

**William Gwillim WALKER Family
and
Vron Property
(by Ivan Badcock, Bishopsbourne – April 2011)**

William Gwillim Walker and family became associated with what is now known as Bishopsbourne, when on 7 February 1825 he received a Grant of 2 000 acres in the area and which property he named “Vron” after a family farm in Wales. The locality here at the time was identified as Liffey River, Norfolk Plains, Van Diemen’s Land. The name Bishopsbourne was applied to the area in 1844, when Bishop Nixon of the Church of England in Van Diemen’s Land, purchased part of the Vron property and established a College and township in the area. The name Bishopsbourne translates, “Bishop’s villa by the stream”.

More land was added to this grant when William received a further grant of 1 000 acres on 26 May 1829 and again increased by another grant of 1 000 acres approved to him on 1 February 1831, the three grants adjoining. Then in 1839 William purchased another 1 000 acres further along the road to Carrick with this land only being separated from his other properties by a 500 acre grant originally made to Thomas Collicott.

William also owned a brick constructed residence at York Street, Launceston which he and his family probably used when visiting Launceston and when William was attending meetings relating to his many community involvements, including that of being a Magistrate. In the 1842 Census William is recorded as the proprietor with the occupier being George Smith.

William and his wife, Jane, with three children reached Hobart on 19 January 1825, aboard the 400 ton sailing ship “Admiral Cockburn”. They had left England on 7 September 1824 and had stopped at Tristan da Cunha Island in the Atlantic Ocean to take on water. Captain Cooling also took on board a man, Augustus Earle who had been stranded there eight months earlier. Earle later became famous as an artist and in 1831 sailed with Charles Darwin aboard HMS Beagle doing sketches of newly discovered plants and animals.

William brought with him 15 pure bred Merino ewes and two “superior” rams, the sheep having been purchased from the distinguished flock of John Bennett Esq., MP for Wiltshire. During the voyage seven lambs were born: there is no mention of any of the sheep dying during the voyage.

Both William Walker and his wife, Jane (nee) Fletcher, had strong links with Wales with both being born there, although in William’s early life he mostly resided in London. Earlier generations on his father’s line had long resided in London near their business operations in the printing industry and wharf operations, these businesses being adjacent to the Tower of London.

William Gwillim Walker’s parents were Miles and Elizabeth Walker and he was their only son. His paternal grandparents were William and Ann (nee Gwillim) Walker with Ann in turn being the only child of Phillip Gwillim and Sarah (nee Lewis).

The family Bible records William being born on Wednesday, 23 August 1785 at 10.30 a.m. at “Berllanvedu”, Llandering, Monmouthshire, Wales. Jane’s headstone, located at the Forth, Tasmania Congregational cemetery, notes that she was formerly of Berllaevedev, Wales. Her parents have been identified as James and Ann Fletcher who also emigrated to Van Diemen’s Land and had arrived here prior to William and Jane. Family stories relate that James and Ann farmed at The Moat, Carrick, around seven miles distant from Vron. Jane’s date of birth has not been located, but with her death notice advising she was 73 years when she passed away on 20 September 1867, gives a date of c.1794.

Further information in William’s family Bible states that he and Jane were married on 4 January 1816 at British Ambassador Chapel by Rev. Stonchoine(sic) in France. Four children were born to the family while living in France and a son in Hamburg, Germany. These were

- Marianne Walker born 30 October 1816 at Chateau de Grace
- Henry Walker born 22 December 1817 at Amboire, France
- William Walker born May 1819 at Vouvray, Touraine, France died 14 May 1819
- Jane Walker born 4 January 1821 at Dieppe, France died 6 May 1823
- William Gwilliam Walker born 26 February 1823 at Hamburg, Germany died 28 February 1824

Another son was born during the voyage to Australia – George Cooling Walker born 21 October 1824 aboard the Admiral Cockburn.

Records show that in 1824, just prior to leaving England, William Gwillim Walker took out a mortgage against his properties in Wales for the sum of £1 000, presumably to assist with the families passage to Australia, freight costs for their chattels and small flock of Merino ewes and rams, as well as providing capital to help get established here in Van Diemen’s Land. This mortgage was subsequently defaulted in 1856, thus effectively losing all the ancestral land. The family address at the time of taking out the mortgage is given as Circus Minorities, London.

The family did not immediately move to Vron but instead initially purchased 200 acres of land on the outskirts of Launceston which William named “Kerry Lodge”. This property is located five miles from Launceston on the Hobart Road running towards Perth.

Not only was William active with farming but quickly become involved with community activities. By July 1826 William had been appointed a “Justice of the Peace for the Island of Van Diemen’s Land and its Dependencies” (The Hobart Town Gazette of Saturday, 29 July 1826 refers). Just shortly after this date the Colonial Times newspaper in an article of 18 August 1826 records that William is to be requested to become a part of a 16 member committee with purpose being to establish a high quality education facility at Launceston with a proposed name of “Cornwall Collegiate Institute”.

During 1826 William was confronted by an attempt to break up his marriage to Jane, by Colonel William Balfour of the 40th. Regiment which was then serving in the

Colony. William was incensed and challenged Balfour to a duel which Balfour declined. With both being magistrates and their fellow magistrates and other leading citizens becoming most concerned about the situation, they took up the matter with Governor Arthur. The Governor took swift action and within days Colonel Balfour was transferred from his post and out of the Colony.

In 1827 on Saturday, 4 August, a family birth notice appears in the Hobart Town Gazette as follows:-

Birth – At Kerry Lodge, near Launceston on 29 ult. the Lady of
W.G. Walker Esq. J.P. of a Son.

Family records give his name as Edward Barnes Walker.

Based on newspaper reports, the family continued to reside at Kerry Lodge until 1829, during which time the development of the Vron property was being progressed, including the building of their new residential mansion, plus other buildings on the bank overlooking the Liffey River to the west. Included in the panoramic views was the nearby Great Western Tiers mountain range which stretched some seventy miles in an arc from the south east to the north west.

Most of these buildings were of brick construction made from the excellent clay to be found on the property. A large team of convict labourers were almost certainly employed on the building work, while others attended to the farm operations.

The newspapers of the time record a regular flow of convicts to and from the Vron property and which included the later notorious bushranger, Samuel Britton. In The Hobart Town newspaper of Saturday, 10 December 1831, Vron is recorded amongst the 21 convict outstations in the Colony that was in receipt of Government rations for the convicts stationed there. On census night held on 4 January 1842, 38 people are resident at Vron, of which 20 were convicts.

Much of the Vron farm land in the Bishopsbourne township area consisted of a clay loam of moderate fertility and was largely free of bush and stone. The soil along the Liffey river flats was more of a loamy-alluvial nature but much more fertile, although on take up was very swampy. The 1 000 acre block purchased near Carrick was composed of poorer soil, with patches of rock and some bush. In 1828 when the Land Commissioners passed through Collicott's grant, which was sandwiched between William Walkers properties, they recorded that it was a bad farm with the front land being fair in quality with the back land being covered with forest and swampy.

By 1828 William had decided to sell "Kerry Lodge" with the property being advertised for sale on Saturday, 5 July 1828 in the Hobart Town Courier as follows-

To Be Sold by Private Contract

The farm of Kerry Lodge, near Launceston, containing 200 acres of land. The principal part is in a high state of cultivation, of which 40 acres are laid down to English grasses, 35 acres in wheat and barley and 55 acres, part in fallow, and cleared ready to be taken up. The

whole enclosed with post and rail fence, and partly divided into paddocks. There is an excellent house and buildings and a garden of two acres well-stocked, which, with the crops will be sold on reasonable terms. It would well suit a settler newly arrived, or any person having frequent occasion to go to Launceston, being only five miles distant on the road to Perth, and in a most agreeable and Cheerful situation.

For particulars apply to the Printer, or on the premises.

Six months later on Saturday, 10 January 1829 the farm is again advertised for sale with a similar description given, with interested persons asked to apply to Mr. Walker on the premises.

In the same newspaper, The Hobart Town Courier and on the same day, a second advertisement was published seeking an overseer for the “Kerry Lodge” farm as follows-

OVERSEER

Wanted a steady free Man, who understands the management of an Agricultural and Sheep Farm. Apply to Mr. Walker, Kerry Lodge near Launceston.

By May of 1829 the property is noted as having been purchased by Mr. Barnes for £700. (Refer Hobart Town Courier of 16 May 1829).

It would appear that the small flock of Merino sheep that William had brought from England had, by 1829, thrived and multiplied. In the Hobart Town Courier on Saturday, 26 December 1829 the following for sale notice appears-

PURE MERINO RAMS

From 30 to 40 pure Merino Rams, the originals from the flock of J. Bennett Esq. M.P. Salisbury, are now to be disposed of. Apply to W.G. Walker, Esq. Vron on the Liffey, Norfolk plains.

A similar advertisement appears the next year, 1830, on Saturday, 30 October.

MERINO RAMS FOR SALE

To be sold, from 20 to 30 Rams, the produce of imported Merino-Ewes and Rams. Apply to
W.G. Walker
Vron, Norfolk plains.

Not only did the sheep flock continue to grow, so also the family with four births being recorded at Vron.

1829 – Alfred Miles Walker, born 8 September 1829

1831 – Adelaide Jane Eliza Walker, born 7 March 1831

1835 – Rhoda Ann Harriett Walker, born 7 April 1835

1840 - Rebecca Victoria Emma Walker, born 11 February 1840.

It would appear by 1833 Jane's mother had become ill and had come to stay with her daughter at Vron. Her death notice appears in the Independent newspaper on 3 August, 1833 as follows-

Died, - Lately at Vron, the amiable and talented Lady of James Fletcher, Esq. and mother of Mrs. W.G. Walker. If sweetness of disposition, elegance of manners, the varied accomplishments of a well bred women, and fervently unassuming piety, ever constituted a living treasure, and a pure example –mourn! Reader mourn: for when Mrs. Fletcher winged her way to the Paradise of God, that example was withdrawn, and that treasure departed. R.I.P.

Another notable event was the marriage of William and Jane's eldest daughter, Marianne to John Alexander Jackson. This took place at the Vron mansion on 24 March 1834.

William and his new son-in-law John Jackson also became connected in business as in 1834 they joined with others in the founding of the public insurance Company, known as the Cornwall Insurance Company with their office located in Launceston. Family stories state that William's later financial insolvency was in part due to heavy losses suffered by the insurance company.

William and family were also connected to the Church of England with some indications that Church services were held at their Vron home. When the new Christ Church at Longford was proposed in 1837, William made a generous donation of £105 and earlier in 1825 when subscriptions for the erection of the first Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Launceston were sought, he made a donation of £2-0-0.

By 1842 William was in financial difficulty as were many other farmers in the Colony. Income for produce being sold had slumped and many were forced into bankruptcy. A notice in the Hobart Town Courier on Friday 15 April 1842 advised the transfer of William's farm properties to Charles Swanston and John Ward Gleadow as trustees of the estate, who then set about liquidating the assets of the Estate, all be it slowly.

Just over two years later the following notice to creditors was published in the Launceston Examiner on Wednesday 4 September 1844.

Notice to Creditors - Notice is hereby given, that William Gwillim Walker, of Vron, in Van Diemen's Land, Esquire, hath, by certain deeds, dated thirtieth day of August instant, conveyed and assigned all his estate and effects to Theodore Bryant Bartley, of Kerry Lodge, in Van Diemen's Land, Esquire and Joseph Penny, of Launceston, in Van Diemen's Land, Esquire, as trustees for the benefit of all the creditors of the said William Gwillim Walker; and that the execution of the said deeds of conveyance and assignment by the said William Gwillim Walker and Theodore Bryant Bartley, is attested by John Ward Gleadow, of Launceston aforesaid, an attorney of the supreme court of Van Diemen's Land: and that the execution of the same deeds by the said Joseph Penny, is attested by William Henty, of Launceston aforesaid, an attorney of the said supreme court – Dated this thirty-first day of August 1844. GLEADOW & HENTY - Solicitors to the trustees.

During 1844 it would appear Bishop Nixon had become interested in the purchase of part of the Vron property for purpose of establishing of high class college at the site. It would be conducted on similar lines to the universities at Cambridge and Oxford in England. An offer of £6 000 was made for about 700 acres of the property and which included the Vron mansion and which was accepted. (Launceston Examiner of Saturday 14 December refers).

At the same time, on Tuesday, 10 December 1844, an auction was held at Vron to sell household goods, stock and machinery. The following notice appeared prior to the sale.

Sale by Auction

Elegant and modern household furniture, horses, cattle, sheep, carriages, farming implements, etc.

Messrs Underwood and Eddie are instructed by the trustees of W.G. Walker, Esq., to sell by Public Auction at Vron, Norfolk Plains, on Tuesday 10th December, and following day if necessary from the number of lots to be disposed of, commencing precisely at twelve o'clock, after a lunch which will be provided at eleven o'clock,

The whole of the ELEGANT and MODERN HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, comprising every requisite for the residence of a family of respectability, amongst which are:

Drawing and dining room suits, in rosewood and mahogany, consisting of

Couches, sofas, chairs

Loo, card, sofa, chess, coffee, and pembroke tables

Brussels, carpets and rugs

Fenders and fire-irons

Mahogany pedestal sideboards

Winged bookcases, with and without secretaires

Dining tables

Chimney glasses and ornaments

Window curtains

Lamps, chandeliers

PAINTINGS

Mahogany four-post, French, tent and ron bedsteads and bedding

Mahogany wardrobes

Chests drawers, wash-stands, and other chamber furniture, etc.

Also

One hundred head of CATTLE, all in the highest possible condition, consisting of –

WORKING BULLOCKS, not to be surpassed in the island

DAIRY COWS, of the most valuable description

Well-bred HEIFFERS, and powerful STEERS fit for the yoke

Five hundred FAT SHEEP, in lots to suit purchasers

A number of most useful horses, broken in to saddle, carriage, cart and plough

A very handsome chariot and harness, with a pair of excellent horses well matched

An open carriage and set of harness
A large quantity of farming implements, consisting of carts, drays,
waggons, ploughs, harrows, rollers, thrashing and winnowing
machines, cider mill etc., etc.
An extensive assortment of dairy utensils
Blacksmiths' tools, forcing pump, etc.

TERMS: - Under £20, cash; £20 and upwards, three months' credit on
approved endorsed acceptances

Catalogues of the furniture may be had at the office of the auctioneers
three days prior to the sale

Refreshments will be provided at eleven o'clock, and every
accommodation will be afforded on the day of the sale.

A report on the sale appeared in the Launceston Examiner on Saturday 14 December
1844 as follows –

SALE AT VRON – The stock and furniture sold at Vron, by Messrs
Underwood & Eddie, on Tuesday last, realised encouraging prices; the
attendance was numerous, and the bidding evidenced an encreasing(sic)
competition.

A second auction sale took place two months later on Friday 14 February 1845 with
items listed for sale. The sale was again conducted at Vron by the same auctioneers,
Messrs. Underwood & Eddie starting at twelve o'clock.

Seventy head of CATTLE consisting of bullocks, steers, cows, and heifers
Three horses
Two hundred pigs
Carriage
A thrashing machine, one winnowing machine
One waggon, two drays, two carts
Two ploughs, two harrows, one roller
One hay or wool screw, one boiler 60 to 70 gallons
One scale, beam, and weights
One cider mill
Four cheese presses
Twenty vats, four tubs
Four milk cisterns, three pails, one churn
A quantity of cheese
Five hundred fat wethers
Two hundred and fifty store sheep

TERMS – Under £20 cash; £20 and upwards, three months' credit on approved
accepted bills.

Walker Family Headstone
Congregational Church Cemetery – Forth, Tasmania

In Memoriam
Jane widow of the late
William Gwillim Walker
Of Vron and formerly of
BERLLAEEVEDEV Wales
Died 20 Sept. 1867
Aged 73 Years

Recorded on the left side of the monument

Also
George Cooling Walker
Her son died 29 November 1867
Aged 43

Recorded on the right side of the monument

Henry her son Died at
Mount Bischoff
22 April 1876
Aged 50

William Gwillim and Jane Walker

William Gwillim Walker	Jane Fletcher	Marriage – 4 January 1816
born 23 August 1785	born c1794	at British Ambassador
died 12 November 1852	died 20 September 1867	Chapel, France

Children:

1. Marianne WALKER born 30 Oct 1816 d. Jan 1890
 m John Alexander JACKSON born c1809 d. 25 May 1885

2. Henry Coutes WALKER born 22 Dec 1817 d 22 Apr 1876
 m Annie DRUMMOND born d.

3. William WALKER born May 1819 d. 14 May 1819

4. Jane WALKER born 4 Jan 1821 d. 6 May 1823

5. William Gwilliam WALKER born 26 Feb 1823 d. 28 Feb 1824

6. George Cooling WALKER born 21 Oct 1824 d. 29 Nov 1867
 m Emma Ellen Fredricka St. George WILKINSON b.c1838 d. 16 Apr 1923

7. Edward Barnes WALKER born 29 Jul 1827 d. 8 Feb 1898
 m Alice BROWN born c1851 d.

8. Alfred Miles WALKER born 8 Sep 1829 d. 3 May 1881
 m Louisa Mary Glover WILKINSON born c1841 d. 12 Jun 1926

- 9 Adelaide Jane Eliza WALKER b. 7 Mar 1831 d. 1900
 m John BENN born 1821 d. 9 Feb 1895

- 10 Rhoda Ann Harriett WALKER b. 7 Apr 1835 d. 1903

- 11 Rebecca Victoria Emma WALKER b. 11 Feb 1840 d. 27 Mar 1929
 m (Rev) Ralph BROWN born c1842 d. 12 May 1903

Child- (1)

Marianne Walker	John Alexander Jackson	Marriage – 24 March 1834
Born - 30 October 1816	Born - c1809	Vron, Norfolk plains
Chateau de Grace, France	England	Van Diemen's Land
Died - January 1890	Died - 25 May 1885	
England	Ealing, England	

Children-

- John William Erskine Jackson – born 13 May 1835 died - 21 Feb. 1836
- Henry Alexander Jackson – bap. 13 Jul. 1837 died

Marianne was the eldest child of William and Jane Walker and with their first four children being born in France between 1816 and 1821 and a fifth child, a son William, born in Hamburg, Germany in 1823 it would appear likely that Marianne's first seven years were spent in France and Germany.

She arrived at Hobart in Van Diemen's Land in 1825 with her parents and two brothers, Henry who had just turned seven years of age and George Cooling Walker, who had been born during the voyage, and was three months old.

Marianne continued to move with the family firstly to Launceston and then at the age of 13 years to the families new home at Vron, on the Liffey River, Norfolk plains which was around 18 miles from Launceston.

A particular event for Marianna was her marriage on 24 March 1834 to John Alexander Jackson which took place at her parent's Vron Mansion. She was 17 years and five months of age with John 25 years.

John was the son of John Serocold Jackson and as part of his large Jackson family emigrated to Sydney in July 1825. He soon found work as a draughtsman at the Surveyor-General's Department at a salary of £100p.a. After several years he appears to have returned to England, for he arrived from London at Launceston in the "David Owen" in June 1831. By 1834 he was referred to as an agriculturist on a large scale, possessing two large farms and renting Esk Farm, Rosetta. In 1833 he became editor of the Launceston Advertiser newspaper.

John's public life and abilities had attracted the attention of Governor George Gawler of South Australia who sent him an invitation to join the public service there. John and Marianne reached Adelaide aboard the "Dawsons" on 2 September 1839 and by 1 October had been appointed colonial treasurer and accountant-general. In mid 1843 John and Marianne left Adelaide and returned to Launceston where the family remained till 21 December of that year when the family left for London. He travelled there to clear his name for alleged misconduct while serving at the South Australian treasury. This he achieved.

On leaving London they firstly travelled to Sydney where John worked for a time compiling a census early in 1846, then returning to Launceston arriving on 26 June 1846. John was soon appointed as a lobbyist by a number of leading colonists here to represent them in London.

Many colonists, both here in Van Diemen's Land and on the Mainland, were becoming increasingly impatient with delay or indecision in meeting long standing grievances by the Home Colonial Office, who had the overall control of the Colonies.

In August 1846 John and his family set sail aboard the "Penyard Park" and they arrived in London on 3 April 1847. At once he set about lobbying at the Colonial Office and published pamphlets on emigration, abolition of transportation, steam communication to Australia, and representative assemblies for the colonies. His colonist's backers were very appreciative of his efforts and extended his two year contract by another two years. Some colonists in South Australia followed his efforts closely and seeing the value of his work also appointed John to represent them in London.

John was also active in other arenas for in October 1847 he had been admitted to the Middle Temple and three years later was called to the Bar.

In 1851 he was appointed colonial inspector for the English, Scottish and Australian Bank at £1 200 a year, with residence to be in Melbourne. He held this position until 1872.

John and Marianne then returned to England with John dying at Ealing, England on 25 May 1885 at the age of 76. Marianne was to live for a further five years in England till her death in 1890 and is also buried there.

Child – (2)

Henry Coutes Walker	Annie Drummond	Marriage -	1863
Born – 22 December 1817	Born -		
Amboire, France			
Died – 22 April 1876	Died		
Mount Bischoff,			
Tasmania.			

Children-

- Reginald Drummond Walker – b.13 June 1863	d.	1931
- Adelaide Annie Walker – b.	d.	

Like his older sister, Henry was born in France, travelling to Van Diemen's Land when six years of age.

Here he initially followed farming pursuits and at the time of the 1842 census is noted as being in charge at the families Vron property. A glimpse of the activity at Vron can be had from the census conducted on the night of 4 January 1842 and the later clearing sales held in December 1844 and February 1845. On census night 38 people are recorded as being normally resident there of which 30 were single male workers. .

The clearing sales give an extensive list of the stock, plant and machinery which indicates a large scale mixed farming operation centering around the raising of sheep, cattle, pigs, dairying including cheese making and general cropping. Managing an operation of this scale must have kept Henry busy.

After sale of the Vron farm he worked as manager for James Robertson of Launceston. Where and the type of this work has not yet been established but may have been in farming as James co-jointly with W.D. Grubb had an adjoining grant to Vron. James also had extensive business interests in Launceston.

Henry died near Mount Bischoff a tin mining region in the western regions south of Burnie following an accident on 20 April 1876, dying two days later.

The newspaper, the Launceston Examiner on 13 May 1876, reported as follows-

A fatal accident occurred on the tramway at Mount Bischoff on the 20th. ult. to Mr Henry Walker, formerly manager for the late James Robertson, Esq. of Launceston, who had been up to the Mount to conduct a store for his brother, Mr. A. M. Walker, of the Forth. It appears Mr. Walker was riding on one of the trucks on the tramway to Emu Bay, when a sudden jolt threw him off, and some of the iron with which the truck was loaded fell on him. He fell a distance of ten to fifteen feet, and was insensible for a short time. He was carried into a hut close by, and Dr. Pring, who resided there attended to him, but he died on the 22nd. ult. The deceased gentleman leaves a widow and two children.

Child – (3)

William Walker
Born - May 1819
Vouvray, Touraine
France
Died – 14 May 1819

Child – (4)

Jane Walker
Born – 4 January 1821
Dieppe
France
Died – 6 May 1823

Child – (5)

William Gwilliam Walker
Born – 26 February 1823
Hamburg
Germany
Died – 28 February 1824

Child – (6)

George Cooling Walker	Emma Ellen Fredricka St. George Wilkinson
Born – 21 October 1824	Born - c1838 Marriage – 13 April 1864
Aboard the Sailing Ship Admiral Cockburn	
Died – 29 November 1867	Died - 16 Apr. 1923
Forth, Tasmania	

Children – none located

George was born aboard ship, the Admiral Cockburn, in the Atlantic Ocean at a spot recorded in the family Bible as Latitude 15 and Longitude 21.

In 1864 when near 40 years of age, he married Emma Wilkinson the daughter of Frederick George Wilkinson who at the time was the Government Medical Officer at Latrobe. Frederick had moved to Latrobe from Hobart in 1868 and on retirement returned to Hobart.

Another daughter of Frederick Wilkinson, Louisa, married Alfred Miles Walker, a younger brother of George.

It is believed that George Walker mostly worked as a farmer, firstly at Vron and later in the Forth region on the North West Coast of Tasmania.

George died at the early age of 43 years the result of a heart condition. His death notice reads-

George died on the night of the 29th. November 1867 of Mount Eric River, Forth. Aged 43 – disease of the heart of long standing, deeply deplored by a large circle of friends.

Child – (7)

Edward/Edwin Barnes Walker	Alice Brown	Marriage – 26 July 1858
Born – 29 July 1827	Born - c.1851	House of James Brown
“Kerry Lodge”		River Forth
Launceston		
Died - 8 February 1898	Died –	

Children – possibly at least two

Edward was the first of William and Ann’s children to be born in Australia. When two years of age he moved with the family from “Kerry Lodge” to Vron where he lived until he was 17.

It is likely that at Vron he learned the basics of farming an occupation that he followed for the next 40 plus years.

At marriage Edward was aged 31 and Alice 17. At marriage Alice is noted as the daughter of James Brown of Forth and is probably a sister to Ralph Brown who married Rebecca (Emma) Walker, Ralph a son of James Brown also of Forth.

In the review of the 1892 year in the Launceston Examiner there is reference to the death of a Mr. E.B. Walker mid year and which noted that he had been a resident in the Leven district for nearly 40 years. Whether this is Edward Barnes Walker is yet to be established.

The death of Alice Walker is also uncertain but there are indications that she may have died in Victoria in 1893.

Also needing investigation is the birth of their children. Two births to Edward and Alice Walker have been noted-

- Male child born 18 August 1859 at Forth River
Possibly this is William Gwilliam Walker
- Male child born 24 February 1861 at Forth River
Possibly this is Edwin Walker.

Child – (8)

Alfred Miles Walker Born – 8 September 1829 Vron Van Diemen's Land Died – 3 May 1881 Forth, Tasmania	Louisa Mary Glover Wilkinson Born – c1841 Died – 12 June 1926 Stanley Park, Okoroire, New Zealand	Marriage – 23 May 1866
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Children-

- Louis Augustine William Walker - born 11 Mar 1867 - d. 2 Jun 1891
- Rhoda Isabella Walker - born 7 Sep 1868 – d 24 Sep. 1877
- William Gwillim Walker - born 24 Sep. 1870 - d. 7 Jun 1890
- George St. George Walker born 22 Feb. 1872 - d. 25 Sep 1877
- Nellie Ada Walker born 2 Mar. 1874 - died 1877
- Alfred Miles Walker born 2 Mar. 1874 - d. 2 Oct 1877
- Ethel Adela Walker born 25 Jun 1875 -
- Selina Mary Walker born 19 Oct. 1876 - d.
- Jean Nellie Walker born 16 Nov 1878 - d. 30 Oct 1918
- Albert Edward Walker born 16 May 1880 - d.

Little has been discovered about Alfred Miles Walker's early life, although would have lived at Vron for his first 15 years before moving to the Forth district between Devonport and Ulverstone, although then known as Torquay and Leven respectively.

Alfred's name appears amongst the names being placed on the electoral roll for the House of Assembly, District of Devon with his address being given as Forth and occupation, leaseholder of H.M. Government Land commencing from 1853.

At his marriage to Louisa on 23 May 1866 his address is given as "Spring Vale" River Forth. The marriage notice records Alfred as being the youngest son of W.G. Walker of Vron and Louisa Mary Glover Wilkinson being the youngest daughter of Frederick St. George Wilkinson, MRCTE, of Torquay, Tasmania.

It is believed the family continued to live in the Forth district until at least Alfred's death in 1881, although several different property addresses are given. Alfred's occupation is mostly given as farmer although in 1877 when declared insolvent, his occupation is described as store keeper, one store being at Forth and the second near Waratah.

The year 1877 was both disastrous and tragic for the family. In August 1877 Alfred was declared insolvent and then the following month four of their children died within a week of each other, the result of diphtheria, which was rampant in the area at the time. Their children dying were Rhoda Isabella aged 9, George St. George (5), Nellie Ada (3) and her twin brother Alfred Miles Walker (3). Two other children would also die at a relative young age, Louis Augustine William Walker, their eldest son born 1867 and who died on 2 June 1891 aged 24. Their youngest daughter, Jean Nellie Miles Walker also died while relatively young, aged 39 years. Details of her life and death follow later in this report. Alfred died in 1881 leaving his wife Louisa to rear the remaining six children out of the total family of 10. The families address at the time is given as Hamilton on Forth. He was aged 51 years.

Louisa died on 12 June 1926 at the residence of her son-in-law, Robert Curruth, of Stanley Park, Okoroire, New Zealand and is buried in that country. She was aged 85 years.

JEAN NELLIE MILES WALKER – (1878-1918) – A Distinguished Nurse
(Youngest daughter of Alfred Miles Walker and Louisa Walker)

Jean Miles Walker as she was more commonly known was born at Forth on 16 November 1878. She was privately educated until 1893, then she enrolled at the newly established Collegiate School, Hobart, which had been started by an Anglican order of nuns. From 1903 to 1906 she attended the Hobart General Hospital where she trained in nursing and in 1908 she entered private nursing. Further training came in early 1913 when she undertook a six month course in obstetrical nursing.

Previously in 1906 she had joined the Royal Army Nursing Service Reserve and by 1909 held the position of principal matron of the 6th. Military District (Tasmania).

With the outbreak of the First World War she entered into full time overseas service and sailed for Egypt in November 1914. From September 1915 to January 1916 as

Sister Walker she worked in the British Hospital ship, "Gascon", which carried patients from Anzac Cove and other battle sites back to hospitals in Egypt.

In 1916 she was promoted to the position of matron at the Darford Hospital, England.. By July 1917 she had transferred to the 5th. British Stationary Hospital at Dieppe, France, then to London where on 19 October 1917 she was attached to the 2nd. AAH at Southall.

When working in the 1st. Group Clearing Hospital, Sutton Veny, she fell ill during the Spanish influenza epidemic.

Matron Jean Miles Walker died on 30 October 1918 in the British Hospital, Sutton Veny, and was buried in the graveyard of nearby St. John's the Evangelist Church.

She had been mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Royal Red Cross (1st. class) in 1916 and which had been received in person from King George V.

An account of the funeral appeared in The Sydney Morning Herald on Monday, 30 December 1918.

DISTINGUISHED NURSE'S FUNERAL

Lieutenant A. Carver of Heytonbury, Wiltshire, forwarded the following letter to Jean's mother and family in Goulburn written on the day when Jean was buried.

"Last week the matron of the hospital at Sutton Veny – a camp a couple of miles from here – died of this influenza that's getting about. We arranged to supply the gun carriage and horses to bear the coffin from the R.B.A.A. The funeral took place this afternoon. We had three officers driving and two cadets as brakesmen on the limbet. I happened to be one of them. We moved off from Sutton Veny at the slow march – a terrible thing for horses to keep up – and we did the mile to the church in just under one hour. The two brakesmen walked behind the gun carriage, and walking alongside me was Captain Jacka, V.C. and M.C. and bar. The road was lined with thousands of Australians, and it made the funeral service even more impressive to see the way every man came up to the salute as the coffin passed – even little kiddies about 6 years old seeing all the soldiers doing it, solemnly did the same. About 100 officers and 200 men attended, besides many others who came along, apart from the actual column of the slow march. I am glad I had the privilege of going – it was most impressive."

Child – (9)

Adelaide Jane Eiliza Walker
Born – 7 March 1831
Vron, Van Diemen's Land
Died – 1900
Melbourne, Victoria

John Benn
Born - c1821
Bootle, Cumberland,
England
Died – 9 February 1895
Melbourne, Victoria

Marriage- 20 April 1852
Cathedral Church
Melbourne

Children- Nil

To date only limited information on Adelaide has been located. After leaving Vron, when around 14 years of age, she soon found her way to Melbourne where she lived for most of her life. In 1852 she married John Benn a native of Bootle, Cumberland, England who had arrived at Melbourne in 1849. There he became a prominent businessman.

At the time of John's death in 1895 the Melbourne Argus newspaper devoted an article to his life and activities and without the good support of his wife, Adelaide, would have been difficult to succeed as he did. It reads-

Death of Mr. John Benn

“The announcement of the death of Mr. John Benn, for many years a prominent figure in the mercantile life of Melbourne, will be received with very deep regret. Mr. Benn who had been ailing for a considerable time past, was unwell last week, but came to Melbourne specially for the purpose of attending the meeting of the Metropolitan Gas Company, of which he has been chairman since its creation, and there is very little doubt but this unfortunate step cost him his life. On Monday, however, he was well enough to preside at the meeting of another company, of which he was chairman: and on Friday his medical advisors, Mr. O'Hara and Dr. Maudsley, found a marked improvement in his condition, but he suffered a relapse during the night, and died at 4 o'clock on Saturday morning.

Mr. Benn whose father was a North of England farmer, was born at Bootle, Cumberland in 1821, and after receiving a business training in a mercantile house in Liverpool came to Melbourne in 1849, and for some years was in partnership with Mr. Charles Heep. He returned to England in 1855, but came back immediately to Melbourne, and in the early part of 1856 became a partner in the well known firm of Grice, Sumner and Co., with which he was connected up to the time of his death. Always an active business man, he was associated with many public companies, and his integrity and tact led to him being elected to the presidency of many of these companies. He was chairman of the old Melbourne Gas Company, and on the amalgamation held the same position in the present company. He also presided over the directorate of The Trustees, Executors and Agency Company, the Agency Land and Finance Company of Australasia, the Commercial Union Insurance Company, and was on the Board of the Union Bank, and several kindred institutions. His interest in squatting pursuits was scarcely less keen, and was one of the few hobbies was the breeding of shorthorn cattle at Coulart, Westernport, where he had established a seaside home that included many of the features of a model farm. Amongst the pastoral properties in which Mr. Benn was interested are “Bagilbogie” Station on the Namoi River, New South Wales and “Monavale”, in the Waikato district of New Zealand. He had no aspiration to figure in public life either Parliamentary or Municipal. Mr. Benn married Miss Walker, who survives him, but had no children, his nearest relatives in Australia being the Messrs Grice, with whom he was distantly connected.

The remains of Mr. Benn will be interred in the Melbourne General Cemetery to-day, the funeral leaving his late residence, Waratah, Clendon-road, Toorak, at 2 p.m.”

John Benn's will reveals that he was a man of considerable worth and made generous provision for his wife Adelaide. When Probate was filed, the Melbourne Argus newspaper of 10 October 1895 reveals for Adelaide – "By the will the testor leaves his furniture and household effects, carriages, horses etc. to his wife Adelaide Jane Eliza Benn and his executors are to pay her a sum of £2 000 immediately after his death, and an annuity of £1 000 from the time of his death until they have wound up the partnership concerns. He also directs that his executors shall invest £40 000 and pay the income to his wife and after her death the principal is to revert to his residuary estate"

John also left substantial sums to others.

Child – (10)

Rhoda Ann Harriett Walker
Born – 7 April 1835
Vron, Norfolk Plains,
Van Diemen's Land
Died - 1903
Melbourne, Victoria

To date little has been discovered about Rhoda's life and activities.

It is likely that she never married as she is recorded under her maiden name of Walker in John Benn's will which he made on 28 July 1887. In his will John instructed that £6 000 be invested with the interest received be paid to her for life.

Child – (11)

Rebecca Victoria Emma Walker	Ralph Brown	Marriage – 10 April 1869
Born – 11 February 1840	Born - c1842	Wesleyan Church
Vron		Castlemaine
Van Diemen's Land		Victoria
Died - 27 Mar 1929	Died – 12 May 1903	
Melbourne, Victoria	Launceston, Tasmania	

Children-

- Charles Brown (Dr. R.C. Brown)
- Edward Walker Brown
- Adelaide Emma Brown, married 1904 to Samuel Lees

Other Notes – Children

Births – The Argus Melbourne

On 17 April 1872 at the Wesleyan Parsonage, Avoca, the wife of the Rev Ralph Brown of a son.

Deaths – The Argus Melbourne, Tuesday 26 November 1901

Brown – On 24 November at his parent's residence, Liddiard St., Auburn, John Benn, third beloved son of Ralph and Emma Brown and brother of Dr. R.C. Brown of Wycheproof, aged 28 years.

Rebecca was generally known as Emma, her third Christian name: this was the name recorded for her when her parents and sisters, Adelaide and Rhoda left Launceston for Port Phillip aboard the "Shamrock" on 20 May 1846.

It is likely that Emma moved often as her husband, Ralph Brown, was a Wesleyan (Methodist) minister, this due to the Wesleyan Church having a policy that a minister's term of ministry not exceed three years at any one congregation. Besides ministering throughout Victoria he also ministered in South Australia.

Some details about Ralph are to be found in the newspapers of the time. The Barrier Miner (Broken Hill) newspaper of Tuesday 7 March 1893 recorded-

The Rev. Ralph Brown is one of the best known of Wesleyan ministers in Victoria – and better known, perhaps, outside strict ministerial work than in it. It was he in company with his brother, some years ago set out from his home in Victoria with under £1 in his pocket and resolved to work his passage around the world upon it. This he did by means of lectures on phrenological and other subjects, "Heads and Faces" being the title of his best known lecture – a lecture which he has repeated in half the larger towns of Victoria and a good many others elsewhere. He is at present in charge of the Cecil-street Wesleyan Church at South Melbourne.

Ralph died at the Launceston hospital on 12 May 1903 and is buried in the Launceston cemetery. At the time he had come from Melbourne to conduct a lecture/preaching tour around Tasmania. His death and funeral notice appeared in the Launceston Examiner on Thursday 14 May 1903 as follows-

Death Notice – On 12 May at Launceston Hospital, Ralph Brown of Melbourne, aged 61.

Funeral Notice – The funeral of the late Ralph Brown will leave the General Hospital on Thursday (this day) at 3.00pm for the General Cemetery

An article about his life also appeared in the Launceston Examiner on 15 May 1903-

Late Mr. Ralph Brown – in reference to the death of Mr. Ralph Brown which occurred at the General Hospital on Tuesday night, the N.W. Advocate says: "It is singular that Mr. Brown commenced his career as a Methodist preacher in the Latrobe district, and, after travelling all over the world, he preached his last sermon at Latrobe a few Sundays ago.

Deceased was the son of the late James Brown, who arrived in Tasmania about 1852, and took up the land the following year at the River Forth, which was known later as "Sea View", and which was purchased by the late Mr. John Powell in '73, and called "Rosa". Mr. Jas Brown had a family of six – four daughters and two sons; one the Rev. J.J. Brown in now a Methodist minister at Clunes, Victoria; the other the deceased, was for a number of Years a Wesleyan minister. He was widely known as a phrenologist and lecturer. His lecture, "My trip round the world on 6s.6d., and how I did it", has been heard and enjoyed by many. In his early life, deceased experienced all the hardships of the early settlers, and it is related that when he entered Horton College at the age of 20, all the schooling he had received had been gained in the course of a year's attendance at a day school. The late Mr. Brown had relatives at

various Tasmanian centres, including Devonport, Forth and Burnie – Mrs. G.F. Patterson of the latter town being a cousin. He leaves a family of three – Dr. Charles Brown of Melbourne; Mr. Edward Brown and a daughter. The deceased only left the coast for the Launceston Hospital last Monday week by a doctor’s advice and his death was not altogether unexpected, though a month ago, he appeared to be in excellent health. He was just 60 years of age.

In another article it is mentioned that he suffered from a kidney disease.

A few other notes on the life and activities of Ralph are recorded in the Alexandra and Yea Standard newspaper on Friday 9 June 1903

- Mr. Brown had charge of the Moorabbin and other important circuits
- he was the driving force in building of the large church on the hill, at the Melbourne suburb of Preston, known as the Cathedral. It bears the inscription, “A tribute to the skill, enterprise and energy of the Rev. Ralph Brown”.
- he was a keen lover of cattle, and after leaving the ministry dealt largely in Alderneys, of which he was a judge at some of the chief agricultural shows.

Please advise additions and corrections to

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