

Melbourne, now the capital of Victoria, had been founded in 1835, and Victoria won separation from New South Wales in 1851. A year later news of discoveries of gold triggered off a wave of migration from the northern hemisphere. Settlement in the country areas of Australia as distinct from the coastal cities was sparse and living primitive. John and Ann lived in an isolated hut fourteen miles distant from Mr. Crawford. During John's absence in assisting his cousin to farm such a large area Ann was terrified of Aborigines, who came begging for handouts. Finally the disparity between their present existence and life in South Ronaldsay and Aberdeen convinced John and Ann that a move to Melbourne was essential. A possible factor which influenced them was the difficulty of educating a young child in the bush, where no facilities existed. To Scots with a strong tradition of high standards of education this would have been an overwhelming reason.

Australia was then a collection of States, each of which was responsible for customs, defence, postal services and similar obligations which after Federation in 1901 became the liability of the Commonwealth. With the departure of thousands of workers for the goldfields John had little difficulty in securing employment in Melbourne. On 1 January, 1852, he commenced duty with the Customs Department as a weigher on a salary of £160 per annum. His commission under seal was signed by the Lieutenant-Governor, C. J. Latrobe. John continued with the Department until his death in 1880.

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John and Ann Mortimer built a bluestone home, *Roeberry*, at 3 Hull Street, Richmond, where they lived for many years. The house was probably erected in 1853. After John's death Ann moved to a weatherboard house in Glenferrie Road, Glenferrie. Both Ann and her son Jim were martyrs to asthma, and Ann was advised that a timber home would give her relief. Later Ann and her daughters went to live in the country at *Roeberry*, Thorpdale, with Jim.

The house at 3 Hull Street, Richmond, several miles from the heart of the city of Melbourne, is today in a good state of preservation, although it is no longer held by the family. Scratched on a window pane may still be read the signatures: