

MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Saturday, 18 September 2010 at 11:29:14 AM

10.5.10

CURRENT WEATHER

ROBERTSON FAMILY HISTORY

Scotland Circa 1760

William Robertson, circa 1760, and *Jean Robertson, (Ormiston), circa 1765*, from Penicuik, Scotland, a town which lies along the northern bank of the steep-sided River North Esk, with the main A702 from Edinburgh to Biggar and the M74, lying a little closer to the base of the Pentlands,
<http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/penicuik/penicuik/index.html> were parents of early Victorian Pioneer, *William Robertson, (1795-1891)*.

They were also parents-in law of William's wife, *Marion (McGilchrist), (1793-1866)*, of West Linton, Scotland, an attractive and ancient village lying to the south of the main A702 trunk road from Edinburgh to the M74 and the south. The village was originally known simply as Linton, but the post office that opened there in 1765 was called West Linton to distinguish it from another Linton, now East Linton, in East Lothian. The villages swiftly adopted the names of their post offices, leaving generations of travellers since to wonder why East and West Linton are 37 miles apart.

<http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/westlinton/westlinton/index.html>

(It is not known if there were any other children from the marriage of William Robertson and Jean Ormiston)

Melbourne, Australia Current Weather

THE FOLLOWING LINKS



Provide Further Information On William Robertson And His Descendants

1. WILLIAM ROBERTSON'S DESCENDANTS 1795-2010



By Name, Lineage & Relationship

WILLIAM ROBERTSON 1795-1891

MARION MCGILCHRIST 1793-1866



William Robertson, from Midlothian, Scotland, son of William and Jean Robertson (*Ormiston*), was born 3 February 1795. William's wife **Marion** (McGilchrist), (*a daughter of the Rev James McGilchrist, (West Linton Presbyterian Church) and Elizabeth (Ballantyne)*), was born on 23 April 1793 at West Linton, Scotland. Little is known of William Robertson's early life, other than he had a drapery and tailoring business in Edinburgh, where he was also a Justice of the Peace.

William and Marion had seven children who (*judging by their dates of birth, all being pre 1833*), were born in Scotland;

Elizabeth Robertson (*Perry*), 12-5-1818 -1852

Marion Robertson (*Kettle then Stokes*) 29-3-1821 - ?

James McGilchrist Robertson 14-1-1823 - ?

William Robertson 11-2-1825 - 23-8-1892

Lillias Robertson (*Bertram*), ?-11-1826-10-11-1913

Johana Robertson 1830-pre 1832

Jean **Robertson** (*Scott*) 1832-1920

In February 1833, William, together with his wife Marion and six of their seven children, departed from the Port of Leith, (Edinburgh), aboard the SS Thomas of London, bound for Sydney, Australia.

2. HISTORICAL PHOTOS/DOCUMENTS



Relating To William-Marion Robertson and Descendants

3. JAMES MCGILCHRIST ROBERTSON



This link relates specifically to a direct line of descent from William and Marion Robertson, through James McGilchrist Robertson, (1823-?), third eldest, (first son), of their seven children, to present day fifth generation Australian descendants, Lynette Power, (Maher), Carole Power, (McLennan), and their seventh generation descendant grandchildren.

4. WILLIAM ROBERTSON FAMILY TREE RESEARCH



Progress Updates



A water colour illustration from a
1908 Autograph book of
Maggie Robertson (1881-1935)

Just why William left Scotland for Australia is unknown, but there is a considered school of thought, ([Stevenson McGilchrist: William Robertson, Victorian Pioneer 1837-1890](#)), that he may well have been a Dissenter.

Dissenters were Protestants who dissented from the doctrine of the 17th century Church of England. They were also known as Non Conformists, a name taken by the Puritans protesting against the 1662 Act of Uniformity. Ebenezer Erskine who led the dissenters in Scotland, seperated from the Established Church in 1733. Many Dissenters who were subject to a number of legal disabilities, both civil and religious, were hanged for their beliefs with others dying in prison. In later years the Dissenters became the Independent Church, which later still became known as the Congregational Church.

While Stevenson McGilchrist's thoughts on William's reasons for coming to Australia are purely speculative, William did become an active member of the Independent Church upon his arrival in in Hobart Town.

After six months and nineteen days at sea, the good ship, SS Thomas, reached Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land (*Tasmania*). However as a fire had broken out in the vessel, the captain was forced to beach the ship, with all aboard escaping with their lives and most of their belongings.

5. HOME PAGE (AND)



What We Have Set Out To Do

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. [Click Main Photos To Enlarge Image](#)
2. While the information on this page is believed to be accurate, it would nevertheless be appreciated if any errors or inaccuracies are discovered, could be brought to the attention of Lyn & Alan Maher, ancestry22@optusnet.com.au at the earliest opportunity.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[Stevenson McGilchrist's 1967 publication, "William Robertson, Victorian Pioneer 1837-1890", a copy of which he thoughtfully provided to other family descendants](#)

[?](#) [?](#) [Sr Teresa Clarebrough.](#)

www.pioneersall.bounce.com.au
[Wooling Hill Garden Estate](#)



John Glover's "A view of Hobart Town" 1832

Numerous descendants of William and Marion Robertson, who have provided information/historical photos for the benefit of future descendants

William, (for reasons unknown), chose to settle in Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land, (renamed Tasmania in 1852 when it was granted constitutional government), and established a Drapery and tailoring business in Elizabeth St, from where he carried on his business for the next five years. On 13 September 1833 the Hobart Town Courier carried the following advertisement;

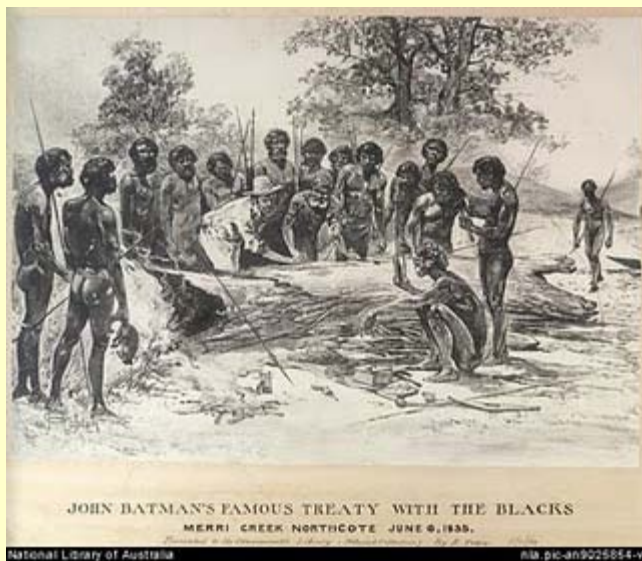
"William Robertson, Tailor and Draper, late passenger of the Ship Thomas, takes leave most respectfully to intimate to the Gentry and Public of Hobart Town and the Colony, that he has commenced business in those central premises, Elizabeth Street, lately occupied by Mr James Crow.

From Experience in business, strict attention combined with elegance and economy, he hopes to merit a share of public patronage. N.B. Ladies Riding Habits, and Children's dresses, as well as everything in the trade done up in first style. An assortment of ready-made coats of the very best quality, will be sold at low prices for cash".

While in Hobart Town, William Robertson became very friendly with John Pascoe Fawkner,

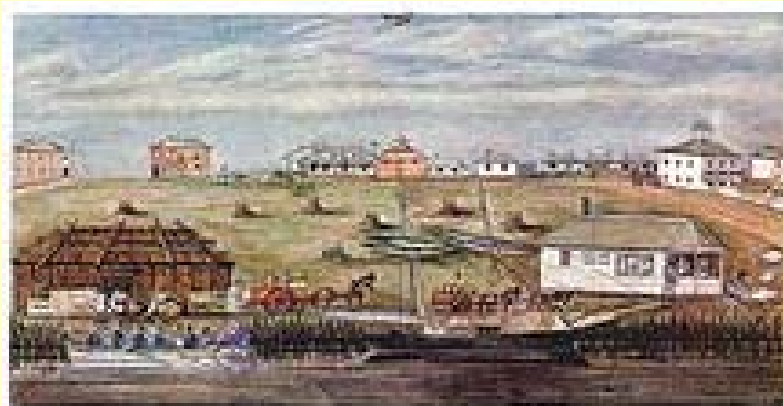


<http://museumvictoria.com.au/collections/themes/2621/john-pascoe-fawkner-businessman-melbourne-pioneer-1792-1869> who in 1835 in company with John Batman, took up land on the Yarra at the head of Port Phillip Bay, making them the original European settlers of Melbourne.



"John Batman's famous treaty with the blacks" June 6 1835

During his time in Hobart Town, William was encouraged by John Pascoe Fawkner to go to Melbourne to view the new settlement, which Fawkner considered to be far ahead of what was then Van Diemen's Land. William came to Melbourne in late 1837, and purchased a block of land in Collins St, near the north west corner of Collins and Elizabeth St's.



Melbourne Landing

Water colour by W. Liardet (1840)

www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutMelbourne/History/Pages/SettlementtoCity.aspx

After some two years in Melbourne, William Robertson decided to take up the land and in 1839 found a favourable spot, (*now known as Elderslie*), near Mount Macedon, but discovered that this land had already been taken up by a Thomas Ferrier Hamilton and J Carr-Riddell.

William then looked across the creek to a place the local aborigines called "Woolong", following which he returned to Melbourne and made application for a grant of land from the New South Wales Government, which was subsequently granted.

William's choice of land was a wise one. The property, consisting of acreage and lease hold land extending along the foot of the Macedon Ranges, was situated in beautiful country at the foot of Mount Macedon.

In 1840 William Robertson established his estate which he called Wooling, making it one of the very earliest settlements in the district. *The name Wooling is believed to originate from the Aboriginal word "woolong", meaning "much water coming together/nestling of many waters", which was indicative of the area at the time.*

The following extract from Balliere's Victorian Gazette of 1865, (Robert P. Whitworthy), states; *Wooling Station (County Bourke); occupier Robertson W.; area 5700 acres ; grazing capability 342 head of cattle; is situated on the Kerri creek (the upper portion of Macedon River), four miles from Gisborne."*

It is believed that most of this land at the time was held by squatting licence, because the Lands Title Office reveals that on June 2, 1854, a Crown Grant of Portion One was made to William Robertson, with a further Crown Grant of Portions 2 and 2A, made to William Robertson on 18 March, 1859. Having selected the land he wished to settle, William set about building a home for his family.

The Centenary Gift Book published in 1934 says of Marion Robertson: In 1840 Mrs Robertson journeyed up the rough track from Melbourne by bullock dray and settled in the little house her husband had built on the edge of the dreaded Black Forest. She got on splendidly with the Macedon blacks, who are said to have been fierce and warlike, and particularly befriended two old gins who were always about the place. Of an intensely kind and generous nature, she thought nothing of riding miles to help a woman in time of trouble and many babies had their first bath at her gentle hands. Her house was always open to the sick and tired.

Robertson Family Photo (thought to be)

Front: William-1825 - Elizabeth-1818 Marion-1821

Back: James-1823 - Jean-1832 - William Robertson-1795

Lillias-1826



Once the homestead had been established, William built a saw pit and mill to take advantage of the abundance of hardwood timber available nearby, turning his sawpit and saw mill into a commercial operation which would employ many local men, and eventually supply most of the timber for the Melbourne to Bendigo Railway Line, and the majority of buildings constructed within a 30 mile radius. William's saw mill is believed to have been the first commercial saw mill in Victoria.



The saw pit and subsequent saw mill served the local area well for around thirty years, following which William discontinued it in favour of general and dairy farming which he combined with grazing.

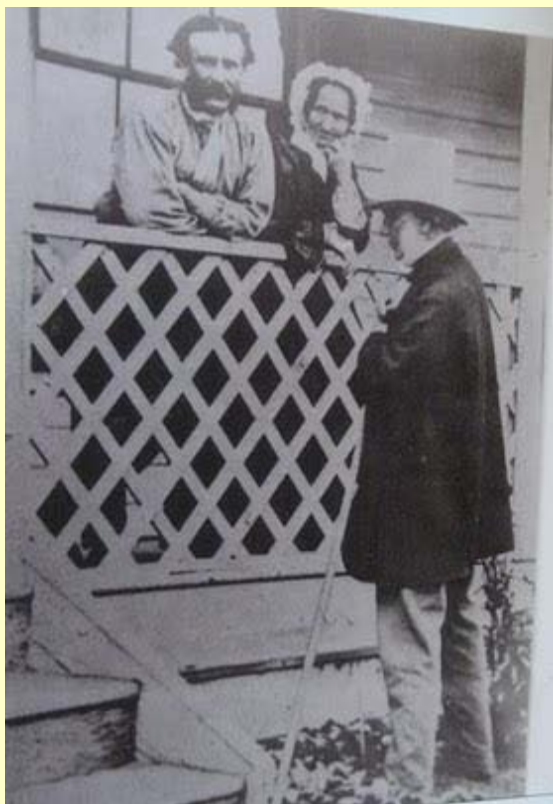


James McGilchrist Robertson by Wooling saw mill Circa 1887

Seemingly another first for him was the construction of fish breeding ponds on his property and the successful introduction and breeding of brown trout. During the 1860's and 1870's William was a member of the Zoological Acclimatisation Society of Victoria and it was under "their control and superintendence" that the project was undertaken.

Along with his substantial farming interests, timber and fish breeding, William also had commercial interests in and around Gisborne, either directly or in partnership with family members. Such enterprises included the Bush Inn and a brick kiln with his son-in-law, George Stokes, and a hay and corn store and later general store with his nephew James McGilchrist. William also found time to lobby for, and help establish, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and the local Mechanics Institute, both buildings for which he is credited with having donated the timber.

He is reputed to have been "A man of a genial manner, although stern to any fraud or deceit, offering great hospitality with a very intelligent interest in all passing events, and a liking to pose as a leader of men. Popular with the public and in his element when dispensing justice from the Bench, serving as a Justice of the Peace for 30 years, Treasurer at St Andrews for 8 years and a Trustee almost until the day he died.



*William and Marion Robertson,
with son James (TBC)*

Whatever his public face, things would seem to have been somewhat different at home. William's nephew James McGilchrist wrote in his memoirs that, "*his uncle ... made no effort to win the love of his children, who all feared him, and even his saintly wife lived in dread of him.* He reputedly spent his evenings alone in the living room, and at 9.00pm a bell was rung for all members of the household to come in for family prayers.

In 1905, William and Marion's daughter Lillias, when interviewed by a newspaper reporter around that time, laid claim to being the oldest surviving settler when describing the family's arrival in Melbourne in 1837;

"We came up the Yarra, and the passengers were carried ashore by blackfellows, who had to wade through a sea of mud. When we arrived in Melbourne there was nothing but tents and wattle and daub huts. Water was scarce and vegetables were a luxury only to be purchased by a few.

We were natives of Edinburgh and colonial life was a great change from what we had been accustomed to. The heat and mosquitoes were almost unbearable. I've never felt them so bad since. There were no sanitary laws; consequently fever was prevalent in the camps. When we got settled, I and some other members of the family were sent to school - the Scotch College. It was a mixed school in those days. After about two years in Melbourne we moved to Wooling". Stevenson McGilchrist claims that while there were some inaccuracies in her recollections, the report in general is interesting.

In later years when the children of William and Marion Robertson had families of their own, Wooling came to resemble a small village. Sadly, the Wooling created by William Robertson is long gone. He passed the property to William, his second son, (fourth child), but over time the land has been sold off and subdivided many times.



William & Marion Robertson with (*unconfirmed*)
(left) son, William (1825-1892)
daughter in law Katherine Miller (1849-1891)
(right) son, James (1823) - daughter in law Ann Jackman (1820-
1896)

In William's early days before Gisborne existed, when death came to Wooling, burials took place at a private location on the property. The burial place at Wooling, is on an open hillside at the foot of Mount Robertson, within a forty foot square enclosure

demarcated by a wooden post and rail fence, Cypress trees and shrubs. It is believed that the Cypress trees are recorded on the National Trust Tree Register, as "*Trees of Interest*". *Enquiries are being made with the National Trust to seek clarification on whether or not this is so. The outcome of these enquiries will be noted on this page.*

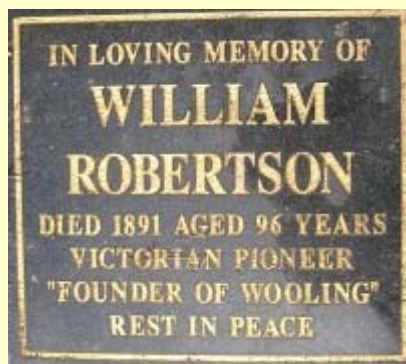
According to research the burial place contains the unmarked graves of William and Marion Robertson, the following relatives, and Mrs Vince, a long time employee.

- 1854: William Bertram 1848-1907
- 1858: Marion (Kettle/Stokes) Robertson 1821-1858
- 1860: Elizabeth Scott 1861
- 1860: Lillias Scott 1858
- 1866: Henry Arthur Scott 1864
- 1866: Marion (McGilchrist) Robertson 1793-1866
- 1866: James Kettle 1840-1866
- 1867: Marion (McGilchrist) Kettle 1841-1867
- 1872: Benjamin Perry
- 1872: William Perry
- 1880: Katherine (Miller) Robertson 1849-1891
- 1881: Jane (Scott) Robertson
- 1890: Ormiston Robertson
- 1891: William Robertson 1795-1891
- and; Mrs Vince, *(a long time employee)*

The Pioneer Robertson Family Cemetery can be seen to this day at Wooling Hill Estate, a private property located at 372 Barringo Road, New Gisborne, Vic, now known as Wooling Memorial Park, where loved one's ashes can be scattered or interred with a memorial plaque.



William Robertson, (*according to Stevenson McGilchrist Book*), died in 1890 aged 95 years. However according to the Victorian Registrar of Birth's and Deaths, (#1506), William Robertson died at Essendon, Vic, in 1891, aged 96 years, which is in keeping with the plaque laid in his memory at Wooling Hill Estate, Memorial Park.



In later years plaque's commemorating the lives of;
Annie (Anne) Isobel Stokes (Tebble), 1913-2000
Mary Halliday Stokes (Taylor), 1913-2004'
Joan Stokes (Bunt), 1916-2005,
descendants of William and Marion Robertson,
have been placed in the Robertson Family Cemetery.

One can only assume that William and Marion Robertson would have been in full agreement of the end use of their property in this day and age.



*This "Work in Progress Document" will be amended, added to
and
corrected as further historical information comes to hand.*

POSTED BY . AT 9:32 PM

1 COMMENTS:

[Anonymous said...](#)

This is fantastic! Could you please let me know when you update the tree to include myself and my family? Melanie

JUNE 19, 2010 4:45 AM

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