

CUSSEN FAMILY

Sisters, Bridget and Catherine Cussen married brothers, (William) Henry and Francis Kirwan from Inglewood. Bridget came to Marysville about 1865 with husband, William Henry Kirwan where they established the Junction Hotel, later running it as The Temperance guesthouse. Her brother, Martin Cussen was involved as a builder in the new settlement and in 1864 received payments for the building of the Survey Office and Quarters. He built a large house in Marysville prior to the land sales of 1864, and he sold it to Henry in 1865 (Junction Hotel).

James Cussen¹ (c1801-1854, Ireland) and **Catherine Magdalena nee Dooley** (c 1801 Rathkeale, Co Limerick, Ireland – 1886 Mooropna²) had the following children who came with their widowed mother to Victoria in the early 1850s.³

1. **Catherine/Kate Cussen** (1839 Limerick, Ireland-1882 Maryborough), married **Francis Kirwan** and lived in Dunolly. See Kirwan Family document for their family details.
2. **Ellen Cussen** (1838- 1892⁴, Dunolly). She married George Simpson in 1856⁵ initially staying in Dunolly, then moving to Graytown where brother Martin was.
 - 2.1. John Simpson (1858⁶ Dunolly - ??)
 - 2.2. George Simpson (1859⁷ Dunolly⁸ - 1918)
 - 2.3. James Henry Simpson (1860⁹ Dunolly - 1870¹⁰)
 - 2.4. Richard Simpson (1862¹¹ Dunolly – 1896¹² WA)
 - 2.5. Mary Helena Simpson (1869¹³ Spring Creek (now Graytown)- ??)

3. **Martin Cussen M.L.A** born c 1837 Rathkeale, Co Limerick, arrived in the colony c1851¹⁴.

Martin was in Marysville prior to the Land Sales of December 1864 with a 7 roomed wooden house with shingled roof and verandah on Block C Lot 11 on the corner of Pack Road and Murchison Street. William Henry Kirwan, Martin's brother-in-law, purchased this block on 28 April 1865 and William and Bridget ran their Junction Hotel from this building.

In August 1864 Assistant Surveyor G T McDonald called for tenders for a Surveyor's Office from builders in the neighbourhood¹⁵. "I would recommend the acceptance of Cussen's tender because it is the lowest and because I have been informed that he is a good workman and well able to carry out his contract" - Mr George McDonald, Surveyor.

'Cussen' received payments for the building of the Survey Office and Quarters¹⁶.

"(In Public Works Department Contract Book)

64/394, £65.12.0 Marysville Completion of Survey office and Quarters. Cussen.

64/264, £97.19.10 Steavenson River, Survey Office, &c, Cussen"

In 1869, with the government no longer needing a Survey office, it was modified to become the Police Station & house. Martin was a good workman because his early building survived until 1889, although by then it was in a parlous state.

Martin moved on to New Zealand, married there in 1869 and finally returned to Victoria to settled in Tatura. For further details of his life and family see page 3.

4. **Bridget Cussen** (1844 Rathkeale, Co Limerick, Ireland-1921 Marysville) Bridget was 17 when she married the 31 year old reefer¹⁷, (William) Henry Kirwan in Inglewood in 1861 and by 1865 they were living in Marysville, operating the Junction Hotel in the 7 roomed building Bridget's brother Martin had built. Bridget died in 1921 at her daughter Maria Catherine Chester's house in Fairfield. *For Bridget's life and family see the Kirwan Family document.*

Martin Cussen - details on his life and family.

Martin was known to be building in Marysville in early 1864. In September 1864 he tendered and won the contract to build the Surveyor's Office and Quarters. He built his own home, a 7 roomed building which he was sold to his sister Bridget and her husband who ran it as the Junction Hotel from 1865. The Surveyor's building was converted to the Police Station in 1869 and was still being used in 1889, although in a parlous state.

Martin left Marysville for adventures in New Zealand and married Margaret Healey (1843, Newport, Tipperary, Ireland-1922, Elsternwick), in Hokitika, Westland, New Zealand on 24 August, 1868. They returned to Victoria about a year later and their first child was born in 1869 in Spring Creek, now Graytown, the family then moved to Seymour, then Mooroopna and Tatura by the time of their last child, Leo's birth in 1886.

In 1889 Martin had unsuccessfully sought election to the Legislative Council and his electioneering speech can be found in *The Mclvor Times and Rodney Advertiser*, 15 Mar 1889.

In 1901 he was successfully elected to the Legislative Council and went on in 1908 to represent the area in the Legislative House until his death. He was a great supporter of the irrigation scheme.

A small town, street and parks in the district are named after the family.

MARTIN CUSSEN AND CO.

One of the oldest firms of auctioneers and stock and station agents in the North-Eastern district is that of Martin Cussen and Co of Shepparton, with branch offices and sale yards at Mooroopna, Tatura, and Rushworth.

The business was established as far back as 1876 by Mr. Martin Cussen, who now represents the district in the Legislative Council, and to whom may be justly conceded the credit of being the pioneer in that favoured locality of irrigation, accompanied by closer settlement. Mr. Cussen is a firm believer in the judicious application of water to the northern area soils. As evidence of the public estimation in which the firm of Martin Cussen and Co. is held, it may be mentioned that their sales of real estate for six months ending April 30th, 1905 amounted in the aggregate to 8,368 acres, representing a cash value of £67,967. Those desirous of purchasing farms in the Goulburn Valley and North-Eastern District generally will find it advantageous to consult them before doing so.

Bairnsdale Advertiser, 2 Sep 1905

THE LATE MR. CUSSEN.

TRIBUTES IN PARLIAMENT.

The Legislative Assembly sat for only five minutes yesterday afternoon, and adjourned without doing any business as a token of respect to the memory of the late Mr Cussen. Immediately after the Speaker Sir Frank Madden took the chair, Mr Watt, the Acting Prime Minister, said he regretted to have to again announce the death of a member of the House. The late member for Waranga, Mr Cussen, had passed away, and from respect to his career and memory he moved that the House do adjourn. Mr Cussen had not had an extended career in the Legislative Assembly, but he was known and loved by every member. He was a pioneer colonist of 60 years, and one of the promoters of irrigation in the northern part of Victoria, where he was for a long time a member of the Rodney trust. In addition to that, he had closely identified himself for years with municipal life. He enjoyed, too, the distinction of having so won the confidence of the electors of an important part of Victoria as to secure return to both Houses of Parliament, and was the only one in recent years who, coming from the Legislative Council, had succeeded in winning a place in the more stormy arena of the Legislative Assembly. Possessed of the native shrewdness and many good qualities of his race, he had a genial temper that endeared him to all members. Public life would be easier if all hon members could take the same charitable, broad, humane view of politics as he had done. They could

only now express their feelings of respect to his memory, with their condolences to his relatives and sympathy to his many friends. Mr. Prendergast, the leader of the opposition, in seconding the motion for adjournment, said that Mr Cussen, who had filled a position in both Houses, might be considered to have been a greater force than was recognised. He had assiduously attended to his duties to his constituents, and had proved himself a kindly friend to all members.

The motion was carried in silence, and the House at a quarter to 5 o'clock, adjourned till half past 1 o'clock this afternoon.

The Legislative Council yesterday passed a resolution placing on record its sorrow at the death of Mr Cussen, who was a member of that House from 1901 to 1907. Mr Drysdale Brown, in moving the motion, spoke of the affable, kindly nature of Mr Cussen, and of the affection with which the members regarded him when he was in the Council, Mr. Manifold, Mr Melville, and Mr, Abbott also expressed their personal regret at Mr Cussen's death, and the motion was unanimously agreed to.

The Argus, 2 Aug 1911.

END NOTES

¹ Some in Maryville considered the Cussens related to Sir Leo Finn Bernard Cussen (1859-1933), judge, son of Maurice Cussen (d.1880) and his wife Margaret, née Finn. Father Maurice Cussen had been head tenant at Creveen House on the Rattoo estate in County Kerry, Ireland. [Australian Dictionary Biography] This family were mostly in the Western District. James Cussen and Catherine Dooley were from Co Limerick and do not appear close relatives. Bridget did have a nephew Leo Benedict Cussen 1886-1948, son of Martin Cussen, who became a well-known barrister in his own right in Melbourne in 1900s.

² Vic BMD Reg No 6600 father Pat Dooley

³ No migration information could be found for Catherine and her sons travelling together or separately.

⁴ Vic BMD Reg No 1594

⁵ Vic BMD Reg No 3532

⁶ Vic BMD Reg No 3799

⁷ Vic BMD Reg No 9512

⁸ Vic BMD Reg No 13814

⁹ Vic BMD Reg No 21630

¹⁰ Vic BMD Reg No 5648

¹¹ Vic BMD Reg No 7943

¹² WA BMD Reg No 1420

¹³ Vic BMD Reg No 25247

¹⁴ Benalla Standard, 1 Aug 1911

¹⁵ 'Making Tracks', Edwards, Rev George, Published by MDHS, page 52

¹⁶ 'Making Tracks', Edwards, Rev George, page 92 – reference is made to the Public Works Department Contract Book found by George at the Public Records Office.

¹⁷ Gold miner who works the line of gold rich quartz.