

House

88 Leeds Street, Doncaster East.

This timber cottage was once part of a large orchard property owned by the pioneer fruitgrower, William Sidney Williams, from Pembrokeshire in South Wales. Williams, who arrived in colonial Victoria in 1853,¹³⁹ acquired the site of 88 Leeds Street in 1858 from the Crown Grantee, William Bust Burnley, for 117 pounds.¹⁴⁰ The earliest part of the existing house may date from this time, when Williams home stood on about 20 acres of land in Lot 249 on the east side of Leeds Street.¹⁴¹ In 1863, Williams added to his Doncaster property by purchasing Lots 251 and 252, comprising 54 acres on the west side of Leeds Street. This land stretched to Wetherby Street on the west and down to the Koornung Creek.¹⁴² These three allotments are shown on an early undated RGO subdivisional plan of the area¹⁴³ and an 1874 Crown Lands Department map.¹⁴⁴

Rate book evidence confirms that there was already a small farmhouse on the site of 88 Leeds Street by 1863.¹⁴⁵ This house appears to have gradually increased in size during the 1870s and 1880s as evidenced by increases in its valuation.¹⁴⁶ By 1890 it was described as a wood house of six rooms on 19 acres with the substantial valuation of 102 pounds. It was owned and occupied still by Williams.¹⁴⁷

Williams was associated with fruitgrowing and gardening in the area at least from the 1880s. During that period he was rated for a house and garden and, according to a contemporary account, he was, the first to grow lemons and oranges in the Doncaster district. He had 200 acres of land, of which 35 acres were planted with fruit trees. His garden won the first Leader Prize Cup in 1885 as the best fruit garden in the Melbourne district.¹⁴⁸

Williams reputedly constructed the largest dam in the area in the valley between Leeds Street and Wetherby Road.¹⁴⁹

¹³⁹ *Victoria and its Metropolis*, 1888, vol.2, p.743.

¹⁴⁰ RGO Search 5509 (Williams).

¹⁴¹ Shire of Doncaster RB 1890 No.352 (Lot 249 in Portion B of Section 6 Parish of Bulleen).

¹⁴² RGO Search 5509 (54 pounds paid).

¹⁴³ n.d. *Part of Plan of Subdivision of Portions A,B,C of Section 6, Parish of Bulleen*. Township of Doncaster.

¹⁴⁴ *Plan of Bulleen*, Parish of Bulleen, Plan 526 B, 1874.

¹⁴⁵ Templestowe District Board RB 1863 No.191 (NAV 18 pounds).

¹⁴⁶ Templestowe District Board RB 1872 No.261 (NAV 33 pounds); 1873 No.288 (NAV 55 pounds); 1879 No.257 (NAV 60 pounds); 1882 No.271 (NAV 76 pounds).

¹⁴⁷ Shire of Doncaster RB 1890 No.352.

¹⁴⁸ *Victoria and its Metropolis*, vol.2, p.743.

¹⁴⁹ Irvine Green, *The Orchards of Doncaster and Templestowe*, p.30.

A second house was built on the Wetherby Road land for Williams' son, John.¹⁵⁰ By the turn of the century, William S. Williams and his son, John, fruitgrowers, were rated for two houses on 138 acres of land in Leeds Street and Wetherby Road with a combined valuation of 200 pounds.¹⁵¹ Williams and his wife, Anne, who bought a winter house at Manly in Queensland in 1909, both died in the 1909-1910 period.¹⁵² After his father's death, John Williams, orchardist, became the owner of the Leeds Street and Wetherby Road properties.¹⁵³ John lived in the newer Wetherby Road house. His daughter, Alice, who was married to William Zelius, dentist, lived in the old Leeds Street house.¹⁵⁴

The Williams family houses on either side of Leeds Street, the extensive orchard, and the dam on the southern part of the Wetherby Road land, are all shown on a 1920s Army map of the area.¹⁵⁵

Of *regional historical significance* as an early Victorian timber farmhouse on a property associated with the pioneering fruitgrowing Williams family, from 1858.

House

2 McLeod Street (SE Corner Hender Street), Doncaster.

Early maps and subdivisional plans confirm that the site of this turn of the century house once formed part of a large farm allotment owned in the 1850s by Thomas Petty, pioneer settler and orchardist. This allotment was on the south side of Doncaster Road and stretched down to Wilson Road. It was one of the c1850 farm subdivisions purchased by Petty from the Carlton Estate.¹⁵⁶

Petty, a weaver from Bradford in England, came to Doncaster in 1853 and, after his purchase of the land on Doncaster Road, commenced fruitgrowing there.¹⁵⁷ His large allotment is shown on an 1874 map.¹⁵⁸ By this decade, Petty was numbered among the successful district fruitgrowers.¹⁵⁹ In the 1880s and 1890s, he was one of the local growers who exported fruit, mainly pears, to England. Later, in 1902, Petty was associated with the construction of the Government Cool Store in Doncaster Road.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁰ RGO Search 5509, *W.S. Williams House, Leeds Street*, from Doncaster Templestowe Historical Society Newsletter, May 1972.

¹⁵¹ Shire of Doncaster RB 1902-1903 Nos.363-364.

¹⁵² Doncaster Templestowe Newsletter, May 1977.

¹⁵³ Doncaster Templestowe Newsletter, May 1977.

¹⁵⁴ Doncaster Templestowe Newsletter, May 1977.

¹⁵⁵ *Ringwood*. Military Survey prep. Australian Section Imperial General Staff, June 1922.

¹⁵⁶ *Plan of the Farm Subdivision of the Carlton Estate* R.C.Bagot, c.1850.

¹⁵⁷ Irvine Green, *The Orchards of Doncaster and Templestowe*, p.7.

¹⁵⁸ *Plan of Bulleen*, Parish of Bulleen, Plan 526 B, 1874.

¹⁵⁹ Irvine Green, pp.32-33(map showing the first district fruitgrowers in the 1870s).

¹⁶⁰ Irvine Green, pp.19,44-45(illustration).