

## BRIM SPRING

On behalf of the CARTER family, I would like to welcome you to our shared ancestral land.

Although I do not live in this area nor have ever lived at this site, it is still part of my past. I belong to the sixth generation of descendants from Charles Carter and there are possibly another four generations of descendants.

We acknowledge there are other descendants of a much longer lineage here today who could very much view us as the very new arrivals. The way the black and white clans have interacted have changed from generation to generation as attitudes and understandings have altered.

This site has always been known as BRIM SPRING or the HOME STATION by the CARTER family. It has also been known as Geranium Springs by others.

The aboriginal name was applied to more practical considerations of topography – a small swamp at Brim Spring was called CHUCKALAPERT.

Brim Spring is important to us as it was the beginning of the Carter family pastoral land holdings, being the first area of land that Charles Carter and his family settled on in their own right.

The Carter family moved there in the winter of 1845. Originally the land was held under annual licence from 1846 which cost £5 per annum. Their occupation became more secure due to change in Land Acts, becoming legally owned under pastoral licence in the Portland Bay District being the 64<sup>th</sup> lease granted. The lease application was dated 5<sup>th</sup> January 1848. The application form was written as follows:

“Application for a lease of waste lands of the Crown beyond the settled districts in the colony of New South Wales.”

This was in pursuance of Her Majesty’s Order-In-Council published in the Government Gazette of NSW of 7<sup>th</sup> day of October 1847.

The pastoral run of Brim Spring was only small – 12,800 acres – and had an estimated capacity for grazing of 4000 sheep.

Brim Spring was described as being between the Grampians and Victoria Ranges on the Glenelg River. Bounded on the north by the Station of Mr. D.C. Simpson (known as Glenisla), on the west by the Glenelg River, on the south by the Grampians, and on the east by Mr. Rose’s station, Rosebrook.

You can certainly understand how loose a description this is and how easily the interpretation of boundaries can be disputed and frequently were in the form of caveats being placed by adjacent pastoral run holders.

Brim Spring was no exception, and a caveat was placed by Phillip Davis Rose of Rosebrook Station and dated 21<sup>st</sup> September 1848 stating that Charles Carter was occupying more land than was originally agreed, and that he was going over a ploughed line that he had made to mark the boundary between Rosebrook Station and Brim Spring.

Phillip Rose stated the location of the boundary had been approved by Captain Foster Fyans who was the Commissioner for Crown Lands, Portland Bay, between 1840 and the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1846.

I am uncertain as to what was the result of the caveat that was applied to the lease.

## CHARLES CARTER'S STORY

The Carter family had its origins in Cambridgeshire near the village of Whittlesey in a small hamlet called Coats.

Charles Carter was the son of Charles and Elizabeth Carter and was born on 1st May 1798. His mother died when Charles was 4. Charles worked as an agricultural labourer and, when aged 23, was accused of "horse robbery", was convicted and because it was a capital offence, was sentenced to be hanged. This was subsequently commuted to transportation for life and he was sent to Van Dieman's Land, arriving there on 6th November 1822 after a 140 day journey on the transport ship "Caledonia".

He was assigned to work with various settlers in Van Dieman's Land. Charles Carter met Thomasina Matthews, a woman from Cornwall, in Van Dieman's Land, and married her at Coal River, now known as Richmond, on 23rd March 1829.

Charles worked as an overseer at Constitution Hill on land owned by a Hobart solicitor, Mr. Gamaliel Butler. Charles never had any problem with the authorities in VDL and was given his Ticket of Leave after helping capture bushrangers.

Charles Carter and his wife decided to move to Port Phillip and arrived with the family which now comprised 4 children – Mary Jane, Eliza Alice, Samuel, William - and the newly born John Charles on 24th September 1838.

In Melbourne, Charles Carter became an overseer again and worked on building a weir over the Yarra to separate the fresh water from salty water. He later took contracts for stripping wattle bark which was used for tanning leather.

He was invited to come as an overseer to help set up a station by James Monckton Darlot. Charles had already had business dealings with Darlot who had sold him bullock teams for carting wattle bark. Darlot was an experienced overlander of stock and was used to speculative ventures, and usually had financial backers.

They decided to go out west of Melbourne and came to what is now known as Dooen and called the station Brighton.

At this time, Charles and Thomasina Carter had their final child, Sarah, who was born in Melbourne in 1841. Sarah drowned in the Wimmera River and is the first family burial. The grave is on the banks of the Wimmera River at Dooen.

The journey to Dooen took place during the winter months, leaving Melbourne in May and finally settling everything on site on the 10th August 1842.

Brighton Run No.25 Portland Bay and consisted of 102,400 acres.

It was from Brighton Station (later subdivided into North and South Brighton) that Charles and his family set out with their dray, cattle and some pigs to set up on their own account, intending to go towards the coast to find vacant land. They broke a wheel on the dray when they became bogged in mud. Thomasina decided they had gone far enough and should settle at that location.

### Life at Brim Spring Station

They grew wheat to make flour for bread making. Sheep were purchased and the older boys helped in shepherding sheep as they had to protect them from the numerous dingos that were in the area.

A vegetable patch was developed at a bend of the creek nearby

Dog proof fences were made

Sons Samuel and William made a watch box which was basically a small house with handles at both ends which was big enough for the boys to sleep in

They also made hurdle fences to help pen in the sheep

Charles made a single furrow plough of wood with iron ploughshare

They came up with an arrangement of a bullock bell on one side of the sheep yard attached by a string to their watch box so that if they heard the sheep distressed by the dingos, they could ring the bell and frighten them away. They also had tame dogs to help.

### Station Business

Samuel Carter, when aged 13 years, was given the task of going to Melbourne to arrange the signing of the pastoral lease applications for Brim Spring as his father Charles had pressing tasks at Brim Spring. At this time, in 1847, they only had 2 horses – one had a sore back and the other was needed for work so Samuel set off to walk to Melbourne with a few provisions tied up in a handkerchief which had to last until he could meet up with a friendly squatter and be offered hospitality. He slept out under the stars. Samuel made the trip there and back in 11 days and walked 60 miles on the last day arriving home at Brim Spring at 11 pm.

### Relationships with the aboriginals

Frontier life was difficult. Sheep were an easy target whilst cattle, especially bulls, were a difficult target for capture by the aborigines.

The whole livelihood of the squatters depended on their stock retention and multiplication – conflicts did occur from time to time.

In the early days, Mrs. Carter and the children were working down at the vegetable patch after having secured their house. When they returned to the house, they noticed some bark sheet removed from the roof and a trail of white flour. Apparently the aborigines had entered the house via the roof and taken all the sugar and flour. The men were away getting provisions so the family had to make do with vegetables for some weeks.

On another occasion, Charles Carter was away and aborigines approached the house with the women crying and indicating that the Carter family were going to be killed. Thomasina decided that the best strategy was to pretend that Charles Carter was still there. She dressed up in his clothes and took his double barrelled shotgun and pretended to shoot birds. After firing several shots, she went back in the house and changed back into her ordinary clothes. Samuel Carter then deliberately walked past the aboriginal camp whistling as if searching for the cows. Later in the afternoon, the aborigines dispersed.

As time passed, an uneasy co-existence occurred with some of the aboriginals viewed as friendly. The Carter boys played with aboriginal children and Samuel Carter became proficient in the local language.

Samuel Carter wrote down a list of aboriginal names and meanings towards the end of his life. These were posthumously published in his booklet “Reminiscences” and are amongst the very few primary sources available.

Eliza Carter, daughter of Charles Carter, remembered seeing as many as 300 aboriginals at Brim Spring. It could take up to a day for them to pass through as they would go past in twos and threes.

The lubras at Brim Spring used to sing a song like YAP YA NA, WARRA WAR or WARRA WAR and would repeat it several times.

The family prospered and improvements were added to the original home which was situated in the area known as Blackfellows Swamp.

In July 1858, the Carter family took the next big step when they purchased the pastoral lease of Rosebrook Station which then became their home.

During the 1850s, it was difficult to get station hands because of the gold rush. There was a great shortage of shepherds, shearers and men to wash the wool.

The Carter girls, Mary and Eliza, needed to work as shepherds especially along the old Adelaide Road which ran through Brim Spring. They had to be able to deal with any trouble which might occur and carried loaded revolvers with them when they were away from the homestead. Both the Carter girls could shear sheep and were said to be capable of shearing 30-40 sheep per day each.

Charles Carter found it necessary to take this wool to Geelong with his sons due to the shortage of men. On one of the trips in 1852, they were approached by Captain Melville, the bushranger, who assessed the situation and finding them well prepared with guns for protection, then decided to ride off.

In 1851, it was a very dry summer with very high temperatures. Spontaneous fire broke out in many parts of Victoria fanned by hot north winds on 6th February 1851, a day to be always remembered as Black Thursday. There were fires in the Grampians near Brim Spring. A man known as wild Harry Garvin saved sheep from the flames by placing them in a swamp at Brim Spring, later known as Dunton's Swamp.

In 1855, a men's hut 14 feet x 10 feet with slab walls and a bark roof was constructed for the cost of £10.

The sheep multiplied at Brim Spring and, by 1857, had 2,500 sheep. The sheep wandered onto adjacent stations and, on several occasions, were impounded by adjacent squatters who thought the Carters had no money to fight the lawsuits. However, the squatters were wrong as they took the cases to Melbourne and obtained damages as well as recognition of their claimed landholding.

In December 1857, the Carters took their wool to R. Goldsborough & Co in Market Street near the Yarra for consignment for sale. It is recorded that they had 104 bales of wool on four bullock drays. The wool had been cold water washed and sold at 22 ½ pence per pound.

#### Station Improvements

By October 1859, the improvements to Brim Spring were two brick cottages, separate kitchen and outhouses, a slab construction woolshed with a galvanised roof and men's huts. There was a garden and a fenced paddock.

In 1859, Charles Carter applied to have the pre-emptive right of 640 acres at Brim Spring taken up and for it to be surveyed in 1860.

*(Notes of a talk given by Dr. Jeff C. Jenkinson at Brim Springs on Sunday 5th April 2009.)*