

## William Cavanagh Farrell (1844-1901)

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*William Farrell is important to Marysville as his review in 1863 of the routes to Wood's Point led to the Yarra Track ascending the Black Spur and going on to what became the resort town of Marysville on the Steavenson River.*

William Cavanagh Farrell was born in 1844 in Darebinvale<sup>1</sup>, Heidelberg to Thomas Farrell (1814-1882) and Margaret Cavanagh (1818-1880). William grew up on his father's farm.

In 1862 he claimed to be the first person to travel the Yarra Track with a team of pack horses. His bush experiences and work on the Track were used by the Government when he was appointed as Assistant Road Engineer to investigate the best route to the Jordan. By October 1863 his report was in, discussing all the known routes and suggesting that Rieck's track, with some major deviations, was the best. Those deviations involved heading further north up the Black Spur and on to the Steavenson River at what is now Marysville. William was just 19 years old.

By 1872 he is running a hotel in Ivanhoe with wife Margaret, but the call of the bush is strong and he selects land at Morwell River.

The 1880s finds William in Yarra Flats with younger brother Henry, who is licensee of the Yarra Flats Hotel. They become aware of the train coming to town and the tourists it will bring. William goes into partnership with Henry and the hotel is extended greatly to include two storeys and called the Burgoyne Hotel. This hotel is in the family until 1905 when the new owner changes the name to The Grand Hotel.

William is described as a 'bit of an entrepreneur'. As an Irish Catholic he is involved with the building of St Aloysius Church and also in building a bank and then a general store in Yarra Flats.

His involvement in his community leads to him being a councillor for the Shire of Eltham from 1890-1901. He serves as Shire President on two occasions.

William dies after an illness in 1901.

Reference:

Yarra Glen & District Historical Society,  
Newsletter Nov 2007



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<sup>1</sup> This was the family home and probably gave its name to Darebin