

Heimat
Rieschiecks Reserve, George Street
Doncaster.

John Traugott Finger (1867-1942), member of the German community which pioneered fruitgrowing in the Doncaster district, and a son of the orchardist, Heinrich (Henry)Finger,²²⁰ was the first owner of this Victorian brick house. Known earlier as Heimat, it was built after John's marriage in June 1889 to Christine Hartwich, and became the family home over a long period.²²¹

District rate records confirm that by 1892 John Finger, gardener, was the owner of a brick house on 60 acres of land on the corner of Waldau Lane (also known as German or Germantown Road and now George Street) and Bismark (now Victoria) Street.²²² The Finger family, it is said, often built their homes of bricks made from the local clay²²³

A contemporary map showed three Doncaster allotments held by the Finger family in the 1890s near the Waldau settlement.²²⁴ The 1894-95 Shire of Doncaster rate records listed John Finger as the owner of a 60-acre orchard and house in Waldau Lane and another 12 acres in Bismark(Victoria) Street.²²⁵

John and Christine had a family of four daughters. Over the years, John "effected substantial improvements" to his George Street property, making dams and putting in an extensive drainage system. The family continued to live at Heimat, except for five years in Hamilton.²²⁶ John Finger is thought to have been responsible for planting many of the pines (from seeds collected in Germany) which still stand in Rieschiecks Reserve. Such rows of pine trees, which were used by the German community as windbreaks, contribute to the district's distinctive landscape character.²²⁷

When John and Christine went to Hamilton, their eldest daughter, Bertha Caroline, and her husband, Fritz Rieschieck, moved into Heimat. This time John and Christine did not return to their Doncaster home. Fritz eventually worked the orchard property. Bertha, who was born at Heimat in 1891, died at Vermont in 1965 (where they lived at the last) and Fritz in 1968.

²²⁰ Irvine Green, *The Orchards of Doncaster and Templestowe*, pp.8,15.

²²¹ Eric Uebergang, *Aumann Family History*, pp.200-201. (Photos of Heimat and John Finger's orchard in George Street).

²²² Shire of Doncaster RB 1892 No. 80 (NAV 195 pounds).

²²³ Graham Keogh, *History of Doncaster and Templestowe*, 1975, p.12.

²²⁴ *Parish of Bulleen*, Directory Maps of the County of Bourke, 1892.

²²⁵ Shire of Doncaster RB 1894-95 Nos.93,93 and a half(NAV 120 pounds,30 pounds).

²²⁶ Eric Uebergang, pp.200-201.

²²⁷ Irvine Green, *The Orchards of Doncaster and Templestowe*, p.27.

Today, Heimat stands on Rieschiecks Reserve, the Council having purchased the property for a reserve and sporting ground but retaining the old home.²²⁸

Of *local historical significance* for its associations with John Finger, member of the Doncaster German community of pioneer orchardists.

House
8 Russell Road
Warrandyte.

There is some evidence that suggests that the oldest part of this cottage may date from the 1860s, or even earlier. Russell Road (where it is located) is at the northern end of Thomson's Gully, opened as part of the Anderson's Creek goldfield in January 1855²²⁹ This was the year after James Gray Russell, miner, the first owner of the cottage, arrived in Melbourne.²³⁰

Russell was listed as a resident of Anderson's Creek (the name of the goldfield and of the infant Warrandyte township) at least by 1863, when the death of his infant son at that location was reported²³¹ Later, in 1864, Russell was among 56 Anderson's Creek residents who petitioned for the reservation of a site on the west of Anderson's Creek for cricket and recreation purposes.²³²

No conclusive evidence has been found either in local government or mining department records to confirm that the Russell Road cottage was there by this time. However, district records confirm that James Russell was the owner of a house and garden, rated in the township area, in 1873. The cottage had a very small valuation suggesting a modest structure²³³

²²⁸ Uebergang, pp.200-201 (Photo of Heimat in the Reserve).

²²⁹ James Flett, *The History of Gold Discovery in Victoria, Warrandyte Goldfield*, compiled 1899, 1909 (shows Thomson's Gully).

²³⁰ Doncaster-Templestowe Historical Society Newsletter, Aug. 1975.

²³¹ Bruce Bence, *Anderson's Creek Warrandyte. 1866-1988*, p.13.

²³² Louis Cranfield, *The Golden History of Warrandyte*, 1982, pp.40-41.

²³³ Templestowe District Board RB 1873 No.365 (NAV 7 pounds 10 shillings).