**MONTMORENCY AND THE NICHOLSON FAMILY**

On 5 February 1839, James Graham bought 925 acres of land at public auction on behalf of Stuart Alexander Donaldson, the future Premier and Chief Secretary of NSW, for £1179.7.6. Donaldson wasted no time in putting the land on the market, under the name of Montmorenci Estate, on 28 March 1840, well before his Crown Grant was registered on 9 September 1840. By 31 December 1840, James Donnithorne, a retired civil servant of the Honourable East India Company, one of his business associates, purchased it for £2312, and immediately raised a Mortgage with Marcus West Loane for £2000, leasing the land on 30 July 1841.

James died in Newtown NSW 25 May 1852, leaving an annuity of £20 pa. for life to his mistress, Ann Kelly, later Jones, with whom he had had two children. The remainder of his Australian estate, which included Montmorency Estate, went to his daughter, Eliza Emily Donnithorne, who, having come to Australia about 1846 from England, where she had been living with her brother Edward, remained in Camperdown Lodge Newtown, her father's rented house, for the rest of her life.

Eliza and her brother Edward Harris Donnithorne, were beneficiaries of the will of their uncle, Captain William Donnithorne, Eliza receiving 5/6 and Edward 1/6 of a property near Sydney, Roddam Farm. They sold this in 1854 for £6000. Eliza was in dispute with the Shire of Eltham from 1874 to about 1878 regarding the amount of compensation for the Shire's acquisition of part of Montmorency Estate to construct the Greensborough-Eltham (now Karingal) Road); she apparently insisted on an unrealistic valuation of the subject land.

Edward died at his home of Colne Lodge in England on 1 February 1885, and Eliza on 20 May 1886. Apart from a number of minor legacies and provisions, her English, NSW and Victorian properties were left to her nephews Edward George Moore Donnithorne and Arthur Brampton Donnithorne. Arthur predeceased her, and as his will was in favour of his wife Aeddan, she became part owner of Montmorency Estate. George Levinge Whately, a solicitor, became Trustee in place of Arthur. The Estate was leased to William Charles Britnell in 1891 and renewed until 1902 in 1899. He was followed by Henry Doig, and then by Terence Callaghan, a dairyman from Collingwood, from 1906 to 1911. From 1892, E. G. M. Donnithorne arranged pay outs for all the commitments provided for in Eliza's will, which relieved pressure on rents from the Estate, but his personal finances became dire owing to his expenditure on weaponry development for which he took out mortgages between 1888 and 1894 , and he became bankrupt. (1)

In 1898 E. G. M. Donnithorne and George Whately transferred part ownership to Arthur Arundell Donnithorne, the eldest son and heir of Arthur B. Donnithorne. (2) So by 1902, A. A. Donnithorne shared ownership with Lt. Col Robert Edward Stuart Harington Stuart, his uncle, Aeddan Blanche Muriel Donnithorne, his sister and George Whately, acting on behalf of the bankrupt E. G. M. Donnithorne, who died in 1906. (2) However, it appears that Arthur transferred his interest to the others on 20 May 1903. (3)

In 1909, Stuart, Whately and Aeddan, now married to Geoffrey Seccombe Hett, applied to convert the title to Torrens, bringing it under the Transfer of Land Act 1890 (Application 37890), and had the property re-surveyed to ensure the accuracy of its description and to enable plans of subdivision for sale of the entire property. Certificate of Title Vol. 3423 Fol. 537 was issued on 6 September 1910, the land being described as 940 acres three roods and six perches in extent. (4) Sales commenced on 10 October 1911 with 63 acres bought by McMurtrie Orr, and continued until 11 July 1916 with the balance being bought by Arthur Grenbry Outhwaite. (5)

In May 1870, John Lambert Nicholson, Gentleman, and his wife and children, unassisted immigrants to Victoria, arrived in Melbourne on the *Madras* in May 1870. The family consisted of John Lambert, ag. 50, his wife Margaret ag. 45, daughters Margaret Georgina ag. 13 and Hannah Wilhelmina ag. 6, and sons John ag. 9, and George Cornwall ag. 3. (They may have had another daughter, identified as a Mrs. R. E. Figgis in the 1920s). They came from Castletown, Berehaven, Co. Cork, Ireland, and settled in Black Hill, Ballarat, Victoria. (6)

George is recorded as practicing as a dental surgeon MACD at 89 Collins Street Melbourne in partnership with a Mr. Pincott in 1900, and in 1901 as a sole practitioner at the same address until about 1921, residing at 28 Normanby Street Middle Brighton (also known as "Oomoobah" and later "Glengarriff") until about 1920. He gained his D.D.Sc by thesis in 1914. He married Roberta McKenzie (f. Donald McKenzie, m. Mary Hodgson) in 1905, and they had two children, Rosa Margaret Roberta b. Brighton in 1907, and George William Lambert b. Castlemaine in 1915. (7) Nothing is known of his brother John, but his sister Margaret Georgina is recorded as living in Elsternwick in 1906 and practicing as a masseuse from 1913, living at 13 Beavis Street and later at 59 Murray Street Elsternwick, and sister Hannah Wilhelmina working as a nurse and living at Brighton, East Melbourne and finally at 59 Murray Street Elsternwick. (8) Neither married, Margaret dying in 1929 and "Sister Mina" RINA on 23 June 1931. (9) No marriage has been found for Rosa, and Sgt. George William Nicholson is recorded as becoming engaged to Audrey Robin Fleetwood in September 1944. (10)

It would appear that George and Roberta moved to "Glengarriff" in Mountain View Road Montmorency about 1920, advertising for a governess for the two children in January and May 1921, although the 11 acres of land on which the house was situated was not purchased by George until 25 July 1923 (from Arthur Vincent Green, Anglican Bishop of Ballarat). (11) There is no doubt about their occupation of the house at this time, as the dates of advertisements (for governess, sale of livestock and pasturage), and George's published correspondence on the state of local roads, water supply and road access to the planned Montmorency Railway Station extended from August 1920 to October 1923. (12)

He was Vice-President of the Eltham RSLSSIA, and he and his family were active in the activities of St Faith's church and Sunday school, which were close to their home. He and his wife also hosted a "Meadow Party" for the short-lived British Association of Loyalists in August 1926 - quite a grand affair, with 120 people attending. (13)

It appears that he transferred his dental practice to Greensborough after moving to Montmorency, while maintaining a leasehold "Counting house" at 169 Collins Street Melbourne until about 1934. (14) He transferred title to his entire property to Roberta in 1932, (15) and no will or probate is recorded as existing. Margaret Georgina and Hannah Wilhelmina became joint proprietors of about four acres on Mountain View Road in July 1914. (16) Margaret transferred her interest to the Church of England in 1917 and 1919, and the remaining land went to Rosa after Hannah's death. (17) Some 3 acres adjacent to Price Avenue was transferred to Rosa in October 1936; (18) this land was transferred by trustees to Ella Margaret and Emily Doris Figgis on 18 Aug 1939. (19) Four lots totalling just over one acre on Mountain View Road were transferred by Roberta to George William in February 1949. (20)

There are inconsistent accounts of their place of residence in 1934, as the local paper published an expression of regret on Mrs and Miss Nicholson "leaving the district" and moving to Elsternwick. (21) George is recorded as at both the Montmorency and Murray Street addresses in 1935, and as a dentist in Elsternwick in 1937; but electoral rolls confirm his continuous residence at the address at Mountain View Road, with wife and children in 1937, (22) and the S & M directory lists him at Mountain View Road in 1939. (23) (However, their entries are not always current). Furthermore, it is probable that by then he had retired from his dental practice; particularly as "Senility" extending for four years was recorded as one of the causes of his death at home at "Glengarriff" in Mountain View Road on 29 November 1940. (24)

The Inventory of Assets compiled for Probate of Roberta's Will included Real Estate of four parcels of land, three within the Glengarriff Estate valued at £9,750 and one in Rattray Road valued at £3,500, and Personal Estate consisting of cash, debentures, rents, debts owing, furniture and effects and a mortgage totalling £10,522. The executors and trustees were instructed to pay income of the estate to Rosa, and on her death, capital and income to her grandchildren. If Rosa married, half of these monies were to go to her brother's children. No provision was made for her son, George William, as "gifts were made to him during [her] lifetime". (29, 30)

"Glengarriff" (sometimes spelled "Glengariff) is the name of a village on the Beara Peninsula in Co. Cork. The Nicholsons applied it to both their Elsternwick and Montmorency homes, (25) and in the days before house numbering became common, it formed their official address. It was used by Real Estate agents to describe the Estate that commenced to be marketed in about 1938, first by Western Homes, then by Coghill & Son, (26) and in 1954 by T. M. Burke Pty Ltd. (27) It was in use at the time of Roberta's death on 30/4/1963 (28) when the last remnants of the Donnithorne land were sold, and it is still used today. The date of construction of the house, and for whom, is unknown, but the recollection of local residents is that it was demolished for subdivision into home sites in the mid-1960s. Its likely location is on the present sites of Nos. 3 and 5 Glengarriff Crescent.

*Peter Simmenauer*

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***Notes on Sources***

The period up to 1911 has mostly been drawn from *Montmorency: the farm on the Plenty,* by Maureen Jones, together with documents included in the PROV files VPRS 460/P0000/3780 (App. 3780). Rosa Nicholson's Will and Probate from VPRS 7591/P0003/545 and 28/P0004/3227; Death Certificate George Cornwall Nicholson RN 21583/1940 from Registry of BDMs; Certificates of Title from *Landata*; letters, notices and newspaper advertisements kindly supplied by Peter Van Eeken from *Trove* held in GHS files, and others as listed below.

**REFERENCES**

1. Jones, Maureen*. Montmorency: the farm on the Plenty.* A & M Jones, 2015

2. Conveyance E G M Donnithorne & G L Whately to A A Donnithorne 835/400 15 May 1898

3. Conveyance A A Donnithorne to Robert E S Harington Stuart & others 829/421 20 May 1903

4. C/T Vol. 3423 Fol. 537 6 Sep 1910

5. *Appendix 1:* Transfers from Title 3423/537

6. Inward passenger lists: unassisted passengers 1852-1923

7. Victorian Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages

8. *Sands & Mcdougall's Melbourne and Suburban Directory* 1900-1945

9. *Argus* 26 June 1931 p. 1

10. *Argus* 7 September 1944 p. 8

11. C/T Vol. 3776 Fol. 101 11 Feb 1914: Trf. 25 Jul 1923

12. Correspondence: *Eltham and Whittlesea Advertiser* 20 Aug. 1920, 7 Dec 1920 & 9 Jun 1922*; Argus* 27 Nov 1920, 28 Jan 1921, 4 May 1921 & 23 Feb 1922*; Hurstbridge Advertiser* 8 Jun 1923, 23 Sep 1923, 12 Oct 1923, 26 Oct 1923 & 22 Oct 1926.

13. *Table Talk* 19 Jul 1926 p. 57 & *The Australasian* 18 Aug 1926 p. 60

14. *Sands & Mcdougall op. cit.*

15. C/T Vol. 5095 Fol. 857 Trf. 17 Aug 1932

16. C/T Vol. 3821 Fol. 034 16 Jul 1914

17. C/T Vol. 3821 Fol. 034 Tfrs. 20 Feb 1917 & 3 Jul 1919

18. C/T Vol. 6068 Fol. 511

19. C/T Vol. 6068 Fol. 511 Tfr 18 Aug 1939

20. C/T Vol. 6068 Fol. 512 Tfr 9 Feb 1949

21. *Hurstbridge Advertiser* 13 Apr 1934 p. 2

22. Australia Electoral Rolls 1906 -1937

23. Sands & Mcdougall 1939

24. Death Certificate George Cornwall Nicholson 29 Nov 1940 Reg. No. 21583

25. Sands & Mcdougall 1919-21

26. Glengarriff Estate Montmorency For Sale Coghill & Son (sub-division plan) 1938?

27. *Argus* 11 Jun 1954 Glengarriff Estate T. M. Burke Pty Ltd

28. C/T Vol. 8499 Fols. 733 & 734 18 Aug 1964.

29. Will of Roberta Nicholson 5 April 1963 (Witnesses M F Ricardo & L G Spear)

30. Probate of the Will of Roberta Nicholson granted 8 September 1964

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