

28 May 2012

Mr John Close
Archivist
Yarra Valley Grammar School
Kalinda Road
RINGWOOD VIC 3134

Dear John,

Re: **The Larkin Family**

I read with interest the article in the Link about the history of the school site and the previous ownership by the Larkin Family. That interest was influenced, of course, by the fact that the site was acquired on behalf of the school by my father Allan Ballard Carter who was an inaugural and foundation member of the School Council. I set about undertaking my research.

Crown Grant Volume 1700 Folio 927 shows that "Thomas Larkin of Ringwood" purchased 51 acres 2 roods 22 perches (about 20.9 hectares) being Crown Allotment 40 in the Parish of Warrandyte from the Crown on 9 March 1885 for 52 pounds, being the prevailing rate of £1 per acre or part thereof.

That land fronted two government roads, now known as Kalinda Road and Plymouth Road but earlier known as Wonga Park Road and Wonga Road. The distinctive kink in the school's Plymouth Road frontage dates from that time.

Adjacent to the land, on the corner of those two roads, was Crown Allotment 40A which you identify as having been acquired by Richard Willoughby in 1876. That title contained an area of exactly 20 acres (8.09 hectares).

Larkin's Crown Grant then notes that Michael Larkin of Victoria Street Camberwell, Gentleman, and Norah Larkin of Warrandyte, Widow, took title on 22 June 1892 as Executor & Executrix of the Will of Thomas Larkin who died on 10 May 1891.

Norah Larkin was presumably the widow of Thomas Larkin. The address ("of Warrandyte") is significant. She might not have been living on the land. Alternatively, the North Croydon locality could easily have been referred to as "Warrandyte". Was Michael Larkin the son, brother or even the father of Thomas Larkin? The title holds a few clues.

The next transfer was Norah Larkin as surviving executor of the Will of Thomas Larkin. That endorsement is dated 9 August 1909, obviously after the death of Michael Larkin. Perhaps he was, indeed, Thomas' father. That endorsement immediately proceeded the transfer on the same day of the date of the title into Norah's name absolutely, and not simply as Executrix of her late husband's estate.

Norah Larkin died on 5 April 1918 and probate of her Will was granted to Thomas Larkin of Wonga Road Warrandyte, Fruit-grower. We can surmise that this Thomas was the son of Norah and her late husband Thomas and that the address "Wonga Road Warrandyte" could in reality have been what would be regarded as Plymouth Road Croydon. Thus, we can surmise that Thomas Larkin was operating an orchard on the land he was living in on 1918.

Thomas Larkin took title to the property in his right in 1923 and held it until his death in August 1939.

Probate of Thomas Larkin's Will was granted to Eileen Molloy of Healesville Road Ringwood and title was transferred into her name on 1 December 1939.

Who was Eileen Molloy? Clearly she was not Thomas Larkin's daughter (she was a spinster). The address 'Healesville Road' refers to what is now Maroondah Highway. In fact the Molloy family lived on Maroondah Highway, west of Oban Road, not far from the land.

Regardless of whether she was family or merely a friend, Eileen Molloy continued to hold the land until the land was sold for development, firstly to Parkmore Proprietary Limited in about 1958 and finally to Dehay Pty Ltd on 26 October 1960.

Dehay Pty Ltd was a land development company of Mr David Hains of the Portland Property Group in Collins Street Melbourne. The company had land along Kalinda Road which was later subdivided into Grayling Crescent and into Chesney Drive and surrounding streets. Clearly the Intention would have been to subdivide the Larkin and Molloy lands (together with Willoughby's land) into residential allotments.

It was at about this time that Mr A Robin Clarke had conceived the idea of an independent boy's school in the location and has approached my father, presumably both to select a suitable site and to serve on the school council which was about to be formed. Allan Carter was obviously aware in his professional capacity of the land and its ownership and identified it as a suitable site for a school. He approached Mr Hains with a proposal to sell and was able to secure an agreement. I recall my father some years later commenting to me that Mr Hains could well have regarded the approach as ill-conceived and an approach merely by a loose consortium with many bright ideas, hopes and aspirations but no money! It is probably a testament to the calibre of Robin Clarke and those around him that David Hains was persuaded of the greater good in selling the land and enable the school to take root.

The school took title of three parcels of land, being the whole of the Larkin Land and the Willoughby Land (which had been split in two in 1890) on 13 January 1964. The entire site which totalled 71.6375 acres was purchased for a price of £52,750. The transfer was signed by David Hains as Vendor on behalf of Dehay Pty Ltd and by J B Harper & R F Hughes on behalf of the school.

The rest, as they say, is history.

As an aside, I understand David Hains is still alive with active business interests. As perhaps the last survivor of events surrounding the purchase of the site, it might be prudent for the school to ascertain whether he would care to detail for the record the circumstances which lead to his purchase of the Larkin/Molloy/Willoughby lands and his sale to the school.

The Willoughby Land also holds some history. Richard William Willoughby held his 20 acres on the corner from the date of the Crown Grant in 1876 only until his death in 1877. His executors continued to own it until 1890 when it was split in two and the northern portion of about 10 acres sold to Hugh Tawton Knight of Spencer Street Melbourne. That portion was later sold in 1897 to William George Long of Melbourne, Fruit Merchant who, in turn, in 1903 sold it to his neighbour, "Thomas Larkin of Ringwood, farmer" on 27 May 1903. It was then held by the Larkin/Molloy family until 1960 when it was sold to Parkmore Pty Ltd and then, in 1961, to Dehay Pty Ltd.

- 4 -

Meanwhile the southern portion of the Willoughby Land was sold to William George Long in 1897 (who held the northern portion) before being sold to James Maggs of Wonga Park Road (now Kalinda Road) Ringwood. It ultimately was also purchased by Dehay Pty Ltd.

Yours faithfully

Richard Carter

Ref: RC/All Other/General/YVGrammar