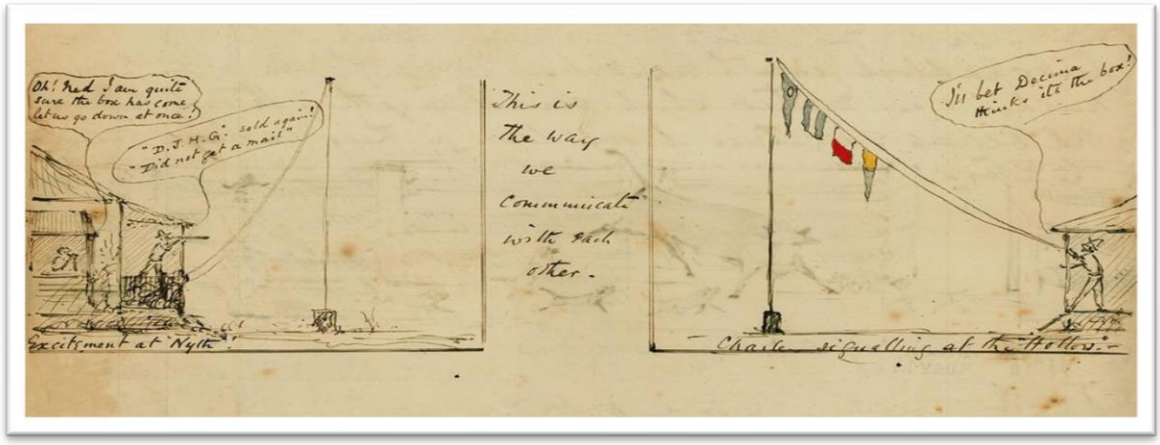


Plate 5.53: The international naval signal flag communication system used between The Hollow and The Nyth, 1877.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

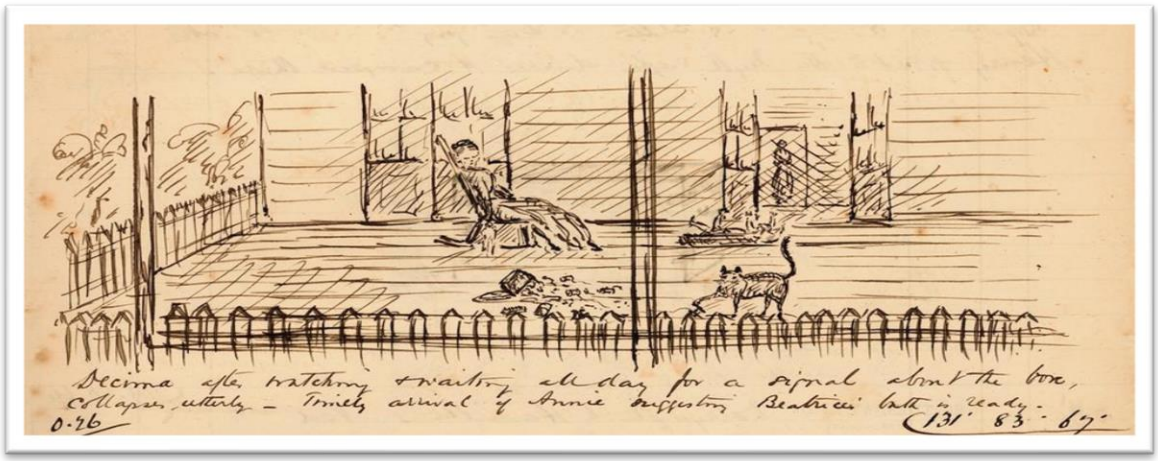


Plate 5.54: Decima Rawson on the verandah of The Nyth, exhausted from the excitement of waiting for the arrival of The Box from England.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.55: The Box being packed for return to England. They sent natural history items and scrap books home to give their families some idea of life in the colony.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.56: The new fernery at The Hollow, next to the main house, *ca.* 1877.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.57: The *Poinciana Regia* tree at The Hollow.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.58: Wini Rawson sitting sewing on the front verandah steps at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.59: Wini Rawson with one of her children on her lap on the verandah of The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.60: The children's room at The Hollow *ca*. 1882. The style of the wall furnishing is a children's version of the drawing room.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.61: Two of Charles and Wini Rawson's children, 'Paddy' and 'Plum Bun', playing with a rocking horse at The Hollow.
Source; Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

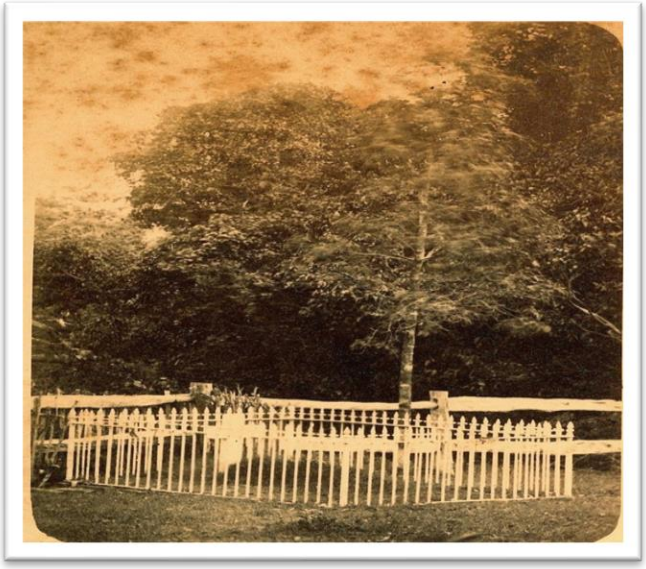


Plate 5.62: Harry Rawson's grave at The Hollow. Born in 1874, he died on 23 July 1876. His grave is all that remains of The Hollow homestead site.
Plate 5.63: Charles, Geoffrey and Lionel Rawson, the surviving sons of Charles and Wini Rawson,
Source: (5.26) Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland; (5.63) Wikitree, courtesy of Sarah Jowett.

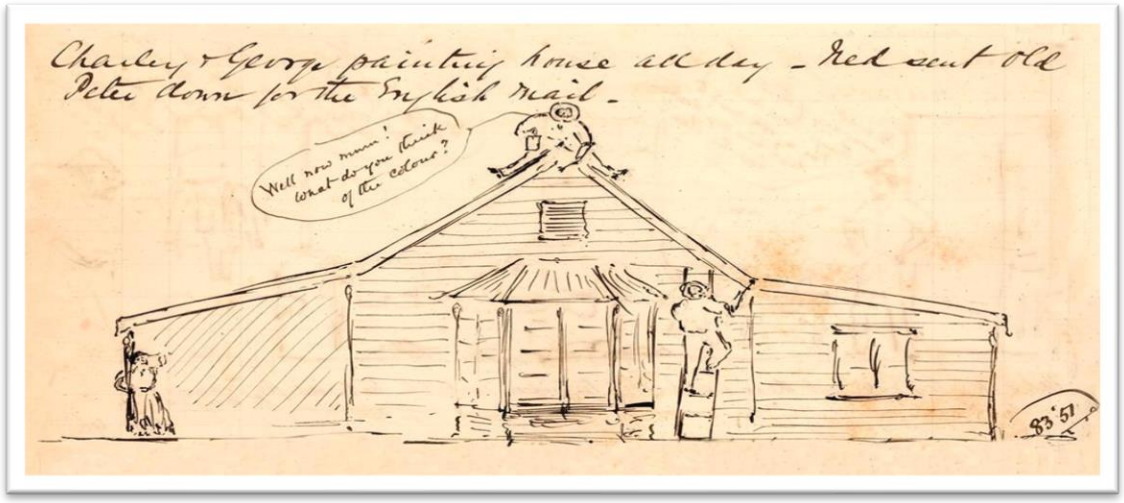


Plate 5.64: The Hollow being painted, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

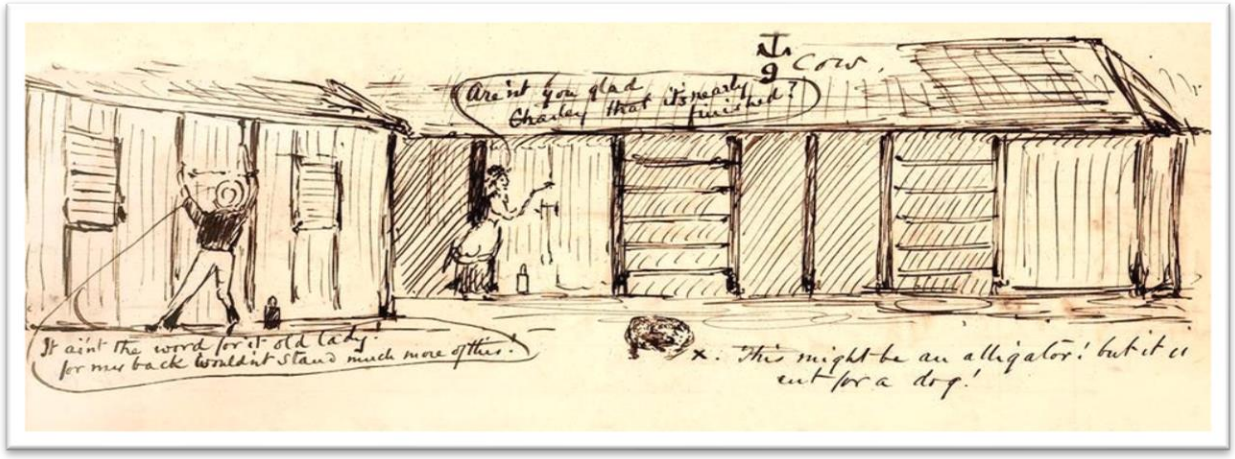


Plate 5.65: Charles and Wini Rawson painting the outbuildings at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.66: Ready to try out the new shower bath at The Hollow.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

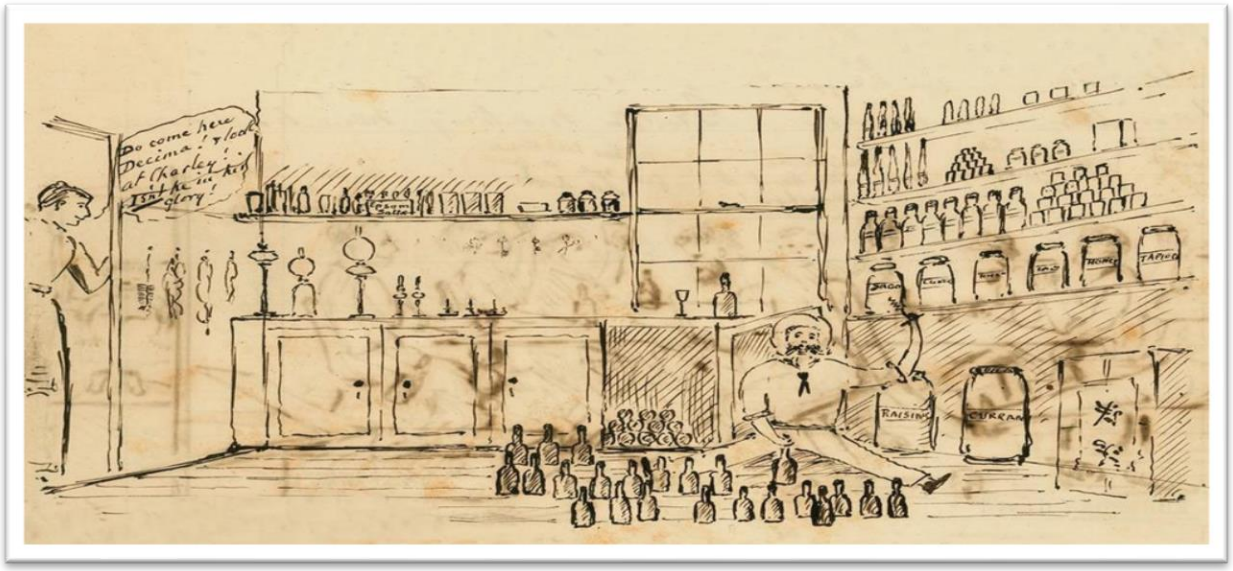


Plate 5.67: Charles Rawson unpacking his case of Madeira, in the kitchen storeroom, 1877.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

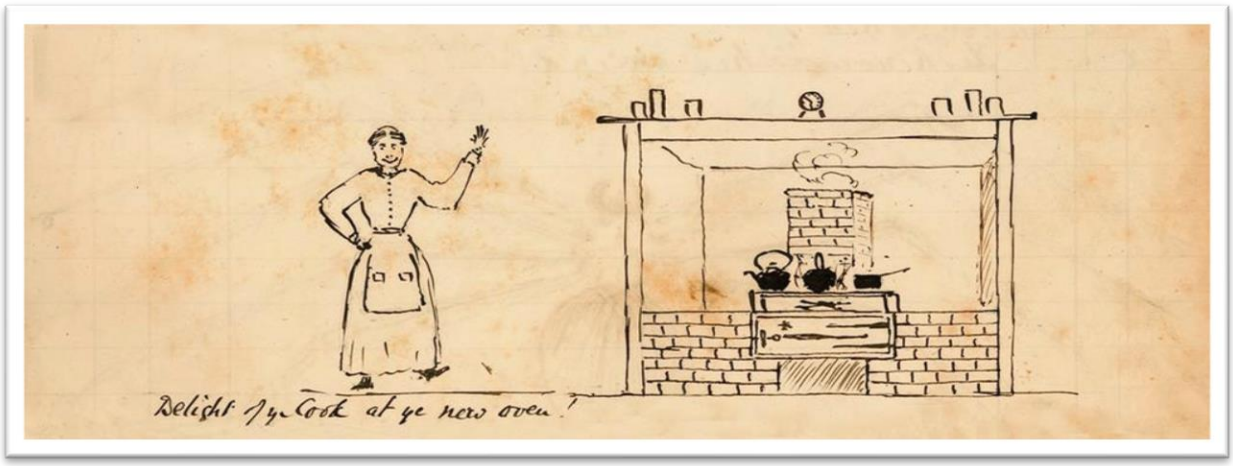


Plate 5.68: The cook at The Hollow celebrating her new oven, 1877.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.69: Winnie and Charles going out to dinner in the rain, to the kitchen at The Hollow.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.70: Cousins Harry Redesdale James and Charles Rawson breaking in the new dining table at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

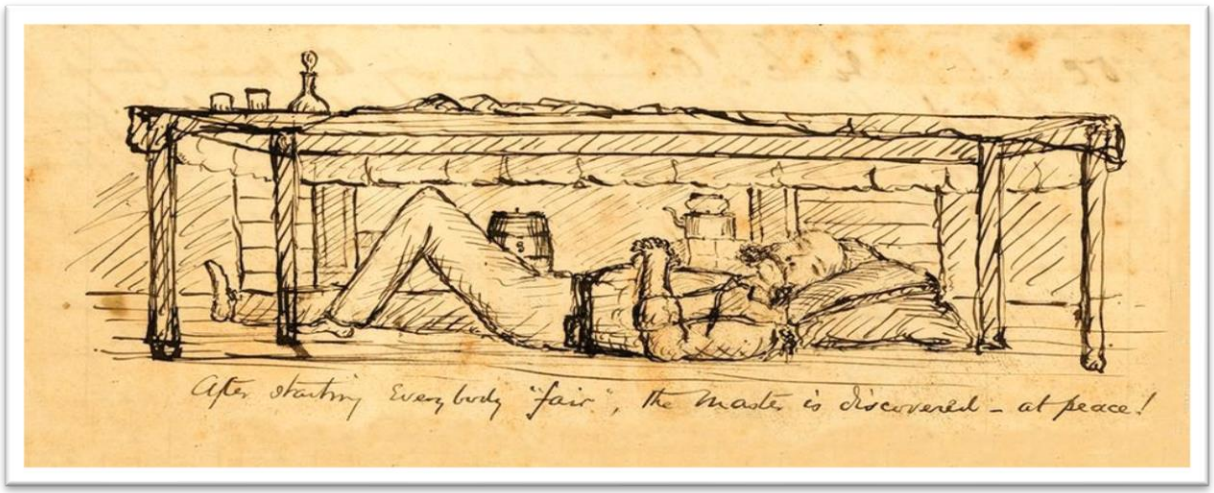


Plate 5.71: Charles Rawson asleep under the dining room table, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.72: Charles Rawson relaxing in a chair on the verandah at The Hollow, 1877.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.73: The Nyth and its colonial style English garden.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.74: The Nyth, near The Hollow, the home of Ned and Decima Rawson. The house was removed to the Hollow in 1881, where it was used as the bachelors' staff quarters, until it burnt down in 1896.
Source: Roth 1908, 18.

Plate 5.75: Decima and Wini Rawson on washing day at The Nyth, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

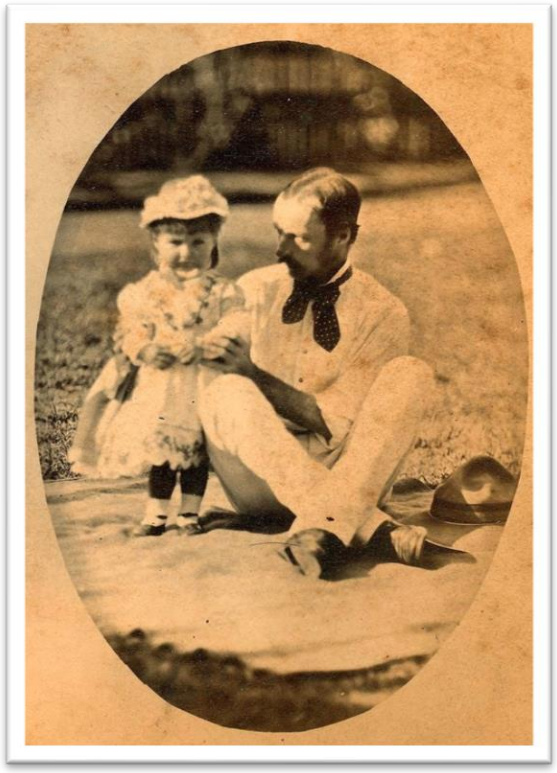


Plate 5.76: Ned Rawson and his youngest daughter Dorothy at The Nyth, 1870s.
Plate 5.77: Beatrice, Dorothy and Sybil Rawson at The Nyth, 1870s. The woman appears to be Wini, wife of Charles Rawson.
Source 5.76–77: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.78: Charles and Wini Rawson set out to pick up the mail, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.79: Charles and Wini Rawson returning from neighbouring Rice & Co.'s Mt Spencer station, 1870s. Wini is riding side-saddle.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.80: Decima, wife of Ned Rawson, seated side-saddle outside The Nyth.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

Plate 5.81: Wini Rawson visiting Decima Rawson at The Nyth, when her sister-in-law was having a problem with her hands, sufficient for her husband Ned to have to take charge of bathing their baby.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

The River Mob

The men from the cattle stations along the Pioneer River, particularly the Martins, Rawsons and Finch-Hattons, were called the 'River Mob'. In their heydays in the 1860s and 1870s

they came down to Mackay at least once a month to collect supplies and their mail. They also livened the place up. Drinking until the wee hours was all part of their fun, and they often ended with a 'bottle chorus' from a sailor's chanty such as 'Whiskey for my Jonnie' or 'Rio Grande', accompanied by each man drawing an empty bottle down the side of a weatherboard house in imitation of ropes, much to the annoyance of Police Magistrate Goodall, as it usually took place at about 4.00 a.m. They were all Justices of the Peace. Their favourite drink was a rum swizzle, a tumbler filled with two inches of Mackay rum, 45 percent overproof, to which were added a few drops of Angostura bitters, a teaspoon of brown sugar, and a squeeze of lemon. The concoction was mixed with a 'swizzle stick' until it foamed at the top, then was consumed.

The Rawsons were gentry larrikins in their younger years. In her memoirs, Mina Rawson refrains from saying much at all about her five years at The Hollow, but there is one telling section published in *The Queenslander* in 1920:

> I had not been a week in my own home, when a cousin of my husband's [Harry Redesdale James] said to me, 'Don't bother to buy any fowls Mina, I'll get you some.' The next night, or rather towards morning, I was awakened by hearing a most awful noise of fowls shrieking, cackling, and crying out. 'I expect it's Harry with your poultry,' Lance said. Sure enough, there was a buggy and from every rail, bar, or place whereon a bunch of fowls could be hung, there they were. They had robbed every hen roost on the 25 miles of road between Mackay and The Hollow, and I started my yard with a full complement of stolen feathers. For months I feared to look any of the waysiders on that road in the face lest they should know I had their fowls.
>
> I once heard my sister-in-law remark as the men were going to town: 'Oh, Charley, we want tumblers, there are only three left!' 'Right you are,' he replied, and that afternoon there were one or more tumblers from each hotel in the town, unpacked from their valises. They'd say, as they laid them out, 'That's from Mother Cook's; that's from Wilkes'; and there is a jolly good corkscrew, I picked up at the Imperial,' and so on. If I was asked if I want anything, I was afraid to say lest I'd find myself the receiver of stolen goods; and I went through this for the first year of my life at Mackay; every time my husband went to town I had visions of him being arrested ….They say eels get used to skinning; it's quite true, for I got used to seeing my husband bringing home all sorts of acquired goods. Some of them did not confine themselves to such as tumblers, corkscrews etc.
>
> One night we heard a neighbour who had still further to go, at the crossing, having some difficulty with his horses. 'That must be old Jack—he's a bit late.' My husband remarked. 'I've a great mind to go down and hold him up; he's got a very nice chain on one of the horses.' 'Where did he get it?' I asked. 'Picked it up at Mother Cook's,' was the reply.
>
> But though they did all these mad and foolish things, they paid 20 times over for them, and the hotel people who were chief, if not their only victims, were quite willing to let them take things, knowing they'd get the value returned many times.[5]

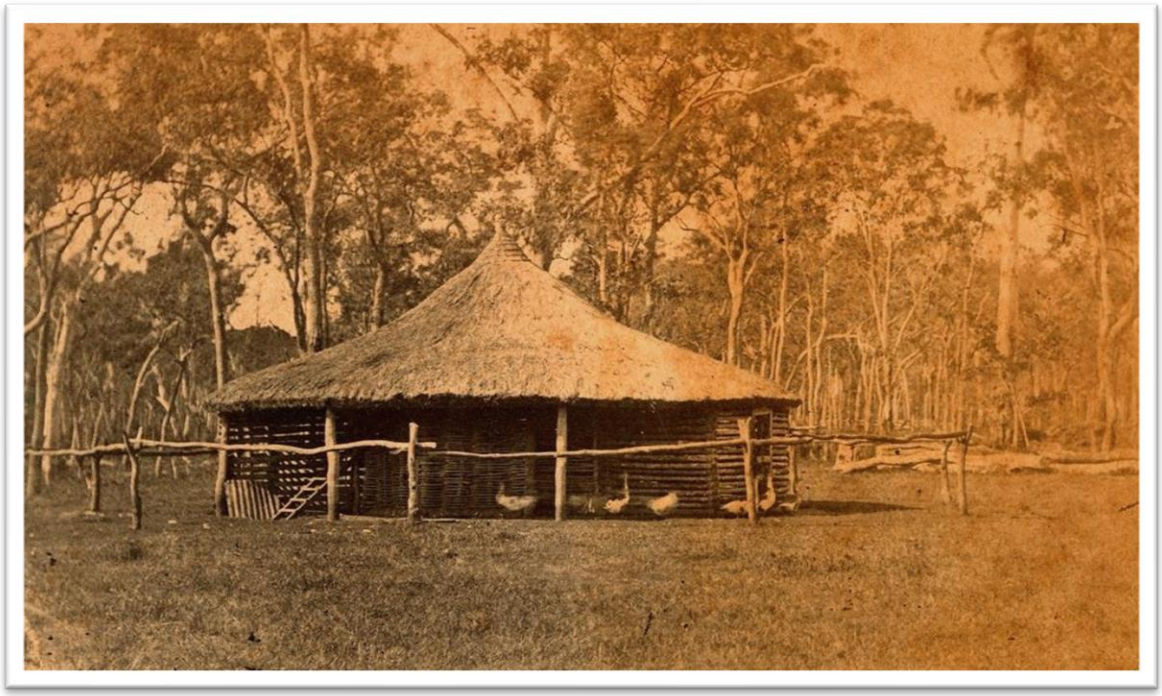


Plate 5.82: The fowl house at The Hollow, 1870s.
Source: Rawson Family Archive, State Library of Queensland.

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These men and women came from grand English houses and families, although the Australian colonies changed them all. At home they would have been respected as squires and gentlemen, or ladies fit for high society. In the Pioneer Valley, they were authority figures, yet they were larrikin squatters, who used their wealth to get away with a relaxed domestic lifestyle. Their wives became used to this liminal existence, and they too were leaders of their communities. The women learnt new domestic skills, and how to cope with mediocre quality servants, or none at all. Their children had the trappings of a well-off childhood, while also experiencing the freedom of the Queensland frontier.

Bibliography

The bibliographies for all chapters are in a separate file.

Endnotes

[1] Finch-Hatton 1886, 45.
[2] Rawson 1890, 4–5.
[3] Rawson 1890, 5.
[4] Rawson 1895, 54–55.
[5] Rawson 1920.