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"TOORANG," ON LAKE CONNEWARRE.
THE RESIDENCE OF DR. A. J. CAMPBELL.

Discover a world of family history

Finding Laurence Ryland

... or not!

Susie Zada

I am sure most people have experienced this — an email arrives requesting information that you know will take less than two minutes to find the answer and reply with good solid references. Often that 'two minutes' is achieved but other times it is not!

The beginning. An email arrived some months ago from a Melbourne-based art dealer/collector. He attached a copy of a painting titled 'Fisherman's Point, Lake Connewarre near Geelong' signed and dated 'Chas Young 04'. He wanted to know if anyone recognised the house featured in the painting and if it still existed. He had made enquiries through Geelong Gallery, they were unable to help but suggested they contact me as I had a more detailed knowledge of the area. One look at the painting and I knew it was a 'two minute job'!

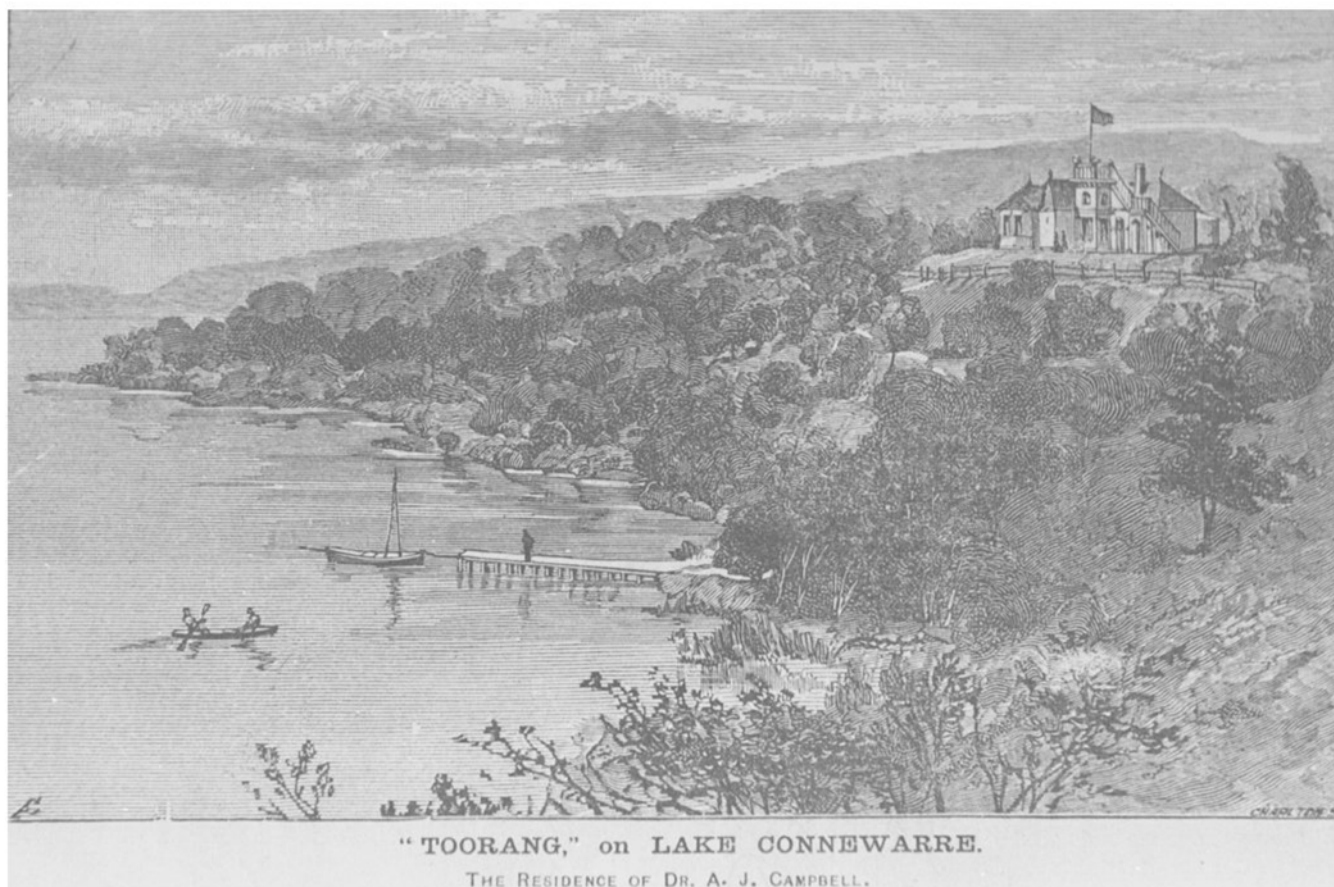
I recognised the house as 'Toorang', it still existed and was covered by a City of Greater Geelong Heritage Overlay [HO290] which meant there would be a citation in the relevant Heritage Study. The 1986 citation read:

Toorang, a single storey Italianate Style villa on the

shores of Lake Connewarre was probably erected for Laurence Ryland in the 1850s as a seven room rubble stone structure with timber shingle roof and square observation tower. Dr Alexander James Campbell, Presbyterian clergyman, theologian and writer of tourist guides lived at Toorang until 1893. Campbell was influential in establishing educational colleges for the Presbyterian Church including Geelong College and Ormond College. Toorang is an early villa on the Bellarine Peninsula with a picturesque setting on Lake Connewarre with significant historical associations with the development of the regions.

Other Toorang references: The Heritage citation also referred to other sources including a 1984 article in the Geelong Historical Society journal *Investigator* called Toorang Memories:

About 1863 a legacy was left to Mother by Miss Romanes (of Romanes and Patterson) of £700 to buy a home for her. With this money, Father bought a house and 100 acres on the bank of Lake Connewarre from a Mr Ryland. The house was built of rough stones from off the place and the walls were eighteen inches thick.



The writer was Frances Janette Balfour-Melville née Campbell (1856–1947), the daughter and longest-living child of the Rev Alexander James Campbell and Mary Turner Wedderburn Maitland Heriot. At some time before her death she obviously recorded her memories of her parents' home Toorang on Lake Connemur.

I replied to the art collector enclosing the above information and also attached a copy of the lithograph which appeared in the 1892 publication *Tourists' Guide to Geelong and Southern Watering Places*. It was a perfect match for the painting and I wondered if the lithograph was a copy of the painting or vice versa? There was also a reference to Mr Ryland in this publication. A chapter titled In the Early Days was actually written by the Rev A J Campbell who described the properties around the banks of Lake Connemur:

... then Mr Ryland's property, which I (under compulsory provisions of a bequest) purchased as a permanent home for my family.

Who was Mr Laurence Ryland? The art collector was delighted with the information and asked one simple question — "who was Laurence Ryland?" I had access to numerous local indexes and decided this was another two minute job. I had also developed an interest in Laurence Ryland as locally Toorang had always been referred to as Reverend A J Campbell's home.

So I started searching for Laurence Ryland in all the obvious places, local book indexes, cemetery records, church records, rate books, Victorian birth, death and marriage indexes and immigration indexes. No Laurence Ryland. OK, so he moved. I checked birth, death and marriage indexes for every colony in Australia, emigration indexes from Victoria and immigration records around Australia. No Laurence Ryland.

I had obviously blown my two minutes but this was now a matter of principle (aka stubbornness). A person who built such a substantial house could not just disappear. It was definitely time to double check the original references and the result was that there was no such person as Laurence Ryland. Checking the index to the *Investigator* journals, there were four references to Laurence Ryland. Three of these references actually referred to Mr Ryland and only one mentioned Laurence Ryland. This particular article had nothing to do with Toorang but referred to Laurence Ryland, licensee of the Builder's Arms Hotel. Following this lead I found it was later corrected in other publications to Laurence Ryan. Unfortunately the index at the time had grouped three Mr Ryland



Mary Campbell

references with one Laurence Ryland reference. Understandably this was where Willingham had found Laurence Ryland.

The 'local' Ryland family. I threw Laurence out the window and focussed on any local Ryland references. There were five Ryland burials in the Geelong Eastern Cemetery ranging from 1850 to 1897 — definitely the right timeframe. These were Priscilla Ryland and four children of James Ryland and Priscilla Williamshurst. Also buried with Priscilla was Elizabeth Williamshurst. The BDM indexes showed that the father of both was John Williamshurst and they were probably siblings.

I put together a family chart which included nine children for James and Priscilla

Ryland, all children died in Victoria, and decided to purchase Priscilla's 1867 death certificate. This confirmed that she had been born in London c1798, daughter of John Williamshurst, wine merchant and Priscilla, maiden name unknown. She married James Ryland c1824 at Statford-Le-Bow in Middlesex. There were ten children listed, one deceased, Septimus, not previously identified was added to my chart as died before 1867.

It was possible that Priscilla's husband James was the Mr Ryland who built Toorang, however, he was eliminated by a reference in the *Geelong Advertiser* in 1868 when their oldest daughter, Priscilla Emily, married. She was referred to as the eldest daughter of the late Jas Ryland Esq, Old Ford, Middlesex, England.

Follow the house and land. It was obviously time to stop following the family and concentrate on the house and land. The first Shire of Bellarine rate or valuation book was for the financial year 1863–1864. There was an entry for Mrs Ryland, owner and occupier of a house and ninety acres of land in Moolap. This was the same parish in which Toorang is located and was probably a match, however, no details were provided for the actual location of this land. A search of the Moolap Parish Plan showed no Ryland as a first Crown Land purchaser. The same plan showed Peter Gunning as the first owner of the land on which Toorang was built.

A Title Search was the only other option. Land Titles and Certificates can be searched and purchased online at www.landata.vic.gov.au/tpc/tpc_home.asp. A word of warning — you need to understand what you are doing as it can be more dangerous and costly than feeding money into a poker machine! The current title showed that it had been created by Application No 113504P on 2 April 2003. I purchased AP113504P online but unfortunately this was the current summary document and not the working notes that traced the land from first Crown Land purchaser to the

2003 new Title. So that was the end to online searching. The title plan did, however, show that the rate book reference to ninety acres was probably a match for this land.

A copy of the full application file was obtained from the Lands Department in Bourke Street, Melbourne. Bingo! Peter Gunning sold part of Portion 24 Block 1 Parish of Moolap on 31 May 1853 to Priscilla Ryland for £224.19.0. Priscilla sold the property on 16 December 1863 to Alexander James Campbell for £700.

Another interesting find came from the *Geelong Advertiser*. In January 1860 Mrs P Ryland advertised Audley for auction. In April 1862 Audley was to let and in August 1863 Priscilla advertised Audley, Lake Connewarre with ninety acres for sale. In 1892 in *Tourists Guide* Rev A J Campbell wrote about Toorang '... It had been untenanted for several years when I got it, and was densely covered with the golden wattle, a fact which is commemorated in its name Toorang, the wattle tree'. So it appears that Campbell gave the house its name Toorang and raised the question — why did Priscilla Ryland name her home Audley? And how could she afford to build her home? Would I find the answers by researching the family in England?

The English Ryland family. Using a combination of *FindMyPast* and *Ancestry* I discovered that James Ryland died in February 1841 and was buried in Bunhill Fields, London. Census records threw up even more questions. I have not yet found Priscilla in the 1841 census but located three children with the right names and ages (twelve, eleven and nine). They were living in High Street, Camden Town with John Ryland (thirty-eight) school master, Charlotte Ryland (forty-six), John Dalrymple (eleven) and eleven other children with different surnames. I also located an Elizabeth Williamshurst (thirty) (Priscilla's sister?) and Mary Dent (thirty) both independent means living at 2 Eastcot Place, All Saints Poplar, Tower Hamlets, with Sarah Dalrymple (thirty-five) next door to a master mariner. Although appearing unconnected, these names, places and occupations came together like a jigsaw puzzle. Priscilla's third son was named John Dent Ryland. The rest surfaced in the death duty registers.

Using *FindMyPast* I found James Ryland in the Index to Death Duty Registers Canterbury Prerogative Court

1796–1903. He died intestate in 1841 with the Administratrix listed as Priscilla Ryland. Researching death duties was a whole new area for me but with help from the experts at the GSV I was able to order the correct LDS film. The registers showed James Ryland's estate valued at £7,000 — a substantial amount at that time. The other administrators were listed as John Dalrymple, master mariner, of 2 Eastcot Place and John Rylander, school master, of 56 High Street, Camden Town. My guesswork on the census entries was firmly linked to the right family. The registers also identified the children as James Herman Ryland and eight others. I had ten in total but a quick check of the birth, death and marriage indexes located the death of Septimus Ryland in 1838 — all children accounted for. I am still waiting on James Ryland's death certificate and another LDS film — Admon Act Books — to fill in more of the jigsaw puzzle.

Tips on lithographs. You can always learn something new, some really useful information from the art collector. In the bottom right hand corner of the lithograph of Toorang is written Charlton Sc. The letters 'Sc' behind the name are an abbreviation of the word sculpsit, Latin for engraved. This abbreviation is often seen on prints, indicating that the name it follows is that of the engraver of the design i.e. Charlton did the engraving, either after an original painting by himself, or after another artist's painting. In the latter case the name of the artist is usually printed in the lower left hand corner of the engraving. The left hand corner of the Toorang lithograph appears to include the initials 'A C'. A possible match for these initials is the artist Albert Charles Cooke (1836–1902). The State Library of Victoria picture collection shows that Cooke was the artist for an 1870 engraving titled Black Swan Shooting on Lake Connewarre.

The end? Have I gone as far as I am going with the Ryland family? Probably not — there are too many interesting and unanswered questions. It has been a fascinating journey resulting in new experiences and more knowledge, a journey I do not want to end! More than anything I would love to contact descendants of James and Priscilla Ryland. I have a photo of Mrs Mary Campbell whose husband used her inheritance to purchase Toorang, ironically from Priscilla who used her inheritance from her husband to build Audley/Toorang — oh what I would give to find a photo of Priscilla Ryland! ☼

Hereditree 2009

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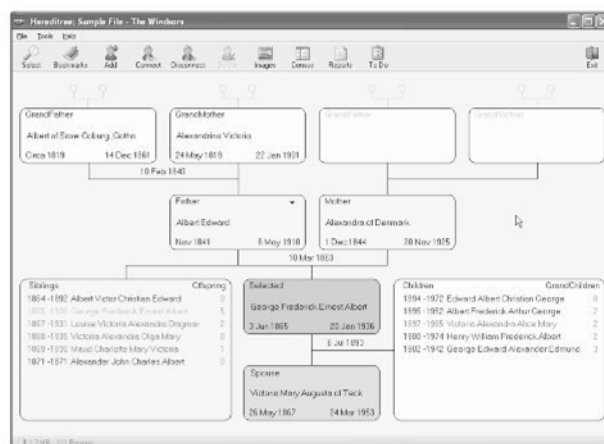
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The Wish List

Many of the GSV's resources have been obtained through donations. As a volunteer organisation we could not provide the services we do without the generosity of members.

DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS

The society is a non-profit organisation and operating costs are financed by membership subscriptions. Generous donations from benefactors and appreciative users allow the library collection to grow in depth and breadth.

The society endeavours to provide the best facilities for members to search for their ancestors.

This program will always be dependent on financial resources available from time to time. Technology and newly accessible information are coming to us at an ever increasing rate and it is the intention of the society not just to keep up but to be the best.

Monetary donations which are directed to the Society are frequently supplemented by other general income, to acquire large items when appropriate. Donations to the Society will add to the sound base of our finances, and benefit all who use our resources.

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