

Catherine Field. New South Wales

By Ray Herbert

Catherine Field is a suburb of Sydney is it located approximately 60 kilometers South West of Sydney.

The Dharug people originally inhabited the land. The area is a part of the Cumberland Plains with some properties still with original stands of trees.

History of the Area.

The historic Cowpasture's Road runs through Catherine Filed on its journey to Camden. The road is now known as the Camden Valley Way.

Land Grants covering the area were given to Granham Blaxcell 3000 acres in 1815, Alexander Riley in 1816, 3269 acres and Count Gabriel Huon de Kerilliau in 1807, 400 acres, George Molle in 1817, 500 acres.

Granham Blaxcell

Granham Blaxcell was baptized on the 27 May 1778 at Kalsale near Saxmundhan Suffork, England.

He joined the Navy in 1801 and was stationed on H.M.S. Rattlesnake at the Cape of Good Hope Station, before transferring to H.M.S. Buffalo.

Blaxcell arrived in Sydney in 1802 on H.M.S. Buffalo, he was the ship acting Purser, and Governor King appointed him Deputy Commissary on 6th May 1803. He was further appointed Acting Provost Marshall and Secretary to the Colony.

Blaxcell took an active part in the rebellion that ousted Bligh and was on the committee that examined the Governor's Papers after his arrest.

Granham became one of Sydney's wealthiest merchants, he had property at Petersham, a Windmill at Pymont, a warehouse in George Street and he also owned several small-trading vessels.

He with Alexander Riley, D'Arcy Wentworth were given the contract to built a general Hospital in Sydney in return they could import 45,000 gallons of spirits over three year.

Involved with debts to John MacArthur and other leading Colonist and unable to meet import duties Granham left the colony in 1817.

He died in Batavia on the 3rd October 1817.

Alexander Riley

Alexander Riley was born in London in 1778 the son of a bookseller.

In 1803 Riley secured from the Colonial Office permission to emigrant, he was the first Free Settler to go to the colony.

He found favour with Colonel Patterson and in 1805 became Deputy Commissary there he grasped the economic possibilities of trade and land cultivation.

With the deportation of Bligh, Patterson faced the command of the Colony, he asked Riley to be the Secretary of the Colony which he accepted in 1805.

Alexander received a grant of 3269 acres on the western side of the Cowpasture Road he named the property "Raby". The original house was built by Convict labour and was burnt to the ground.

In partnership with Richard Jones and his brother Edward based in Calcutta and W.S. Davidson in Canton set up a Mercantile Company. The first to begin Marine Insurance in New South Wales.

Riley was one of the founders of the Bank Of New South Wales (Westpac) and in 1816 and briefly in 1817 he was one of the Directors.

In 1817 Riley returned to England where he gave evidence to the select committee on gaols in 1819, he joined the Firm of Donaldson, Wilkinson and Co. agent for the Colonial Trade.

Alexander and his brother Edward imported a Flock of Saxon Merino Sheep into the colony in 1825.

In his declining years ill health prevented his desire to return to the colony, he passed away in London on the 17 November 1833.

Alexander's son Edward continued to run the property.

William Moore purchased the property in 1866 and built two-storey building on the site in 1870.

The property was sold to Arthur Rick in 1914 and sold to the Mitchell family in 1935.

George Molle

George Molle was baptized in Mains, Berwickshire, Scotland on the 6th March 1773.

George joined the Scots Brigade (94th Regiment) and as an ensign served in Gibraltar, The Cape of Good Hope, India, Egypt and Spain.

Promoted to Colonel he served at Gibraltar before transferring as the Colonel of the 46th Regiment of Foot when ordered to serve in the Colony of New South Wales.

On the 20th March 1814 he took the Oath of Office of Lieutenant Governor of the Colony.

George and his wife played an active part in the Public life of the colony, being patron of the Female Orphan School and a member of the committee for the Civilization, Care and Education of Aborigines.

500 Acres on South Creek was granted to George Molle in 1817 which he named "Catherine Field".

George served as the local Magistrate and ran the court from his home until 1825 when it was closed and moved to Cawdor. He assisted in the foundation of the Bank of New South Wales in 1817.

In September 1817 George Molle left with his regiment for India, where he died in September 1823. George's son William Macquarie took over the operations of the property after his Father left.

Molle Island in the Whitsundays is named after George.

William Hovell leased the property in 1831 and worked the estate with his family for a number of years.

Count Gabriel Marie Louisa Huon de Kerilleau.

Count Gabriel Huon was born in Brittany on the 17 April 1769 and escaped from France to England in a smuggler's boat during the revolution.

He joined the New South Wales Corps as a Private Soldier under the name of Gabriel Lewis and arrived in the Colony on the "Surprise" in October 1794.

After his discharge from the New South Wales Corp, John Macarthur engaged Gabriel as a tutor for his younger sons William and James. He was held in high esteem by most of the early Governor's and visit Government House regularly.

Gabriel married Louisa De Sage on the 7th February 1800 at St. Johns Church Parramatta they had 4 Children, the eldest Paul was an early Settler in the Campbelltown and Airs District

In 1809 the Count and his wife move to a grant of 150 acres on the George's River the grant given by Governor Bligh. He planted maize, vegetables and fruit trees, which were wiped out in 1809.

On the 1st January 1810 he was granted 400 acres along with 5 convicts to man the property. The property was named "Buckingham" after the Marquis of Buckingham.

Gabriel struggled with the property over the time he owned "Buckingham" he grazed cattle and raised crops on the property.

In the summer of 1811 it was Hot and Dry with limited water, the vegetable planted were scorched and the maize crop destroyed.

The property was sold in 1816 to James Chisholm and renamed Gledswood.

In 1825 Gabriel obtained 3000 acres near Bungonia.

On a Sunday in December 1828 he left the property and started to walk to his son's property at Campbelltown, he was seen and spoken to on a couple of occasions and put on the right road.

He became lost in the Gullies of the Shoalhaven River and never seen again.

James Chisholm

James was born in 1772 at Calder Scotland he joined the 29th Regiment and later transferred to the New South Wales Corp. in 1791.

He arrived on the “Britannia” in 1791, after obtaining the rank of Sergeant he left the Corp in 1810.

While still a Soldier he was issued with a licence for an Inn in 1809, he erected a building in George Street between Martin Place and Hunter Street, he also acquired a further 5 leases in the same area.

James obtained a grant from Governor Bligh at Redefine and built a two-storey House which he named “Calder House” this was later sold to the Government for the erection of the Everleigh Railway Workshops.

James was a wealth Spirit Merchant in George Street Sydney when he bought the property in 1816 for the sum of 278 pounds,

James Built the homestead at Gledswood as a wedding present for his son James (Jaz) who planted the first Grape vines on the property which produced fine wine.

James was one of the founders of the Bank of New South Wales he became the Banks Landlord from 1817 to 1837.

Gledswood remained in the hands of the Chisholm Family until 1940

Camden Valley Golf Resort and Lakeside Golf Club courses, the former home of El Cabello Blanco are located in the area along with the Gledswood Homestead

Catherine Fields Today.

The suburb forms part of the Northern Ward of Camden, the area consists mostly of 5-acre properties with 1-acre sites around the General Store, Community Centre and Sports Oval.

Catherine Field was the Home to El Caballo Blanco and the Australian Park these attraction have now closed. A fire destroyed the main arena area of the property.

The golfer is serviced by the Camden Valley Golf Resort and Lakeside Golf Club both provides challenging courses for the Golfer.

Catherine Fields has fallen under the New Southwest Development Plan that will see the rural aspects of the area change to suburbia.

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