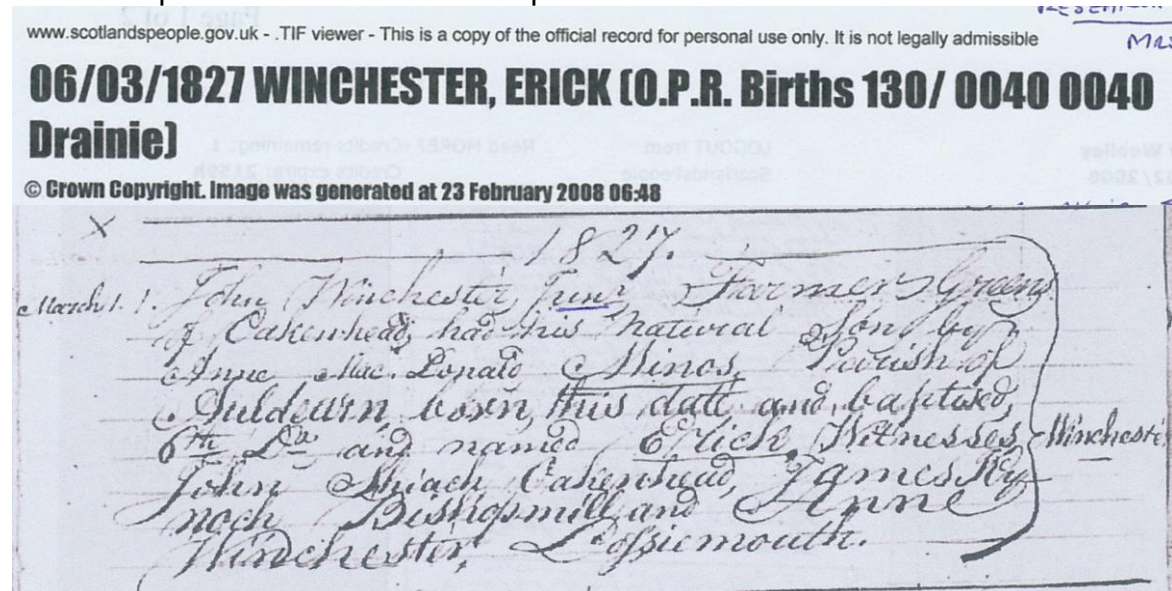


Eric Winchester

Born 1827 Died 22/5/1902

Eric was born in Drainie, a very small place near to Lossiemouth, a sea port close to the Moray Firth of Scotland. His parents were John Winchester and Anne Macdonald and he was a farmer, according to Eric's Wedding certificate. With further research and understanding more of the terminology used on Scottish Baptism records, it seems that John and Anne were not married. Which may explain why research into a marriage and further information about them as a couple is unable to be found. Was Eric raised by his mother or father? Or did they live as a family. We do not know at this time.

His Baptism took place 6/3/1821 at Drainie. According to baptism, shipping documents, and Marriage certificate, his name was spelled as Erlick, Erick, Erich, and Eric, but because the other details matched known information, I have accepted that all are the same person.



(transcript:- March . John Winchester Junr Farmers Greens of Oakenhead had his natural born son by Anne MacDonald Minos Parish of Aldearn, born this date and Baptised 6th Day and named Erlick, Witnesses John Shaick Oakenhead, James Kynoch Bishopsmill and Anne Winchester, Lossiemouth)

From the above details it appears that John 's father was also John and his mother was Anne Winchester. The wording 'natural born son' is different to other Baptismal records which state 'lawful son by', indicating the parents are married.

Research of Unassisted Passengers to Victoria in 1852 revealed that Eric arrived in Port Phillip October 1852 on the "Lord Warriston", which had embarked from Greenock in Scotland 15/7/1852. The Ships master was Cubitt and the ship was licensed to carry 387 people. For this journey there were 324. Eric is recorded in the passenger list as 23 years, Goldsmith from England. Actually he was only 21 and the fact that he was said to be English

could also be a recording error as it was right next to entries for Scots passengers.

Nothing is known of where he spent his time after arriving here, until his Marriage to Mary Anne Jane Wellington (who was known as “The Belle of Clunes”) 13/12/1860 at the Wellington Hotel, North Clunes in Victoria. On the certificate it states that Eric was a miner, and his residence was at Bald Hills, Ascot, which is an area about 5 kilometers west of Creswick, and was a site of extensive mining for Gold at the time. It would be easy to imagine that some of Eric’s time after arriving here was spent in getting from Melbourne to the Gold Fields in a style as depicted in S.T.Gill’s painting ‘The New Rush’.



His young 16 year old bride was the daughter of Richard and Mary (Pope) Wellington, proprietors of the Hotel, her occupation was given as Hotel Keeper. Eric and Mary Anne Jane started their life together at Bald Hills in another Wellington Hotel as hotel keepers. They would have fared better than most people who lived under very rough conditions on the gold fields. On 5/11/1861 Mary gave birth to a son Richard James, at Bald Hills, which was reported in the “Creswick and Clunes Advertiser” 12/11/1861 edition. On the 18/11/1863 the same paper carried the announcement of Mary giving birth to another son on 15/11/1863, John, at Bald Hills.

Bald Hills was a small township and had several businesses and many people living there until the mining operations finally ceased. On visiting this area in June 2000, there are no longer any miners of course, but evidence of diggings in rocky and stony ground are present. A small area at Long Point has been preserved and allowed to re-grow the natural vegetation common to there. With a little imagination one can imagine small mining claims with perhaps a tent, or if prosperous enough, a rude hut to accommodate the miner and his family. I don’t imagine it was too luxurious, very cold in winter and extremely hot and dry in summer, a hard existence, especially with young children. There was a down turn in the Gold Mining at Bald Hills and perhaps that is why Eric and Mary Jane moved to a better life in Clunes another very successful Gold mining town?

An advertisement in the "Clunes Gazette" 5/11/1864 reads as follows:-

J. Whittleston

Respectfully informs his customers that he has divested of his Hay, Corn and Produce business to Mr Eric Winchester, and most respectfully solicits the patronage of his customers for his successor.

Beneath this is the following piece:-

E. Winchester,

HAY, CORN AND PRODUCE DEALER.

Criterion Hay and Corn Store,

Corner Fraser and Camp Street, Clunes, respectfully notifies the public that he has purchased from Mr John Whittleston his business, and trusts that by strict attention to business combined with best articles, to merit the patronage so liberally bestowed upon his predecessor.

So we can assume that Eric and Mary Anne Jane had moved to Clunes at some time after the previous November when John was born. Annie was born at Clunes 24/12/1865.

A Bill of Sale "Bought Of E. Winchester" 1/2/1866, says that 2cwt 16 lbs of Hay cost 16 shillings. Eric's business bank ledger says he opened the year 11/1/1865 with a balance of £26/1/3, by 21/3/1865 this had increased to £65/14/6 so business was improving.

According to the Burgess Roll's 1866 =- 1976 Eric had a store in Fraser St and home in Suburban St.

During this period Eric Wellington was born 1/3/1868, Matthew Drysdale born 1870, Frederick William was born 1873, Walter Pope was born 22/2/1875, and Evelyn Barbara born 5/3/1877. Mary Anne Jane would have been very busy caring for her little brood. Her babies would have probably all have been born with the assistance of a midwife, at home. Walter arrived with the assistance of one Mrs Walton, at Suburban Street Clunes.

Unfortunately John died 27/8/1872, aged 8 years 9 months. and is buried in the Church of England section of Clunes Cemetery in an unmarked grave, row B, 39 graves in from the road way.

During the years at Clunes, Eric did have a very brief stint on the Borough Council, elected 14/2/1868 for North West Ward, then 19/8/1868 he resigned. This is recorded in the Minute books of Borough of Clunes.

The health Officer's report for 1867 is of interest and was as follows:- deaths 110 within and outside the Municipality.

Main Causes: January & February, Diphtheria and Dysentery.

March to July, fever of low type. (Typhoid)

After creek cleared by floods in July, there was a total cessation of Typhoid.

Also blamed "effluvia from putrid animals"

During latter months of the year, there was little illness and this of a mild character with the exception of a few cases of Diphtheria, confined to one locality.

Most unhealthy period was in February & March = 48 deaths.

In September, October, & December only 11 deaths.

Of 110 deaths 70 were children under 5 years, & 40 over that age. 61 were males & 160 females.

Births:- 239 inside Municipality & 73 outside it. Total 312. 152 males & 160 females.

1861	Births 128	Deaths 43
1862	177	75
1863	226	66
1864	253	62
1865	300	79
1866	254	120
1867	312	110

The number of children who died would have been fairly typical, but to our way of thinking now, far too many little ones died before reaching 5 years even. Still if you look at the births for 1867 against the figure of 70 under 5 years who died, many babies seem to have survived, or were yet to face the infections and diseases that were common.

Mary Ann Jane's brother Matthew Wellington (Storekeeper) married Emily Anne Eliza Roe (a Milliner) 31/10/1871 at the newly constructed St Pauls Church of England church in Clunes, Eric Winchester and Richard J. Roe (Emily's father) were witnesses. Reverend John G Herring performed the ceremony. Matthew's Great Grandson Richard Wellington says they were the first couple to marry in the new stone church and were given a Family Bible to commemorate the event by the Church. A wooden church had been situated in Fraser St, but was moved up onto the hill next to the new church, this building is still standing and kept in good order as the hall for the later building. This couple had 13 children of whom only 5 survived, several were born and died at Clunes as very young babes. Other babies were born and died are buried at Wunghnu after the family moved away from Clunes to select land at Drummanure near Numurkah.

In 1878 the Winchester and Wellington families moved to the Goulburn Valley area. The Winchesters settled at Mooroopna and the Wellingtons in the Wunghnu, Drummanure (9 Mile Creek) area. Evelyn Barbara Winchester was only a young 12 month old child at the time and the weather was so hot, Mary Anne Jane had to drape wet sheets around the cot to keep the baby cool and alive.

The family lived at 'Clunes' house on the corner of Morell and Northgate St (it may be Alexander St, because I could not find where the other streets would cross) Mooroopna, in the middle of perhaps three house blocks, according to information from Evelyn (McKean) Farrall. The following year 27/5/1879 Emily Mary Winchester was born, the last of Eric and Mary Jane's family.

The house was 6 roomed with a picket fence in front, on the north side were three detached rooms, one a bathroom, the other two were bedrooms, probably built for the sons and later used for the boarders. The house was

weather board with three rooms opening off the central passage on either side and a verandah back and front. Mary Jane's bedroom, the back bedroom always seemed dark to Evelyn (McKean) Farrall as a young child and contained a large cedar chest of drawers, a wash stand and a double bed. Mary Anne Jane did not have very frequent baths because the bathroom was away from the house, preferring instead to have a sponge down in the bedroom. The kitchen had a large wood fired stove with a drop down door that on cold days the cat called Peter would crawl in for a sleep, he was shut in by accident once. The only water tap in the house was near the stove. The dining room contained the piano, a long table with heavily carved chairs, that was always set with a starched damask cloth and serviettes. The sitting room had a low padded chair with a round back among other items. A sea shell inscribed with the Lord's Prayer was an interesting ornament. In the middle bedroom was a bed with a horsehair mattress that Evelyn (McKean) Farrall thought most uncomfortable. Well away from the house were the wash house and toilet. The wash house was really at the back of a large store or rubbish room and contained a copper and large wash tubs.

The toilet always known as the W.C. was rather unusual in that it had two seats, one at normal height serviced by a "Night Man", and the other with a chamber pot under it for small children.

There were large Pepper trees, Oleanders and an enormous Rose bushes in the garden. At one time there had been a pergola with grape vines growing over it on each side of a path to the street.

The girls of the family had Piano, singing, dancing, painting, dress making and horse riding lessons, even though times were not easy. The boys may have also learned Piano too, at least Fred and Walter could play, because it was noted that they played a duet together at a "Back to Mooroopna" gathering in 1933. Fred was blind, said (by Wallace Winchester) to be as a result of a childhood accident where he got hit in the eye, Evelyn (McKean) Farrall gives a different account;

"Uncle Fred was born with practically no sight. When quite young he went to the "School for The Blind" in St Kilda Rd, Melbourne. He later worked at the Institute for The Blind making mats. While there he became a member of the South Yarra Club. He lived for some years with his mother in Mooroopna, during that time he became involved with the Blind Institute and he usually entertained the members of the Blind Concert Party who came round each year. We developed a great appreciation for the ability of blind people to cope with their disability. Uncle Fred was an excellent pianist, and often played for dances. He had perfect pitch, which meant that he could always tell us which note we played wrongly when we practiced the piano.

He was a trainer for the Mooroopna Footballers and had a special lineament which we always used for our aches and pains. He spent the last years of his life with us and died in the Mooroopna Hospital."

The children grew up and took on different responsibilities, Richard became a Saw Mill owner, and Matthew worked with him, Eric went to Wagga and had a property and also worked seasonally picking fruit etc.

Walter became a printing compositor and also worked for a time at the saw mills, Annie married Henry Tuck (Stock and Station Agent) and moved to live

at Cobram, Emily married Norman McKean and they ran a General store in Mooroopna, Evelyn married William Fairley and they also ran a store in Mooroopna.

There were sad times for the family, John had already died when they lived at Clunes.

The "Cobram Courier" 31/12/1896 carried an Obituary for Richard Winchester who had an accident at a saw mill near Tocumwal. He and Caleb Roe (Emily (Roe) Wellington's brother) conducted sawmills together in the area:-

"It appears that about 9.30 am on Friday morning last, Mr Winchester was engaged with one of the men rolling logs. He was in the act of turning a log about 40 feet long, with an 8 feet girth, which contained a rather prominent limb butt. The log turning on this projection, came down with more than ordinary force on the skids, so much so that two other logs got away from their protection, and rolled down with such rapidity that before he could get away, Mr Winchester standing upright, was jammed between the log he was rolling and the other above. Fortunately the last one had a flat side on it, and on this it settled after the impact. This eased the second log, and enabled Mr Winchester to fall out clear of further damage. His partner (Mr Roe) and Mr M. (Matthew) Winchester, with the other workmen at the mill, quickly had the unfortunate gentleman removed to his home, and a messenger was instantly dispatched to Cobram for Dr Stackpoole. The Doctor after careful examination found that Mr Winchester had been fearfully squeezed about the center of his body, and it was evident that serious injuries had been sustained.

On Sunday it was deemed advisable to bring Mr Winchester into Cobram, where provision for his reception had been made at the residence of his sister. (Mrs Henry Tuck) In the evening eight men started to carry the sufferer on the station Ambulance, kindly lent by Mr Ellis, but after going a portion of the journey, which was about 9 miles from Cobram, further assistance was sent for. Willing hands were readily forthcoming, and on arrival at Cobram Dr Stackpoole was waiting. Throughout his trying experience Mr Winchester remained perfectly sensible, and though he had received a terrible shaking Dr Stackpoole did not apprehend any serious consequences, unless secondary symptoms developed themselves. On Monday the condition of Mr Winchester did not give any alarm to any of his friends, but in the evening it was apparent an unfavorable change had set in, although he himself led everyone around him to suppose that he was doing well. It was only with very great difficulty that he managed to breathe, and as night wore on, the patient's attendants around the bedside felt that Mr Winchester was far more critical than appeared. About 1.00 O'clock Mr H. Tuck deemed that it advisable to send again for Dr Stackpoole, but before he arrived, after a lapse of only a few minutes, Mr Winchester had breathed his last, passing away so peacefully that those in the room imagined he had just gone off to sleep. In the lamentable death of Mr Winchester, at the age of 35, there has passed out of this world one of the manliest, most straightforward men that ever lived. He was a good friend, a dutiful son and a most devoted husband, thinking nothing a trouble to himself so long as the welfare of others around him was attend to. Truly of Mr Winchester it might be said with the poet that

‘He wore the white flower of a blameless life.’

And while his untimely death has come as a terrible shock to his poor wife, and relatives, no one will be more deeply mourned by a wide circle of sincere friends than the subject of this notice.

On Tuesday afternoon Mr Winchester’s remains were conveyed by train to Mooroopna where the interment took place the next afternoon, the funeral arrangements being in the capable hands of Messers Levings Bros.”

On 23/1/1901 Matthew died from Typhoid and was buried in Mooroopna cemetery. Evelyn Farrall told me that she believed that when Eric, his father died the following year, he was unable to be buried in the same plot. Because of Matthew’s illness and death, the grave could not be reopened for another burial for a number of years.

Then came the death of Eric himself 22/5/1902:-

Extract of an Obituary notice in the ‘Goulburn Valley Yeoman’ on 29/5/1902 for Eric Winchester, reads as follows.

“DEATH OF MR ERIC WINCHESTER.

The hand of the great leveler- death has been in solemn evidence in our midst during the past week, and one of our old and highly esteemed citizens has passed away from us. It came as a great shock to this town and district last Thursday to learn that Mr Winchester, who has been a most prominent figure amongst us for the past 22 years. Was taken seriously ill and no hope of recovery was given.

On Wednesday he was pursuing his usual avocation at noonday, but could not complete his work, and had to go home, never to rise again.

Mrs Winchester was away at Cobram attending her daughter, Mrs Tuck, who had met with a serious accident, and she was immediately sent for, and came down with her daughter by Thursday’s train, arriving at 6.15 pm., but Mr Winchester was unconscious and passed away in perfect peace half an hour afterwards, at the age of 71 years.

Mr Winchester came to this district from Clunes, where he had occupied a prominent position, and was a councilor in that municipality. He entered into the service of Mr Mills, a storekeeper, on the ground now occupied by Mr Fairley’s store. Some years after he entered the service of Quiggin brothers, as yard-manager at the saw mills, and it was during this term that he met with an accident at the saw bench, when his right hand had to be amputated.

The firm was extremely sorry to lose the services of such a faithful workman at that time, and expressed their regret in a practical way.

He has filled the responsible offices of deputy returning officer, poll clerk etc. at many important elections, and always did his duty faithfully. Being of an exceedingly kind disposition his friends were legion, and there was hardly a man, woman, or child for miles around but what knew and respected him.

The funeral took place last Saturday afternoon, when a large number of friends paid their last respects to his memory, and the wide spread feeling of regret at his sudden death was shown in the numerous messages and tokens of sympathy sent to the bereaved family. The rev. J. McQueen read the burial service, and Mr Mundy carried out the arrangements”

So life would have become quite difficult for Mary Anne Jane, and it was after her husband's death that she then took in boarders to supplement her income. Mostly young Bank workers and men of that type. She remained living in the old home until her death 20/5/1927, having become more and more frail and suffering a degree of dementia.



ERIC WINCHESTER
BORN DRAINIE SCOTLAND
DIED MOOROPNA 22/5/1902



Mary Jane (wellington) Winchester circa 1923

The information for this piece came from;-

The writings of Evelyn (McKean) Farrall (Granddaughter of Eric and Mary Anne Jane)

Records held at The Clunes William Barkell Museum.

Public records Office of Victoria.

Newspaper Archives at the State Library of Victoria.

I.G.I Index.

Birth Death and Marriage Records of Victoria.

Personal visits to the areas mentioned by Betty Woolley.

“Mooroopna to 1988” - published by the local Shire of Rodney.

Compiled by Betty Woolley May 2016.

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Contact with/or for further information regarding the Winchester family would be appreciated via the above addresses.