

school a couple of them had to walk from Chapel Road to Chandler Road where he grew the gherkins, to take the afternoon tea to the men. The children also had to pick fruit, probably wash vegetables for market, gather eggs, milk the house cows and jobs like that. In the evening nine children were taught elocution, by the eldest sister, Maple. They each in turn had to stand on a table and recite to the group. James would regularly take them to the theatres in Melbourne. Apparently they saw just about everything that was showing. I don't know how he would have transported a family of ten. Maybe they took it in turns.

## DANDENONG HOUSE.

By Lola Marsh

Although I had carried out many years of research into my families' histories it was the report in *The Dandenong Journal* on January 9<sup>th</sup> 1978 about the fire that gutted *Dandenong House* that prompted me to search for the correct date for the erection of this building.

My mother, Bertha Andrews, then a girl of 18 years, had lived at *Dandenong House* with her father, James Fenton, her stepmother, Marie [Foster], some of her nine brothers and sisters and two stepbrothers. One, Alan, was born to Marie in the boarding house in 1911. There were stories told of their experiences whilst living there and it's strange how some things remain in your memory. Things that enabled me to piece together dates, all very small and insignificant in themselves, but combined they enabled me to have a calculated guess at the time *the House* was built and maybe why it was built. It definitely wasn't built in the 1880's as was published in the newspaper and I estimated it to be 1909-10.

The clues I started with:

1. My mother had told me her age was 18 at that time.
2. The story of the violent storm that blew the roof off *Dandenong House* just after they'd moved in.
3. The eldest daughter, Maple Edith, who it was alleged fluttered her eyelashes at Martin Thomas, the Commercial Bank teller and later married him. Their wedding, although both families were strong Methodists, was held at the Presbyterian Church on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1911, their reception at *Dandenong House*.

My next move was to ask permission to study the archival collection of old *Dandenong Journals* and *Advertisers* at the Historical Society's rooms. Mr Dave Mickle was kind enough to open the rooms for me and advised me how to begin my search. My sister, Thelma Keys, also helped. We spent about five hours searching and even then did not cover all the issues we wanted to, but I found what I was looking for, namely the correct date of the building of *Dandenong House*.

Some time previously I had been given a clipping from *the Dandenong Advertiser* dated February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1933. It was the obituary notice for my Grandfather, James Fenton Andrews. It stated he had been born at Diamond Hill, Dandenong in 1862. Not only did it give his history in the district, it also stated he purchased land from the Orgills and that they built *Dandenong House* near the railway station for him. (A point that Mr Love, who researched the Orgill family history, later confirmed.) So I worked back from this date, and arrived at around 1910.

I later discovered that in 1907 Susan Orgill sold a small corner of her land to the Victorian Railways on which to dig out and install a turnplate for turning locomotives around. The Orgill family owned a large tract of land stretching from Foster Street to well down Hammond Road and the rail line had cut through that. When Susan died in 1909 her three descendents sold the remainder of her land to Fenton Andrews including her two-storey weatherboard home. This land was opposite the end of Robinson Street, on the Corner of Foster Street and a short Government road that led to the station. Across the road in Foster Street, and around the corner to the right from Robinson Street, were a group of well-to-do houses that added prestige to the area, part of the Orgill family lived in one of those. I remember that because I used to leave my bike at their house when I travelled by train to school. Fenton dreamt of his hotel being a very grand place in this perfect location. Almost everyone travelling by train to Dandenong would pass this corner. How could it fail?

Fenton moved his own family into the two-storey weatherboard, the former Orgill home, at the rear of the property but now connected to the boarding house by a first storey covered walkway. The stables must have been beneath this home because I remember cars were later garaged there. The Andrews children now attended Dandenong East Primary School and the whole family would have attended the Methodist Church in Scott Street.