

Heritage Overlay No.: 094
Citation No.: 251
Place: John Campbell Miles Farmhouse Site

Other Names of Place: Miles family homestead site
Location: Shamrock Place, Melton West (Allot. A1 Sec. 6 Parish of Djerriwarrh)
Critical Dates: Establishment pre 1892; Association with JC Miles: until at least 1930s; House survived until sometime between late 1930s and 1953.
Existing Heritage Listings: None
Recommended Level of Significance: LOCAL



Statement of Significance:

The John Campbell Miles farmhouse site in Melton West is significant as a rare surviving relic of the small farms that established in Melton West from the time of Crown land sales in the 1850s; and for its association with John Campbell Miles, the founder and namer of the Mount Isa mining field.

The place consists of the land around the former Miles cottage, extending down to the gullies and flats of Djerriwarrh Creek. The site of the former cottage includes all ruinous fabric and detritus associated with the cottage, and potential archaeological evidence. It includes the small

grove of peppercorn trees characteristically associated with early farmhouses, and other remnant plantings, such as prickly pear and aloe, and, in the native scrub towards Djerriwarrh Creek, wild white irises. Evidence of an underground tank formerly used for domestic purposes is likely to survive. The place is also likely to retain evidence of gold prospecting undertaken by John Campbell Miles (including a shaft dug by him in his adult years).

The John Campbell Miles farmhouse site in Melton West is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A4, B2, H1). The scant remains of the place are representative of the negligible remaining evidence of nineteenth century small farming in the area west of Melton, and particularly along the Djerriwarrh Creek; the only other more substantial remaining places being two underground water tanks on nearby properties. Its isolated setting, closer to the water source of Djerriwarrh Creek than nearby roads and neighbours, is scarce evidence of early small farming practice.

Its isolated rural setting is also evocative of the reclusive itinerant bushman and prospector, John Campbell Miles, who in 1923 discovered the Mount Isa copper, lead, zinc, silver mine. By the late twentieth century Mount Isa was one of the world's great mines, and a major contributor to the Australian economy. Miles was raised at the cottage and commenced his life of prospecting on the Djerriwarrh Creek which forms the western boundary of the property. As an adult, until at least the 1930s, he intermittently returned to the property, lodging at the then dilapidated and deserted cottage, and sunk a prospecting shaft on one of the gullies of the creek.

The property is expressive of the pervading significance of 1850s Victoria, which had provided ordinary people across the world with new opportunities for wealth, originally from alluvial gold and subsequently from the developing economy and access to rural farms, and which was the origin of a caste of single male prospectors whose lifestyle and achievements are etched into Australia's national folklore. While Thomas Miles, like the majority of diggers, was unsuccessful, the name of his son John Campbell Miles is now celebrated in one of the world's most important mining towns

The John Campbell Miles farmhouse site in Melton West is scientifically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC C2). It has the potential to contribute to an understanding of the small farming and domestic lifestyles in the dry Melton Plains area, and to the life of prospector John Campbell Miles.

Overall, the John Campbell Miles farmhouse site in Melton West is of LOCAL significance.