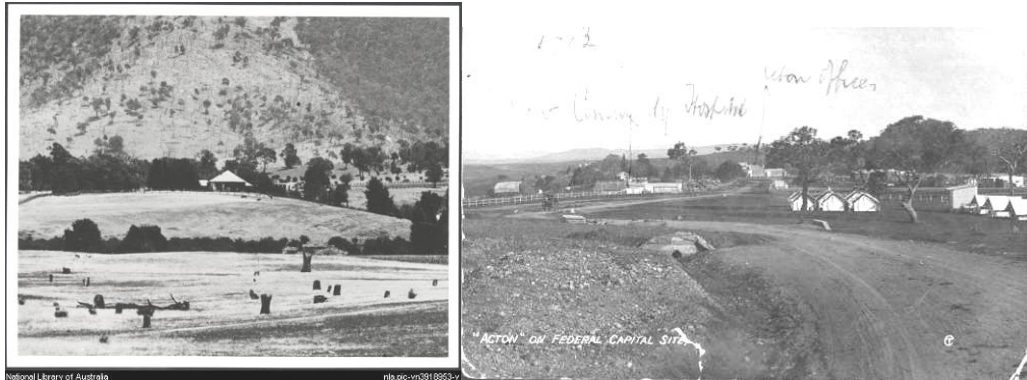


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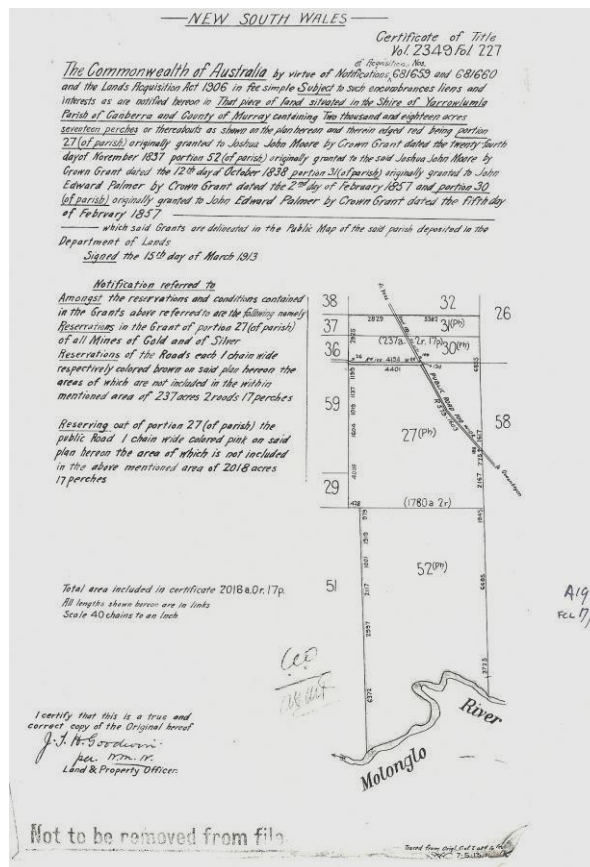
CHAPTER THREE

ACTON - SECOND SETTLEMENT OF EARLY CANBERRA



Nla.pic-vn3918953-v Acton House

Nla.pic-vn4402431-v Acton 1913



The area of Acton in Federal Times was the parcel of land on the north side of the Molonglo River that stretched back from the banks of the river to Black Mountain and on the east from Civic Centre & Commonwealth Avenue to Black Mountain Peninsula on the west. It incorporated parts of two land grants - JJ Moore's *Canberry* later renamed by the second owner, Jeffries, *Acton* and John McPherson's *Sprinbank*. In 1911, Moore's land was resumed by the Commonwealth. It was followed by Yarralumla and Klensendorffe's grants on the south side of the Molonglo opposite Acton. At this time, both these properties in the vicinity of the two tenant farms - Kaye's and Briar, were also included as part of Acton. With the establishment of Acton as the name for the area the post office address changed from Canberra to Acton.

There are many descriptions of this early settlement, one of which was written by Dr Frederick Watson who edited the Historical Records of Australia and was one of the early lecturers at RMC. In 1929 he was elected Third Commissioner. Amongst his publications are: *History of Canberra* [1927] and a chapter, *History of the Australian Capital Territory, to the Proclamation of the 'Seat of Government Act 1910* published in *Handbook For Canberra* described the exploration and settlement of the area of Canberra in which he wrote: [REF **Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science 1938**] ...about the end on 1824 some employees of JJ Moore formed a stock station at Acton, and this was the first permanent settlement in Canberra. Subsequently Moore was permitted to purchase 1,742 acres on which he erected the homestead [later known as Acton House] which now is used as the police station at Canberra...In 1825 Robert Campbell was granted land [area of Duntroon] ...John McPherson in 1831 settled on his property at Springbank...

He added further to this information in a letter published in ***The Canberra Times* 17 January 1939:**

THE NAMING OF CANBERRA - The Editor, 'The Canberra Times'

Sir.- During the last few days I have been asked frequently to origin and meaning of the name of Canberra. In March last, I was asked to write the story of early Canberra to be included in the handbook for the Science Congress. I began with an explanatory statement about the name; that statement was omitted by the editors, and an incomplete statement by Mr CS Daley was inserted elsewhere.

My statement was as follows:-

'Place names were given frequently by the aborigines from a fancies resemblance of the natural features to human or animal forms. The rocky hill in the plain immediately northerly from Ainslie was named Ngungahleen, meaning a beautiful view. From the neighbourhood of this hill, the Canberra plain with Mount Ainslie to the east and Black Mountain to the west suggested the human breast, and the locality was named Canberra, meaning a woman's breasts. Between these hills or breasts, the aborigines located their tribal meeting ground where corroborees were held, where the women remained during the initiation ceremonies at Jidbinbilla (now Tidbinbilla), and where the young men returned after their first initiation to manhood; in a recess on Black Mountain, the tribal phallic stone was preserved. Surely there would be no more beautiful and no more appropriate name for the capital city of a continent than Canberra, implying a first nursery of all human development.

Moore's original name of his property, Canberry [various spellings including Ngambri, Kemberry. Canburry] is the Ngunawal name of the almost treeless plain sheltered by Black Mountain and Mount Ainslie. The name was used by the settlers and by the late 1850s the spelling settled to Canberra.

Nearby Black Mountain was originally known as Blacks' Hill because it was a major meeting place of the Ngunawal who camped on Black Mountain Peninsula. These people were also known to the locals as Ngambri (Canberry) or Kamberry. The locals referred to the Aboriginal people not by their tribal names but identified them by the areas where they camped and met for ceremonies etc. For example the people who camped near Duntroon at Pialligo were known as the Pialligo Tribe.

Acton, was the second of five major settlements established in the Federal Territory. It became the Administrative Centre of the Territory, a position that it held well into the 1960s.

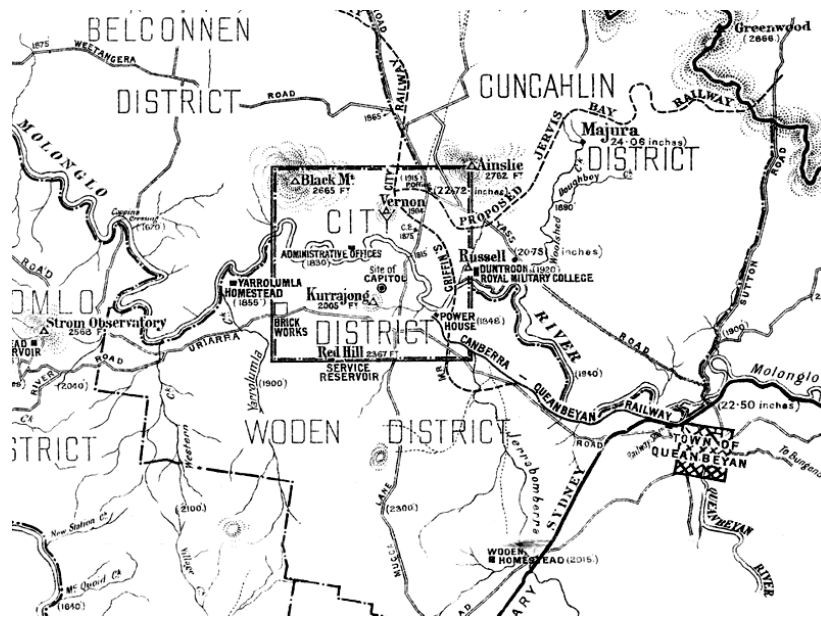
Just why this area was chosen for the Administrative Centre of Canberra may be linked with the initial choice of a camp used by the surveyors who made their first camp in 1909. It was set up on the south side of the Molonglo River in a big gully (later known as Surveyors' Gully) near a major track between the Uriarra [south] and Yass Roads [north]

This camp was in the Gura Bung Dhaura Hills of which Capital Hill is one, on Klensendorff's Grant. The hills, like those of Acton were relatively well timbered which gave some protection from the strong winds that blew across the almost treeless Canberra Plain. From this central site the surveyors commenced their work to survey the thirty six square miles for the proposed city area. This information was then sent to the competitors for the proposed Federal City. The surveyors remained in this camp until 1912 when permanent accommodation was ready for them at Acton.

Acton was well protected from the winds and was near a permanent water supply provided by a spring that fed into Canberry Creek [later renamed Sullivan's Creek]. A number of old farm cottages and other buildings on cleared land as well as well defined tracks etc made it a more suitable site for a large settlement than the area of Surveyors' Gully.

Acton was the headquarters of the Lands & Survey Department and other departments responsible for the co-ordination and management of construction work. It also had Canberra's first bank, the Commonwealth, established in 1913 and later a police station (transferred from Molonglo Settlement), a Court House, hospital, post office and was home to the Administrator, Colonel Miller. TC Weston set up the experimental nursery at Acton in 1913 and between 1919 and 1923 a school was provided for the children.¹

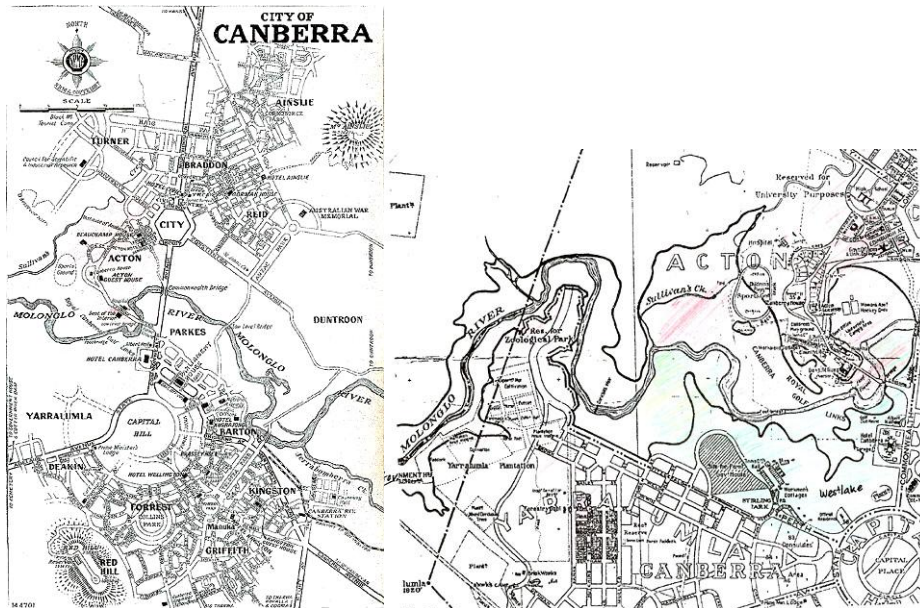
In 1925 Acton became the home of the First Commissioner, John Butters and headquarters of the Federal Capital Commission.



Above Acton on right hand side of the Molonglo River. Commonwealth Avenue cuts across the photograph bottom and Hotel Canberra on the LHS off Commonwealth Avenue. The rectangular shape is the Nursery and nearby are Acton Offices. Above the nursery is the line of workmen's cottages erected in 1924 and

¹ NAA A/231/1; DSG 23/1695; A192/1; FCL21/1891 Gugler AR Builders of Canberra 1909-1929 pages 43, 44

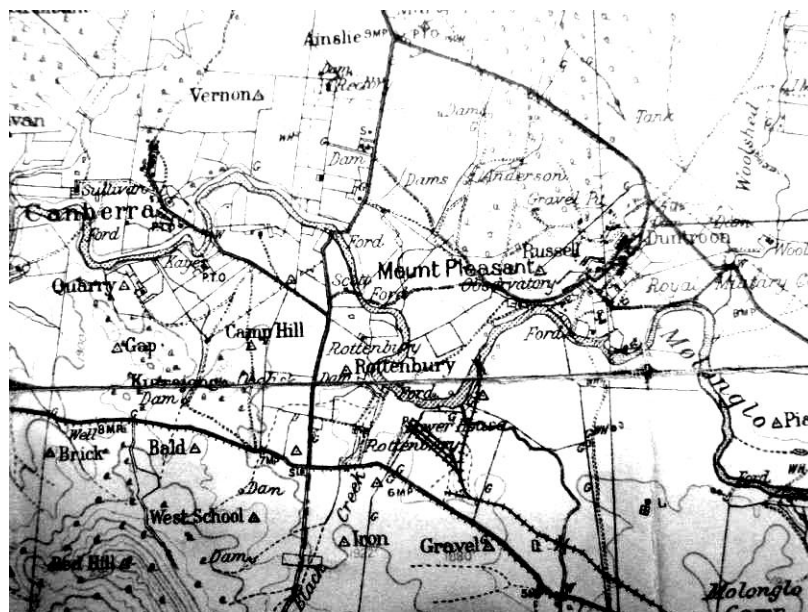
off to the right, Canberra House & Bachelors Quarters [the Acton Guest House] and smaller timber cottages erected for officials. The oval shape is the Race Course which had a bora ground in it. The Royal Canberra Golf Links can be seen on either side of the River and on the far left in the Gura Bung Dhaura Hills (Westlake) are the Westlake cottages. The white area is the Quarry - now Attunga Point.



Above 1949 map of Canberra showing the area of Acton and right 1920s-30s map showing Acton in red and Westlake in green - both were the suburb of Acton.

ACTON - THE EARLY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY

The main entrance to Acton Settlement from the south side was Lennox Crossing. The following 1913 map owned by Harold Jones and loaned by his grand-daughter, Patricia Frei shows the major roads in the area. Acton is on the north side of the river partly covered with the name *CANBERRA*. Vernon is now City Hill, Civic. The Quarry is Attunga Point. Camp Hill and Kurrajong are now parts of Capital Hill, the centre of Walter Burley Griffin's plan and site of the Federal Parliament House opened 9 May 1988.



Shortly after the resumption of the property by the Commonwealth in 1911, Charles Scrivener, the Surveyor General in charge of the surveying work, who had lived in the surveyors' camp, moved into the old Acton

farmhouse where he remained until retirement in 1915.² This perhaps marked the beginning of the Acton settlement.³

The following year accommodation was built for the surveyors and other officials at Acton and a tent camp established for the workmen.

Some indication of the dates of moves from tents to timber cottages or barracks at Acton is given in an article in *The Canberra Times* 12 March 1938⁴ which states: *It was not until January 1912 that the first house [at Acton] was available, and quarters for officers [Bachelors Quarters] was not completed until September 1912. On August 26, 1912 work commenced on an administrative building at Acton, which forms part of the present offices of the Department of the Interior...*

Between 1919 and 1923 a school was provided for the children.⁵

The population of Acton consisted of a mixture of the social classes. The working class lived on the flat and the officials and administrator on the hill above.

The single men working for the surveyors lived under canvas and the married in hessian walled humpies and old farm cottages. The single⁶ officers and surveyors moved into the timber barracks known as the Bachelors Quarters. The married moved into farm houses and a few timber cottages. The Administrator, Colonel Miller first lived under canvas and moved with his wife and family in January 1914 into the grand two storey concrete dwelling known as *The Residency*. In 1924 a few small portable timber cottages designed by HM Rolland were constructed for working class married men.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT THE BEGINNING AND MOVE TO ACTON

***The Canberra Times* 12 March 1938 - 25 Years in the Building of the Federal Capitals:**

The first contour survey [of the city area] was carried out in 1909 and extended over an area of about 36 square miles with the object of providing data for the determination of the most suitable site for the capital. On January 18, 1910 the first base camp was established in the valley at the foot of Kurrajong Hill [Capital Hill]. The site of this camp is at present marked by a small concrete building on the eastern side of the roadway leading from Commonwealth Avenue to the Prime Minister's Lodge [State Circle]. The first officers were Mr Charles Robert Scrivener, Messrs A Percival, WG Sheaffe, FJ Broinowski and WC Chapman.

It was not until January 1912 that the first house was available, and quarters for officers were not completed until September 1912. On August 26, 1912 work was commenced on an administrative building at Acton which forms part of the present offices of the Department of the Interior....

***The Advertiser [Adelaide] The Capital Site - Preliminary Work* 9 March 1911:**

Whatever may be the future of the Yass-Canberra as a site for a Federal capital, the Department of Home Affairs has some progress to report in connection with the work in making the territory fit for occupation. The Minister finished a short statement to-day showing what had been done since the beginning of this year. The chief executive acts are as follow: - Acquisition of 'action' [Sic Acton] about 1,780 ½ acres acquired from Mr J Jeffries to provide sites for temporary offices outside the city area: accommodation for staff engaged there, and cottages for construction workmen...

² Waterhouse, DJ *The Eight Lives of Acton House...Not Nine*, Unfortunately in *True Tales From Canberra's Vanished Suburbs of Westlake, Westridge & Acton* –Gugler 1999 pages 425-427

³ *The Canberra Times* 12 August 1939 has a reference to the early surveying work carried out in the FCT that in part reads: *Near the Acton offices are two innocent looking concrete pillars At a glance you might take them to be flagpole mountings on sun-dial ;pedestals or even machine gun posts. On them depends all the surveyor's measurements of this city. The pedestals were erected in 1912 under the direction of Mr CR Scrivener who was charged with the layout of the capital. They are exactly 500 links apart (5 chains) and even today are constantly used to ensure the accuracy of the surveyor's chain.*

⁴ *Canberra Times* 12.3.1938 <http://nla.news-article> 2453891

⁵ NAA A/231/1; DSG 23/1695; A192/1; FCL21/1891 Gugler AR Builders of Canberra 1909-1929 pages 43, 44

⁶ Many of the *single* men were married, but because of the shortage of accommodation for married men, left wives and families behind.

The Canberra Times 31 December 1953 entitled *THE ACTON OFFICES FORTY YEARS AGO* gives further insight into the early office accommodation at Acton. An excerpt follows: *The second Government Administrative offices in Canberra were completed and occupied by the Home Affairs Department at Acton on August 22, 1912. The Federal Capital Territory was virtually under the Control of Colonel PT Owen as Director-General of Works and Mr CD Scrivener as Director of Lands and Surveys for the Department of Home Affairs.*

The first office from which the National Capital was administered was a wood and malthoid building erected in 1910 not far from the present Canadian High Commission's Office [former Lord Casey's house - now Casey House - the site of the malthoid & timber office built by Murray was near Scrivener's concrete plan room on Capital Hill].



Above: Photograph showing the first building site at Acton courtesy of Alison Neiberding. This site is most likely that of the Residency. Alison's father, Nairn Stuart, a plumber by trade, worked on this site and also worked on the construction of RMC Duntroon. The family moved into one of the portable temporary cottages designed by HM Rolland in 1924 and later to 4 Liversidge Street.

In early January 1914 Colonel Miller, the Administrator, who lived first in a tent and later in a small timber cottage moved with his family into a two storey house constructed in concrete. It was named the *Residency* and later, *Canberra House*.⁷ This house may be the first *permanent* dwelling built in the territory?

This concrete structure was not the first built in this material in Canberra. The plan room at the Surveyors' Camp in Surveyors' Gully Camp Hill built in 1911 was perhaps was the first. This building still stands on Capital Hill and the information on the signs are slightly misleading in that they can imply that this was the first building on the site. This seems to be a common error reported in a number of newspaper articles even as early as 1929 when Mr E Murray wrote the first of a number of letters of correction to the Editor of *The Canberra Times*. The letter dated May 15, 1929 that was published the following day in part reads: *It is not a fact that the shed referred to was the first to be erected in Canberra. The first Government building to be erected in Canberra stood close to that referred to in your article. It was built for the use of the late Mr Scrivener, Chief Surveyor and his fellow surveyors who were camped on the site, which was generally known then and for years afterwards as 'Surveyors' Gully.'* This building was erected by Mr John Murray... At a later date the building was removed to a site at Acton a little west of the present police station, and I believe, it still stands there...⁸

Acton had its hall that was used for many purposes such as a school, meetings, social events such as dances and card evenings and the weekly church services. A Masonic Hall was constructed by John Howie's men and in 1927 it was moved to Russell Hill where it served as a school until 1929 when it made its last move to Corroboree Park where it still stands as the Ainslie Hall.

Following are the 1913 Census, 1916 and 1917 electoral rolls for Acton and Canberra and 1928 Electoral Roll. Only Australian or British subjects 21 and over could go on to the electoral rolls.

⁷ Queanbeyan Age 9.1.1914 (Lyll Gillespie's cards)

⁸ It was a common practice to move timber buildings to sites where they were required. Mr Murray's letter was published in *Canberra Times* 16.5.1929 <http://nla.news-article> 1004194

Following is the 1913 census for Canberra that included Acton. Head of Household only named.

Name	M	F	Total
Avery, William	2	2	4
Ayton, AW	1	0	1
Easterfield, PC	1	0	1
Bondfield, J	1	0	1
Brennan, Jas H	1	0	1
Broinowski, FC	1	2	3
Brown, JG	1	1	2
Cameron, Alan	1	0	1
Christmas, W	2	1	3
Davis, AD	3	1	4
Edwards, SH	1	0	1
Gray, George	1	0	1
Green, N	1	0	1
Gunn, HP	1	0	1
Harrington, EP	1	0	1
Ireland, FC	1	0	1
Kaye, Chas	4	3	7
Kendall, J	4	2	6
Kennedy, J	3	1	4
Lynch, FJ	1	0	1
Miller, Col	3	2	5
Macdonald	1	0	1
Piggin, FA	1	3	4
Rottenberry, G	2	6	8
Ryan, MJ	1	2	3
Scott, John	6	3	8
Scrivener, CR	4	4	8
Sharp, T	0	1	1
Smith, JA	1	0	1
Stewart, Jas F	10	4	14
Sullivan, FG	7	4	11
Thompson, J	1	0	1
Thorning, H	1	1	2
West, Miss	0	2	2
Weston, C	1	0	1
White, Angus	1	0	1
TOTAL	82	45	127

1916 ELECTORAL ROLL ACTON

SPRINGBANK, ACTON

BATES, Ellen & Edwin home duties & clerk
 COPELAND, Mary & Hugh home duties & carpenter
 COX, Mary & Frederick home duties & stock inspector
 EDWARDS, Nina & Leslie home duties & draughtsman
 O'DEA, Louisa & Gilbert home duties & labourer

ACTON

BLEWITT, Annie home duties
 CRUICKSHANKS, Eliza & Andrew home duties & plumber
 DAVIS, Emily & Alfred home duties & labourer
 DONOVAN, Anthony steward
 HEARN, Ernest steward
 JOLLEY, Jessie & Percy home duties & chauffeur
 KAYE, Edith, Letitia & Charles home duties, home duties & labourer (They lived at Klensendorff farm on south side of the Molonglo River - now part of Yarralumla.

KENNEDY, Janet & James home duties & carpenter
 KING, Ernest nurseryman
 McINTOSH, Christina home duties
 MARTIN, William labourer
 MASSON, William steward
 MILLER, Jane & David home duties & public servant (David has *Canberra* not Acton)
 MOFFAT, Mary & Robert home duties & carpenter
 MONGER, Roy clerk
 PHILLIPS, Myra & James home duties & cook
 RAYNOR, Henry steward
 RICHARD, Sarah home duties
 RICHMOND, Andrew engineer
 ROBINS, Blanche & Thomas home duties & carpenter
 ROBINSON, Lilian nurse
 THOMSON, John medical practitioner
 THORNHILL, Robert clerk
 THORNING, Elizabeth & Henry home duties & carpenter
 VEST, Charlotte & William home duties & engine driver
 WEST, Marguerita nurse
 CORKHILL, Catherine & Robert hd & dairy farmer [They lived at Riverview on the south side of the Molonglo.]

1916 ELECTORAL ROLL CANBERRA

[A number of people who lived at Acton put down their place of abode as *CANBERRA* - the following may or may not have lived at Acton, but some eg Charles Weston, did.]

AVERY, Isabella & William home duties & labourer
 BLUNDELL, Ethel & Charles home duties & labourer
 BRILLIANT, Ann home duties
 CURLEY, Eva, Frederick, James & William home duties, labourer, labourer & labourer
 DE SMET, Jules carter
 DONNELLY, Maude & John home duties & chainman
 DRINKWATER, Ruby & Percy home duties & postmaster
 FENNELLY, Austin clerk
 FISHER, John labourer
 FOX, James labourer
 GLICHRIST, Eli draughtsman
 HAMILTON, Catherine & George home duties & labourer
 IRELAND, Doris & Frederick hd & bank manager
 JARDINE, John clerk
 JARRETT, Ernest labourer
 KELLY, Maria & Joseph home duties & labourer
 KING, Ernest labourer
 KITSON, Henry foreman
 LAWTON, May & Albert home duties & chauffeur
 LEA, Pearl, George & Thomas home duties, cleaner & cleaner
 McCARTY, James labourer
 MAKIN, Christina & William home duties & wardsman
 MILLER, Selwyn grazier
 MOUAT, Iris & Harry home duties & surveyor
 MURRAY, Victoria & John home duties & storekeeper
 NORGROVE, Cecil labourer
 OLDFIELD, Margaret, Mary & Sydney home duties, home duties & labourer
 O'GRADY, William labourer
 O'LAUGHLAN, Vance civil servant
 O'ROURKE, Conrad labourer
 PEARCE, James labourer
 PEDEN, Mary home duties
 PERCIVAL, Frieda & Arthur home duties & surveyor
 PIGGIN, Doris & Frederick home duties & civil servant

REID, Norman	labourer
ROBBINS, Harry	clerk
RUSSELL, Rebecca & Wentworth	home duties & clerk
RYAN, Alice & Edward	home duties & foreman
RYAN, Kate	home duties
RYAN, Patrick	labourer
RYAN, William	labourer
SCOTT, Catherine, Ellen, Mary Jane & John	home duties, home duties, home duties & caretaker
SHEAFFE, Catherine, Isabel & Percy	home duties, home duties & district surveyor
SKINNER, Margaret	home duties
SLATTER, Stephen	civil servant
SMITH, Samuel	labourer
SOUTHWELL, William	labourer
STEWART, Helen & James	home duties & plumber
STRETCH, Kenneth	surveyor's assistant
THORNTON, William	labourer
THURBON, Archibald	cleaner
VAUTIN, Ruth & Claude	home duties & draftsman
WADSWORTH, Alfred	health inspector
WELLS, Charles	ganger
WESTON, Thomas	botanist
WILSON, Eliza & Albert	home duties & clergyman

A number of the men living at the Bachelors Quarters 14 June 1916 left without paying their bills before they left to join up. The bills were not made up at the time of leaving. Their names are: AE Wadsworth, LH West, PF Douglas (Fire Chief), RS Shannon, IA Smith, AE Fennelly, C Muir, ED Gilchrist, L Edwards, AF Smith, AJK Corner, AG Cooper, JH Kennedy, SG Bell, LS Malcolm, L Hall, ER Iredale, A Osbourne, L Taylor, J McRae Dunn, RR Monger, VH O'Loughlin, HW Robbins, SH Slatter, RJ Thornhill, LH West, AJ Carney, SG Bell. At this time there were 27 male members of the Mess. [51a]

1917 ELECTORAL ROLL ACTON

BLEWITT, Annie	home duties
DAVIS, Emily & Alfred	home duties & painter
DONOVAN, Anthony	steward
JOLLEY, Jessie	home duties
KAYE, Edith, Letitia & Charles	home duties, home duties & labourer
JOLLEY, Percy	chauffeur
KENNEDY, Janet & James	home duties & carpenter
KING, Ernest	nurseryman
McINTOSH, Christina	home duties
MASSON, William	steward
MOFFAT, Mary	home duties
MONGER, Roy	clerk
PHILLIPS, Myra & James	home duties & cook
ROBINSON, Lilian	nurse
THORNHILL, Robert	clerk
THORNING, Elizabeth & Henry	home duties & carpenter
VEST, Charlotte & William	home duties & engine driver

ELECTORAL ROLL CANBERRA 1917

ANDERSON, Emily & Archibald	home duties & labourer
AVERY, Isabella & William	home duties & labourer
BEAVER, Thomas	labourer
BLUNDELL, Ethel, Charles & George	home duties, labourer & carrier
BRACKENREG, Helen & James	home duties & inspector
BRILLIANT, Anne & John	home duties & works superintendent
DONNELLY, Maude & John	home duties & chainman
DRINKWATER, Ruby & Percy	home duties & postmaster

FITZPATRICK, John	labourer
FOX, James	labourer
JARDINE, John	clerk
JARRETT, Ernest	labourer
KEIR, James	chainman
KELLY, Maria & Joseph	home duties & labourer
KITSON, Henry	foreman
LAWTON, May & Albert	home duties & chauffeur
LEA, Pearl & Thomas	home duties & cleaner
LINETON, Thomas	labourer
LUTON, Sydney	cook
MAKIN, Christina & William	home duties & wardsman
MOUAT, Iris & Harry	home duties & surveyor
O'GRADY, William	labourer
O'LAUGHLAN, Vance	civil servant
O'ROURKE, Conrad	labourer
PIGGIN, Doris & Frederick	home duties & civil servant
REID, Norman	labourer
ROBBINS, Harry	clerk
RUSSELL, Naida, Rebecca & Wentworth	home duties, home duties & clerk
RYAN, Alice & Edward	home duties & foreman
RYAN, Patrick	labourer
RYAN, William	labourer
SCOTT, Catherine, Ellen, Mary Jane & John	home duties, home duties, home duties & caretaker
SHEAFFE, Catherine, Isabel & Percy	home duties, home duties & district surveyor
SLATTER, Henry	public servant
STEWART, Helen & James	home duties & plumber
THORNTON, William	labourer
THURBON, Archibald	cleaner
VAUTIN, Ruth & Claude	home duties & draftsman
WADSWORTH, Alfred	health inspector
WESCOTT, Ethel & Frederick	home duties & labourer
WESTON, Thomas	botanist
WINCHESTER, Mabel	home duties



Above: CDHS photograph with names of Acton building added - courtesy of Patricia Frei. The Race course also had a bora ground on it. During the non racing times stock used to graze on it.

1928 ELECTORAL ROLL ACTON

Frank Dunshea whose family lived at Acton before 1920 has written his memories of Acton.⁹ He wrote the following about Upper Acton (Liversidge Street, Balmain Crescent & area of old hospital): *The Upper Acton Houses as well as the Acton Cottages and the few close by houses there were the houses in the higher parts of Acton some of which are still standing and now are part of the ANU. These houses were mainly in Liversidge Street and Balmain Crescent. Mostly residents in Upper Acton were professional people or high grade public servants. They did not mix socially with the Acton Cottages residents but there were several exceptions and there were families from there who took part in a lot of our Acton Cottages' Activities. Some of these were the Hilton Family - Bob Hilton was one of the early policemen in Canberra and the Carrucans. The father of the family was a Belgium immigrant who killed himself with a shotgun in the garage, probably before I was born. I remember Mrs Carrucan as a very pleasant friendly woman. Her two boys Don and Jack became good fishing mates of my brother. Their sister Enid married a US Navy negro who was stationed for a time at Acton Guest House [former Bachelors Quarters] and moved to America after the war. The Makins lived next door to the Carrucans and next door to Jim Bolton who was very skilled at making model aeroplanes which in those days were made from patterns from which you had to cut balsa wood struts and fit and glue them together and cover with stretched ricepaper. Motor power was achieved by winding up rubber strips by turning the propeller. Jim made fairly large models that would fly a reasonable distance and usually land successfully. I had some attempts at making smaller models but these usually crashed and were wrecked early in their career. The Stuarts from No 13 Acton Cottages later moved into the Makin's house. George Makin became a top lawn bowler and represented Australia at the sport.*

Some prominent Canberra people lived in upper Acton. H P Moss one of the early Chief Engineers of the electricity supply was one - Dr McKellar another and of course CS Daley who I think had the title of Civic Administrator and was also regarded as an unofficial mayor of Canberra. He was an unassuming conscientious and gentle man and I think was generally liked. He had the Number Plate FCT 1. CS Daley used to attend functions at the local schools and usually made fairly lengthy speeches. He had an unfortunate habit of continually punctuating his speech with the word ERR and I remember the Ainslie School most of the kids used to count the number of times he said ERR during his speech and you would hear whispers in the audience of say 58...59..60... etc and the teachers would turn around and glare at us. After the function not many of us kids would have any idea of what Mr Daley had said but most would have a pretty accurate account of how many time he said ERR. The Daley's had a son Geoff and daughter Margaret who were friendly but as they went to the Grammar School and didn't become involved very much in our local activities we didn't get to know them very well.



CS Daley 1927.

information about burials come from several sources - Jean Salisbury's book, *St John's Churchyard* (C of E St John the Baptist Church, Reid ACT), Riverside Cemetery Records, Queanbeyan and cemetery records on line in the ACT. Woden and Gungahlin Cemeteries are the two main public cemeteries in the ACT.

ACTON

ALLISON, Winifred hd

BRACKENREG, Helen & James hd & lands officer

Ruth Robinson (nee Brackenreg) wrote a book about the family's early life in Canberra. It is called *Yabbies At Acton*. In it she mentions that her parents came to Canberra in March 1913. She says, *My father was with the North-West Pastures Protection Board at Narrabri NSW when appointed Inspector with the Lands and Survey Branch of the Department of Home Affairs headed by Charles R Scrivener. Later he was to become a Veterinary Surgeon and a Valuer. His duties in 1913 related to the sub division of land in the ACT for grazing and other purposes and supervision of leases. His first job however, was the eradication of rabbits. After living in a number of makeshift places of accommodation the family finally moved into 8 Liversidge Street after Dr Thompson who moved across the road into No 7. Both Helen and James Carrington Brackenreg are*

⁹ Published in *True Tales From Canberra's Vanished Suburbs of Westridge, Westridge and Acton* Gugler, Ann

buried in Woden Cemetery. Helen Brackenreg was buried on 28th August 1964 and her husband on 9th September 1957.

DEANE, Ruth & Percival hd & PM's depart
DONOVAN, Anthony head cleaner

Anthony Donovan was buried on 30th January 1947 in the ex-servicemen's section of Woden Cemetery. He died on 28th January 1947 aged 75 years and his address at the time of his death was c/o W Wallace, Acton. His grave was paid by the RSS&AILA.

EDWARDS, Nina & Leslie hd & draftsman
GRIFFITHS, Sidney car driver

Sydney Francis Griffiths was buried at Woden Cemetery of 7th March, 1958. He died on 5th March 1958 aged 79 years. His address was c/o Nursery Cottage Acton and his grave was paid by Edward J Griffith of 15 Hotham Crescent Deakin.

JONES, Elizabeth & Harold hd & commonwealth officer
c/o Mrs E Ryan KING, Ernest gardener

Ernest Albert King was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 11th July 1966. He worked at the Butter's residence.

LONDRIGAN, Edmond survey chainman
POTTS, Iris & William hd & civil engineer
ROWSE, William accountant
SMITH, Ivo ps

WATERMAN, Viola & Herbert hd & ps

Buried in the same grave in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery are Herbert Roy Waterman, buried 10th November, 1964, Marie Jean buried 8th February, 1995 and Viola Marian who died on 26th December, 1976.

WILSON, Ellen, Josephine & George hd, hd & stableman

George Thomas and Josephine Nellie Wilson are both buried in the same grave at Woden Cemetery. He was buried on 29th September, 1951 and Josephine on 1st June 1967.

WITHERS, Emily & Walter hd & labourer

Emily Withers died on 3rd January 1943 and is buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery. She was 70 years of age. Buried in the same grave is Walter who was buried on 6th June, 1947. He died on 4th June 1947 aged 75 years and his address was given as 10 Acton Cottages.

ACTON COTTAGES, 1928

Ten timber cottages were erected in 1924. Later another five were added to bring the number up to 15. With the exception of one was known as *The Big House* all were the same design as those erected at Westlake. These cottages were designed by HM Rolland and were referred to as portable timber cottages.

The Big House was originally constructed for Mr Breen, manager of the Bachelors Quarters. He refused to live in it because he considered that it should be rent free as part of his work agreement. The Commonwealth wanted to charge rent.

The original tenant list was as follows: 1 W Wallace, Lands Department, 2 Mrs C Wylie, charwoman, 3 C Marshall, Afforestation Branch, 4 E Dunshea, cleaner, 5 E Thurgold (Thurgood?) cook Hotel Canberra - crossed out JW Mitchell Bars and earlier Bourke, 6 W Green Lands Department, 7 J H Saunders chauffeur - J Lynch also on the list, 8 T Ryan Works Branch, 9 M Heselden, Forman Plasterer - another list had for same number W Reilly, 10 Mrs Withers, Laundress. Another list had SF Griffiths, 11 S Margules Afforestation, 12 Bachelors' Quarters Staff, 13 J Stuart Works Branch, 14 F Dorman Works Branch, 15 J Preston [later moved to No 2] Hotel Canberra. Between 1917 and 1921 and later a number of men built their own cottages at Acton. A number were hessian walled cottages. The men were F Dorman, E Dunshea, A Anderson, G Wilson, J Cooper, W Blewitt and T Beaver.

Frank Dunshea in his story of Acton wrote: *The heart and soul of the Acton that I knew consisted of fifteen small weatherboard cottages in a single row with galvanized iron roofs, known as Acton Cottages. They were situated in an area extending from the present wharf on Acton Peninsula, near Sylvia Curley House, heading*

west in the direction of Springbank Island. This area is now covered by the water of Lake Burley Griffin. All the cottages, with one exception, were basically the same and were built as temporary worker's accommodation. They were the same design as the houses at the Causeway in Kingston and at Westlake which was a community situated in an area between the present American Embassy and Lake Burley Griffin. Westlake, was known locally as The Gap. The one exception to this design among the Acton Cottages was number 12. It was a different shape with a front porch and was bigger than the others and was known to us as the big house. The occupant of this house during my early years was a fairly reclusive woman called Addie, and the only name I can recall her being referred to was Addie Big House. This house was later occupied by the McNamee family. [The McNamee family lived at Westlake prior to their move to Acton.]

DORMAN, Louisa & Frederick home duties & turnkey

Ruth Robinson in her book says of the Dorman family -

There was a family called Dorman living in one of the cottages. They first lived at Queanbeyan and Mr Dorman worked on the construction of the Cotter Dam. He cycled there every day and home again!

Frederick William Dorman was buried at Woden Cemetery 13th June, 1960 and in the next grave is Douglas William Dorman buried 11th February, 1944. The Dorman family are also mentioned in Father McGilvray's book *The Hallowed High Adventure*. In May 1928 Father Dunleavy made the first baptism in St Christopher's - the baby was Peter Meere. Later that month Father Haydon made his first baptism in the church (in the school building). It was Leslie Dorman. Les was the younger brother of John Dorman who became a successful builder in after years and who in 1930 was presented with the PM Haydon Gold Medal for the pupil of St Christopher's School obtaining the highest aggregate marks in the Goulburn Diocesan Examinations. Jack Dorman, no mean athlete, was doubtless a member of St Christopher's School team which was the premier side in Canberra School's Australian Football Competitions of 1930.

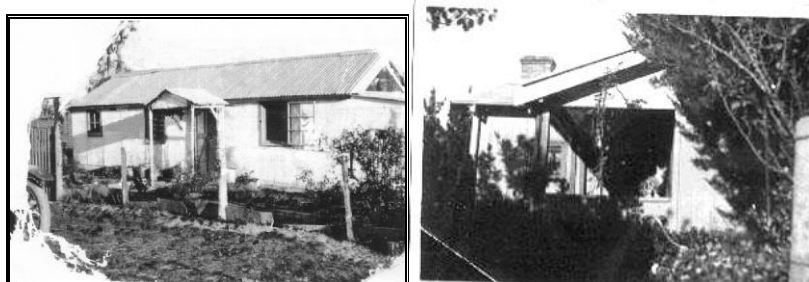


Above: Left Alison Stuart outside *The Big House* 1920s and right her parents Nairn and Alison Stuart (nee Kinlyside). Photograph loaned by Alison Neiberding (nee Stuart).

DUNSHEA, Christina & Ernest home duties & watchman

Christina Dunshea and her husband are buried in the Presbyterian Section of Woden Cemetery. She died 22nd April 1954 and Ernest Charles in 1959. He was buried on 31st March, 1959. An Eliza Dunshea is buried at Woden. She was buried 21st January, 1940.

Below: Below left: Dunshea's first home. Photo taken 1919 and right No 4 Acton. Courtesy of Dunshea family.



Ernest Charles Dunshea was born in Queanbeyan. He married Christina McIntosh of Majura in 1918 and soon afterwards the young couple moved to Acton where they lived in a hessian walled cottage, with timber floor

and iron roof until No 4 Acton Cottages became available in 1924. Ernest's parents were William Henry and Eliza Dunshea and in 1930s the old couple moved into No 4 with their son and his family. William Charles Dunshea died on 1st April 1938 and Eliza Dunshea on 20th January 1940. In 1946 Ernest Dunshea and family moved to Manuka and Mrs McIlvena then took over the tenancy. (Frank Dunshea & Amy (nee Dunshea) West.

Frank Dunshea wrote: *The house my family occupied, number 4, originally consisted of two bedrooms, a sitting room (always referred to as the front room), kitchen, combined laundry and bathroom and a toilet. There was no hallway. The front door went straight into the front room with the main bedroom off it, then through to the kitchen with the second bedroom straight off that, and the backdoor with the laundry outside. The toilet was attached to the house with the door to it being outside at the rear of the house, so you would have to go outside via the backdoor and down the back steps and walk past the laundry windows to go to the toilet. But, we considered ourselves lucky as we were connected to the sewerage system and had both running water and electricity, which is something our grandparents in Queanbeyan did not have. The laundry/bathroom consisted of a fuel copper, concrete tub and a flat bottomed tin bath with a cold water tap and no shower. In later years the baths were fitted with wood fuelled bath heaters. These heaters consisted of a heavy steel cylinder with a removable conical fuel feeder also used as an air intake in the top in which the fire was established. It was surrounded by a water jacket fed in at the bottom and coming out the top. They were known as Puffing Billys as when they were really going (especially when fed with pine cones from the pine plantation behind the cottages) they puffed like a steam train and seemed to be rattling the whole house. The water coming out would be almost at boiling point.*

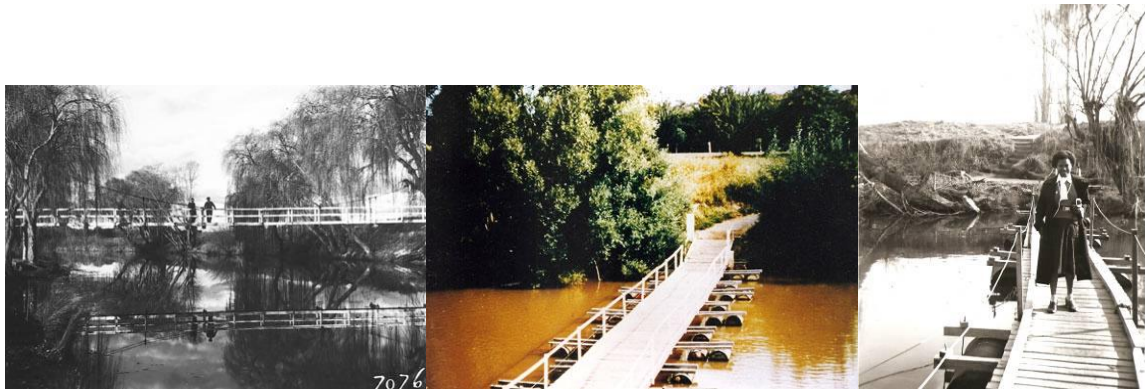
The kitchen had a fuel stove and a porcelain sink surrounded by a wooden bench. The stove was almost continuously kept alight with a large kettle simmering away at the side ready to be pushed on to a hotter section at any time to boil the water for a cup of tea should a visitor arrive. The only power point in the house was in the kitchen. It was a porcelain two pin outlet with a switch that had a brass cover and toggle.

We had an open wood fireplace in the front room around which on winter's nights you would be able to alternatively roast the front of your body while the back froze or put your back to the fire while your front froze. The houses were originally unlined and in some places you could see outside through the gaps in the weatherboards. The houses were lined with canite after many years and this made a big difference. My father insulated our ceiling by fastening flattened out reinforced cardboard cartons to the ceiling rafters. This was long before the days of pink bats. My parents slept in the front bedroom and my two sisters in the other bedroom. My elder brother and myself slept in the leanto, built by my father at the rear, which only had a rollup canvass blind covering the large open window space, flooring laid on the ground and no lighting. The house was extended by the addition of another bedroom and a small verandah at the front of the house when my paternal grandparents moved in with us. My brother or myself then slept on this verandah with only canvas blinds to keep out the winter cold. The cottages were fenced in by wire netting with a small gate at the front and large farm type gates at the bottom of the backyards. These faced onto a track that ran between the cottages and a pine plantation established in a paddock, with the Royal Canberra Golf Course on the other side of the plantation.

We had, like most people in the street, a large vegetable garden in the backyard, some fruit trees, a wood heap, fowl yard and a shed built out of mostly scrap material. The road in front of the cottages was unsealed and without kerbing or storm water drainage. There were only two street lamps which were mounted on the electricity poles that ran alongside the road, one between the front of number 12 and 13 and one in front of Seton's place - No 5.

Below: Suspension bridge over the Molonglo River joining the two sides of the Canberra Golf Club 1933. This bridge was swept away in one of the floods and replaced with a pontoon bridge.

In April 1933 the Club was granted the prefix of ROYAL [Queanbeyan Age 4.4.1933]. The first half of the course was ready for use in 1926. The nine holes were extended to 18 with new greens on the north side. This event was recorded in Queanbeyan Age 22.11.1927 - *The newly extended golf course near the Hotel Canberra will be officially opened on Saturday November 26 at 2pm when the Prime Minister (Rt Hon SM Bruce) will drive the first ball. The first four to take off will be the PM and Mrs Bruce and Sir John and Lady Butters. Sir John Butters is president of the club. [photo courtesy of NAA A3560, 7076 - barcode 3203591] Right photograph pontoon bridge 1950s. Far right: Vagi Varo on the bridge c1952 following a big flood.*



Our Little Community

A lane ran between the lower end of the cottages and a dwelling constructed of scrap material which was occupied by the Llewellyn family and later on when the Llewellyn's moved into number 7 by an English couple Harry and Bessie Chatham after the Saunders family moved elsewhere the fences alongside this dwelling were also the boundary fence alongside the 8th fairway of the Royal Canberra Golf Course.

Alec Llewellyn married a well known horsewoman named Bobby Llewellyn and she established a riding school in the area behind number 7 and the pine plantation. The riding school became a very popular Canberra facility. Bobby Llewellyn's Riding School moved to a location near Yarralumla Woolshed on the Cotter Road after many years at Acton.

There were other residents who were also considered part of our little community in Lower Acton. The Thurbon family lived in a cottage alongside the main road across from the Acton Hall and overlooking the agistment paddock. The Hospital Superintendent's house was later constructed almost exactly on the same block and was occupied by Dr Lewis Nott, who was to become the first Federal Member of Parliament for the Australian Capital Territory. Dr Nott was a great dog fancier and owned some large red setters. He was a familiar sight standing on the hill behind the house watching the dogs run across the agistment paddock for exercise.

There was a Police Cottage on the Lennox Crossing Road on the same side as the Acton Hall where Sergeant Cook, his wife and daughter, Bessie lived, followed by the Brodribb family with daughters Joyce and Pat. The Samuels family lived in a Cottage attached to the Acton Offices. [Prior to that they lived at Westlake.]



Above left: Lennox Crossing early years of 20th century. Courtesy Gordon Kaye and right the crossing 1926



Above: Lennox Crossing 1926. In the background are the Acton Offices. NAA photograph Image No A3560, 88
A cottage next to the entrance to the Acton Nursery was occupied by Sid Griffiths who worked for the Parks and Gardens and his family and with two other cottages nearby - one occupied by Ned Ryan and family. Some of the people from Upper Acton along Liversidge Street took part in many of our activities - the Hiltons, Carraucans, Boltons and Makins are ones that come to mind. The Kayes, Bates and Cullen families from Springbank were also considered a part of the community.

There was also in the early days a shack on the other side of the pine plantation from the cottages right opposite our house which was actually in the boundaries of the Royal Canberra Golf Club, built mostly of galvanized iron occupied by an old German man whom we called Bill Smith. He lived a hermit like existence and us kids were all scared of this probably harmless old man. I remember during one flood the water was about a foot deep around his shack and the police arrived in a car and removed him while he struggled and protested. I think he knew more than the police because the water didn't come up much further that time.

5 - FRANCIS, Caroline & Joseph home duties & labourer

Joseph Francis was a member of the Canberra Band and was an ex-serviceman. Mr Francis left town and his wife later moved to Queanbeyan because there was no support for women and children without a bread winner in Canberra. The local Returned Soldiers and Sailors organisation supported her for as long as they could.

GRAHAM, Sarah home duties

LLEWELLYN, Janet & William home duties & cleaner

Mrs Bobby Llewellyn daughter-in-law of Janet Llewellyn leased her horses. She was also a good horsewoman and had a famous horse named Trooper. William died on the 16th October 1928 aged 51. He is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery in Reid. He married Janet Graham. *Reference St John's Churchyard* Jean Salisbury. Janet was buried in Woden Cemetery on 24th June, 1965.

11 - MARGULES, Constance & Louis home duties & gardener

The Margules later moved to the Cotter River. A number of the family are buried in St John's Churchyard Cemetery. They are: Allan, son of Constance & Louis who died 24th February, 1933 aged 2 days; Louis Edward Constantine Stanley Margules died 13th October, 1959 aged 71; Baby girl, stillborn 22nd March, 1937; Bessie died 20th February, 1937 aged 6 years, Constance Margaret died 8th May, 1937 aged 31 years. Constance Margules was friends with the Stuart family of Acton and often stayed with them when her time was near to have the new baby. Alison Neiberding, daughter of Alison and Nairn Stuart has a bootie knitted for the last Margules baby and said that Constance was a good horsewoman who loved to ride.

3 - MARSHALL, Margaret, Charles & Herbert home duties, ganger & tractor driver

Charles Wilkinson Marshall and his wife, Margaret Helen moved into 3 Acton Cottages shortly after the 20th February, 1925 and remained until May 1937. They had four children, Frederick John, Tom (born 1923), Ted (born 1937) and Margaret (born 1931). Ilma Keir of Westlake is a cousin of the children. Frederick Marshall.

RYAN, Helenor & Anthony home duties & team driver

Helenor Mary and Anthony Thomas Ryan are buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery. She was buried on 21st December, 1949 and in the next grave Anthony was buried on 7th March 1960.

RYAN, Alice & Edward home duties & land inspector

Alice was nee Blundell and a photograph of Alice, Ned and their young son Norman is in Blundell's Cottage in Canberra. The little boy died on 23rd December 1919 after being bitten by a tiger snake in his bed. Another daughter, Margaret, also died as an infant.



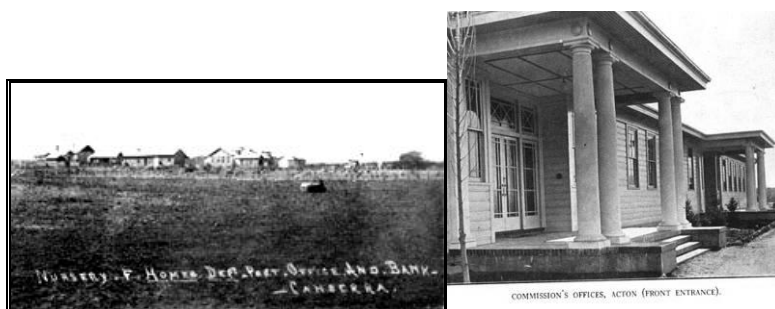
Above: Ned Ryan's original cottage at Acton 1914 NAA - Image No M16, 2/43 Right Detail of Ryan's new house.

7 - SAUNDERS, Dorothy & John home duties & chauffeur

John Saunders was chauffeur for John Butters, First Commissioner who lived in Canberra House. John Harold Saunders was buried in Woden Cemetery on 9th November, 1954. He was 64 at the time of his death on 7th November and his grave was paid by his wife. Their address at that time was 9 Giles Street Kingston. John Saunders also worked as a Supervisor with the Transport Section of Department of Transport.

13 - STUART, Alison & Nairn home duties & plumber

Alison Stuart was nee Kinlyside. Both are buried in Woden Cemetery - Alison Ann on 8th July, 1969 and Nairn Hugh David on 12th September 1956. The Stuart family moved from Crawford Street Queanbeyan to 13 Acton Cottages in September 1924. Their daughter, Alison was 3 weeks old. Mrs Alison Stuart nee Kinlyside was born at Briar Farm and in 1913 moved to Oaks Estate at the end of 1913. Nairn Stuart was born in Sydney and came to the Territory around 1910 to work on the construction of RMC Duntroon. He lived for awhile in De Smet's Boarding House at Duntroon. Below left: One of the Stuart family photographs of the Nursery and buildings at Acton around 1913. Below right FCC offices 1926 - note the classical columns



THURBON, Ruby & Archie home duties & printer

Ruby Isabel Thurbon died on 18th March 1991 and is buried in Gungahlin Cemetery.

9 - THOMAS, Elvie & Ernest home duties & painter

Yvonne Burnell (nee Thomas) provided the following information about her family. Ernie and Elvie Thomas came from Wagga Wagga to Canberra in 1927. They had four children, a daughter who died in Wagga, Yvonne, Raymond and Stafford. Ernie was a keen member of the Canberra City Band and indeed it was the band and his friendship with one of the members that helped with the decision to move to Canberra. Being a member of the band which had its headquarters at Acton was the probable reason for their move to Acton. Ernie was one of the men who played in the band at the opening of Parliament in 1927. Yvonne recalled that another

member was Terry Cross. Her brother Raymond was a keen musician and played the coronet. Yvonne recalled that the following people lived at Acton - 15 - Gardiner, 14 Ware, 13 Stuart, 12 four ladies, 11 Margules, 9 Thomas, 8 Tim Ryan, 7 Saunders followed by Llewellyn, 6 Seton, 5 Seton, 4 Wylie, 3 - couldn't remember, 2 Bill Wallace blacksmith, 1 Granny Graham, Mrs Llewellyn's mother. Some of these names are different to that provided in the Electoral Roll - in some cases people did move around but it is more likely in this case that the order is correct but some of the house numbers are out.

Below -Raymond Thomas at Acton.



1 - WALLACE, Flora & William home duties & labourer
Bill Wallace worked as a Blacksmith in the Blacksmiths' Shop at Acton.

2 - WYLIE, Cassandra waitress
James, son of James and Cassandra Wylie nee Chapman was born in Leeds in England in 1916 and arrived in 1925 with his family. He died on 17th May, 1931 aged 15 years. He is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery. Reference *St John's Churchyard* by Jean Salisbury.

ACTON ROAD, ACTON 1928

ASHE, Rene & Robert home duties & builder
CORK, Ernest ps
Ernest James Cork died on 6th October 1970 and is buried at Woden Cemetery. In the same grave is Florence Cork who was buried on 9th August, 1991.

CUNNINGHAM, Dorothy & Ferdinand home duties & bank manager
4 - MARSHALL, Dorothy, Herbert & Thomas home duties, private secretary & clerk
MAUSER, Rose nurse
MONAHAN, Eleanor & George home duties & clerk of the senate
Eleanor Malby Monahan was buried in Woden Cemetery on 15th January, 1959.
STUBLEY, Elizabeth home duties

LIVERSIDGE STREET, ACTON 1928



Above: Bruce children are the first two on the right. Jessie (Mrs Gibbs) still lives in Canberra and is the only surviving child. This photograph was taken at Acton around 1927.

5 - BRUCE, Catherine & Alexander home duties & superintendent
Mr Bruce took over from Thomas Weston in March 1927 and was responsible for the design and planting of the rose gardens at the Provisional Parliament House grounds.

DALEY, Henrietta & Charles home duties & secretary PM's department

Charles Daley was born on 4th July 1887 at Maldon Victoria. He died on 30th September 1966 aged 79. In 1905 he joined the Department of Home Affairs in Melbourne and took up the position of clerk in the Public Works Branch. Daley held prominent positions in the Canberra from the early 1920s. A book, *As I Recall, Reminiscences of Early Canberra Charles Daley* edited by Shirley Purchase - contain many stories about his involvement in the story of Canberra. His wife predeceased him by many years. She died on the 10th September 1943.

MILDENHALL, William ps

Mildenhall took photographs of early Canberra. The collection is in the Australian Archives in Parkes, Canberra. Adele Emma Mildenhall died on 25th February 1983 and is buried in the same grave as William James Mildenhall who was buried on 24th July, 1962.

MOUAT, Iris & Harry home duties & surveyor

BACHELORS QUARTERS 1928 ELECTORAL ROLL

ADDISON, Stanley	clerk
ATKINSON, Austins	surveyor
BAILEY, Albert	clerk
BALLANTYNE	clerk
BAKER, Alan	clerk
BARCLAY, Harvey	bank clerk
BARKER, Edgar	clerk
BELL, William	time clerk
BIRD, Lawrence	engineer
BOWES, Bertie	manager
BRISLANE, Icy	waitress
BROPHY, John	clerk
BRUEN, Benedict	clerk
CLADELEUGH, Alfred	clerk
CARMODY, William	public servant
CAPPER, Arthur	clerk
CARROLL, Keith	clerk
CLAPSON, Henry	civil servant
CLAREMONT, Stanley	bank clerk
CLARKE, Camillus	civil servant
CURRER, Charles	clerk
DALCOT, Thomas	clerk
DOUGLAS, John	public servant
EMERTON, Walter	clerk
FERGUSON, John	public servant
FORD, Michael	public servant
FORTIN, Andrew	drainage designer
FULLER, Frederick	clerk
GASKIN, Albert	clerk
GORDON, George	draftsman
GOW, Philip	clerk
HADKINSON, Thomas	civil servant
HARE, Rupert	steward
HARRIS, William	clerk
HASTINGS, Joseph	steward
HAWKINS, Harold	draftsman
HIMING, Frederick	heliographer
HODGSON, Ernest	clerk
ILOT, James	designer
IRVING, John	golf professional
JOHNSTON, Donald	steward
JONES, Henry	kitchenman
KEATING, Daniel	clerk

LINDSAY, Harold	electrical engineer
LITTLE, Cyril	bank officer
LLOYD, Charlotte	waitress
LLOYD, Robert	clerk
LONDRIGAN, Edmund	survey chainman
LYON, Joseph	kitchenman
MACAFEE, James	clerk
McCLOSKEY, John	public servant
McGLADE, Thomas	public servant
MACGREGOR, Peter	steward
McKENZIE, Edward	steward
MARTIN, Henry	cook
MARTIN, John	bank clerk
MAXWELL, Frederick	clerk
MAY, Leonard	clerk
MESKELL, Henry	time recorder
MILLER, John	messenger
MOLLROSS, Roy	clerk
MOORE, Donald	clerk
MORGAN, Arthur	postal employee
MORROW, Austin	clerk
MORGAN, George	public servant
MORONEY, James	clerk
MURPHY, Edward	public servant
NULTY, Thomas	public servant
O'BRIEN, John	watchman
PARR, John	steward
PATERSON, Alexander	steward
PETTY, Cecil	clerk
RADICH, Peter	civil servant
RICHARDS, Edward	clerk
RICHARDSON, John	clerk
ROBERTSON, Henry	civil servant
ROBERTSON, Henry	government servant
RYCE, Leo	clerk
SHANNON, Lindsay	bank official
SHAW, Samuel	draftsman
SHERIDAN, William	cook
SHORTMAN, Reginald	steward
SPINNER, Stanley	clerk
STAPLETON, John	civil servant
SWINGER, Louis	public servant
THOMPSON, Robert	public servant
TUDOR, Roy	public servant
WADE, Arthur	clerk
WRIGHT, Frank	clerk
WALLACE, Charles	clerk
WHITHAM, Charles	clerk
WICKS, Reginald	clerk
WOODS, Whitney	civil servant

CANBERRA HOUSE (Constructed in 1913), 1928

Two photographs - top one is of the Prime Minister's Lodge and the bottom one of Canberra House, Acton 1927.



Frank Dunshea: *The Commissioner's Residence* [Canberra House]

Situated on the hill overlooking the cottages, the race course and Springbank, across the road from the Bachelors Quarters, was the residence of the Federal Capital Commissioner, Sir John Butters, surrounded by spacious grounds and an imposing fence and gates. This building was later to become the Residence of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom and is now occupied by the ANU Staff as a recreational facility. There was also another cottage within the grounds occupied by the caretaker and his family. I think his name was Ernie King.

The hill on which the residence was situated was always known locally as Butter's Hill - usually pronounced as Butterers Zill. A road ran up the hill around the grounds and back on to Liversidge Street. [John Butters - later Sir John was the First Commissioner and lived in Canberra House 1925-929. It was renovated for his use. The hill was a favourite place for billy carts, the main road was a fairly gentle slope. There was another track that curved around the side of the hill on the cottages side that was more adventurous and another very rough track that went straight down the steepest part of the hill. It was only after many dares that anyone attempted to go down this track and it usually resulted in a broken cart and many bruises.

BUTTERS, Lilian & John home duties & chief commissioner

Ruth Robinson: Later the Butters family occupied the Residency and more houses were occupied at Acton...What a small community we were; tennis at the Residency was a very important social event. Later a court was built on the river side of the Acton houses, but it did not have quite the same atmosphere as the Residency court in its garden setting. When the Butters came in 1925 the house became the social centre again for our parents and also for us children. Sir John and Lady Butters (Sir John knighted in 1927) had four children, Molly, Enid, Margaret and John, who was born in Canberra.

HAMMOND, Robina	children's nurse
RENNIE, Mary	cook
WORSFOLD, Lillie	home duties

GENERAL HOSPITAL ACTON



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The new hospital which was originally known as the Canberra Community Hospital and later the *Royal Canberra Hospital* that was built in the early 1940s in the area of Acton Peninsula is not discussed in this book. Janet Newman and Jennie Warren published a book in 1993 - *Royal Canberra Hospital* which covers the history of this hospital.

The original Acton Hospital was a timber structure that today is part of the ANU. A list of nurses at the hospital on 26 February 1917 notes the following:

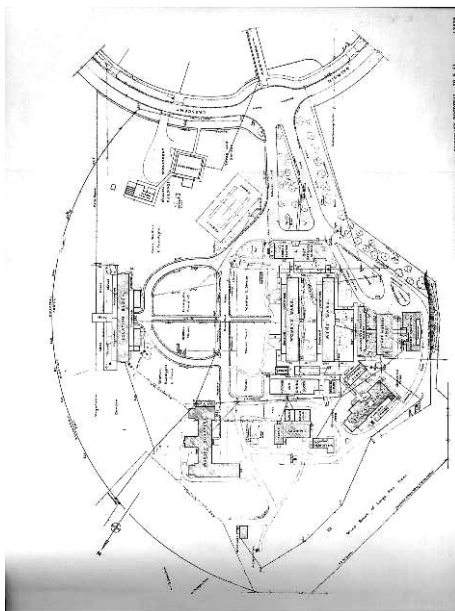
- Ellen Bates 26.2.-11.5.1917
- Julia Doherty 27.2.-22.3.1917
- Janet Kennedy 24.4.-6.5.1917
- Edith C Boag 11.6 - 23.6.1917
- Edith Bourke 8.8 - 19.8.1917
- May Lawton 18.8.-27.8.1917
- Catherine Grey 24.8 - 10.9.1917

Miss Lawler was Matron and on 15 April 1928 she was given one month's notice. There are many stories about Matron Lawler who known for her entertainment of official visitors to the hospital. Jim Gibney's book *Canberra 1913-1953* has an excellent account of this period of the history of the hospital.



Photograph of old hospital Acton taken in the late 1990s. The Australian National University still uses the building which today is the Research School of Earth Sciences.

This old timber building is still in use by ANU. Canberra Historical Journal New Series No 15, March 1985 - Brackenreg lives and times by JR Brackenreg - The hospital was written about in the following manner: *First doctor. Work started on the hospital in 1913 and it was completed in 1914. Excluding doctors at Duntroon, Dr Thomson was the first full-time government doctor in Canberra and played a part in the building of the hospital.*



Above: Plan of the hospital complex 1941 - courtesy James Collet, ANU Heritage Officer.

The "Queanbeyan Age" of 30th October, 1914 reported "...Dr Thomson is the medical officer in charge. Miss Charles-West the Matron and Misses Stuart and Windle staff nurses."...My mother, writing of Dr Thomson says: "...the great worry of his life was the lack of care for maternity cases and he managed to open a small

hospital but it closed after he left in 1917." The hospital reopened in 1921 with Matron Lawler in charge. She was a noted horsewoman and was also a qualified chemist. There was not another full time medical officer until Dr James arrived in 1926...

BALE, Isabella	nurse
BALLARD, Marlee	nurse
BATHERSBY, Mercie	nurse
BOULTON, Jessie	nurse
CAREY, Iva	nurse
DONALDSON, Annie	housemaid
HALL, William	nightwatchman
KEEGAN, Francis	wardsman
Francis Patrick Keegan died 14th July 1985 and is buried at Gungahlin Cemetery	
LAUGHLIN,	Gertrude nurse
LEIGHAN, Mollie	chef
McKID, Marjorie	nurse
MILLAR, Leo	wardsman
PAGE, Beatrice	nurse
PETRIE, Winifred	nurse
PHILPS, John	wardsman
PITCHER, William	wardsman
SAUZIER, Mena	nurse
SEVIL, Marjorie	nurse
TASKER, Ethel	nurse
TATARINOFF, Mary	nurse
WALKER, Alexandra	nursing sister

LANDS & SURVEY CAMP, ACTON 1928

FRASER, Archibald	watchman
JONES, Horace	labourer
JONES, Frederick	labourer
McTAGGART, Francis	nurseryman

Francis Edward McTaggart died 22nd September 1976. Buried in the next grave at Woden is Amy Ellen McTaggart who died 25th December 1997.

POLICE STATION, ACTON 1928

The first Police Station and cells were at Molonglo where Sergeant Cook was in charge.

FELLOWS, William	police constable
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Above: Plumbers at Acton circa 1913. Photograph loaned by Alison Neiberding nee Stuart. JB Young second on left standing. Right: Tom Stuart at 4 Liversidge Street Acton. The family moved from No 12 Acton Cottages to 4 Liversidge Street.

The 1929 Electoral Roll contains only the names of landholders and people renting cottages. Russell Hill residents who built their own homes were disenfranchised along with others who did not meet the renting or ownership regulations.

ACTON ELECTORAL ROLL 1929 - Only head of household -renting, owning or leasing land.

BRACKENREG, Helen	home duties, land, City
BRACKENREG, James	lands officer, house
CUNNINGHAM, Ferdinand	bank manager, residence
DALEY, Charles	ps, house
DEANE, Percival	secretary, house
DORMAN, Frederick	turnkey, house
DUNSHEA, Ernest	watchman, house
JONES, Harold Com	officer, house
MOUAT, Harry surveyor,	land
POTTS, William civil	engineer, house
RYAN, Edward land	inspector, house
SAUNDERS, John	chauffeur, house
THURBON, Archie	printer, house
WALLACE, William	blacksmith, house
WATERMAN, Herbert	ps, house
WILSON, George	stableman, house

ACTON ROAD, ACTON 1929

MONAHAN, George	clerk of the Senate, house
ROWSE, William	accountant, house_

NURSERY COTTAGE, ACTON 1929

GRIFFITHS, Sydney	driver, house
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ACTON COTTAGES, ACTON 1929

MARSHALL, Charles	ganger, house
6 RYAN, Anthony	teamster, house
8 RYAN, Timothy	labourer, house
13 STUART, Nairn	plumber, house

HOTEL ACTON 1929

ADMANS, William	ps, house
FURPHY, Henry	civil servant, garage
INNES, Haughton	private secretary, house
PULVER, Astley	surveyor garage
ROBINSON, Charles	---, garage
McCALLUM, Frank,	ps, house
ROBERTSON, Duncan	medical practitioner, garage_

LAWSON CRESCENT, 1929

BRUCE, Alexander	supervisor, house
EDWARDS, Albert	civil servant, house
MARSHALL, Herbert	private secretary, house

SPRINGBANK, ACTON 1929

KAYE, Samuel	farmer, land
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LUCAS, Sydney ps

McKENZIE, Winifred & William medical practitioner & museum director

McTAGGART, Amy & Francis home duties & gardener
Francis Edward McTaggart of 36 Cox Street Ainslie (1950) paid for the grave in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery for Paula C McTaggart who died on 5th September 1950 aged 5 months.

MAKIN, Euphemia & James dressmaker & bricklayer
Mrs Annie Makin died 25.3.1935 aged 55. She is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery in Reid ACT.

MILDENHALL, Adele & William home duties & ps
William Mildenhall became the *official* photographer of early Canberra. His photographs are in the Mildenhall collection in the Australian Archives in Canberra. Adele Emma died on 25th February 1977 and is buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery. In the next grave is William James Mildenhall who was buried on 24th July, 1962. He died on 21st July 1962 and his grave was paid by Mrs Adele Emma Mildenhall. Their address was Flat 2 Block 11 Stuart Flats.

MOUAT, Iris & Henry home duties & surveyor

NEWMAN, Veronica c/o Miss Sharwood home duties
A Iris Veronica Newman was buried in Woden Cemetery in the Anglican Section on 13th December 1948. The 1935 Electoral Roll has Veronica Iris Newman. It may be that this is the same person. The Woden Cemetery Records note that Iris Veronica Newman died on 12th December 1948 and was 35 years of age. Her grave was paid by Joseph Ernest Newman of 52 Causeway. The 1935 electoral roll has Joseph Patrick Newman living in Causeway.

RAIN, Ethel & Robert home duties & surveyor
RYAN, Alice & Edward home duties & land inspector
EA Ryan of Goreen Street Braddon (1948) paid for the grave in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery for Pauline Ryan who died on 14th July 1948 aged 6 months or 6 hours - handwriting hard to decipher. Anthony Thomas Ryan of 6 Acton Cottages paid for the grave in the RC section of Woden Cemetery for Edmund Joseph Ryan of Tea Gardens Ginninderra who died on 7th April 1953 aged 69 years.

RYAN, Helenor & Anthony home duties & team driver
Anthony John Ryan of 6 Acton Cottages paid for the grave of Edmund Joseph Ryan of Tea Gardens Ginninderra who died on 7th June 1953 aged 69 years. He is buried in Woden Cemetery. Anthony Ryan paid for the grave of Helenor Mary Ryan who died on 19th December 1949 aged 70 years. She is buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery.

THURBON, Ruby & Archie home duties & plan printer

WARE, Letitia & William home duties & labourer
(See Ainslie 1928. The family came from Leeton and lived at Ainslie prior to moving to 14 Acton Cottages)

WATERMAN, Viola & Herbert home duties & ps
Herbert Roy Waterman was buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery on 10th September 1964. He shares the grave with Marie Jean Waterman buried 8th February, 1995 and Viola Marian who died on 26th December 1972.

WILSON, Josephine & George home duties & stableman
Josephine Nellie Wilson died on 30th May 1957 aged 61 years. She lived at Liversidge Street Acton. on 3rd October 1951 she bought the grave in the Anglican section of Woden Cemetery for George Frances Wilson who died on 28th September 1951 aged 87 years. Her address was Acton Cottages.

WITHERS, Emily & Walter home duties & labourer
Emily Withers died 3rd January 1943 aged 70. Walter Withers of Acton Cottages paid for the grave in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery. Walter Withers of 10 Acton Cottages died on 4th June 1947 and is buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery.

The McNamee family lived at Westlake and later moved to Acton Cottages. Margaret McNamee died on 27th December 1951. Her grave was paid by William McNamee of 12 Acton Cottages.

Jack Armstrong of 9 Acton Cottages died on 2nd March, 1957 aged 46. His grave in Woden Cemetery was paid by Merle Adele Armstrong. The couple are not on the 1935 Electoral Roll.

ACTON ROAD, ACTON

DONOVAN, Anthony watchman

An Anthony Donovan was buried in the Ex-Servicemen's Section of Woden Cemetery on 30th January, 1947. He died on 29th January and was 75 years of age. His address was given as c/o W Wallace Acton. The RSS&AILA paid for his grave.

MONAHAN, Eleanor & George home duties & clerk of Senate

John Henry Monahan of Foxlow Street Captain's Flat (1947) paid for the grave in the RC section of Woden Cemetery for Mrs Norah Monahan who died on 4th February 1947 aged 70. Her address was 70 Boldrewood Street Turner. They may or may not be related to the above. Bryan Willis Monahan of 36 Melbourne Avenue Deakin paid for the grave in the Woden Cemetery for Eleanor Malby Monahan who died on 15th January 1959 aged 84 years. She lived at the same address as Bryan Monahan.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, ACTON

SAMUELS, Irene & Victor home duties & caretaker

Vic Samuels lived at Westlake prior to his move to Acton. He was responsible for enrolling many Canberra men into the AIF World War II and was an ex-serviceman from World War I. Irene Mary Samuels was buried at Gungahlin Cemetery. She died on 29th August, 1980. Buried in the same grave is Winifred Aysleigh Samuels who in 1935 was working as a waitress in the Hotel Kurrajong. She died on 28th October 1993. Victor Oswald Samuels was buried in Woden Cemetery on 10th July, 1961 in the Ex-Servicemen's Section. His grave was paid by Victor Bruce Samuels of 69 McCaughey Street Turner. At the time of his death on 8th July 1961 Victor Oswald Samuels was 72 years of age and his address was given as 4 Knibbs Street O'Connor. Victor Bryce Samuels died on 20th April 1988 and is buried in the Ex-Servicemen's Section of the Gungahlin Cemetery.

BALMAIN CRESCENT, ACTON

ALLEN, Leslie professor of English

BELL, Alice home duties

4 DICKSON, Florence & Bertram home duties & scientist

Florence Dickson was buried in the Woden Cemetery in the Anglican Section on 11th June, 1938. She died on 10th June and was 44 years of age. Her grave was paid by Dr B Dickson of Acton.

DICKSON, Francis law student

MOSS, Elizabeth, Jean, Gertrude, Percival & James home duties, home duties, civil servant, electrical engineer & civil servant

SHARWOOD, Annie & William home duties & ps

Annie May Sharwood was buried in the Presbyterian Section of Woden Cemetery on 24th April 1962. She died on 21st April 1962 aged 84 years and at the time of her death lived at 18 Giles Street Kingston. Her grave was paid by Beatrice Holt of the same address.

THOMAS, Mary & William home duties & civil servant

WC Thomas died on 14th September 1957 aged 67. The address was given as 14 Balmain Crescent Acton and the grave was paid by Mrs WT Thomas (the information was handwritten and difficult to read. The second initial may be wrong in William's name?)

LAWSON CRESCENT, ACTON

EDWARDS, Mary & Albert home duties & civil servant

5 MAKIN, Andrew plumber

LIVERSIDGE STREET, ACTON

6 BOLTON, Eileen & James home duties & examiner of patents
Mrs Eileen Bolton died on 26th February 1942 aged 54 years. Her grave was paid by James Alfred Bolton of Liversidge Street Acton.

11 BRUCE, Catherine, Alexander, Robert & William home duties, supervisor, divisional foreman & assistant CS&IR
Robert Dickson Bruce of Oxley Street Griffith (1942) paid for the grave in the Methodist Section of Woden Cemetery for Baby Bruce who was stillborn on 24th February 1942.

AE Bruce was the second Superintendent of Parks & Gardens in Canberra and responsible from 1927 when he took over from Thomas Weston for plantings in Canberra including the Rose Garden at Parliament House. Jessie Gibbs (nee Bruce) wrote a story about her family. It was published in *True Tales From Canberra's Vanished Suburbs of Westlake, Westridge and Acton*. Part of her story is as follows: *Alexander Dickson Esson Bruce was born on 8th February 1884 at Arbuthnott, Kincardineshire, Scotland, fifth son of William and Martha Bruce, farmers of Kincardineshire Scotland. Dad became the second Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in Canberra and was responsible for much of the early street plantings in the city as well as the rose gardens in front of the Provisional Parliament House...In 1910 Alexander Bruce arrived in Western Australia where he worked at several jobs including coal mining. He returned to Scotland to persuade his wife Catherine to return with him to Australia. She agreed and with their children, David and Robert left Scotland and arrived in Perth on 29th July, 1912. They settled in Collie WA where Alexander worked at a Co-operative mine. His next position was at Hamel where two more sons, William and Douglas were born. He was employed as an assistant to the State Nursery in Hamel and his next move in 1919 was to Freemantle where he took up the position the Curator of Parks and Gardens with the Freemantle Municipal Council. The youngest and only girl, Jessie was born here. The next move was to Subiaco where Alexander took up the position of Park Superintendent and it was while he was here that he applied for the Canberra job. The family arrived in Canberra in May, 1927 in time to attend and view the official opening of Parliament on the 9th...The family spent the first two to three nights in the Hotel Canberra before moving to a cottage in Torrens Street in Braddon. This house was far too small and shortly afterwards they moved into an Acton Cottage usually kept for a bank manager. When Mr Weston retired and moved from Acton the Bruce family moved across the road into Weston's former house...In July 1932 he was admitted into the Commonwealth Public Service and in 1935 he was awarded the MBE for his work which was the responsibility for preparations of planting schemes, selection of trees and shrubs and the planting of the city area...*

CARRUCAN, Rubenia & Donald home duties & civil servant
Donald Patrick Carrucan died on 27th April 1976 and is buried in the Ex-Servicemen's Section of Woden Cemetery. Rubenia Carrucan is buried in the General Section of Woden Cemetery. Rubenia died on 11th December, 1984.

People mentioned in the Woden Cemetery Burial Register who lived in Liversidge Street at the time of their death.

St John's Churchyard by Jean Salisbury refers to Marcus O'Dean and his family who lived in Liversidge Street in the 1930s. He was an architect. Marcus O'Dean was born in England in 1878 and travelled first to Canada and then in 1914 to Sydney. He then moved to Adelaide where he enlisted in the AIF. On 24th April 1920 he married at All Saints Wickham Terrace Queensland to Elizabeth Ella Lobban. The couple had one son. Marcus died on 7th March 1937 aged 59 years and is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery. His wife and child later moved to Sydney. Following her death Elizabeth O'Dean was cremated and her ashes placed with her husband. She died 30th June 1961 aged 78 years. She was born in Darlington Sydney on 1st April, 1883 and lived in a number of places in NSW. Her father was a senior inspector of schools. Her parents were Alexander Lobban and Elizabeth Lobban.

1953- On 28th May 1953 Milba Mural Taber of 6 Liversidge Street paid for the grave of Barry William Taber. His body was exhumed from another grave.

AK Healy of 7 Liversidge Street paid for the grave in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery for Elsie Treloar who died on 19th December aged 52. Her address was 7 Liversidge Street.

ACTON COTTAGES, ACTON Timber cottages designed by HM Rolland were built in 1924.

4 DONALDSON, George bricklayer

A George Donaldson died on 16th August 1972 and is buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery. In the next grave is Doris Donaldson who died on 7th November, 1987.

4 DUNSHEA, Eliza & William home duties & nil

GRAHAM, Sarah home duties

11 KEELEY, James labourer

7 LLEWELLYN, Janet & Alexander home duties & civil servant

Alexander James Llewellyn died on 13th January 1979 and is buried in the Ex-Servicemen's Section of the Woden Cemetery. Janet Llewellyn was buried in the Woden Cemetery Anglican Section on 24th June 1963. J Llewellyn paid for the grave in the Woden Cemetery for Florence Graham who died on 26th September 1938 aged 86.

3 MARSHALL, Margaret & Charles home duties & ganger

2 PRESTON, Frances & Joseph hd & watchman

Frances Preston was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 1st December, 1961. Joseph William Preston is buried in the Ex-Servicemen's Section of Woden Cemetery on 23rd February, 1949. He died on 22nd February and was 68 years of age. Mrs Preston paid for the grave.

6 RYAN, Edmund assistant

8 RYAN, Agnes & Timothy home duties & horse driver

Mrs Agnes Irene Ryan of Liversidge Street Acton paid for the grave in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery of Jean M Ryan who died on 23rd May 1940 aged 94.

5 SETON, Florence & Herbert home duties & labourer

13 STUART, Alison & Nairn home duties & plumber

Mrs Stuart was nee Kinlyside and was born at Briar Farm. Her father, Thomas wrote under the nom-de-plume of *The Jangler* and was one who supported the choice of the site of the Territory. Nairn Stuart died on 12th July 1956 - he was 74 years of age. His grave in the Presbyterian section of Woden Cemetery was paid by Thomas Hugh Stuart of 4 Liversidge Street Acton. The Stuart family moved from 13 Acton Cottages to 4 Liversidge Street. Mrs A R Stuart of 4 Liversidge Street Acton (1964) paid for the grave in the Presbyterian section of Woden Cemetery for Thomas C Kinlyside who died on 28th March 1964 aged 73 years. His address was 4 Liversidge Street Acton.

9 THOMAS, Elvie & Ernest home duties & painter

1 WALLACE, Flora & William home duties & labourer

Alfred Wallace of No 1 Acton Cottages paid for the grave in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery for Flora (or Rosa - hard to read) Wallace who died on 6th September 1952 aged 77. Alfred Wallace of No 1 Acton Cottages paid for the grave in the RC section of Woden Cemetery for William Wallace of the same address who died on 27th December 1953 aged 74 years. Flora Wallace was nee Mayo.

WITHERS, John labourer

CANBERRA HOUSE known originally as *The Residence*.

(Grounds) KING, Lillie & Ernest home duties & gardener

McDERMOTT, Mary & Robert cook & chauffeur

GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL, ACTON

ALCORN, Ann nurse
BAKER, Doris housemaid

BELLAMY, Una	nurse
BENNETT, Jeanie	nurse
BREEN, Violet	nurse
BURGESS, Lorna	trainee
CADE, Catherine	ward sister
CARRUCAN, Patricia	trainee
CAVANAGH, Clarice	nurse
DAY, Muriel	nurse
DOWLING, Rhene	nurse
DUCK, Irene	nurse
EGGLESTON, Lois	nurse
EVERETT-SMITH, Isobel	matron
KEATING, Margaret	nurse
KEATING, Kathleen	nurse
LAVERCOMBE, Hazel	nurse
LONG, Eric	wardsman

An Eric Adair Long (the above has only one first name) of 16 Braddon Flats (1954) paid for the grave in the Anglican section of Woden Cemetery for Marion May of 8 Cowper Street Ainslie who died on 24th May 1954 aged 77 years.

McGREGOR, Ivy	nurse
MAHONEY, Florence	nurse
MEUFING, Esther	nurse
MORRIS, Sybil	nurse
PARSONS, Allison	maid
PEASLEY, Una	trainee
PATERSON, Kathleen	trainee
PETTY, Clarice	housemaid
POEPPEL, Isobel	chef
SIMPSON, Elsie	nurse
STAPLETON, Mary	nurse
STIRLING, Besse	nurse
WALDOCK, Nellie	nurse
WILLARD, Emma	nurse

MOUNTAIN VIEW ACTON

CHATHAM, Elizabeth & William home duties & labourer

THE NURSERY COTTAGE, ACTON

GRIFFITHS, Edith home duties

Edward J Griffiths of Hotham Crescent Deakin paid for the grave in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery of Sidney F Griffiths of Nursery Cottage Acton who died on 5th March 1958 aged 79. He is not on the 1935 Electoral Roll which suggests that he may be one of the many who left home in search of work during the Great Depression. The first Nursery established in Canberra was at Acton and then in 1914 at Westridge in Sheedy's Paddock.

SPRINGBANK ACTON This house site of this property is now Springbank Island [In the early years of the territory Bates family moved into an old slab cottage on the property, Cox & Thurbon into two farm cottages and Woodman and Sheehan into the woolshed.]

KAYE, Clara, Edith, Kate, Letitia, Charles, Frederick & Joseph clerk, home duties, home duties, home duties, dairy farmer, milk vendor & ---

True Tales From Canberra's Vanished Suburbs of Westlake, Westridge and Acton contains the story of the Kaye family of Springbank. The family lived at Springbank in the 1840s then moved to Emsall Inn and back to Klensendorlffe's Farm House from 1854 to 1924 and then back to Springbank where they remained until forced to move because of the encroaching needs of the city and the lake. Part of the story written by Geoff Kaye. He relied in parts on the family history written by Margaret (nee Stirling) Kaye. Part of the narrative is as follows: *Joseph Kaye, a woolclasser, was born in 1809 at Mirfield Yorkshire. In 1832 at the age of 23 years he migrated to Australia aboard the brig Sarah...* Gordon Kaye's obituary published in *The Canberra Times* - *One of nature's true gentlemen and a proud Canberra farmer. Frederick Gordon Kaye's death on December 17 marked the end of an era in the history of Canberra. A third generation farmer, Gordon Kaye was born on Klensendorlffe's Farm (near the present site of the Albert Hall) on October 1 1910, just three months before*

the Federal Capital Territory was established. He attended the Naming Ceremony in 1913 and the opening of both Parliament Houses in 1927 and 1988. Canberra was his home and he loved it. He was a true Canberran and proud that, as a farmer, he was carrying on a tradition established by his grandfather, Joseph and continued by his father, Samuel Charles also born on Klensendorlffe Farm. Gordon's grandfather, Joseph, the first Kaye in the district, arrived in Queanbeyan in the 1830s. After some years there in business which included establishing the town's first licensed inn in 1838 in partnership with William Hunt, Joseph took up farming in Canberra in 1844 at Springbank. In the 1850s he went back to Queanbeyan but about two years later returned to Klensendorlffe Farm which originally included the sites of both Parliament Houses. Samuel Charles was born in 1861 and took over the farm when Joseph retired to Queanbeyan. In 1924 the Kayes moved back to Springbank and after Samuel's death in 1933 his widow and a number of his children carried on the farm. Gordon was one of those and he, two brothers and a sister were still farming at Springbank when the development of Lake Burley Griffin forced their retirement. The present Springbank Island was the site of the homestead...Gordon is survived by his widow Betty, sons, Ted (Darwin), Alan (England), daughter Lorraine (Canberra) and eight grandchildren...

A number of Kaye family are buried at Woden Cemetery. They may be from other families - Elle Endora Mary died 21st June, 1977 Anglican D 092; John buried 18th January 1946 Anglican D 092; Frederick Gordon died 17th December 1997 Baptist C 016; George buried 27th June 1953 Anglican 171; Mabel Lavinia buried 7th May 1966 Anglican D 172; John buried in Ex-Servicemen's Section 8th August, 1948; Monica E died 30th August 1976 Anglican H 259; Gungahlin Cemetery - Hazel Kathleen died 5th October 1980 and Frank Sandford Kaye died 19th June, 1985 - both buried in same grave at Gungahlin.

Joseph Arthur Kaye of Arthur Circle Forrest paid for the grave of Judith Seymour (spelling of latter name not clear - writing bad) who died in 1956 or 1957 aged 68 years. She lived at Springbank.

RICHARDS, William labourer

Some of the people who are mentioned in the Woden Cemetery Burial Register who lived at Acton at the time of their deaths.

John Charles Bonnyman of the Acton Tourist Camp died on 18th August 1942 aged 63 years. His grave was paid by A D'Arcy (for RSS&AILA). He was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery.

On 10th October 1941 Seeton ARTU (?) of 15 Acton Cottages paid for the grave of Joseph O'Rourke of Duntroon. He was 65 at the time of his death on 9th October and was buried in the General Section of Woden Cemetery.

BUILDINGS ON THE ACTON SITE

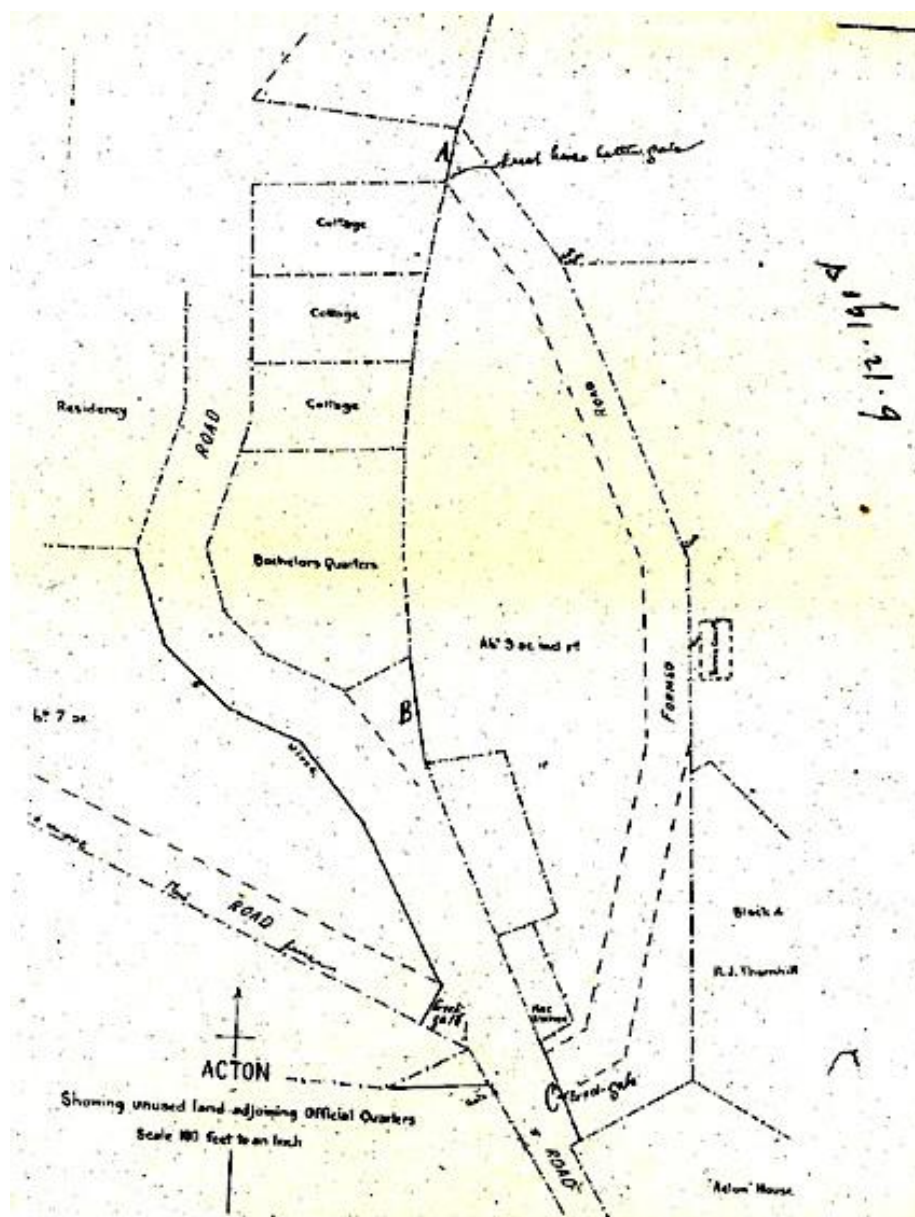
The notice accompanying the map [A361/1 DSG 18/1417] dated 15.11.1916 signed by PL Sheaffe, District Surveyor states: *In order to relieve the nuisance caused by horses straying in the Workmen's Camp Area, at Acton, the Honourable the Minister for Home Affairs has approved of the allotment of paddocks as shown below:-*

<i>Paddock A</i>	<i>Night Paddock</i>
<i>Paddock B</i>	<i>Agistment paddock</i>
<i>Paddock C</i>	<i>Agistment paddock</i>
<i>Paddock D</i>	<i>Quarantine area, and Agistment when not required for quarantine.</i>

Any horses found outside the abovementioned paddocks, and especially those horses found straying within the Workmen's Camp Area, will be impounded forthwith.

No horses are to be fed in the Workmen's Camp area.

Works Branch Administration Offices	1912/13 - 1913/14
Ministers Block	1912/13
Building materials for Acton buildings	1912/13
Erection of Commonwealth Bank	1912/13
Temporary Building for Lands & Survey Office	1912/13
PO Acton erection	1912/13 1913/14 1914/15
Removal of offices from Power House to Acton for Works Branch.	1922/23
Removal of part of Molonglo building to Acton	1923/24 1924/25
Extension of Works Office at Acton	1923/24 1924/25
Administration Offices increase accommodation	1923/24 1924/25
Installation of intercommunication telephone system in Works Branch	1923/24 1924/25
Hot water system	1923/24 1924/25
External lighting Administration office	
Hut for watchman	1923/24
Additional accommodation for lady typistes	1923/24 1924/25
Additions for exchange	1923/24 [1]



THE ACTON SCHOOL - HELD IN THE HALL

In the teen years of the last century there were two public schools in the central area of the future city. One was Narrabundah School also known as the Cross-Roads School. The site is today opposite the Fire Station in the Manuka area. This school closed when Telopea Park School opened in late 1923. The other school was Duntroon. Another school was established at Molonglo Settlement in 1921.

The Narrabundah¹⁰ School was the closer of the schools but too far for small children of Acton to walk. They would have to walk two miles through paddocks and cross the Molonglo River to attend. In 1919 the following parents wrote to the Person in Charge of Education, NSW to apply for a teacher at Acton:

- S Vautin 2 children aged 5 & 7
- WO Russell 1 child aged 7
- E Ryan 1 child aged 5 (Norman died 24 December 1919 as result of a snake bite in his bed)
- F Cox 2 children aged 4 & 6
- F Gordon 3 children aged 5, 7, & 10

As a result of this request, Mr Caldwell was appointed and commenced duty on 10 February 1920 with an attendance of eight pupils. The school was equipped with old furniture and a terrestrial globe from the old Cotter River School (tent) that closed in 1917.

The numbers did not improve with a result that the school was closed on 30 April 1920 and Mr Caldwell transferred to another country school. Male teachers in the post World War One period in particular were in short supply. Priority was given to men for country positions and many taught at part time schools. Lady teachers had to rely on families to board them and unfortunately Canberra at that time did not have a family willing to board a teacher. The one exception was Miss Kilgour from Victoria who was able to stay with her married brother. She commenced duty on 20 May 1920.

Unfortunately Miss Kilgour's stay was short and she was replaced with Miss Fitzgerald who was accommodated in the Bachelors Quarters which was a male only boarding house. This presented some problems because the young lady was one female amongst forty men. This situation was quite unsuitable and Miss Fitzgerald was quite untenable. The education refused to supply a male teacher with the result that the school closed

It was a common practice at the time for the wife of a male teacher to teach the girls sewing. I am not sure if they were paid - I don't think so. It was also the practice in the NSW system up until the Second World War that women teachers once they married they had to resign. And it was not until well into the 1960s that women teachers received equal pay to men.

However, the local Acton people did not accept the decision of the Education Department without a fight. On 23 September 1921 the Commonwealth Surveyor General, Mr Percy Sheaffe wrote to the Department. Part of his letter follows:

On returning from my recent short leave I learned that the Acton School Mistress had recently been removed elsewhere without reason or notice, thereby placing the pupils attending the School in what I maintain an unfair position. The Officers whose children have been attending this School are stationed at Canberra in their official capacity and therefore have not the freedom of the average citizen as regards to their place of residence, consequently it is maintained that they are entitled to prior consideration to the average citizen

Secondly, there are four children going for their Qualifying Certificate Examinations and one of these for a Bursary; this is the third occasion that at least one of these children has been prevented from sitting for the QC examination as a result of the untimely removal of Teachers from the Acton School. It is the last occasion that the pupil who is going for the Bursary can sit for the same as she will be over the age by the next examination...Had they been informed at the time of closing the School that it was not expected to reopen same for a considerable period as it now appears to be the position, the parents would have known definitely what was before them and therefore taken immediate steps for the continued education of their children by sending, at any rate, those going for Bursary or QC Examination to an adjacent School; In this respect I have interviewed Mr Jones, Head Teacher of the Duntroon School, who, realising the unfortunate position in which the children are placed on this and previous occasions, offers to take as many as possible at his School to give

¹⁰ Bert Sheedy, local historian stated that the spelling was nErrabundah...not nArrabundah. The spelling difference to ensure that it wasn't confused with the land – Narrabundah.

them special attention in an effort to make up for the time already lost, some scholars have recently left Duntroon School...[13]

The Commonwealth Surveyor General replied that two new schools - one at Civic Centre and one near the present Narrabundah School were at that time soon to be constructed. The Acton children would be able to attend either school. His timing was out by quite a few years in the case of the Civic School - the Ainslie Primary School - which did not open until 1927 and the other, Telopea Park opened in September 1923. [14]

Ruth Robinson wrote the following about the Acton school:

The first school for the children of the early civil servants was on the flat at Acton near Mr Weston's experimental nursery. It was held in the hall which also doubled for meetings and social occasions. Later the hall was moved to the road and eventually became the Trades and Labour Hall. The school was known as a Provisional School, a term used to describe a school of not less than ten pupils. The school had four teachers in its short life of 1920-1923 - namely Mr Caldwell, Miss Kilgour, Miss Fitzgerald and Mr Mervyn Nash. Miss Kilgour, a South Australian teacher was the sister of Mr Kilgour who lived in one of the Acton Cottages and had three children at the school. Mr Nash was a teacher I knew and I remember being frightened of him. He ruled by the cane - it reposed on his desk at all times.

Ruth Robinson listed the children who attended the school -

JR (Dick) Brackenreg, Andrew O'Brien, May Dorman, Leo O'Brien, Hector Horsburgh, Joan Horsburgh, John Kilgour, Walter Kilgour, Jean Kilgour, Jack Rolland, Margaret Rolland, Maitland Rolland, Bob Vautin, Betty Vautin, Sybil Edwards, Alice Avery, Harold O'Brien, Grace Curley, Fred Curley, Mavis Curley, Freda Cox, Fay Cox, Kitty Bates, Edith Gordon, Phyllis Corkhill, Pat Corkhill, Clara Kaye, Gordon Kaye, Don Smith.

The following children were too young for school but went occasionally - Jack Dorman, Percy Thurbon, Eric Dunshea, Ruth Brackenreg.

THE ACTON HALL

Prior to the end of World War One there were two public halls in the Canberra city area. One was at Duntroon and the other at Acton. The Acton Hall was constructed from galvanised iron and it served not only the people of Acton but the Canberra city area as well. This hall served as a school and functions such as meetings, church services, socials, concerts and dances were held. From 1929 it was used for district meetings of the Social Service Association. In the late 1920s a request was made to allow boxing matches to be held in the hall. This request was denied because it was considered that the wrong type of person would be attracted to the district.

In 1923 a proposal was made to allow the hall to be used for moving pictures. WO Russell of the Lands & Survey Branch was asked to *Look into the matter*. His report in part stated: *I interviewed Mr Freebody, Proprietor of Picture Show at Queanbeyan. He is of the opinion that it would cost him 150 pounds to install a generator. He would be prepared to carry out his part of the business if the Commonwealth was prepared to install a motor generator set at the Molonglo Camp and also Westridge. The population around Acton does not, in Mr Freebody's opinion produce a business proposition.* [The population at this time at Molonglo was 200 and Brickworks, 170.] [7]

The moving pictures did come to Canberra, but not Acton. They were shown twice weekly at the Causeway Hall and Monday to Saturday at the **Capitol Theatre when it opened in 1928** and later the Civic Theatre.

In May 1929 the hall was in the way of a proposed new road to be built in front of the Acton quarters. However it survived because members of the Association expressed concerns that it could cause disruptions to their regular meetings. As a result it was not moved.

The Canberra Times 6 July 1946

ACTON HALL WHEN CANBERRA WAS YOUNGER

Memories of Other Days

Renovations are to be considered to the Canberra Trades Hall, formerly known as Acton Hall, which has a past as colourful as any building in Canberra.

Officers from the Department of [the] Interior will inspect the Trades Hall to-day to ascertain what renovations are required. Representations were made last week by the Trades and Labour Council to have the hall reconditioned.

There is an acute shortage of public halls in Canberra and the Trades and Labour Council has received many requests for the hire of the building.

Inquiries yesterday failed to trace any 'old-timer' who could remember when the hall was first built. Most were guessing but the consensus of opinion was 'about 1918'.

Below Nuns of St Christopher's Convent in Manuka leaving the Acton Hall (this building is not galvanised iron and may be a later Hall at Acton?)) after Mass.



THE PRIDE OF LIMESTONE PLAINS

Prior to 1920 the hall was the hub of the small social activity in Canberra. In the 'roaring twenties,' it reached its peak of popularity and always seemed a shade ahead of its rivals for popular fame - Westridge Hall and Molonglo Hall. To-day a handful of Canberra unions and organisations use it as a meeting place. Gone are the days of the Saturday night dances which almost the entire population of Canberra attended. Gone also are the days of the Sunday Church services held in a hall festooned with balloons and colourful streamers and dozens of 'empties' out the back.

Acton Hall did not always stand on its present site. Prior to 1923 it occupied a position near the present Acton stables and the blocks on which it rested may still be seen.

Pioneers still speak of the functions held there by the Canberra matron who met her present husband there.

CAFE AND 'SCHOOLS'

Apart from being a social centre the hall was used as a school. Two of the teachers were Mr Nash and Miss Fitzpatrick. Down the road was Canberra's first cafe - the 'Kangaroo Cafe' managed by the late William Mitchell. 'We used to get good meals there from old Bill,' said Mr FJ Dorman of Griffith, when asked about the cafe yesterday.

'Bill' Mitchell later moved to the roaring White City camp near where the high School stands. [Canberra High School - now the Music & Art Schools connected to ANU]. He ran some of the biggest gambling 'schools' of the time.

The hall was removed from its old site early in 1923 and provided a thrill of a lifetime to the small number of children living at Acton. Two old-fashioned traction engines- always a familiar site in Canberra's early days - lifted the building in one piece on jinkers to the present site.

Travelling and local concerts made their appearance to packed audiences. One function stands out. It was the first concert of the newly opened Telopea Park School [1923]. A tattered sheet was hung down over the stage and senior boys of the school blackened with burn cork poked their heads through porthole openings and sang, 'Swanee River'. They were encored - truly an inspiring show until someone set fire to the curtain.

Union meetings were occasionally held there, but Mr Leo O'Neill organiser of the AWU and his associates took away some of the glory by calling public meetings on Capitol Hill and many a weighty questions was decided upon there instead of at the old Acton.

Sunday schools were also held in the Acton Hall and while the children learnt religion, the biggest two-up school in Canberra was being conducted near where the American Legation proudly stands beneath Canberra's azure skies. [Tradesmen's Camp, Westlake - site today is block 3, section 128 Stirling Park, Yarralumla and the area of the French Embassy in Perth Avenue Yarralumla.]

More than 2000 men used to attend those 'schools' and thousands of pounds were won and lost in an afternoon.

CRADLE OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Acton Hall witnessed the inauguration of a welfare movement under the auspices of the Federal Capital Commission which sought to provide the incipient capital with some of the amenities of established cities. Indoor and outdoor recreation, education, libraries, kindergarten and children's welfare were some of the projects put forward at the initial meeting in [May] 1925.

In 1925, also, it was the home of the Canberra Brass Band with 20 instrumentalists.

Sunday sport was also a contentious question in those days of long ago. On December 10.1925 the Welfare Committee and delegates from various sporting organisations met at the Acton hall to formulate an expression of opinion in regard to the Commission's decision on Sunday sport. The deliberations resulted in a request to the chairman of the Commission, Mr JH (subsequently Sir John) Butters to define organised sport, and in a decision to support the Commission in discountenancing the conduct of competition matches and cup finals on Sundays. [Two teams put the decision to the test and were taken to court and fined.]

MEN AND MUSIC.

Occasionally the hall saw the presence of colourful Jerry Dillon who was to Canberra what Hannan was to Kalgoorlie. Jerry, long since departed, was in everything. He was foreman of the sewerage construction and president of more than a dozen sporting organisations.

His football teams were the apple of his eye. Both Australian Rules and Rugby League occupied part of his active and busy life.

If a man played football he was sure of a job with Jerry. He was the first president of the Canberra National Football League.

Acton Hall however, began to lose its importance as a social centre, following the erection of the Causeway Hall in February 1926 [sic it was put up in late 1925 in one day and completed later with the opening in 1926].

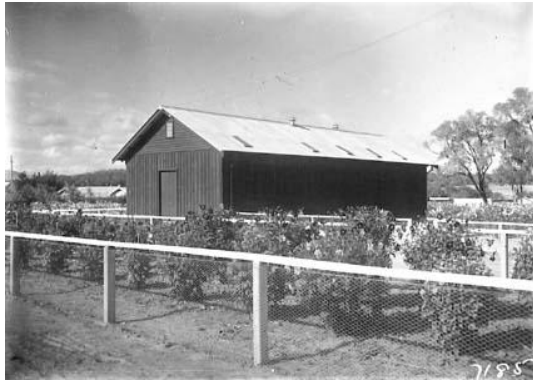
The brass band was in attendance at this Causeway function. When a reference was made in 'The Canberra Times,' recently to the opening of the Causeway hall no mention was made of the band. The organising secretary of the band (Mr Bert Howe) drew attention to the omission.

'I ought to know,' he said, 'I carried the big drum from Acton.'

Canberra, with its growing population seems to have outgrown the Acton hall, but if the required renovations are carried out it may recapture some shade of its former self.

MASONIC HALL

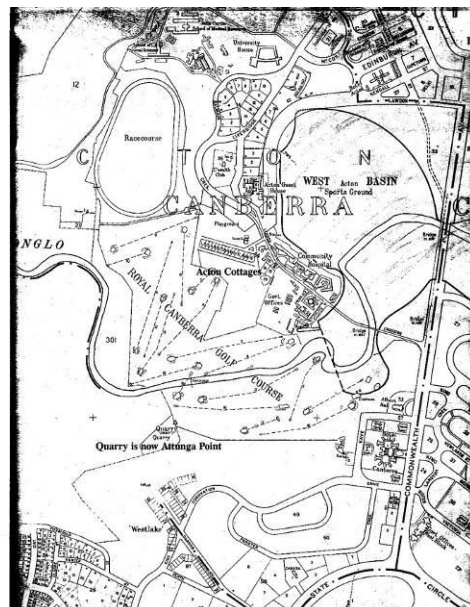
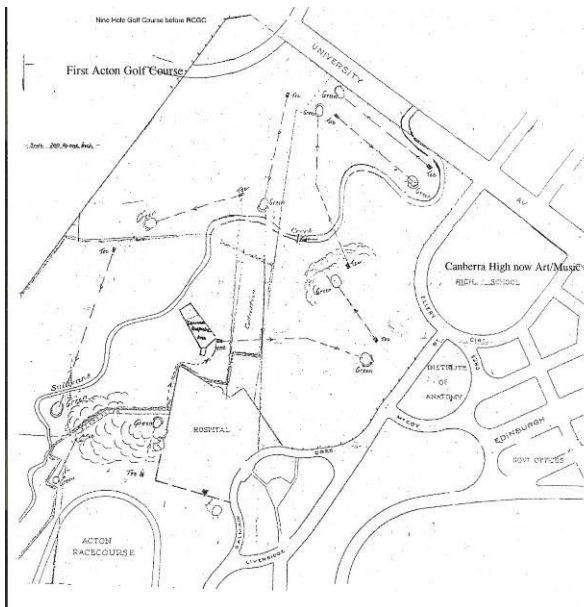
In the early 1920s Contractor John Howie's men of Westlake built a Masonic Hall at Acton. In 1926 it was moved to Russell Hill where with some modifications it became the Russell Hill School. In 1929 the school closed and during the 1929-1930 financial year it was moved to Corroboree Park, Ainslie, where it is still in use today as the Ainslie Hall.



NAA 3560 7185 - Masonic Hall, Acton and Ainslie Hall, former Russell Hill School and originally Masonic Hall, Acton.

SPORT IN THE ACTON AREA

Once it became known that the proposed lakes would not be established early in the development of the city the flats on either side of the area now known as Acton Peninsula were used for sporting activities. On the Civic Centre side women's sports grounds were established for hockey and basketball. On the other side the race track was set up on *Springbank* land that in between races was used to graze stock. Nearby were the cricket field and football grounds and in the area of the between the Canberra High School (now School of Art) and Acton buildings was the first golf course. The second golf course was later established behind the Hotel Canberra and across on the north side of the river in the area now below the waters of Lake Burley Griffin. This course moved in early 1960s to its present site in Westbourne Woods in the area of the permanent nursery in Yarralumla.



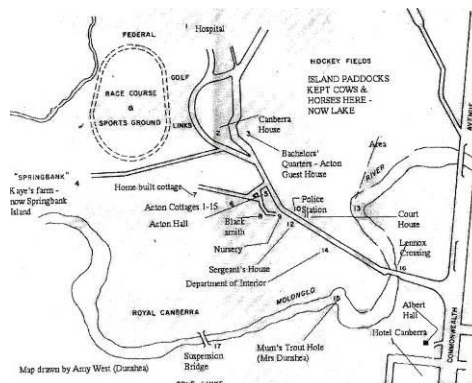
Lyall Gillespie's Card: *Queanbeyan Age* 7.3.1929: According to information supplied to the Senate 9,400 pounds is the total cost of the Canberra and Acton Golf Links. To date the cost of upkeep was 6009 pounds and the revenue derived 2,990 pounds. Canberra Golf Club has a membership of 171 and there are 88 associates. [Women could not be full members and were associates.] The area referred to as Canberra section was behind the Hotel Canberra and the Acton section on the north side of the Molonglo. It is interesting to note the costs involved in this Golf Course and Club, of which Mr Butters was President compared to what was spent on facilities for construction workers.

SWIMMING POOLS

The Molonglo River that before the arrival of the settlers and the removal of trees consisted of a chain of ponds. There were many deep holes in the river, some of which became the areas chosen for local swimming pools. In Canberra there were two *official* pools. One was at Acton and the other at the Power House. People living near the river had their own swimming holes. The Westlake one was near the suspension bridge in the grounds of the Royal Canberra Golf Club that joined the two sides of the river. This bridge was swept away in one of the floods and was replaced with a pontoon bridge which provided an excellent sunbathing area for the Westlake swimmers including myself. In the early years it was provided with a life buoy and a rope. Another pool was between the Westridge pool near Corkhill's *Riverside* farmhouse. This one was in the shallow water and was probably one of the old crossings. It was not favoured because of the leeches. As a child, I with other Westlake Kids swam almost daily between September and March. On either side of the banks were the willows the original planted in the early years of the 19th century by Elija Bambridge. *The Queanbeyan Age* 15.10.1929 had an article *Old Canberra Notes* by EG Williams - that refer to the willows, part of which follows:

In the olden times one of the striking features of the landscape at Canberra was the willows known as Blundell's willow and Bambridge's willows. These willows have a romantic history. In the year 1822 someone whose name is not known to was on his way to Australia called at the Island of St Helena and while there was allowed to cut some slips from the willows near Napoleon's grave. These he stuck into potatoes and brought to New South Wales where he planted them with perfect success. Fifteen or twenty years later Elija Bambridge bootmaker and farmer of Canberra got cuttings from these willow trees and planted them along the river at Canberra and Acton where they are growing today - no doubt to farming of the latter proposed will result in their destruction. [Lyll Gillespie's cards]

These willows provided handy diving boards and shade that perhaps made the waters of the river so icy cold. Only the top couple of feet was warm. We children also shared the river with the odd swimming snake, platypus and dead cow. The first dead person I saw was that of dead man floating in the river. That the river was polluted was evidenced the year that I had a scratch on my ankle. When the blood poisoning line got up to mid calf my mother would put a bread poultice on it and when the mark was down again to ankle level it was back into the water to swim or paddle our home made canoes.



The second official pool was at Acton where some facilities were provided for bathers. These facilities were not always kept in good condition as evidenced in a letter dated 10 July 1926 written by CS Daley, Secretary, to the Social Service Officer that in part reads: *It is noted that the Dressing Sheds erected under the auspices of the Outdoor Recreation Committee by the Canberra Swimming Club last season on the banks of the Molongo at Acton are without anchorage.* [15]

Swimming Clubs were formed. One document that I found in NAA dated 16 April 26 [16] noted that the Honorary Secretary of the Canberra Swimming Club, Mr Webb, was leaving Canberra and had left the records of the club with the Treasurer, Mr Saunders. The President at that time was Mr Potts. Articles in *The Canberra Times* inform the reader that the first swimming club was founded by Percy Douglas, Fire Brigade Chief at the Power House, where facilities were set up for the swimmers and annual swimming meets held along with polo matches and other water sports.

One article in *The Canberra Times* dated 5 March 1928 in part reads: *The second aquatic carnival of the Canberra Fire Brigade Swimming Club was held at the Club baths at Kingston on Saturday afternoon...The*

chief event, the 100 yards Club Championship for the Edlington Cup, J Thompson was successful. The Club Handicap over the same distance, with the W McDonald Cup was annexed by Parl. Miss A Kirkpatrick won the Ladies' Handicap.

Musical lifebuoys, the greasy pole contest, the underwater swim and a clever exhibition of tandem swimming by the Misses Kirkpatrick and Bateson, were notable features of the carnival...

That the river was dangerous is evidenced by the number of deaths by drowning and the death of one of the Leech boys of Westlake who dived into the Acton pool that was supposed to be bottomless. He hit his head, broke his neck and even though rescued by his friends, died.

TENNIS AND ALL WAS NOT QUIET AT ACTON!

Tennis was a sport played by people of all ages and all classes. Quite often a tennis court was one of the first extras built in the settlements and that included Acton. The courts followed the Hall.

Tennis competitions were regular events and the highlight of the year in the late 1920s, the *Gorman Cup*. It was named after the Commissioner of that name who died unexpectedly from appendicitis in 1927. Around the same time the Hotel Ainslie, built in 1925 for lady typistes and other single ladies of that class, was renamed Gorman House.

There were several tennis courts built at Acton. One was at Canberra House, another at the Bachelors Quarters and yet another for the lower classes who lived in the workmen's cottages. The first was on the hill in the grounds of Canberra House, the Bachelors Quarters nearby and the other below near the Children's playground above the workmen's cottages.

The courts built near the cottages were erected by workmen under the auspices of the Social Service Association on the 50 - 50 basis - that is, men supplied the labour and the Federal Capital Commission the materials.

Documents in the NAA indicate that there was a strong rivalry between the classes and an indication of that dissention between the classes at Acton can be read in a number of documents including one written in 1927 when the Sub-Committee of the Tennis Club recommended that:

1. *All bona fide residents of South Acton, which shall mean that area bounded generally on the South and South-east by the Molonglo River; on the North by the Western Line of West Basin as outlined on the Griffin plan to a point at, and including Bachelors' Quarters then in a generally Westerly direction including Canberra House and grounds to Sullivan's Creek, and thence generally South-West and South to the confluence of Sullivan's Creek with the Molonglo River.*
2. *Residents of South Action, shall not be constructed to mean the paying guests, or residents of the Bachelors' Quarters, nor the residents or guests of Canberra House, subject to conditions set out hereinafter.... [17]*

On 21 November 1927 F Woodman wrote to John Honeysett, Secretary of the Social Service Association: *At a meeting convened at Acton on Sunday Nov 20 [19]27 by residents of the Acton weatherboard cottages who are dissatisfied with the action of the Acton park Tennis Club in depriving the children of the use of the Tennis Court in front of the cottages...Those presented at that meeting on 20th Nov were:- Messrs Wallace, Stuart, A Ryan, J Ryan, C Marshall, S Wilson and myself. So you can see that the meeting was truly representative of the men who helped build the court, as there were seven out of the twelve present... [18]*

However, tennis continued at Acton and as at 13 September 1927 the membership of the Acton Park Tennis Club was 38. At this time JH Saunders (chauffeur to Sir John Butters) wrote to the Social Service Association requesting the use of the disused tennis court at the side of Acton House. The request was granted. [19]

CRICKET AND FOOTBALL & OTHER SPORTS.

There are a number of books written about the early years of Football and Cricket in Canberra. Acton fields were used for the sports and Acton fielded strong teams in both. Also featured in the pages of local papers is information about other sports that included quoits and hockey. Examples of newspaper articles follow:

Queanbeyan Age 16.9.1927: *Report of the annual general meeting of Acton Cricket Club in the Social Service Building on Thursday 8th September Mr JH Honeysett presided. The election of office bearers for the coming season resulted as follows;*

Patron: Mr JH Irving

President: Mr JH Honeysett

Vice Presidents (& Committee?) - Messrs P Deane, WN Rowse, CS Daley, HR Waterman, JC Brackenreg, WE Potts, EK Hart, Phil Fleming, J Arbuckle, JC Gunn, AT Shakespeare.

Hon Secretary Mr Peter C Ryan

Hon Treasurer Messrs L Rice and L Butter

Hon Auditor FT Waight

Selection Committee: Messrs J Grant, L Rice and L Stephens.

Delegate to FCT Cricket Assn: Mr Peter C Ryan

The Acton Hockey Club held its annual meeting last evening at the Acton Hall. Congratulations were offered to the Kingston Club on its winning the 1929 Premiership and the Cassidy Cup.

The following are the office bearers for the 1930 season:

Patrons: H Waterhouse Esq and CE Lane-Poole Esq

President: JGS Collier

Vice-President: GH Whitehill

Hon Secretary: VA Griffiths

Treasurer: T Marshall

Press Correspondent: E Waterman

Captain: J Nicholson

Vice-Captain: JG Avery

Selection Committee: J Nicholson, JG Avery and GH Whitehill

The official ground of the club is the Southern end of the Acton Sports Ground. Colours black and white.

Canberra Times 28.3.1930

CLUB, ACTON NATIONAL FOOTBALL CLUB

Report of a committee meeting of the Acton National Football Club at the Bachelors Quarters. The resignation of Mr EH Handley from the presidency was received with regret. Mr C Curren was elected president and Mr J Irving vice-president. Canberra Times 19.4.1928

Practice began in earnest on Tuesday last when a fine muster of old players and recruits appeared on the Acton arena. The Acton officials were present and were very pleased with the talent that is available for selection.

Warren McDonald, Captain of last year's premier side has been appointed captain. The coach and the captain will be appointed next Tuesday evening. Canberra Times 26.4.1928

The most enthusiastic meeting in the history of the Acton Club took place at Acton on Wednesday evening. The annual report prepared by Mr James Tookey, assistant secretary of the club, stated that the club performed well and showed marked improvement on the previous year's play. The following office bearers were elected:-

President: Mr EH Handley

Vice Presidents; Dr K Moore, Messrs JG McLaren CMG, Hr Waterman MVO, Mr McDonald, J Irvies, GD Keating, J Iloth, Syd Sherren (of Collingwood)

Committee: Messrs JM Orr, C Bourne, F Rye, W Pearce, H Raesbeck

Treasurer: Mr Clapson

Secretary: Mr KJ McKenzie

Assistant Secretary: Mr J Tookey

Delegates to League: Messrs TJ McGlade, C Bourne & J Tookey

Canberra Times 28.2.1930

Another early reference to Cricket played in the teen years refers to the Ainslie Cricket Club before the suburb of Ainslie was commenced. Percy Douglas lived at Acton up until the time when he enlisted in the AIF in 1916. The following two articles are found in Lyall Gillespie's Cards.

Canberra Times 8.8.1929: *The first Ainslie Club was formed in 1914, Mr Robert Maloney being elected president. Of the 18 members in that season 13 enlisted for active service in the Great War. Foundation families of the club were the Maloneys, Reads, Shumacks and Southwells. The club won the first cricket competition to be played in the territory, the teams competing being Queanbeyan, Hall, Brick Bats (Westridge), Duntroon and Ainslie.*

Canberra Times 8.8.1928: *In order that another club under the new district scheme could be formed next Thursday night the old Ainslie Cricket Club was wound up at a meeting of the Social Service Hall last night.*

CLUB, AINSLIE CRICKET

Queanbeyan Age 15.9.1916: Report of Mr PF Douglas President of the Ainslie Cricket Club enlisting in Melbourne.

Queanbeyan Age 28.1.1916: *Mr PF Douglas President of the Ainslie Cricket Club has forwarded for our inspection a Roll of Honor bearing the names of nine members of the Club who are now in the trenches or who are on their way to the front. Among the names are some very prominent players and those of Ayrton, Edwards, Willis, Landon and Jackson may be mentioned as representing the pick of the Club. Mr Ayrton will be remembered by the members of the various clubs completing in the Federal Cup Competition last season by his remarkable powers with the ball. But performances last year were 7 for 8 against Power House, 5 for 12 against Hall, 8 for 15 Brick Bats. At times also a dark horse with the bat has best was 49 against Hall.*

Edwards and Wilks were a pair who could always be expected to make a stand for their side. HO Loudon of 'Googley' fame was when required was an excellent stone Waller.

E M (Johnny) Jackson was and is still considered by his club mates as being the most popular and best all round player they had. R Middlecourt (?) if for his fielding alone was always worthy of a place in the team. A Berry who was the first member of the club to enlist was always considered a 'cert' when the selection committee met.

Mr Southwell, though not a regular player was one of the eleven picked to play in the final match which was for Ainslie the competition and the cup. H Turner, the club's official scorer was well in evidence every Saturday.

The Club has formed again this year but in name only for they cannot get a team.

RESIGNATION OF STAN MARGULES & THE SOCIAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Stan Margules of Acton who later moved out to Cotter where he worked as a caretaker, was one of the hardworkers who supported the club and his community. He was secretary to the Social Service Association which had its headquarters at Acton. Mr Heseldon had ignored the authority of the local Service Association and as a result, Stan found it necessary to resign his position. Part of his letter of resignations reads as follows:

My reason for doing so [resignation] is that I have been instructed by the committee of the above to write to Mr Heseldon and inform him to remove the goal posts, pegs and any other structure he has on the children's playground as he has never had permission to erect same. When the football ground was erected Mr Heseldon informed me that he had the permission from Mr Butters [First Commissioner who lived in Canberra House at the top of the hill] to do so. To my mind the above request is not Social Service business at all. Therefore I have no other alternative than to ask you to accept my resignation. [20]

The headquarters of the Social Service Association was at Acton. Freeman Wylie in the Canberra & District Historical Society Journal new series No 36, September 1995 has an article on the SSA entitled *The community spirit - 'intangible but all important. Social Service idealism in Canberra 1925-1929.* His opening paragraph reads: *The Canberra Social Service Movement 1925-1929) was conceived in the difficult physical conditions of a large construction site as a co-operative welfare program between management and workers. In the unique environment of the National Capital it changed into a program to develop an ideal community which became more pervasive than the garden city ideas normally associated with Canberra. Under pressure of an expanding and changing population the movement was incapable of meeting all the demands made of it.*

Despite some notable achievements, the movement became a battleground where local community needs unsuccessfully challenged the planning priorities of the National Capital. Some features of that battle became characteristic of Canberra planning dilemmas.

The first meeting of representatives from most of the camps and settlements (Oaks Estate was excluded) was held in May 1925 and it was not until 1926 that the majority of the camps and settlements joined and elected representatives to speak on their behalf at the meetings. The Social Service Association, however, did produce a magazine, *The Canberra Community News* in which articles, poems, photographs etc submitted by the locals were printed. The first edition came out in October 1925 and the last in 1927 when the costs of producing the magazine became prohibitive. Joe Honeysett was the secretary and he did a fine job. However, from the documents that I have read which includes the record of the final wind up meeting of the SSA I gain the impression that Mr Butters wanted to impose his ideals on the people and they had other ideas.

Following are articles printed in *The Canberra Community News* on Acton.

11 October 1925

It is somewhat regrettable to record that social service activities at Acton are practically confined to the energetic work of the residents of the portable cottages. As a case in point these enthusiasts have worked hard in the construction of the tennis court alongside of Acton Hall and have received very little assistance for the other residents of the district. It is up to the boys at the Bachelors Quarters to join with their Acton confreres in the best interest of the suburb.

Mr Saunders who is the representative of Acton on the Council of the Canberra Social Service Association will be glad to hear of intending members of the Acton District Association from the Bachelors Quarters. The annual subscription is quite a nominal one, of one shilling and entitles a member to a voice in the management of welfare activities of the district.

The Acton Sports Ground is in magnificent order just now, and now that the lake scheme has been temporarily set aside, residents not only of Acton, but the whole of Canberra hope that something can be done to suit the convenience of the many sporting bodies who make weekly use of this most popular sports ground. The Canberra Cricket Club - thanks to the kind assistance of Jack Irving - have placed their playing pitch in splendid order, and have recently obtained permission from the Commission to lay water on the right up to the wicket. Plans of a small pavilion for this ground have been prepared, and it is expected that the work will be put in hand at an early date.

The tennis court at the Bachelors Quarters has been in almost constant use, and the surface is beginning to show signs of wear. Arrangements are being made for a further supply of ant-bed for the reconditioning of this court.

The recreation room at the Quarters is now one of the cosiest spots in Canberra, and the House Committee is to be congratulated on the introduction of an up-to-date canteen for the use of residents, and the great amount of other good work they have put in for the welfare of the 'bachelors'.

11 November 1926

Since the annual general meeting of the Canberra Social Service Association the Acton District Association is fast gaining new members, twenty-five having recently been enrolled with the promise of many more to join up. We are hoping that the residents of the Bachelors Quarters will co-operate towards the betterment of the social well being of Canberra's prettiest suburb.

Chiefly owing to the energy displayed by residents of the Acton Cottages, the tennis court by the Acton Hall is rapidly assuming shape, and it is hoped that the opening games will be played in the course of the next few weeks. The work of excavation was a fairly considerable task, but now that the ant-bed and gravel work have been laid out and rolled the back of the work has been broken. The remaining work consists of fencing the court, which we hope to have completed by the end of next week.

The road in front of the portable cottages is in a very bad state at present, and clouds of dust arise whenever a vehicle passes. A petition was recently signed by the residents requesting the Commission to put this road in good order. It is hoped that our anticipation in this regard will be realised at an early date.

After passing through the vicissitudes of flood etc the old cricket pitch on the flat below the Bachelors Quartes has been taken over by the Westlake Cricket Club, the grass has been mown, and the club is to be congratulated on their enterprise in securing such a good ground.

An over-luxuriant growth of grass on the Acton Children's Playground is rather militating against the enjoyment of the local youngsters, and we hope that 'the powers that be' will introduce a couple of hefty scythe-wielders in this locality.

11 June 1927

A strongpost at Acton during the visit of the Duke and Duchess was notable for its artistic decoration and the effective greenery and streamer display. The splendid effort was the result of the Acton branch whose members joined heartily in the work of erection. A large number of residents attended to give their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess, a hearty cheer as they passed through Acton, and the enthusiasm of the crowd must have been very gratifying to the Royal visitors.

The branch is very grateful to the Commission for the assistance given and the supply of poles, flags and bunting, and to the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens for the lavish contribution of greenery.

18 July 1927

'Real Social Service. Canberra Times 28th June, the following article appeared regarding the Annual Meeting of the Social Service Association.

'The Annual Meeting held last night indicated that in this branch was to found social service in the true form, or at least to a more noticeable extent than in other districts of Canberra. The atmosphere which pervaded discussions was essentially that in which might thrive the principles and practices of social service as conceived by its round in Canberra.

The reputation gained by the Acton branch in this regard, is one of which members should be proud and augurs well for future activities in the district. The Hon Secretary (Mr L Margules) reported that during the year the membership of the branch had reached 48, and the credit balance stood at 11 pounds 19/ 10d after making a gift of 10 pounds to the Acton Park Tennis Court.

The Chairman (Mr JH Saunders) stated that the Branch started with eleven members. Through the energies of the officers elected at the first meeting held at the old survey hut, membership had increased to its present standing. The Branch had been successful in developing a number of social service projects at Acton, having established well equipped play grounds for children, and a tennis court built by voluntary labour. Election of Officers: The election of officers resulted as follows: Chairman, Mr JH Saunders; Vice-Chairman, Mr Thurbon; Hon Secretary, Mr Margules; Hon Treasurer, Mr Saunders; Auditors, Messrs Kaye and Thurbon; Delegates to Council, Mr Saunders.

ACCOMMODATION AT ACTON

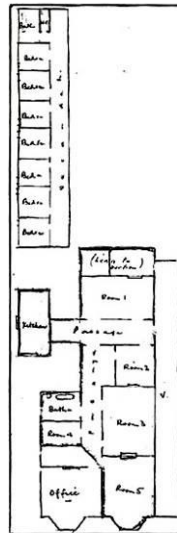
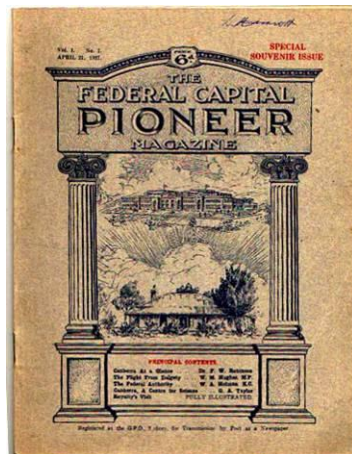
ACTON HOUSE

The original dwelling on the Acton site was the old stone farm house. Jill Waterhouse in her article *The Eight Lives of Acton House...Not Nine Unfortunately* published in *True Tales From Canberra's Vanished Suburbs of Westlake, Westridge & Acton* Gugler AR - Notes the following chronological history of the house:

- Built circa 1843 when Arthur Jeffreys took over the grant from JJ Moore and renamed it Acton
- 1850-1873 Leased as a Rectory for St John the Baptist Church. The family that lived there the longest was that of Rev PG Smith. They arrived in 1855-1873
- House leased to a number of tenants including Southwell, Gates & Wright families.
- 1887 Arthur Brassey leased Acton House until 1911 and added to the building.
- 1911 House taken over by the Commonwealth
- 1911-1915 home of Director of Commonwealth Lands & Surveys, Charles Scrivener
- Percy Sheaffe then leased the cottage after Scriveners left.
- By 1920s the cottage was run down
- 1926 [1927] headquarters of Social Service Association
- 1929 used as a library

- 1930 served as a police court and in 1932-33 the territory's first murder trial took place here.
- 1941 the cottage pulled down and the site marked by a fountain.

Below: Acton House 1917. Part of the House was to be used as quarters.



Above: Cover of Federal Capital Pioneer Magazine 1927 showing Provisional Parliament House and Acton House
NAA A657/1 & DS12/3955 & Plan of Acton House 1917

ACTON HOUSE VALUATIONS OF IMPROVEMENTS (EXCLUSIVE OF FENCING)

The list is under the following headings: Improvements, construction, Position, Age & Condition, Dimensions, Rate, Value

ACTON HOUSE (new portion) containing 4 rooms and a bathroom; brick, plastered outside, pine ceilings, cedar joinery, wood floors, ceiling 11'5" high. A on plan; About 22 years, fair; 40'6" x 38' x 19'6" - 12'3" x 4'4" x 19'6" x 2; 6d c ft; 798 pounds

ACTON HOUSE (original portion) containing 3 rooms, 1 skillion room and pantry; ceiling 9'8" and 8'3" high; Stone, plastered iron roof over shingles, plaster ceilings; B on plan; About 60 years fair considering age but not scientifically built; 38' x 2" x 26' 3" x 15'3"11'0" x 9'; 3d c ft; 210 pounds

ACTON HOUSE Verandah (original and old) wood posts, iron roof, brick floor, 19 feet wide; 85 long; 55 pounds

ACTON HOUSE. Old kitchen wing and skillion (now removed); about 60 years old; about 750sq; 2/- sq ft; 75 pounds

SHED (Loft over); iron walls and roof unfloored; C on plan; over 20 years, fair; 33x15; 24 pounds

SHED (Dairy); Slab walls, bark roof, no floor; D on plan; 10'x7"; 3 pounds 3/-

SHED (drays etc); Slab end and side thatch and bark roof, no floor; E on plan; Old dilapidated; 30'x13; 5 pounds

SHED; Back and end slabs, skillion roof 7ft wide, no floor; E on plan; Over 20 years, poor; 30' x 13; 7pounds 10/-

SHED (poison); Iron walls and roof, no floor; E on plan; Over 20 years, poor; 12' x 6; 2pounds 10/-

SHED (grain); Iron walls and roof no floor; F on plan; Over 20 years, poor; 15' x 10; 5 pounds 10/-

SHED (Buggy); Iron walls and roof no floor; F on plan; Old fair; 18' x 12; 8 pounds

STALLS: Slab back and end walls open front, no floor, 3 stalls, part open; F on plan; Old Fair, 45' x 11; 15 pounds

HARNESS ROOM; Weatherboard walls, iron roof, wood floor; F on plan; Old Poor; 11' x 6'; 8 pounds

[Total value] 1216 pounds 13/-

The report continued to note other buildings at Acton which included:

- House, Ryan's - brick walls, brick floor, 5ft verandah brick floor, low iron roof, hessian ceiling - over 40 years old poor; 30 x 12
- House Ryan's - slab walls, iron roof, wood floor, no ceiling, brick chimney; over 40 years Bad; 25 x 12
- House Rottenberry's - brick walls rough plastered, iron roof, height about 9ft at front and skillions at back, rough verandah 32ft long; very old dilapidated and uninhabitable; 33'x16'; 33'x7' skillion, 12' x 12'; 12'x 7' skillion
- Sheds - four old sheds at above house removed before I valued and therefore not estimated
- Woodshed - Iron and timber walls, iron roof, sides open to skillions, Wood and grating floors, near Yass Road; Old Bush construction, poor repair, 36'x11' 36' x8' skillion 18' x 8' skillion
- Shed - penning up; adjoining woodshed; Old rough bush structure; 63' x 14'
- Hut - bark walls and roof; at Wood shed; Old rough work 9'x9'
- Cowbail and Shed - old and dilapidated

There is reference to Ryan's House and the death of his small son by snakebite later in this section. Rottenberry had a lime kiln in the area and may have lived in the above mentioned cottage.

Following are a number of articles in newspapers about this historic dwelling:

The Canberra Times 19 August 1927

ACTON HOUSE For Social Service RENOVATIONS UNDER WAY

Old Acton House, one of the remaining landmarks of old Canberra will shortly be the headquarters of the Social Service activities in the Federal Capital. The existing Social Service rooms at Acton have proved insufficient for the requirements during the past few months and will probably be utilised for office purposes by the newly-constituted Development Committee.

Acton House is now undergoing repairs and renovation, and it is expected that it will be available for occupation in five or six weeks.

The Canberra Times 2 August 1929

ACTON HOUSE CLOSED FOR MEETINGS LIBRARY TO REMAIN FOR PRESENT

Acton House, which as the headquarters of the Social Service Association served the various public bodies of Canberra as a meeting place for some months has now been closed for that purpose and preparations for the conversion of the buildings into a court house are going ahead.

Temporary provision for the various meetings has been made by the Commission at the Commission Offices. Portion of the accommodation of the Engineers' Department will be utilised for this purpose until the building at present occupied by the Lands Department, is made available.

The Canberra Community Library, however, will not be transferred from the present premises until provision has been completed for the library in the Lands Department building.

The Canberra Times 25 September 1929

ACTON HOUSE - CANBERRA'S FIRST COURT - HEARING OF RATE APPEALS - MANUKA WORTHLESS FOR BUSINESS - HOW VALUATIONS MADE

The first court, which has been held in Canberra sat at the new Court House at Acton yesterday when Mr Justice Pike presided over the Land Valuation Court. The court is to hear appeals against assessments of city are leases for rating purposes and bout 400 appeals have been lodged.

Yesterday three appeals were heard in connection with blocks at Manuka and according to the witness of the appellants, Mr WG Woodger, this land is worthless for business purposes at present.

Proceedings were enlivened when the Lands Officer of the Federal Capital commission was being cross examined and could not inform the court as to how he had arrived at the values.

After having admitted that 1,000 pounds was a fair valuation for the arcade block, he was confronted with the allegation that he had valued it at 1,700 pounds and will inform the court when it resumes to-day whether this allegation is correct.

The Canberra Times 10 February 1934

ACTON COURT HOUSE - To be Used by Supreme Court

It has been decided that the first sitting of the Supreme Court which will be held on Monday, will now be held at the Court House Acton

It is understood that sufficient time was not given in order to prepare a suitable court room at the Pal...Office. Although carpenters have been working in preparing a court room at the Patents Office at Acton it was stated yesterday that everything could not be in readiness for Monday.

The Canberra Times 16 February 1940

ACTON HOUSE CAIRN TO BE ERECTED

A cairn is to be erected to mark the site of old Acton House, which is to be demolished. This was announced by the Minister for the Interior (Senator Foll) last night when he said that representation had been made to him by Senator Collings and others that some action should be taken to preserve the old house. The Minister said that, unfortunately the site of the new hospital overlapped the old Acton House, which would have to be demolished.

After consulting the Planning and Development Committee the Minister decided to erect a cairn to mark the site of the old building which is of historical interest to Canberra. The cairn will be constructed from material taken from the house.

2 December 1954

CEREMONY The Canberra Times TO COMMEMORATE FIRST CANBERRA HOMESTEAD

The first homestead in Canberra, Acton House, will be commemorated at a ceremony at a memorial fountain in the grounds of the Canberra Community Hospital on Sunday afternoon.

The memorial fountain is on the site of the old station first occupied by Joshua John Moore of his employees about 1824. The property was sold 19 years later to Arthur Jeffreys who married the daughter of Robert Campbell, whose representative James Ainslie formed the second settlement in Canberra.

At various periods the old building was a rectory, a police station, and a Government Office. The estate at Acton was the first private land acquired by the Commonwealth when it was resumed in 1911 from the heirs of Arthur Jeffreys.

The ceremony, which has been arranged by the ACT Advisory Council will bring together pioneers and young residents of Canberra. Guests will include Mr and Mrs AD Campbell, who are related to Robert Campbell and

members of the earliest Commonwealth parties surveying the ACT, Messrs Arthur Percival, former surveyor-General, and PL Sheaffe, who at one stage lived in Acton House.

The commemorative address will be delivered by the president of the Canberra and District Historical Society, Mr LE Fitzhardinge, who is also a reader in Australian History and the Australian National University.

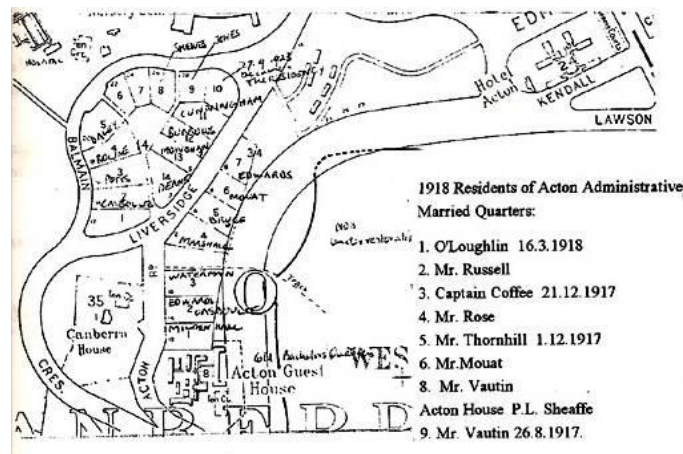
The ceremony will conclude with young Judith Timpson, granddaughter of Mr Percival placing a spray of flowers on the memorial tablet. A general invitation has been extended to the public to attend.



Above: 8 Liversidge Street

TIMBER COTTAGES FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Three timber cottages for administrators were erected by 1912 and soon increased to seven and added to over the early years. These cottages were erected in Liversidge Street and Balmain Crescent. Acton House was intended to be used for accommodation for visitors, but was leased initially to Charles Scrivener. These cottages were intended to be temporary. Permanent buildings were constructed in concrete and brick. [21] However it is interesting to note that at least one cottages had a Tuscan Column entrance area that elevated it to the 19th century ideal of the classical tradition usually kept for such buildings as libraries, court houses, a few churches and the odd gaol.



Some of the documents found in NAA give a little of the background of the accommodation:

- 9 September 1916 - Sheaffe proposed to offer both Acton House and the Bachelors Quarters separately as Residential Chambers. At the time Acton House had one cook and a half time Steward. Rent was received from a permanent boarder and from a few casuals. The Bachelors Quarters had a Chief Steward and two stewards and a kitchenman employed. [22]
- 18 July, 1917 Andrew L Richmond applied to rent the quarters at Acton house. He proposed that the outside quarters consisting of seven bedrooms, a bathroom and WC, and the office in the main building, be maintained as at present and be available for the use of official visitors. [23]
- 25 July 1917 the old maternity cottages (No 6) let to Mr Moaut. Before his tenancy Mrs Makin had been employed in the Maternity Cottage working from 7.30am until 2pm. She resided in her own home and was paid one pound a week from 12 January 1917 to 12 January 1917. [25]

- 28 September 1917 WO Russell report listed the following buildings at Acton:
 - Canberra (Acton) Administrator's House C8 vacant
 - Acton House FCBAL Richmond 1 room 5/- per week
 - 1 Cottage FCB Medical officer in charge of Quarters
 - 7 Cottages FCB Married officials 105 of salary
 - 1 Cottage FCB Banking manager 82 pounds 5/- pa
- In 1918 the people who lived in the houses were:
 - 1 Mr O'Loughlin, 4 rooms, kitchen, servants quarters and office
 - 2 Mr Russell as above
 - 3 Captain Coffee as above
 - 4 Mr Rose as above
 - 5 Mr Thornhill as above
 - 6 Mr Mouat as above with, in addition, one outside room
 - 7 Mr Brackenreg as above
 - 8 Mr Vautin 5 rooms, kitchen, servant's room
 - Acton House PL Sheaffe, 6 rooms, servant's room, kitchen [27]

Around 1927 the following are listed as living at Acton in the timber cottages:

Section 14, Balmain Crescent:

•	Blk	Sect	Occupant	Capital Value	Weekly Rental
•	2	14	Casboulte, TR	2,000 pounds	3 pounds 11/-
•	3	14	Potts, WE	2,861 pounds	4pounds 17/6
•	4	14	Rowse, WN	2,836 pounds	4 pounds 16/-
•	5	14	Daley, CS	3,742 pounds	6 pounds 6/-
•	8	14	Skewes, WJ	3,214 pounds	4 pounds 17/-
•	9	14	Jones, AE	2,622 pounds	4 pounds 9/-
•	11	14	Cunningham, AM	1,927 pounds	3 pounds 9/-
•	12	14	Burrows, Dr A	1,718 pounds	3 pounds 3/6
•	13	14	Monohan, GH	2,261 pounds	3 pounds 18/6
•	14	14	Deane, PE	2,840 pounds	4 pounds 19/-

Section 34 Liversidge Street

•	1	34	Mildenhall, J	1,237 pounds	2 pounds 8/6
•	2	34	Edwards, I	1,373 pounds	2 pounds 13/-
•	3	34	Waterman, HR	1,548 pounds	2 pounds 18/-
•	4	34	Marshall, H	1,289 pounds	2 pounds 10/6
•	5	34	Bruce, AE	1,342 pounds	2 pounds 11/6
•	6	34	Mouat, H	1,289 pounds	2 pounds 9/6
•	7	34	Edwards, AW	1,175 pounds	2 pounds 5/6

- **27 September 1923**
 - The building at Block 10, Section 14 Balmain Crescent Acton was designated the Residency Block.
 - Bl 2 Section 12 TR Casboulte's house had to be repapered.
 - 1923 all the buildings occupied by the administrative staff had repairs carried out. [29]
- **Details from Minutes of meetings of FCC 1924-30.**
 - **21 August 1925** - Decision made to erect five weatherboard cottages at Acton between Canberra House and the Hospital for:
 - Secretary cost 2175 pounds
 - Accountant cost 1700 pounds
 - Health Officer cost 1700 pounds
 - Assistant Chief Engineer cost 1700 pounds
 - Supervisor Building Construction cost 1400 pounds. [30]
- **Canberra Times 18 November 1927**
 - Stated that two more weatherboard houses under construction at Acton.
 - DR Tate built the first for Major E Jones

- Messrs Johnson and Bracker built the other for Mr Monohan.

One of the cottages fronted on to the new road deviation under construction. This road went in front of the hospital and the recently constructed houses for Departmental Heads. It rejoined the Acton Road at the Hospital corner. A further deviation left the new road before it rejoined the Acton road and followed a line below Canberra House. It was to intersect on Acton Road near the hall. The section of the existing Acton Road between Acton Hall and Hospital corner was to be converted into a plantation. [The hall was on the site of the public toilets on the side of the lake near Sister Curley House.] The cottage opposite 8 Liversidge Street and occupied by Monaghan's was built on the site of the old water tank.

David Dexter - *ANU CAMPUS* and other information from locals including Alision Neiberding an archival documents led to the following list:

Section 34 Acton:

- CS Vautin vacated 1917; WH O'Loughlin vacated 1921; WJ Mildenhall vacated 1932;
- RH Mollross - during his tenancy the house was sub-let to MS Hall and JH Lindsay - house demolished 1969
- FW Broinowski; WO Russell; L Edwards; TJ Smith house demolished 1973
- 16 Lennox Crossing - Captain GE Coffee vacated 1919; J Kilgour vacated 1921; AL Richmond vacated 1925; HR Waterman; H Dawes vacated 1936; Sergeant R Hilton
- 2 Liversidge St - FA Piggin vacated 1918; JK Ross vacated February 1919; RJ Rain vacated October 1919; L Knibbs vacated March 1921; SJ Lancashire vacated March 1921; CW Horsburgh vacated June 1925; AH Glassey vacated about June 1926; H Marshall Secretary to Sir John Butters, vacated about July 1932; KJ Carrucan. His widow Rubenia Carrucan was the last department tenant and first ANU tenant. House demolished for Acton tunnel in 1976.
- 5 or 6 Liversidge St - RJ Thornhill vacated February 1922; TCG Weston vacated 1926 (?); AE Bruce vacated May 1932; J Makin vacated February 1946; NA Stuart - following Nairn Stuart's death his widow remained and was the last departmental tenant.
- 6 Liversidge St - H Mouat vacated late 1933; JA Boulton vacated May 1949; RJ Taber Department of Worsk & Housing vacated?; Milba S Siles (formerly MM Taber) last departmental tenant and last ANU tenant. House demolished for the Molonglo Arterial Road 1977.
- 8 Liversidge St - JC Brackenreg vacated 1927; AW Edwards
- 14 Balmain Cres - TR Casboulte; WC Thomas
- Block 3 - 16 Balmain Cres - WN Rowse - Accountant FCC; Dr FN Ratcliff Assistant Chief Div of Entomology CSIRO, last department tenant
- 18 Balmain Cres - WE Potts; Dr LH Allan; E Clark; Professor OHK Spate
- 20 Balmain Cres - CS Daley 1926-1966
- 22 Balmain Cres - Brigadier JP McGlinn vacated 1930; Dr BT Dickson vacated 1938; Dr DG MacKeller vacated early 1940; Dr LW Nott vacated late 1943; USSR Legation for about three months 1943; S East
- 6 Balmain Cres - WJ Skewes tenant from about 1929; WH Sharwood; Dr P R Viljoen High Commissioner for South Africa; JK Uys - High Commissioner for South Africa vacated 1956; Professor CP Fitzgerald.

- 28 Balmain Cres - HE Jones tenant 1928-1937 (?1927); J Oldham tenant in 1937; LS Jackson; Dr AJ Metcalfe tenant 1946-Sept 1960
- 9 Liversidge St EP McPhee July-Dec 1919; LG Fussell vacated about June 1926; FW Cunningham vacated May 1932; ADE Bruce vacated June 1936; Dr CV Mackay vacated January 1939; AJ Ryan managing director 2CA vacated about April 1943; USSR Legation vacated May 1944; GG Jewkes sublet to Dr WHF Crcik and IR McPherson for periods up to 1958; destroyed by fire 1972
- 7 Liversidge St - Dr JRM Thomson vacated 1917; CS Vautin vacated March 1922; HM Rolland Architect FCC later Director General of Works vacated August 1927; JC Brackenreg vacated about January 1929 also lived at 8 Liversidge St; Dr A Burrows vacated April 1929; WD Crawford vacated July 1932; RJ Rain vacated November 1936; LA McAndrew vacated June 1944; AK Healey
- 5 Liversidge St GH Monahan; JFM Haydon
- 3 Liversidge St P Deane; JA Jackson; Sir Raphael Cliento; Dr C Barnard

WO Russell listed the following living in the cottages in 1918 - 1. O'Loughlin; 2 Russell; 3 Captain Coffee; 4 Rose; 5 Thornhill, 6 Mouat; 7 Brackenreg; 8 Vautin; Acton House Sheaffe.

The Canberra Times 18 November 1927

TWO RESIDENCES - Construction at Acton NEW ROAD DEVIATION

The new weatherboard residences are under construction at Acton. One is being built by DR Tate, builder for Major HE Jones (Director of Investigation Bureau of the Attorney-General's Department and the other by Messrs Johnson and Bracker, builders for Mr Mohahan (Clerk of the Senate).

One of the new residences fronts upon a new road deviation which is under construction. The deviation leaves Acton Road and follows a course around the front of the hospital [timber hospital built 1914] and the recently constructed cottages occupied by departmental heads of the Commission and rejoins Acton Road in Hospital Corner. A further deviation leaves the new road before it rejoins Acton Road and following a line below Acton House, will intersect Acton Road near Acton Hall.

The new deviations are being constructed in accordance with the city plan. Eventually that section of the existing Acton Road between Acton Hall and the Hospital Corner will be converted into a plantation. Bachelors' Quarters and the adjoining residences will front upon the new section which will be constructed between Acton Hall and the point in the vicinity of Hotel Acton.



Bachelors Quarters 1912 - courtesy National Library of Australia nla pic.-vn4594034-v and below another photograph of the Quarters 1912.



THE BACHELORS QUARTERS - (Acton Guest House, Lennox House)

The Bachelors Quarters were timber barracks ready for occupation from October 1912 for single officers - many of whom belonged to the Lands & Survey Department and visiting administrators.

Each man had his own room, which was connected to the electricity supply when it came on line. Up until 1920 when water from the cotter became available the supply was provided by tanks. A pan system was used as a sewerage system. The Quarters were managed by a Steward and meals were supplied.

During the 1914 -18 war the quarters had few tenants. When work resumed in the early twenties the occupancy rate swelled to overcrowding that necessitated tents being erected in front of the quarters to house the overflow. These were joined in 1921 by ex-Molonglo buildings. Further additions to the Quarters were again required in 1923 and 1927.



Above nla pic-an11030057-40-v Molonglo building being moved to Acton. This may have been the dispensary moved from Molonglo for Ned Ryan or one of the buildings for the Quarters?

The quarters were not always run at a profit. In 1928-29 financial year the loss was 21,038 pounds. [31]

From 1925 when Gorman House (then known as Hotel Ainslie) opened for the young lady typistes a firm track between the quarters and the house was made and a number of marriages followed. The men of the quarters also wrote regularly to the *Canberra Community News*. One example written in 1927 follows:

Christmas Day at the Bachelors Quarters. The mere men of this masculine establishment were left - as was only natural - to their own resources and devices on this festive occasion.

With inherent initiative, however an effective Committee was informally formed, which energetically assembled ways and means for the provision of a prolific feast, quite becoming 'fit for the Gods' as some of the members assuredly imagined themselves to be.

Nevertheless a legitimate conviviality was the net product arising from the combined efforts of numerous willing hands and minds which contribute lavishly to the requirements and pleasures of residents and visitors alike.

The Dining Room was decorated with aesthetic taste, for which the ladies of the Staff are greatly praised while the dinner and supper were replete with everything that the most epicurean taste could desire.

For these the ubiquitous Be Bowes was responsible, while his matchless arrangements for the after-tea Dance were a source of lingering gratitude to all and sundry.

Numerous visitors were present in the evening, and included many ladies from adjacent Hostels, who graced the occasion so effectively that all went 'merry as a marriage bell.'

Appropriately, we may here pardonably quote Byron :-

On with the Dance, let joy be unconfined

No sleep till morn, When Youth and Pleasure meet.

Such was the prevailing spirit (while it lasted) though it may be said, inversely and in truth that as the Town Clock struck midnight hour, the revellers were glad to cease from revelling and to

*'Fold up their tents like the Arabs,
And silently steal away.'*

GJC [32]

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE RUNNING OF THE QUARTERS

From reading the many documents relating to the quarters one could be forgiven for thinking that there was a lot of in-fighting. A clear barrier of class distinction between the people employed to run the quarters and those living in them was apparent through the reading of many documents.

Following are excerpts from a number of documents in NAA that give some indication of the life and problems of those living and working in the quarters.

The catering arrangements in one lengthy document of over three pages *Conditions of Lease of Staff Boarding House 1917* listed over 28 separate conditions. An extract follows:

No 1 Set table meals 1/6 (Menu card to be provided).

Breakfast (weekdays 8-9am) shall consist of Porridge and Milk, or Rice and Milk, and Ham or Bacon and Eggs or Grilled Steak or Chops, or Sausages and in addition, Tea, Coffee, Cocoa or Milk and Brown and White Bread, marmalade and Jam or Honey.

Luncheon or Tea Meals (weekdays 1-2pm; Saturdays and Sundays 6-7pm) consisting daily of at least three of the following meats:- Chops, Steaks, Sausages, Ham or Bacon and Eggs, Irish Stew, Stewed Steak, Haricot, Curry, Pork Chops, or Boiled Eggs, Cold Ham and Meats with Potatoes, fresh butter, bread, cheese, Salads and a large cup of Tea, Coffee, Cocoa, or Glass of Milk.

Cut lunches will be provided for such Officials who are unable to be present at this meal.

Dinner (week-days 6-7pm, Saturdays 12.30 to 1.30pm, Sundays 10.2pm) consisting of Soup and hot Joints (choice of two kinds) or made dish, Potatoes and at least two other vegetables in season (must be served in vegetable dishes and separately), Sweets (choice of two kinds), Brown and White Bread, Butter, Cheese and Salad, Tea and Coffee and Milk.

No 2 Sundries at Counter (To be ready at all times)

- *Sandwiches - Ham, Beef and other (full rounds) must be cut with fresh bread and properly made 3d*
- *Meat Pies 3d*
- *Fresh Tea, Coffee or Cocoa, large cup 3d*
- *Bread and Butter and Cheese 3d*
- *Fresh Bun, Scone and Butter, Roll and Butter, Cake or Pastry 3d*
- *Glass of fresh milk, large 3d*
- *Ginger Beer per bottle (if partaken in room) 3d*
- *Aerated Waters small -do- 3d*
- *Aerated Waters large -do- 6d*

For Ginger Beer or large or small aerated waters taken out of the Room an extra 3d may be charged but must be refunded on return of bottles to the same.

Persons [part missing page torn] of Lease of Staff Boarding House 4Ctd

- *Tobacco - All standard brands to be sold at ruling retail prices*
- *Cigars - Havana 6d*
- *Manilla's etc 3d*
- *Cigarettes 3d & 6d*
- *All tobacco, Cigars and Cigarettes kept in stock must be approved brands only.*

Note the tables must be laid with clean white cloth, linen serviettes and best table appointments, Salt, Pepper, Mustard, Vinegar, Sauce and other condiments. The food must be of the best quality and sufficient attendance provided behind the Counter or at Table to facilitate service.

No 3 Refreshment Hampers (Charge 3/6d for one, 2/6d for each additional person. Contents for each person, part Chicken or Duck or cold meat, 2 slices of Ham or Tongue, 2 rolls (fresh) or fresh brown and white bread. Butter and Cheese, half ounce each Celery, Lettuce, Tomatoes or other salads; Dessert, Salt, Pepper, Mustard and Vinegar, Sugar and Milk and Hot Tea or Coffee, or Pint of Milk, or large bottle of Soda, Lemonade or Ginger Ale at choice. Food must be of the best quality only and fresh.

Fittings for Hamper for each person.- 2 small Plates, 1 Glass Tumbler, cup and saucer and tea spoon. Vessel for sugar and milk, pepper, salt, vinegar and mustard spoon. Double dish for butter and cheese to fit in place. Two serviettes, 2 knives (desert), 2 silver plated forks, corkscrew and straps for above. Inside baskets and fittings must be kept clean. [33]

As at 29 September 1917 the cost of an officer's room was 25/- per week. By the end of 1917 the numbers of occupants had dropped to the extent that a reduction of staff was necessary. At the time the following staff were employed:

- Cook 9/- per day (per week of seven days) 3pounds, 3/-
- (Mess also pays 17/- per week)
- Chief Steward 8/- per day 2 pounds 16/-
- Steward 7/- per day 2 pounds 9/-
- Kitchenman 7/- per day 2 pounds 9/-

At this time the staff had to look after nine officers, one caretaker and two bank officials. Work included cleaning of rooms, provision of meals and the quarter's laundry. Reductions in staff amounted to the loss of one steward and at that time it was between Donovan and Masson with Masson being the one being made redundant.

New Charges were set on 10 May 1918:

- Weekly board and Lodging 25/- per week
 - Day Boarders 1 pound per week
 - Occasional meals 2/- per meal
 - Temporary visitors for 7 days or less 6/- per day
- Vegetables and fruit were available from the Yarralumla nursery when they were available. [34]

1921-1922 ADDITIONS TO THE BACHELORS QUARTERS:

With the renewed building activity after the war additional staff were required to carry out the work with the result that extra accommodation was required at the Quarters. The additions and requirements can be followed through documents in the NAA such as *Works & Railways, Melbourne* 27 June 1921:

As requested in your communication of the 4th May 1921, -li am forwarding, herewith, sketch plans indicating increased accommodation at the Bachelors' Quarters, Acton, by the addition of two buildings removed from the Molonglo Camp. These buildings will provide recreation rooms and 10 new bedrooms and both buildings can be conveniently connected up with the existing buildings.

The Works Superintendent has stated that the present accommodation is insufficient for the existing staff, and there are no rooms available for visiting officers. It is necessary therefore to use rooms in the Residency, and one of these is temporarily occupied by the Supervising Mechanical Engineer, Mr Snaddon.

In carrying out the work, steps should be taken to enlarge the main Dining Room by including with it the existing Smoking Room; the latrines near the Dining room should also be improved as to privacy and wash basins introduced.

The estimated cost of removing the Dormitory and Mess Room buildings from the Molonglo Camp and re-erecting at the Quarters, including the accessory works above mentioned is about 600 pounds. [35]

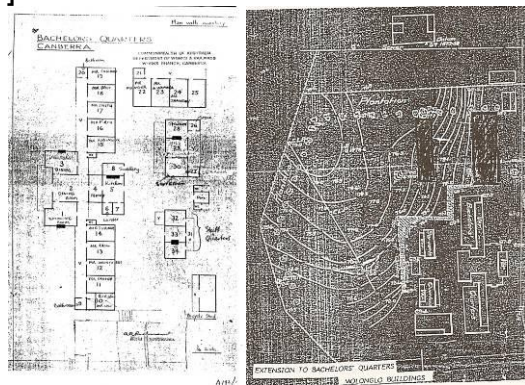
LIST OF ROOMS AND TENANTS 1921

1. Smoking Room
2. Dining Room
3. Visitors' Dining Room
4. Pantry
5. Kitchen
6. Larder
7. (?)
8. Scullery
9. Bathroom

10. Bedroom Mr Cole
11. Bedroom Mr Cadden
12. Bedroom Mr Woodforde
13. Bedroom Mr Rail
14. Bedroom Mr Turner
15. Bedroom Mr Robinson
16. Bedroom Mr Force
17. Bedroom Mr Smith
18. Bedroom Mr Daly (Daley?)
19. Bedroom Mr Sheldon
20. Bathroom
21. (?)
22. Bedroom Mr Monger
23. Bedroom Mr McNamara
24. Bedroom Mr Jamieson
25. (?)
26. Storeroom
27. Bathroom
28. Bedroom Steward
29. Bedroom Miss Fitzgerald [Miss Fitzgerald was the Acton School teacher 31.1.1921-9.9.1921]
30. Bedroom used as a storeroom
31. Staff Quarters
32. Staff Quarters
33. Staff Quarters
34. Staff Quarters [36]

By 8 June 1922 additional furniture was requested for the Quarters. The list included the following:

- Billiard Room
- 6 wooden forms with backs and arm rests
- 1 Coir Matting Runner with round table
- 1 Billiard Table with cover and scoring board &c
- Recreation Room
- 3 Lounges with leather cushions for seats
- 2 Morris arm chairs
- 2 round tables 4' in diameter
- 6 small chairs
- 3 Douglas arm chairs with cushions
- 2 Floor rugs 10'x6'
- 1 Dinner wagon suitable for books and paper
- 1 Fender, Kerb
- Framed picture for walls of both rooms
- 2 covers for tables
- Packing and Freight [37]



By October 1922 the accommodation was again acute. WO Russell complained that he did not have sufficient accommodation for official visitors, some of whom only gave him a few hours notice. While awaiting the addition of six rooms the was solved in the short term by putting up tents. Approval was given to erect nine tents which were erected on the vacant area in front of the main bedrooms - ie on either side of the dining rooms. This reduced the extra lavatory and bathroom requirements. [A septic system was in place at this time.] [38, 39]

Tents were available from the Works Branch on hire. Also available were furniture and fittings consisting of stretchers, camp washstands and ware, duchess chest of drawers, mattresses and quilts. Linen and blankets were supplied. [41]. The July 28 1927 Sanitation Report noted that there were 140 rooms at the Quarters.



Above: NAA photograph Additional Tents at the Quarters, 1926 - A3560, 46

Further accommodation was required at the Quarters by 1927. A report in *The Canberra Times* dated 20 May 1927 under the heading of *CITY PROGRESS* noted that *Satisfactory progress has been made with the work of providing additional accommodation at the Bachelors' Quarters, Acton. Thirteen rooms were completed during April, the roof of the remainder has been covered in and partitions are being erected.* An earlier edition of *The Canberra Times* 21 April 1927 referred to *extensive additions to the Bachelors Quarters, Acton have been put in hand. The excavations and foundations for this work have been completed, and brickwork commenced.* The paper the issue on the next day also mentioned that the Sewerage Treatment Works at Western Creek was nearing completion and that the Water Supply Service at the Bachelors' Quarters were almost finished.

TROUBLE AT THE QUARTERS

Not only was there problems between the working class who lived on the flat in the portable timber cottages designed by HM Rolland but also between the residents and the staff of the Quarters. Some examples of dissention follow:

3 August 1922 - Supervising Officer wrote a directive to the boarders - part of which follows:

The monthly reading of meters discloses the use of electric light much beyond the capacity of official installations. Your co-operation is invited to preserve actual lighting requirements. Your co-operation is invited to preserve actual lighting requirements chiefly in the direction of turning off the current when leaving any unoccupied room. On ceasing work the stewards will switch off lights not required by the Management. Please again turn off any of these points after using same. The Works Director is restoring all additional wiring complained of by him. The Surveyor general has directed that any person who has extended or tampered with wiring since he prohibited any interference be requested to find quarters elsewhere. For that purpose all rooms will be inspected at an early date.

Supper *It is proposed to discontinue any provision for supper unless those enjoying same clean up after finishing. Enamel jugs must not be used on open fire...*[42]

13 March 1923 - Letter from Fred Walker, Chief Steward to JTH Goodwin Esq:

In consequence of filthy state and general disorder in which I continually find the Pantry between Dining Room and Kitchen - nearly every morning and culminating in what must be a perfect orgy last night, I find it will be necessary for me every night - after cleaning up to lock the Pantry door. As it appears the Mess must have food provided for them during the night I will leave out certain things for them on one of the tables in the dining room - in any case, the Pantry (after hours at any rate) should not be open to anyone to walk in. [43]

Robert Rail, President of the Mess letter to Goodwin 5 March 1923 - complaint about Fred Walker:

With reference to your memorandum to Mr Walker, a copy of which was referred for my information, I have to state that I placed it before the Committee. After due consideration we decided that the position as defined in your memorandum did not warrant the institution of such a Committee and as we were aware that it was not the intention of the Mess to elect a President and Committee merely to act as a medium between the Chief Steward and individual members for trifling complaints we decided to convene a meeting of the Mess in order to acquaint members of the position. We also decided to tender our resignations as a Committee since it is impossible for us to justify, either to you or the Mess, our further holding of this office.

That the position as it now stands is embarrassing to the Committee and practically unworkable, firstly because it is unreasonable that the President of any Mess should be subservient to the Chief Steward, more especially when the Chief Steward in question is a man who has had no previous experience whatsoever as a Steward and who has little or no control over his Staff, as is evidenced by the almost daily bickering amongst them. We were told by the Supervisor some time ago that Mr Walker's chief credential was that, he had been used to being waited upon all his life, he was quite confident that he could efficiently wait on others. However feasible this may appear in theory in practice it has not proved the success that one might have expected of it.

Secondly the position is practically unworkable since the majority of complaints with Walker by reason of your memorandum to him I have already been told by Walker on two occasions now when speaking to him and the Staff has inevitable been mentioned that 'it was no business of mine.' He also informed me that you had said that he was to be the Manager of the Mess and implied that his authority was final apart from yours. If that is the case it would appear that the Bachelors Quarters is sadly over managed in that for the supervision it requires:-

- 1. A Supervisor (Mr Russell)*
- 2. A Manager in the person of a Chief Steward who owes his position solely to a previous friendship with the Supervisor.*
- 3. A President and Committee of two - merely a mouthpiece for general complains with no power to see that such complaints are rectified. [44]*

A further complaint was aired 19 May 1923

We the undersigned members of your Department at Canberra respectively desire to draw to your attention the unsatisfactory conditions applying to accommodation at the Bachelors Quarters, Canberra...It is pointed out that the Chief Steward, Mr Walker, is a man of absolutely no experience in catering and boarding house management, and although he is in receipt of 5 pounds per week in an allegedly supervisory capacity, his inability all round, is the cause of slipshod methods prevailing...This was pointed out to the Surveyor General whose reply was to the effect that Walker having come from a good home, where he had received good service, he should be able to pass on the same to us - We regret that in this direction he fails entirely...

The petition was signed by: LR Willis, W Adamson, A (?) Jackson, H(?) Force, J McCloskey, L Dent, J(?) Orr, LS Boynton, ?, Fred C Cook, ?, E Naylor, F Smith, WM Langford, Geo J O'Neill, E Proctor, Keith Champion, K Hudson, RL Hall, S Chas(?) Uslau(?), Collidy I (?), P...(?), W Jackson, O'Sullivan, HR Cadden, HB Ingeleinson (?). [45]

WALKER REPLIED 15 JUNE 1923:

A vague and general charge has been made the slip shod methods are in vogue in the working and carrying out of duties by me and the Bachelors Quarters Staff. It is easy anywhere at any time to make these kinds of allegations, and I absolutely in the same general way give a flat denial to the charge and ask for specific statements.

I would point out there is a Mess Committee who have been instructed to bring to my immediate attention any complaints from any members of the Mess. I have not had one for over 3 months, and all previous complaints have been at once taken up by me and remedied immediately. Also I would point out I have frequently invited the President of the Mess and Committee to make any suggestions that occur to them that I could carry out to promote the well being or comfort or convenience of the Mess generally or individually. None have been forthcoming.

Further, any requests made to me by any individual member has always been complied with, even at the financial expense of the Establishment. I am myself on duty every day from 6am superintending personally

the members of my Staff and during the whole of the day any member of the Mess can see me and get personal attention. Full advantage is always taken of this even after I have gone to bed.

As evidenced of the excellent service I would point out:- The absolute punctuality and regularity of every meal, never once has a meal been 5 minutes late, nor the food in general or in particular even been short of scanty or of any but the best quality and of great variety.

All rooms, public and private are kept thoroughly clean and tidy - without interfering with private personal property. Swept and dusted every day and washed out once a week, sometimes oftener if required. The bedroom and dining room staff here are all men at least 15 years experience and thoroughly known and carry out their duties. The present cooking staff must have given satisfaction as no complaints have been received. In any case they were changed to meet the Mess wishes; and I lost a superior excellent and capable married couple as cook and assistant.

My person experience of over 40 years of Boarding Houses and Hotels in England, the Continent and Australia is wide spread and for the last 17 years I have perforce lived continually in them. Further during the last six years I have been most closely associated with the running, working and management of a large first class Boarding House in Sydney accommodating 40 to 50 guests, but nowhere have I come in contact with such a percentage of men whom it is quite impossible to satisfy as a section of Boarders living here. The same section that most often are associated in the unseemly and disorderly behaviour and who are amongst the signatories of this present petition.

If there are any slipshod methods it is in meeting the desires and failings of individual members of the Mess and doing it without any fuss and on many occasions not reporting to the proper quarter in their unseemly and disorderly behaviour, foul language and drunkenness. [46]

Mr Walker eventually did resign and on 30 March Mr PJ Breen was accepted as the new Chief Steward. However, a cottage - known to the locals as *The Big House* - was erected in the area of the temporary portable cottages for the new Steward. Mr Breen decided against taking the position when it was made clear that he was expected to pay rent. He considered that free accommodation was part of the conditions in running the Quarters. The Federal Capital Commission tried an inducement of agreeing to lay the lino in the cottage. It failed. [50]

14 June 1924 Mr Hicks was the successful applicant [51] and he was happy to reside in the cottage provided and pay rental of 6 pounds per week. His wife was to take up the position of Matron for one pound per week and her duties included supervision of linen, small mending and see that the bedrooms were properly kept. Unfortunately Mr Hicks entered a hospital in Sydney prior to taking up the position. By 21 August it was known that he had cancer and not long to live. [52]

Who ran the establishment in the years before the decision was made turn the business over to private enterprise. *The Canberra Times* 5 March 1935 announced that the Bachelors Quarters had been let to O'Malley Brothers of Queanbeyan and Sydney who took over the day before.

THE RESIDENCY - CANBERRA HOUSE

Canberra House was originally known as The Residency and was built to house the Administrator Colonel Miller, his wife and family. Prior to the Residency being ready for occupancy, Colonel Miller lived in a tent then a small cottage. The Millers moved into the two storey concrete house in early January 1914. Following are snippets of information on Lyall Gillespie's Cards on Colonel Miller. When the First Commissioner moved into the then recently renovated house in early 1925 it was renamed: *Canberra House*.

The house was designed by John Smith Murdoch and was built by day labour under the control of the Home and Affairs Department at a cost of 7,488 pounds (excluding services). This figure was according to an accounts document dated 25 August 1912 and may not be quite accurate. The house was valued at 6,300 pounds [53] and the grounds and tennis court at 2,000 pounds.

That Mr Murdoch continued to use concrete in buildings is evidenced in *The Canberra Times* 15 April 1926 in an article on two proposed permanent buildings - *When asked his opinion on material of which the building might be constructed, Mr Murdoch said that he was in favour of a reinforced concrete frame, brick filled with a granite or thracite base...*

In the grounds of the residence was a tennis court attached and other buildings used by staff. Following the departure of Colonel and Mrs Miller in 1917 the house remained empty and was used from time to time as extra accommodation for visiting dignitaries. Following are newspaper and other articles from Lyall Gillespie's Cards.

Mr Murdoch was also the architect who designed other significant Canberra buildings including Hotels Canberra and Kurrajong and the Provisional Parliament House. In 1930 he was appointed Second Commissioner. [CTs 6.1.1930]

THE RESIDENCY 1914-1925

Queanbeyan Age 27.8.1912 *In today's Evening News there is an excellent portrait of His Excellency Colonel David Miller ISO, Secretary to the Home Affairs Department who will shortly take up his new duties as administrator of the Federal Capital Territory.*

Frederick Watson's History of Canberra. Page 164 - *On the 8th August 1912 David Miller was appointed resident administrator of the territory, and henceforth he resided at Acton. He was given charge of Canberra and the territory and was responsible to the Minister for Home Affairs only virtually a sub department of the Department of Home Affairs with an independent chief was established at Canberra.*

Queanbeyan Age 1.10.1912 *Col Miller, Administrator of FCT left Melbourne for Sydney on Saturday afternoon. During the week he will proceed to Canberra where he will take up his residence. Before the close of the year a function is to be arranged to celebrate the foundation of the Federal City and it is probable that at that ceremony the city will be named...*

Queanbeyan Age 26.11.1912 *Col Miller, now Administrator of the FCT is in residence at Acton or whatever will be the name of the Federal Capital City. Locally Canberra is preferred. His quarters are certainly not that one could term fashionable yet poor(?) and honest the more attractive part in the vicinity of the residence being the bon trees and weeping willows which fringe the bank of the Molonglo River.*

Queanbeyan Age 9.1.1914 *The Governor General held an investiture at Government House Melbourne on Tuesday last when Col D Miller, Administrator of the Federal Territory received the insignia of CMG and MR CR Scrivener Director of Comm Lands and Surveys, the insignia of ISO. Col Miller has moved into the Administrator's residence at Canberra. The appointments of the new home are everything that could be desired and modern architecture has completed a substantial residence in fitting with the high position of administrator...*

Wizard's Notes Post 7.5.1914 *A Deserted Capital - All the works on the Federal Capital site having been abandoned I understand that the Director, Colonel Miller has not taken his departure for Melbourne. It is said by one of our residents who interviewed him before leaving that he stated definitely that the whole of the land within the territory would be resumed within three months and that each holding would be submitted for lease by tender with no preference whatsoever to previous owners...*

Queanbeyan Age 21.1.1916 *The Minister for Home Affairs (Mr O'Malley) said there was evidently some misapprehension about Col Miller having to carry on as the Administrator of the FCT while he was Commandant of the NSW Military Camps. He had been entirely freed from home affairs duties and he (Mr O'Malley) was the administrator of the Territory at present.*

Frederick Watson's History of Canberra page 184 *On 31st August 1917 David Miller retired from the Public Service. He had acted as Administrator of the federal territory residing at Acton Canberra since 1912 and whilst acting as administrator he had returned nominally the position of permanent head of the Department of Home Affairs and subsequently of the Department of Works and Railways.*

Queanbeyan Age 9.2.1917 *Colonel Miller, Administrator of the Federal Territory is retiring in the near future.*

Queanbeyan Age 2.3.1917 *Col Miller late Administrator of the Federal Territory in company with his wife and family took his departure from Canberra on Wednesday.*

CANBERRA HOUSE 1925-

In December 1924, John Butters with his wife and family arrived in Canberra where they were accommodated in the Hotel Canberra until the renovations taking place at the Residency were completed. On 1 January 1925 he began his work as First Commissioner. The annual rental was 300 pounds inclusive of all services. The cost of his new offices at Acton with electricity and heating installed was 2,046 pounds 13/8d. [53]

Another document found in the NAA noted the jobs operated on since 1 January 1925 and costs incurred:

- Renovations 2,834 pounds 4/6 1924/25
- 2 Radiators 6 pounds 15/9 1927/28
- 2 Helga radiators 6 pounds 13/11 1927/28
- Carpet 103 pounds 16/7 1924/25
- Power heat & light 119 pounds 1/9
- Fire Screens 288 pounds 6/- 1924/25
- New tar paved tennis courts 647 pounds 18/6 1924/25
- Fittings & furniture 191 pounds 18/4 1925/26 [54]

The Canberra Times 20 September 1932

A HOUSE WITH A HISTORY

Surrounded by an attractive garden, the steep red gabled roof of Canberra House has been a familiar architectural feature of the city since before the war, when it was built for Col Miller, the first administrator of the Territory. Bearing the name, 'The Residency', the building was later used to house senior administrative officers who visited Canberra during the period of early constructional activity.

After remaining vacant for some time, it was renovated by the Federal Capital Commission for the first Chief Commissioner (Sir John Butters) and re-named 'Canberra House'.

Following the departure from Canberra of Sir John Butters, 'Canberra House' was offered for tender by the Government. The FCT Branch of the RS&SILA tendered, intending to use the premises as a club house, but the offer was refused.

The Canberra Times 10 March 1927

CANBERRA HOUSE - RENTAL QUESTION - Reply to Criticism

Melbourne, Thursday

The Minister for Home and Territories (Sir William Glasgow) referred to the recent press criticism of terms under which Canberra House was being occupied by Mr JH Butters, Chief Commissioner of the Federal Capital Commission at Canberra.

He stated that the house once was known as the Residency and latterly as Canberra House. It was originally constructed and occupied as a residence for the Administrator of the Territory, and at the time of the appointment of the Commission it was used for the purpose of accommodating visiting officials. Upon the appointment of the Commission, the Chief Commissioner became the chief Government representative at Canberra and Canberra House was obviously suitable as the official residence.

The Minister stated that while it is true that the rental paid by Mr Butters at present is 200 pounds per annum, it will be increased as from July 1st next year to 300 pounds per annum. The rental fixed also covers the supply of electric current. In fixing the rate up to and inclusive of June 30 1927 at 200 pounds per annum, the Government took into consideration that fact that during the period prior to the transfer of the seat of Government to Canberra the burden of entertaining had necessarily fallen principally upon the Chief Commissioner, and that no allowance had been granted to him in respect thereof. The rental payable by Mr Butters after July 1, 1927 represents 10 percent of his salary, and in this respect corresponds with the rate which prevailed for many years in the case of Commonwealth public servants, whose duties required them to reside in official premises.

There was a tendency, Sir William contended, to disregard the fact that the Chief Commissioner is de facto administrator of the Federal Territory. The ordinances of the Territory are administered by the Federal Capital Commission, of which he is not only the chief executive member, but also the only resident and full time Commissioner. All other administrators of Commonwealth territories are either provided with furnished quarters free of rental or are granted allowances in lieu of quarters. Mr Butters is the only administrator who is required to pay rental for his quarters and receives no compensation allowance.

In referring to the suggestion that some officers of the Commission are receiving special consideration in regard to housing, the Minister stated that he had been advised by the Commission that four heads of departments had been provided with houses on sites in proximity to the Commission's offices and the Chief Commissioner's residence. These locations were chosen as a convenience in view of the fact that the officers concerned are constantly engaged in night work, either at their offices or in confidence with the Chief Commissioner at his residence. The house construction on these four sites were designed as far as possible to meet the requirements of the officers concerned. The rentals vary from 130 pounds per annum to 190 pounds per annum.

The Minister also referred to the fact that all public servants resident in Canberra are charged a rental based upon the capital cost of their homes less 25 percent. This arrangement is in accord with the approval given by the Government some years ago. [Not mentioned is that those transferred to Canberra received an annual allowance that ranged from around 19 pounds to 40 pounds per annum - to compensate for the higher cost of living in Canberra compared to Sydney and Melbourne. Construction workers did not receive this allowance.]

The Canberra Times 30 March 1930

GOLF CLUB - Decides Not To Tender - FOR CANBERRA HOUSE

To amend the constitution and also to discuss the matter of a club house with a view to obtaining Canberra House, a special general meeting of the Canberra Golf club was held in the Acton Hall last night. About 60 members and 30 associates [women] were present. Mr HJ Sheehan presided.

Amendments were made to the constitution to provide for a patron and vice patron and the appointment by the club of any annual or special general meeting of life members and life associate members; and the appointment by the club at any general meeting of honorary members.

A resolution was carried that the committee ask His Excellency the Governor-General for the time being to accept the position of Vice-Patron.

Resolution that Sir John Buttes and Lady Butters be made life-members and that the Governor-General and State Governors and their respective staffs; and the Prime Minister be made honorary members of the club were also carried.

This was followed by a lengthy discussion dealing with Canberra House, as a possible club house, for the lease of which the committee sought power to tender.

Mr Sheehan thought that it would be very advantageous for the members to have Canberra House as a golf house, provided of course, that they could get it at the figure at which they were prepared to tender. To meet the expenditure of the Club House it would be necessary for members to pay an extra 2 pounds 2 shillings a year and associates and extra 1 pounds 1 shilling.

With the removal of the present bar to those not resident in the Federal Territory becoming members he considered that the Club would be the means of attracting many more desirable members to the Club. He did not consider Canberra House ideal, but considering that the Club had not the funds for a new Club House nor, as far as he could see, any likelihood of obtaining any for sometime the opportunity of leasing Canberra House was one not to be lightly passed over.

'If you turn down Canberra House,' he said, 'you must reconcile yourselves to the fact that you are not going to have a club house for a considerable time. As a club we will considerably strengthened if we have a golf house,' he concluded.

Major Jones asked if the Committee had taken into consideration the matter of furnishing the House.

Mr Sheehan replied that the committee had given every consideration and with carpets and blinds already provided they would do the furnishing by degrees.

Mr Romans suggested that the Associates might assist by organising dances and parties. He contended that the conditions of finances of members would be different now to what it would be in a few years' time and that if they could not afford a golf house now they never would be able to do so.

Mr Howse asked how much each member would be expected to spend at the club house. The president said the committee hoped to make a profit of the bar trade of 1/- per week from each member.

Mr WJ Clements contended that the taking over of 140 acres by one section of the community would later give rise to questions and that section of the community would be expected to pay for it.

Mr Yandell said that he considered that by the general attitude of the members they did not think that the club house was worth the extra 2 pounds 2 shillings and it was a question of whether members really wanted it.

That any spare money should be spent in the improvement of the links was voiced by Mr Howse and supported vigorously by Mr Hayley.

Major Officer asked that the matter be adjourned for a few days to give members and opportunity of discussing it.

Mr WG Woodgers supported the motion and told the meeting that it would require 75 per cent majority to justify the proceedings.

Dr Dodds considered that the acquisition of a club house would attract many new members and increase the funds of the Club.

Mr Pocock thought that Canberra House was not in a suitable position and offered little better conditions than the Hotel Canberra did at present.

Mr Gordon Dawkins spoke in favour of leasing the house and Mr Treagear opposed it on the possibility of the Club in the near future to care for the links themselves. He contended that the extra fees would lose many members for the Club and fees for the remaining few would consequently be increase.

The motion was defeated.

The Canberra Times 20 September 1932

CANBERRA HOUSE - BRITISH GOVERNMENT TAKES LEASE - Mr Crutchley's Residence

Workmen are at present carrying out renovations to Canberra House, the former seat of the Territorial Administrator and later the residence of the Chief Commissioner of the Federal Capital Commission.

After having been idle for three years it is shortly to be occupied by Mr ET Crutchley, the representative of the British Government in Australia.

It was officially learned yesterday that Canberra House, which is surrounded by well laid out grounds, has been taken over by the British Government in Australia on a yearly rental basis.

The building has been unoccupied for a number of years, and considerable work is necessary before it can be made ready as the official residency of the British Government in Canberra.

The Canberra Times 30 June 1937

CANBERRA HOUSE - IMPROVEMENTS TO GROUNDS

The grounds at Canberra House are now being renovated and a large number of wattle and other trees are being removed in order to permit the laying down of flower beds. During the past few years the wattles had outlived their usefulness and had prevented a comprehensive gardening scheme being put in hand. It is

expected that when the flower plots have been established and other improvements completed Canberra House, which is the residence of the High commissioner for the United Kingdom (Sir Geoffrey Whiskard) and Lady Whiskard, will become one of the show places of Canberra.

JOHN BUTTERS - 1927 - SIR JOHN BUTTERS, FIRST COMMISSIONER 1925-1929

John Butters was the man who as First Commissioner of the Federal Capital Commission took over the responsibility from the FCAC in January 1925 to speed up the construction work necessary to move the Federal Parliament from Melbourne to Canberra. This he did.

He had limited funds at his disposal. He established the Social Service Association in an attempt to perhaps make the lives of the construction workers, officials and those transferred to Canberra in 1927 a little easier. But he was unable to provide the civic rights that the people demanded and left before his term of office was up.

In 1929 the people of the FCT received a vote for a Third Commissioner, but because of regulations put in place this third commissioner in reality had no powers or real voting rights. Each one of the Third Commissioners remained only for a short period of time. Eventually in 1930 an Advisory Council was formed. Members were elected and they could advise the Minister for the Interior who had final say.

It was not until 1989 that the people of the ACT had an elected local government. Earlier in 1949 the people of the ACT were permitted to elect a local member for the House of Representatives who for many years was only able to vote on local matters. The first was LW Nott who stayed for one term. He was followed by Jim Fraser.

Following are a number of articles from Lyall Gillespie's cards:

Canberra Times 13.5.1927 On 29th October in accordance with the provisions of the seat of Government (Administration) Act the Federal Capital Commission of three was appointed to take office on the 1st January following. John Henry Butters was appointed chairman for a term of five years and Sir John Harrison and Clarence Hardie Gorman were appointed members of the Commission for terms of four and three years respectively. Frederick Watson's History of Canberra pages 215-216

A private ceremony connected with the Royal visit was an investiture at which honours were bestowed which had been approved by His Majesty the King at the New Year and in commemoration of the inauguration of Canberra. In the list Canberra figured prominently, the Chief Commissioner and several officers of the Federal Capital Commission receiving recognition. Sir John Butters. The distinction which has been awarded to Sir John Butters KB, CMG, MBE is one which meets with universal approval on account of his big part in the development of Canberra. To the huge task which was included in preparing Canberra for occupancy by the legislature and administrative bodies of the Commonwealth were added the difficult problems involved in preparing for the Royal visit in a city which was as yet in name only and lacking in conveniences usually available for such a work.

Born in Alverstoke England in 1882, Sir John was educated at Taunton School and University College Southampton, where he graduated with first class honours. He came to Australia where he was identified with the great Hydro Electric Scheme which today is the greatest asset of Tasmania. It was the position of General Manager and Chief Engineer of the Hydro Electric Department that he occupied prior to the appointment in 1924 as Chairman of the Federal Capital Commission. In Tasmania he was chairman of the Tasmanian State Advisory Committee of the Council of Science and Industry.

Sir John as an eminent engineer has been associated prominently with engineers' societies. He is president of the Institute of Electrical Engineers, member of the American Institute of Civil Engineers. Recently he was instrumental in the formation of a branch of the Institute of Engineers, Canberra.

Canberra Times 3.9.1929 While there is no official announcement that the Chief Commissioner Sir John Butters will be relinquishing his position within the next few weeks probably about the beginning of October, it is learned that he will take up office as a director of Babcock and Wilcox Ltd in Sydney about that time. Although the Government is faced with a serious political crisis there is reason to believe that the Prime

Minister will make an early announcement to Parliament on the Government's intentions regarding the failure of the Federal Capital Territory.

Canberra Times 7.9.1929 Sir John Butters was today elected Director of the Australian Benzol and Coal Distillation Ltd. It is understood that he has also accepted a seat on the Sydney Board of Babcock and Wilcox Ltd and will practice in Sydney as a consulting engineer. Two new appointments are to be made under the Seat of Government Administration Act Messrs AJ Christie and JA Murdoch are to be appointed Chief Commissioner and Second Commissioner for a period of twelve months.

Canberra Times 9.9.1929 Sir John Butters realised that reduced expenditure would not justify the continuance of his high salary and he did not propose to seek an extension of his appointment. The second Commissioner, Mr Gould, whose services were generously loaned to the Government by the Council of Malvern for a period of twelve months was desirous of returning to his permanent position. It was accordingly proposed to appoint Mr AJ Christie Director of Posts and Telegraphs at Brisbane as Chief Commissioner and Mr JH Murdoch as Director General of Works and Chief Architect for the Commonwealth as Second Commissioner. It was proposed that Mr Christie should be paid a salary of 1500 pounds and Mr Murdoch 1400 per annum.

WORKMEN'S CAMPS & COTTAGES AT ACTON

LANDS & SURVEY CAMP

The first Lands & Survey Camp consisted of tents. Whether there were surveyors in this camp is not known. Their Canberra camp up until towards the end of 1912 was on Camp Hill (now part of Capital Hill). This camp is most likely the single men's camp. The married quarters that there is reference to in 1917 consisted of humpies erected on the flat land. These cottages were constructed from bag (hessian) and iron. In the area were a number of old farm cottages owned by the Commonwealth that were let to construction workers. A number of these cottages had been condemned as not fit for habitation but because of the shortage of accommodation were let. One such cottage that overlooked Lennox Crossing was tenanted by Ned (Edward) Ryan, foreman of the Lands & Survey men, and his wife Alice and son, Norman. On Christmas Eve 1919 the child aged five was put to bed. He kept calling out that something was in his bed. When the parents checked a snake slid out. The child had been bitten and despite desperate attempts to save his life, he died. There are many documents in NAA that show the distress of the officials and locals. One result was that the old dispensary from Molonglo was moved to Acton and set up as a new house for the Ryan family. [56]

HISTORY OF LANDS & SURVEY CAMP

This camp for workers was established about 1911 at the Acton site. By the late 1920s men from the Lands & Survey branch were joined by others from the Nursery and other general labourers. Some references to this camp are found in the NAA. One example dated 27 April 1921 from JT Mouat Staff Supervisor to the District Surveyor requested that a suitable wooded building be added to the camp for the use of the Lands & Survey Mess. The building was to serve as a headquarters and accommodation for at least six men and a cook. Many of the men stayed all week and returned home at weekends.

Another letter from District Surveyor Sheaffe dated 23 August 1921 noted that labourers permanently employed at Acton had only one room with a fireplace for shelter and the cooking of their meals. He recommended that about six compartments be moved from Molonglo to Acton to house the men. At this time the request was refused. [57]

LIST OF WORKMEN AT ACTON 1917-21.4.1921.

The list notes the ownership of each humpie, materials used in structures, rental and current state of employment in 1921

- Dorman, F Privately owned, galvanised iron roof, hessian walls, 2/- per month. Employed by Commonwealth Works & Railways Dept
- Dunshea, E Privately owned, roof and hessian walls 2/- per month, employed by Commonwealth Afforestation Branch. Dunshea bought his house from TW Robins who was returning to Sydney. Dwelling had a wooden floor.
- Anderson, A Privately owned, galvanised iron roof and hessian walls, 2/- per month; Employed by Commonwealth W&R Dept.

- Wilson, G Commonwealth cottage; galvanised iron; house and ground rent 2/- per week. Employed by Commonwealth; Lands & Survey Branch. This name has * next to it and on the bottom of the list, handwritten *Application by T Beaver to rent - Wilson vacated*. (This cottage was tenanted by Charles May, who vacated 31 August 1919. May was employed by Afforestation and Wilson by the Commonwealth.) [58]

A number of these men with families moved into the 1924 timber portable cottages designed by HM Rolland.

WO Russell's report of buildings in Acton dated **29 September 1917** listed the following structures:

- Temporary workman's cottage 2 R CS Officer-in-charge Afforestation Quarters
- Temporary workman's cottage FCD ex-employee 2/- pw
- Old Cottage CSL &S employee 6/- per week
- Old Cottage CSC Kaye included in lease (Dairy) - [This cottage was on the south side of the Molonglo River on former Klensendorff land grant then part of Duntroon Estate. This area was included at this time as part of Acton.]
- Old Cottage CS Works employee (included in lease) [in pencil *fire station*]

18 November 1918 P Sheaffe wrote to the Surveyor General Melbourne about the Acton Camp sites: *Messrs A Davis; James Stewart; H Thorning; AE Bland and F Dorman occupy camp sites at Acton rent free. They all lived in humpies constructed out of weatherboard and galvanised iron roof...It is understood that at one time been condemned, is the reason that no rent was charged by the late Administrator, however the fact remains that the camp sites are occupied.*

Recommended (1) that the above occupiers, in addition to E Dunshea, dealt with in your memorandum above referred to, be given notice that on and after the 1st December 1918 that they will be required to pay to the Clerk-in-Charge, Accounts Branch Canberra, camp site rent at rate of sixpence per week, monthly in advance. (2) That each occupant execute the usual camp site Tenancy agreement. [57 & 59]

Another cottage was rented after 16 November 1920 by T Beaver who was a Commonwealth employee. The *galvanised iron cottage situated at workmen's camp area Acton* had recently been occupied by Caretaker Wilson. G Wilson had paid 2/- per week and permission was granted to Beaver on the same basis. He moved in on 20 November 1920.

A letter from the Commonwealth Surveyor General dated 19 April 1924 referring to the house of Mr Wallace gives some indication of living conditions at Acton for working class.

Dear Sir, With reference to your residence, I desire to inform you that the same has been condemned by the Medical Officer. It will be necessary therefore for you to either reconstruct the place or else to enter into occupation of a government cottage as soon as one is available.

A submission is being made to the Minister for the erection of several wooden cottages in the vicinity of Acton and when such are available you must vacate the house which at present you occupy. [61]

A second letter dated 5 April 1924 from Henry Stoker to the Commonwealth Surveyor General gives the reason for the move. It in part reads:

Have inspected Mr Wallace's House on the flat and gave necessary instructions re disinfecting the room from which the sick child was removed...The house is an old time structure which needs to be replaced. I noticed there were several houses served by two double water closets, which in the case of Mr Wallace's house is at a distance of over 100 yards. The distance is such, as at night, and with children, to make more than probable that these WCs are not always used, the surface of the ground being polluted instead. [62]

William Wallace and family moved into No 1 Acton Cottages in 1924.

TEMPORARY PORTABLE WOODEN COTTAGES DESIGNED BY HM ROLLAND BASED ON CONTRACTOR HOWIE'S COTTAGES AT WESTLAKE.

These cottages were the same design as those erected at Westlake earlier in 1923 and occupied from March 1924. They were 24ft x24ft - four rooms - 2 bedrooms, lounge and kitchen. At the rear was a 'lean to' that held the combined laundry and bathroom and a lavatory. The latter was entered from outside the building. The bath was tin and water for it was heated in the wood fired copper and carried across to the bath in buckets. The Acton cottages differed to the Westlake houses in that they were painted a fawn colour and the Westlake cottages - green. Members of the old Acton Cottages erected a plaque close to the site of their old houses in memory of those who lived there. The Acton cottages also differed to the Westlake ones in that they had an added verandah and a brick fire place. The cottages were pulled down or sold sometime around the early 1960 when preparation for Lake Burley Griffin commenced.



Above: Acton plaque erected near the site of the old cottages. Behind to the left is the site of the children's playground. The cottages were removed and/or demolished in 1961. Mrs Amy West (nee Dunshea - deceased) was the person instrumental for the beginnings of this project and responsible for much of the research carried out.

HISTORY OF THE COTTAGES

1. *On 3rd April [1924] the Minister approved of the construction of five portable cottages at Canberra for workmen employed by this Department. The capital cost is estimated at 360 pounds each - 1,800 pounds for the five.*
2. *The Surveyor General has now forwarded a request that ten of these cottages be constructed as it is desired that the men be comfortably housed before the winter sets in. Mr Goodwin further recommends the construction of a 'somewhat similar cottage' for Mr Breen, the Manager of the Bachelors' Quarters.*
3. *It is recommended:-*
 - a. *That approval be given to the construction of ten cottages as requested by the Surveyor General.*
 - b. *That the rental be fixed at 12/- per week, as recommended by the Surveyor General, and already adopted by the Works Director. This amounts to about 31 pounds per annum, which is not quite 10 per cent of the capital cost (exclusive of land value, rates etc).*
4. *It is thought that the Surveyor General has submitted sufficient information in regard to the proposed cottage for Mr Breen. No estimate of cost has been supplied for this structure which Mr Goodwin apparently intends to be slightly different from the others. Moreover it is understood that Mr Breen's duties require his presence at the Bachelors' Quarters constantly. It is suggested that further information be sought in this regard.*
5. *Mr Goodwin states that a brick fire place is necessary. The ordinary workmen's cottages are finished with a tin fireplace. Mr Goodwin considers it unreasonable to expect families to live in a cottage heated by a small stove set in a tin fireplace. The cottages for Lands and Survey Staff will be semi-permanent and will remain for some years. Mr Daley, Secretary to the Advisory Committee informs me that the cottages for Mr Goodwin's staff will there for the life of the cottages. With the brick fireplace the cost of each cottage will be increased from 360 pounds to 400 pounds. So far as the Lands and Survey branch is concerned the cottages cannot be regarded as portable, but it is an opportunity of obtaining a cheap type of residence.*
6. *Regarding the rental Mr Goodwin apparently does not intend to increase the rental of 12/- per week previously fixed. This is the rental charged by Works and Railways for their cottages. I consider, however, that it would be creating an invidious distinction to give our employees*

better cottages for the same rental. It is considered that reasonable rental would be 13/- per week. This is proportionately based on the Works and Railways rental, viz:—

- i. $\frac{12/- \times 600}{360}$ 1 pound per week

7. *It is recommended therefore:*

a. *Workmen's cottages - Construction of 10 cottages at 400 pounds each - rental of 13/- per week*

b. *Mr Breen's Cottage - Construction of 1 cottage 600 pounds - rental of 1 pound per week*

8. *It may be stated that although these proposals may be submitted by us, it is by no means certain that the Minister for Works and Railways will make this money available. Mr Stewart's idea was originally for a 250 pound cottage. This was increased subsequently to permit of sewerage and other conveniences. It was only because of the health standpoint that he authorised an increase to 360 pounds. (Approved GFP 3/5/1924). [63]*

A document dated February 1924 listed the following people applying for the cottages: Mrs Carr; Mr Lynch Afforestation; Mr Blewitt Afforestation - named crossed out with *Marshall, must wait*; Mr Hourigan Afforestation; (2) Mr Griffiths Afforestation; (4) Mr Carr Afforestation; Mr Green Lands; Bourke Lands; Mr Reilly (crossed out with above written *Dunshea Afforestation* and written underneath, *Reilly also Afforestation*); Mr Ryan Works; Mr Wallace Lands. (1) *Dunshea to get first vacant cottage. [64b]*

Ten cottages were built and followed by another five to bring the number up to fifteen.

By July 1924 the cottages were completed and occupied. They were tenanted commencing with No 1 at the western end:

1. W Wallace (2.10.1924) Lands Department
2. Mrs C Wylie Chairwoman
3. C Marshall Afforestation Branch
4. E Dunshea Cleaner
5. E Thurgold. Cook Hotel Canberra - name crossed out with JW Mitchell
Bars placed at No 5. Earlier notation had Bourke 25.9.1924.
6. W Green Lands Department
7. JH Saunders Chauffeur (J Lynch 1.10.1924 also on list for No 7)
8. T Ryan (22.7.1924) Works Branch
9. M Heseleden Foreman Plaster (on another list Wm Reilly 6.8.1924)
10. Mrs Withers Laundress (another list had SF Griffiths 1.10.1924)
11. S Marguels Afforestation
12. Bachelors Quarters Staff (this was the house designed for Mr Breen
known as the Big House)
13. J Stuart Works Branch
14. F Dorman Works Branch
15. J Priston Hotel Canberra.

The first house was allocated to J Ryan on 22 July 1924.

A plan of the cottage area showed that next door to No 1 Acton Cottages there were two iron buildings belonging to W Wallace and A Anderson and a hessian building belonging to T Ryan. Nearby to cottages 4 and 5 was the original Dunshea cottage. [64]

In October 1928 Mr Francis lived in Acton Cottages. The family lived in Molonglo and was a labourer working with Parks and Gardens from 7 September 1927 when he was offered a cottage at Acton because he played in the Brass Band where the headquarters and practice centre was. He was like the majority of younger men working in the territory, an ex soldier and he may not have been well when he walked out on his wife and children. [66]. The loss of the income earner for the family put them in dire straits. There was no widows' pension in the territory. Following is part of a letter written at the time:

*Under your instructions I have fully investigated the case of the above and have to report as follows:-
Sergeant Cook informed me that a warrant had been issued for the arrest of the husband of Mrs Francis and he considered it would be better for Mrs Francis and her children if she moved to Queanbeyan as the Child*

Welfare Department could take up her case. She would probably be allowed 10/- per week for each of her five children. While this family remains in Canberra they cannot claim an allowance...

Mrs Francis requires assistance immediately, as the funds of the Returned Soldiers League and other charitable sources from which she was receiving help, are exhausted. Mrs Francis informs me that the Storekeeper (Mr O'Keefe) is asking for settlement and she has only enough food for herself and the five children to last two days...[65]



Above right: Alan Gane at home (12 Westlake) on leave in early 1940s. He called in to Acton where he rented one of Mrs Llewellyn's horses to ride home. Mrs Llewellyn was one of Acton's well remembered locals. She kept horses including Trooper, which at aged 16 was still winning races.

Acton in 2010 is vastly different to the early years. The second hospital built in the early 1940s was imploded. Some of debris flew across the lake and hit a young girl who died. The site of this hospital is now covered with the buildings of the Museum of Australia. The lake has filled and covered the area of the workmen's cottages; the government departments and library have moved and the Australian National University has taken over much of the land. Sullivan's Creek still flows, but not longer flows free. Canberra House and many of the small timber cottages built for the officials along with sections of the Bachelors Quarters have survived.