

The connection between the Carrucan and Sweeney families is longstanding and is closely linked with the Eltham area. To write any history of the Carrucan family, it is also necessary to include the Sweeney family. This I have endeavoured to do in this brief article.

Thomas Sweeney (1803 – 1867) ¹ has long been honoured as the pioneer settler of Eltham. He must have possessed a great determination to survive, and crammed into his 64 years, a range of experiences at which we can only marvel. From the records sighted to date, the impression is of an enterprising, hardworking man with a keen sense of justice. He died a respected member of the community and left to his wife Margaret and their family 418 acres of land, including Culla Hill, a place of significance for all Sweeney descendants.

The Sweeney and Carrucan families, when I was a child in the early 1950s, believed that ‘Captain Sweeney’ had migrated to Australia as a freehold settler and the title ‘Captain’ reflected the fact that he had been a captain of a coastal trader in New South Wales. The story went that he had sailed up the Yarra in 1838 in a rowing boat on which he had rigged a sail.

But Sweeney family historian Peter Cuffley had determined by 1968 that Thomas Sweeney had in fact been transported to Australia as a convict. This caused consternation in family circles when first mooted. Peter remembers Uncle Jack’s reaction when he first broke the news to him – he was not prepared to accept the possibility that this might be true. Matters were made worse when Peter passed on his research to Alan Marshall who was putting together his book ‘Pioneers and Painters’. ² When this was published in 1971, all was out in the open and the matter was finally settled but the waters washed rough for some years further.

Yes, it was true. In an Ireland of poverty and discrimination, Thomas Sweeney and Michael Connors had in 1823 attempted to burn down the Guyder family home. The Guyders were well off landlords and owned several farms in different townlands but this was their home base. This particular incident was but many in a long guerrilla war in which the local farmers fought for social justice in the Irish countryside.

On Tuesday March 28, 1823 at the Clonmel Spring Assizes, Michael Connors and Thomas Sweeney were convicted under the Whiteboy Act, 'for a *felonious assault on the house of Patrick Guyder, at Cullohill, and with having set said house on fire.*' The list of sentences states that Michael Connors and Thomas Sweeney, '*for assaulting a habitation, between sun-rise and sun-set*' were to be hanged on the 26th of April. Thankfully, this was commuted to Life Transportation to New South Wales.

In an ironic twist, Thomas Sweeney subsequently named his family house in Eltham to ‘Culla Hill’. Was this a final laugh at the authorities in Ireland who had condemned him to transportation? Peter Cuffley thinks that he probably lived near Culla Hill in Ireland and knew Cullahill Castle as a landmark and that this was perhaps the inspiration for Culla Hill, Eltham. Further research may one day settle the question.

He was a mere twenty years of age when condemned and we can hardly begin to imagine the experience of being imprisoned on the hulk 'Surprise' in Cork harbour prior to being taken on board the convict transport Isabella. They were possibly on the hulk for as long as four months and we know from the surgeon's report that some of the convicts were in poor health.

Once in Sydney, he was selected to become an assigned servant to James Chandler, a young man of means and of good Christian character. After some years working on his property at Botany, he was reassigned to a John Brown of Liverpool and then passed onto George Brown at Dapto near Lake Illawarra.

Eventually in 1831, he received a ‘Ticket of Leave’ which described him as of height 5ft 9ins with dark ruddy complexion, brown hair and brown eyes – typical Irish stock.

He was soon operating a coastal trader between Illawarra and Sydney. During his visits to Sydney, he met Bridget Coleman and they were subsequently married in 1833. Somewhere between 1833 and 1835, Bridget died and he subsequently married Margaret Meehan at St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney on April 23rd 1838.

A Conditional Pardon was granted to Thomas on February 15th 1838 and by September of that year he and wife Margaret had arrived in the very new settlement on the Yarra at Port Phillip. Melbourne's population was only a few thousand and many of the buildings were still only temporary shelters.

¹ Much of this information on Thomas Sweeney has been provided by Peter Cuffley who is his great great grandson. Peter, of Castlemaine, is a well known historian and author who has extensively researched the Sweeney family tree.

² *Pioneers & Painters: One Hundred Years of Eltham and its Shire* by Alan Marshall, Thomas Nelson (Aust), 1971

Patrick Sweeney was born to Thomas and Margaret on December 6th 1838. When the first priest arrived in Melbourne he caught up on the backlog of children not yet baptised. The second Sunday mass was held on May 26th 1839. Patrick was the sixth child baptised on that day and is the seventh in the register.

Thomas gained a licence to depasture stock in the district of Melbourne on July 31st 1840. Twins Catherine Agnes (Kate) and Margaret Augustina were born on Wednesday May 19th 1841. In April 1842, Thomas wrote to Superintendent LaTrobe wanting to purchase land on the south bank of the Yarra with the £100 he had deposited in the Sub Treasury. He was referred to the Land Board and so began the process which led to the purchase of the 110 acres which became Culla Hill. While he was able to purchase that acreage in the Parish of Nillumbik, he was still a squatter on the south side of the Yarra about seven miles from Melbourne in January 1843 and actually had land under crops. His address at this stage was Merri Merri Creek. Even in May 1844, he was still uncertain about the 110 acres at what is now Eltham, and actually sent a petition to see if he could exchange it.

Development at Culla Hill would have begun in 1844/45, and it is known that the first building erected was a slab hut of about 12 x 15 feet. There was a severe recession in the early 1840s and it wasn't until around 1846 that things began to improve. The second building at Culla Hill was likely the Irish style 'longhouse' which was later described as a three roomed detached cottage as distinct from the main house which is believed to have been built later. The barn is still an outstanding construction of stone and brick and is said to have had a thatch roof before the corrugated iron was used.

Real prosperity came with the gold rush and prices for meat, potatoes and grain went to unheard of levels. Thomas carried goods to the goldfields and soon had enough money to purchase two more blocks of 158 acres each. They were allotments 2 and 3 of section 6 Parish of Nillumbik and were transferred to him from the Crown on June 18th 1856.

Thomas and Margaret Sweeney were the first freeholders to settle in what is now Eltham and they were soon followed by other settlers. Amongst that next wave came Bridget Carrucan in 1854. Soon afterwards, her brothers Patrick and Peter joined her in Eltham and the Carrucan settlement in that area was firmly in place.

The connection between the Sweeney and Carrucan families was quickly established when Bridget married widower John Coleman (no relation to Thomas Sweeney's first wife Bridget Coleman) at Culla Hill and then started to farm a nearby allotment.



Sweeney's first home at Culla Hill was a 12' x 15' shack of roughly sawn timber palings with a chimney of hand made bricks, still standing and seen on the right of this photo, taken in 1940. In the background are seen the cottage and barn which also belonged to the original homestead

However, it was a further two generations before the two families intermarried and officially cemented their relationship.

John Francis Sweeney, born in 1844, was the oldest son of Thomas and Margaret Sweeney and to him passed the property of Culla Hill when Thomas died in September 1867 (his wife Margaret died in 1884). In 1968, John married Ellen Kenney and their marriage produced 10 children

Annie	11 October 1869
Elizabeth Agatha	27 June 1871

Agnes	10 March 1873 (died 1 st May 1881)
Ellen (Nellie)	27 October 1874
Mary	9 March 1876
Caroline (Carrie)	17 February 1878
Thomas	6 August 1879
Arthur	27 March 1881 (died 1 st July 1881 as an infant)
John Francis	26 May 1882
Kathleen	5 October 1884



John Sweeney with 5 of his daughters, Culla Hill, Eltham, circa 1900. Mary (wife of Michael Carrucan) is the second girl from the left.

At the same time, the Carrucan families were also increasing in size and Patrick Carrucan, who had migrated to Australia with his wife Mary (O'Brien) in 1856 also sired a large family of 10 children

Bridget	1858
Michael	1860
Susan	1862
Patrick	1864
Thomas	1866 (died as an infant)
Mary Anne	4 February 1868
Catherine	1869
Margaret Theresa	1871
Frances	1872
Annie	1874

These 2 families grew up on farms only 2 miles apart, they went to the same Elementary School, they attended Mass together (Mass was held in the front parlour at Culla Hill in the early days) and it was inevitable that they should intermarry. But more of that later.

John Sweeney intermittently kept a personal diary (hand written in an old Exercise book) between the years of 1881 and 1883 and the following extracts show the sort of subsistence farming which framed the lives of the early Eltham settlers.

Monday July 2, 883	Ploughing
Tuesday – Thursday	Cutting wood for Melbourne
Friday	Mary Murray here
Saturday	At home all day
Sunday	At home. Mary Benson here in evening.
Monday – Tuesday	Ploughing
Wednesday	Ploughing
Thursday	Working about farm
Friday	Ploughing for Mr Gordon

Saturday	Working at home. Annie and Agatha went up to Murrays in evening.
Sunday	At home all day
Monday	Ploughing in morning. Went to Mrs ? funeral in evening.
Tuesday	Ploughing for Mr Gordon
Wednesday	Mick (Carrucan) went to Melbourne with wood
Thursday	Ploughing for Mr Gordon

The diary went on with monotonous regularity. The diet was one of cutting wood, ploughing, planting or digging up potatoes, taking produce or wood to Melbourne to sell and the various special occasions when someone visited or the family visited someone. Peter Cuffley thinks that Mr Gordon was a Melbourne based person who had purchased property locally and could afford to have people working for him to improve it. He possibly got wiped out in the crash of the 1890s.

The diary also lists the cost of labour in shillings.

1 Day Ploughing	15/-
1 Day cutting firewood	15/-
½ day carting soil	7/6
Carting wood to Melbourne	19/-

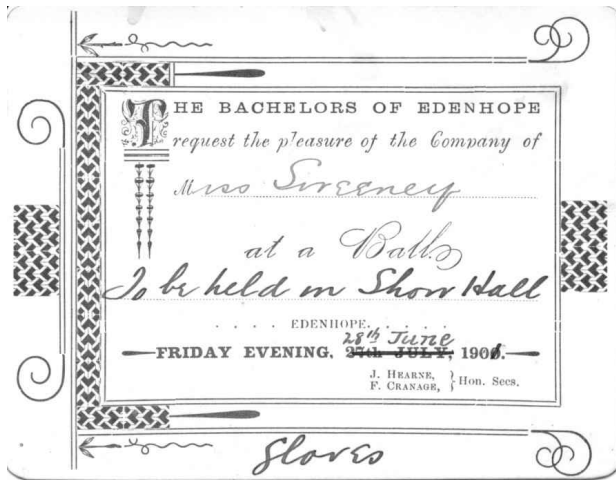
This was subsistence farming at its purest – nothing excess, everything done with a reason and to an end. With large families of up to 10 children, it was a continual struggle to make ends meet and put food on the table.

The local farmers had to supplement their incomes whenever possible, especially during the Great Depression of the late 1880's. At that time the able men travelled far and wide in an effort to bring in extra money. One of the Depression initiatives was the building of the water canal at Research and surrounding areas.



Gang of men including Michael Carrucan (our grandfather) putting in the water canal in Research during the depression years.

Pastimes and significant events were few and a Ball was an activity of special note. The following card was sent to my grandmother Mary Carrucan (nee Sweeney) in 1901 from the Bachelors of Edenhope inviting her to a Ball. She was certainly worthy of such an invitation as this portrait, taken in 1901, testifies.



Strangely enough, the intermarriage between the Sweeney and the Carrucan families did not occur until after the death of John Sweeney who died on May 24th 1909. On October 12th 1910, Michael Carrucan, the oldest son of Patrick and Mary Carrucan, married Mary Sweeney, some 16 years his junior. Age differences meant little then and many marriages matched younger girls with older established men.

But why wait so long? Was John Sweeney against the marriage? Mick Carrucan had inherited the family farm in Dalton Street at Eltham and he seemed an acceptable suitor from that perspective. Certainly the Sweeneys saw themselves as a bit special and a marriage to a Carrucan might have been deemed by John Sweeney as unacceptable. Mary had been brought up in the upper echelons of Eltham society but Mick had only received the most basic education. In fact my mother Betty taught her father Mick to read and write in later life, an indication of the gulf that perhaps separated them socially.

It is also possible that there may have been a much simpler explanation. Peter Cuffley, in his article "A Postcard and the Story of Culla Hill" explains

Pat Sweeney in Perth says that his father Frank Sweeney left Eltham about 1904. Mary Sweeney may have gone at the same time. We know she ran a boarding house in Perth for some years. A postcard, written to them in Perth by their sister Kas tells Frank to try to come home that year as their father's neck is troublesome. Certainly John Sweeney died of cancer and it seems it was a cancer on the neck, caused no doubt by years of exposure to the sun.

So the post card may have been written in 1909 and it may have caused Mary to return home either to see her father before he died or for the funeral. In any case, this may explain why the marriage to Mick Carrucan took place soon afterwards.

The marriage was celebrated at St John's Catholic Church in Heidelberg and the following photo shows the Bridal Party.



The wedding of Mary Sweeney and Michael Carrucan at St John's Catholic Church in Heidelberg. Celebrant was Rev Fr. Parker. From left to right: Catherine Sweeney, Michael O'Hare³, Michael Carrucan, Mary Carrucan, Thomas Sweeney, Ellen Smith (nee Sweeney)⁴

Mary moved to the Carrucan farm in Dalton Street and joined in the tough farming life of the day. The horses were the most important pieces of machinery available and teams and drays were prized possessions. My uncle kept two beautiful drays in his sheds long after the horses had gone. He could not bear to part with them.



Two teams of horses in the top paddock at the Dalton Street farm, early 1900s.

The Carrucan farm was actually spread across 3 separate properties. The main farm was in Dalton Street and occupied some 20 acres in 3 main paddocks. A second property of some 15 acres was located on Main Road near Bridge Street and a third property of around 100 acres was found in Research.

As was the norm in those days, Mick and Mary Carrucan started their family quickly and soon had three young children to care for.

Patrick John Carrucan	born 14 December 1911
John Francis (Jack) Carrucan	born 22 May 1913
Elizabeth Agatha (Betty) Carrucan	born 28 December 1915

³ Michael O'Heare was a Melbourne based solicitor who had been spent time with the Carrucan family as a sickly child. He went on to become the family lawyer, looking after wills and probates, etc.

⁴ Ellen Sweeney was Pat Sweeney's daughter and was known as 'Ninnie'.



Mary Carrucan with baby John Francis (Jack) at Eltham in 1913

Following Irish traditions, the children were named after older family members. Pat, as the first born boy, was named after his paternal grandfather, Patrick Carrucan. Jack was named after John Francis Sweeney, his mother's younger brother and Betty was named after Elizabeth Agatha Sweeney, her mother's older sister.

The 1911 Post Office Directory has under Eltham the names of Michael Carrucan (gardener), Denis Carrucan (carrier) and Thomas Sweeney (farmer).

On 8th December 1915, Mary's youngest sister Kathleen (Cassie) married Francis (Frank) Carrucan (1872-1953), thus creating a second marital connection between these two pioneering families and a son, Francis Kenny Carrucan, was born the next year on 12th September 1916 at Ivanhoe.



A historically significant photo outside the original hut at Culla Hill – Ellen Sweeney, Mick Carrucan, Cassie Sweeney and Frank Carrucan – this photo would have been taken around 1915 and either shortly before or shortly after Frank and Cassie married.

Alas, tragedy struck when Cassie died 4 weeks later on 14 October 1916 at Culla Hill.

Mary and Mick took in the young baby and the family at the Dalton Street farm swelled from 3 to 4 children. The following photo, taken in about 1920, shows the 4 children in formal pose. Although Ken was the youngest, he was soon

the tallest and grew into a strapping handsome man who stood well over 6 feet in height. Pat and Jack were more typical of the Carrucan/Sweeney stock and stood about 5' 8" as men.



Back: Pat (1911-1991) and Jack (1913-1976)
Front: Ken (1916 – 1997) and Betty (1915 – 1990)

Both the Dalton Street farm and Culla Hill were the central points for the Carrucan and Sweeney families, now interconnected with children, grandchildren, uncles and aunts. There was a constant flood of visitors to Dalton Street on weekends from the now far flung clans. The old aunts were especially formidable with their lilting Irish brogue and their strong personalities and independent ways. My uncle Jack used to delight in telling how, whenever they saw some young woman expecting a baby, the comment would quickly come

“That poor gal. What brute of a man has done that!”

But this must be seen in the context of the day. The families were typically large and women were tied to their families by the constant drudgery of cooking, washing, working around the farm and looking after the farm animals. It was a tough life and not one that the old aunts saw in a very positive light.



A bevy of aunts at Eltham – from left to right, we have Annie Smith (1860-1934), Ellen Hooley (1874-1943) and Nessie Sweeney (1869-1955).

This photo, taken around 1927, is at the side gate to the family house in Dalton St. and shows the old kitchen behind the fence. The picture shows Pat at the back and from left to right at front, Betty, Ken, Mary and Jack. The rigours of farming life are already telling on Mary who has lost her youthful look and is now around 50 years of age.



Holidays or excursions of even a day were few and far between but the following photo shows one such occasion, at Black Rock visiting the Ryans. Pat, Ken and Jack are in suits and hats in the front. Betty is in the white dress second from left.. Mary is the lady kneeling back right. On the far left is Nellie Murray (born 1907), the sister of Jim Murray (James Eurgene born 1911) who was the last of the old Eltham relatives to die.



The Eltham Elementary School in Dalton Street (School Number 209) had been started in the 1850's and was just a stone's throw from the Carrucan farm. All the children attended and this photo of the 1921 Grade 1 and 2 class shows some 39 children ranging in ages from about 6 to 10. Betty is fourth from the left in the second row from the front. Ellen (Narna) Sweeney is the teacher on the right hand side.



The boys had to take the milking cows from the Dalton Street farm each morning up to the Bridge Road block and then bring them back each afternoon for milking. Uncle Jack told many stories of the adventures that this entailed. On one occasion the boys stopped at Burgoyne's shop for some lollies and the cows sauntered off up the road on the well worn trail. Fitzsimmons, the proprietor of the Eltham Hotel nearly had a heart attack when he walked into the main bar and was confronted by a cow. On another occasion, some thunder sent the dog wild and it got into Burgoyne's shop and nearly wrecked it in its frenzied attempts to hide.

With the Depression of the late 1920's putting huge pressure on the working class families of Melbourne, any school related aspirations were put aside by the boys. Each had to finish his education after Grade 7 and move into the workforce and earn a living to supplement the farm income.

First Pat was apprenticed into the building industry but did not finish his time. He was then sent to the block in Research to milk cows and to make a go of it. Alas, the land was poor and better suited to mountain goats and he had little chance of success. He married one of the local girls, Louise Norman, and spent some years there but eventually moving to the Goulburn Valley and found better long term employment in the Railways and State Rivers. He died in 1991 and is buried in Tatura.

Jack was apprenticed as a pattern maker but found that the hours would be shorter if he worked on the foundry floor so he arranged for his papers to be transferred and he trained as a moulder. He then spent the rest of his working life in the foundry.

Ken worked on another dairy farm in Eltham before working as a storeman lumping wheat bags in Eltham and then working for a timber merchant in Heidelberg. He was tall and strong and could hold his own with anyone.

Only Betty was given the opportunity to continue her education. She was a gifted student and the following extract from 'The Advertiser', dated December 24th 1931, details the Eltham Elementary School Prize night.

Mr. Stewart presented the Rhodes Ideal girls' prize, which was presented for the first time this year. This medal was donated by Mr. and Mrs. E. Smithers, to be awarded on the same basis as the medal which has been presented to the boys by Mr. A. Smithers for some years past. The winning of this medal demands not only scholastic attainment, but also those other qualities that go towards making desirable citizens such as efficiency in sport, bearing and character. The announcement that the award had been won by Betty Carrucan was a popular one.

Betty won a scholarship to Melbourne Girls' High School and from there won a senior government scholarship to Melbourne University. She was the first Eltham girl to go to University and was awarded a Newman College Exhibition. She gained a Bachelor of Arts with Honours and worked as a teacher in an illustrious career that spanned 40 years. She eventually retired in 1982 and died in 1990. She is buried at the Eltham Cemetary near Jack and Ken.



Betty Carrucan, 1933, photo in Melbourne Girls High School Magazine

There were few photos, if any of the Mick Carrucan. The only three that I have are his wedding photo, the photo in front of the old Culla Hill hut (see previously in article) and this photo which was set in the early 1940's at the Eltham house.



Mick Carrucan is front left and this photo is taken probably not long before he died around 1942. His wife Mary Carrucan (nee Sweeney) is left back. The lady in the front is Ellen (Narna) Sweeney - the family resemblance between her and her sister Mary can be easily seen. She returned to Eltham in the late thirties after she and her husband Will Hooley had fallen into bad financial straits. She had married Will in 1923 at Eltham and they had moved to the western district. She was a school teacher and had a great influence on our mother Betty.

Will Hooley was minding Rutter's farm near Culla Hill when the 1939 bushfires swept through and burnt the house. The Black Friday fires of January 1939 remain the most extensive and devastating fires that have ever ravaged Victoria. It was said that Culla Hill survived because it was 'blessed', having been the regular place for mass in the early days.

Uncle Jack used to tell the story that Will was notoriously forgetful and on one occasion, he loaded up the jinker and went all the way into town. When asked by the storekeeper where his wife was, he had to confess that he had forgotten her. This was always a family joke from then on whenever Narna was around.

Will Hooley died in 1941 of hydatids after being bitten by a dog (or so the story goes). Narna was sick by this stage and moved to the old family home in Dalton St Eltham and spent her last years there. She died in 1943, possibly of cancer. She would have been living there when this photo was taken.

Peter Cuffley asked his mother about the identify of the other family in the photo. She thought the family were Brasiers or Braziers. She thought they lived for a while in a cottage owned by one of our relatives at Research. They look a bit dressed up just to have come from Research, unless they were at Eltham for something special. The other possibility is that they were one of the many cousins and other family links who regularly visited Eltham. Peter's mother and her sisters sometimes stayed there, and our grandmother would go to Black Rock for holidays with the Ryan family.

Peter Cuffley has provided the following information on Ellen Sweeney and Culla Hill. While not directly related to the Carrucan family tree, it is still interesting reading.

Ellen (Nelly or Narna) Sweeney was born on the 27th of October 1874, the daughter of John Francis Sweeney and Ellen Mary Kenney. She married Will Hooley (after 1920?) and consequently lost her job as a teacher. This led to the loss of Culla Hill, because Will was notoriously unlucky in his business ventures. Pat Sweeney from Perth tells me that when they visited in the 1930s, Narna and Will were living at Culla Hill. Will had his truck in the shed or barn and the Sweeney kids commented, 'Our Dad's got a truck like that - but IT goes out!'. I think Narna met Will when she was teaching in the Western District. He was born in Rutherglen in 1879 and had two sisters, Charlotte and Delphina who both became nuns. He was apparently rather neat and brought up in comfortable circumstances. Mum says he was proud of his family and that his two sisters were nuns. Your uncle told me that your grandfather, considered Narna to be the most responsible and capable member of the family, so he appointed her Executrix of his will. After she was left Agatha's quarter (Elizabeth Agatha Sweeney, 'Aunt Gatha', died in 1917), she paid each of the other members of the family for their portion, including Frank Sweeney, who took all the equipment away from the farm'. Jack said his mother (your grandmother) would not accept money for her share of Culla Hill, to try and help Narna keep the property. Both Narna and Mary were very attached to the place and both were very proud of the family history. Narna was fairly well off until she lent Will Hooley a considerable sum of money. He subsequently lost it all in a business venture, and this left her with only the farm. At this stage the Depression was at its worst and there was little interest in a small farm. At one time it was in the hands of six agents. Many years ago, Justus Jorgensen told me he looked at the place as a possible site for his artists colony, before he purchased the land that became 'Montsalvat'. I have a friend whose father's family rented it at one stage. In the end, the house and 75 acres were sold for about two and a half thousand pounds (late 1930s). The will of John Francis Sweeney, dated 24th May 1909, leaves the property to Ann Foley, Agatha Sweeney, Ellen Sweeney (Executrix), Mary Sweeney, Thomas Sweeney, Frank Sweeney and Kathleen Sweeney.

Although Culla Hill was lost to the Sweeneys, the farm in Dalton Street continued in Carrucan hands. Jack had worked long hours in the foundry during the war years and was close to exhaustion by 1946. He resigned from work, used the money he had saved to build a modern dairy at the Dalton Street farm and worked with his mother Mary in milking a herd of some 20 cows. But as luck would have it, 1946/1947 saw a dreadful drought. They were supplying milk to the Eltham Dairy run by Hardings but times were so tough that Hardings could not always guarantee to pay for the milk they supplied. This combined with the high cost of feed for the cows nearly ruined them and they were forced to sell the herd.

Jack travelled to Western Australia for a long holiday and stayed with Tom Lane and his family. It was probably a necessary holiday to help him overcome the draining experiences of the previous few years. Returning to Eltham in 1947, he rejoined the foundry and worked there until 1958. He initially became President of the Moulders Union (an honorary position – he still worked on the floor) and eventually won the paid Trades Hall position of Secretary of the Moulders Union. But Mary's health started to deteriorate so badly that he resigned from this position in 1957 and spent the next 4 years caring for her until she died in 1961.

Sometime in the years after the war, the other blocks were sold off and Dalton Street was left as the one remaining section of the farm.

When my grandmother died, the Diamond Valley News of November 28th 1961 carried the following obituary

The death last week of Mrs Carrucan, the last surviving member of the Sweeney family, brought a long chapter of Eltham's history to a close.

It was in 1838 that her grandfather, Thomas Sweeney, made his home at Culla Hill, a homestead of stone and mudbrick that still overlooks the Yarra the end end of Sweeney's Lane. Mrs Carrucan was born there in 1876, one of the ten children of John Sweeney.

When she married in 1909, she went to the house in Dalton Street, and apart from 4 years in Western Australia, lived there until her death. Her daughter Mrs. Erickson is a teacher at Eltham High School, her son Pat is living in the Goulburn Valley and her son Jack lived with his mother, caring for her with great devotion in her long illness.

Mrs. Carrucan was always shy of good works in the public eye, but throughout her long life, her character and courage, her kindness and gentleness, gave her a lasting place in the hearts of many friends.

Uncle Jack continued to live at the Dalton Street farm after his mother's death and he dabbled in cattle dealing. But during the intervening years until he died in 1976, he was forced to subdivide the property and gradually sell off sections to make ends meet. Thus the area gradually changed from farming to housing as the suburbs encroached onto the farm.



This photo shows Jack at the front of the old homestead in the early 1970's.

The following view of the old farmhouse at the same period shows the ravages of time. It was not possible to walk on the front verandah due to white ant infestation. It was only possible to walk lightly in the front rooms adjoining the verandah as the white ants spread further.



On Jack's death, the remainder of the property was sold off and the historic home was finally demolished to make way for a modern brick dwelling. The house would have taken a lot of money and effort to save and this was obviously not a viable proposition.

Culla Hill now remains the only remnant and reminder of those early days. A unique opportunity was presented in 1997 when the property was auctioned. I made the pilgrimage to the old property that I had not visited since my childhood days. The following advertising brochure was produced for the sale which attracted hundreds of people.

AUCTION

Saturday 28th June at 2:00 pm
Lot 12, 100 Sweeneys Lane, Eltham

Historic Sweeneys Circa 1838



A VICTORIAN HOMESTEAD

Set in glorious gardens of some 1.19 Ha that were the design of Edna Walling and Ellis Stone with foliage best seen at Mount Macedon or the Botanical Gardens. French doors access the terraces and garden courts. Formal and informal living areas and generous bedroom accommodation will suit a large family. An old brick dairy and stone barn still stand today as they did all those years ago.

Flagstone terraces lead to an inground pool although in need of some modernisation. This property will last and be treasured for generations to come.

First time offered in 50 years.

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