

## **William Joseph RICE (1850-1936)**

William was aged nine and could read when migrating to Tasmania with his parents and three siblings on the 'Trade Wind' arriving in 1858. William was born at Mildenhall, Suffolk, England on 14 January 1850.

William married Elizabeth Jane Hadley (1848-1932) at St Luke's Church, Campbell Town on 11 April 1871. Elizabeth was the daughter of John Hadley (1817-?) and Mary Ann nee Johnson (1823-?) of Campbell Town. They had ten children, two of whom died in infancy.

After William's marriage he worked for Mr Taylor at his 'Winton' property<sup>1</sup>. They moved to Upper Blessington in 1894 to take up farming on the 'Ingleburn' property. Blessington was a pioneering district and the work to be done was hard and back breaking. They baked their own bread. Groceries were brought from Launceston by horse and cart. Farmers in the district grew peas, oats, wheat and potatoes. Every home had an orchard, some quite a distance from the house as they were planted where there was access to a creek or river for watering. The oats were cut by horse drawn mower and then manually tied into sheaves. These were 'stooked' in the paddock – about six sheaves to a 'stook' to dry. Later they were carted by horse or bullock drawn wagons to barns or made large haystacks. They would then be cut into chaff to help feed stock. Some were bagged and taken to Launceston for sale, using horse drawn wagons, the trip would take two days.

There was no school before 1900 and some of the children rode horses to school at Lower Blessington about seven miles away. William's daughters, Maud and Ella, had alternate stays with their Aunt Sarah Baker (nee Rice - 1856-1942) at Cleveland to attend school. It is not certain where the rest of the family had their education as little was available.

William and Elizabeth moved to 'Ingleburn', where William's second son, Thomas lived. After Thomas' wife, Rachel Annie nee Collins (1890-1922) died, aged 32 years, William and Elizabeth helped raise Jack (1920-1993), aged one year, the youngest of Thomas and Rachel's children. Another son, Athol (1913-1980), was five years old and was raised by Thomas' sister Ellen (Nell – 1882-1948). Nell married Cyril Raymond Robert (Sydney) Barnett (1889-1959) and lived in Hobart. The other son, Studley (1911-1915), was so severely scalded he died whilst being brought to the Launceston General Hospital. He had been staying with his grandparents at Upper Blessington for the previous 18 months. Elizabeth had removed a boiler of water from the fire and Studley fell backwards into it. Nina Florence (1909-1974), their only daughter, was aged 13 when her mother died. She married Lawrence James Smith (1901-1992).

William's daughter, Sarah Maud (Maud – 1888-1973), who married Alfred Vernon Ludwick (Vern) Collins (1886-1927), brother of Thomas' wife Rachel, lived with her husband at Top Place. Later they moved to Lebrina, returning later to live at North View. Vern died in 1927, aged 41 years. Maud stayed on with her two sons Kenneth Vernon (1909-1970) and Raymond William (1917-2003) running the farm, Ken later took up a carrier business to Launceston every Friday, carrying passengers and everything from groceries to machinery,

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<sup>11</sup> Much of the following information has been taken from an unsourced document – author unknown.

grain etc. He later sold out to Roy Charles Rice's (1890-1971) eldest son, Leslie Roy Rice (1914-1987), following his return from World War 2; Les was a Rat of Tobruk.

Roy married Rene (Ruby Irene) Whittle (1893-1980) in 1914 and lived at first at Top Place, later moving into 'Byethorne' when his father moved to 'Ingleburn'. They raised eight children. In 1916 or thereabouts, Les bought 'Byethorne' and Roy and Rene moved to a small farm at Longford and later again, to Perth.

In April 1931 William and Elizabeth celebrated their diamond (60th) wedding anniversary with a party at the North Esk Memorial Hall, Blessington, arranged by their family and friends. They were then 81 and 82 years of age. At that time the family consisted of eight children living, 36 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

William died, aged 86 years, on 25 September 1936 at the residence of his son-in-law, Alfred Edward Charles Goss (1887-1976 – husband of Ella Margaret Rice), of 159 George Street, Launceston and was buried at Carr Villa. Elizabeth died on 2 February 1932 aged 83 years at son-in-law's residence, James Edward Morrison (1874-1946 – husband of Florence Edith Rice) of 50 Galvin Street, Launceston.