

Weston, William Pritchard (1804-1888)

Sponsored: Charlotte Cook (Norfolk, cook)



William Pritchard Weston was born on 18 April 1804 in Shoreditch, Middlesex, England. He died on 21 February 1888 at 'Leithen', Acland Street, St Kilda, Victoria.

Weston sailed for Australia in the 'Adrian'; the new lieutenant-governor of VDL, Colonel (Sir) George Arthur, was also a passenger. Weston had a letter of recommendation from a friend at the Colonial Office, and his capital was more than £3000. The 'Adrian' reached Hobart Town in May 1824, and although Weston was bound for NSW, he decided to remain in VDL, for on the voyage he had met Ann Elphinstone, daughter of Peninsular war veteran, Captain William Clark, whose family had embarked at the Cape. They were married in June 1826 at Cluny, a home Clark built at Bothwell, and the lieutenant-governor lent his carriage to take the clergyman from Hobart for the occasion. Weston was granted 2000 acres (809 ha) of land which he first considered taking at Great Swan Port and later applied for Bothwell. Disappointed in his application for land at Bothwell, he took his grant instead at Longford, where by 1826 he had also bought 300 acres (121 ha). ... In 1835 Arthur appointed him to the Commission of the Peace. At Longford in 1831 he built Hythe, a fine Regency-style residence, and began the improvement of his flocks and the preparation of wattle bark for export.

When responsible government was granted to Tasmania Weston was elected unopposed to the House of Assembly in September 1856 as member for Ringwood. In April 1857, when Thomas Gregson had to resign as premier, Weston was asked to form a ministry. However, rowdy opposition led by Gregson completely demoralized Weston and in May he resigned the premiership in favour of Francis Smith, his attorney-general. The ministry he had chosen remained in office for four years and gave the colony its first stable government since the granting of self-government. In 1857 he became a member of the Legislative Council, and from November 1860 to August 1861 was premier again, after Francis Smith had been raised to the bench. Soon afterwards ill health forced him to retire from politics. ... Weston died on 21 February 1888, aged 84, in Geelong, Victoria. (*Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 2, 1967*)

The Australian Dictionary of Biography lists Weston's occupations as: Anglican lay leader, anti-transportationist, Congregationalist lay leader, grazier (sheep), landowner, Member of the Lower and Upper Houses, premier)

Picture of William Pritchard Weston by J W Beattie and is held in the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, State Library of Tasmania. (Copied from *The Australian Dictionary of Biography*.) WP Weston, landowner, Longford applied for Immigrant Bounty Tickets on 18 July 1854 and April 1856.