

BEYOND THE NINETEEN COUNTIES

*This historical study of the first Le Count family
in Australia was compiled and written by*

ROLAND POULTON

KENDALL, NEW SOUTH WALES

Revised December 1990

CHARLES LE COUNT, M. ANN DENNIS
ST. LUKE'S CHURCH FINSBURY LONDON
MAY 16 1798

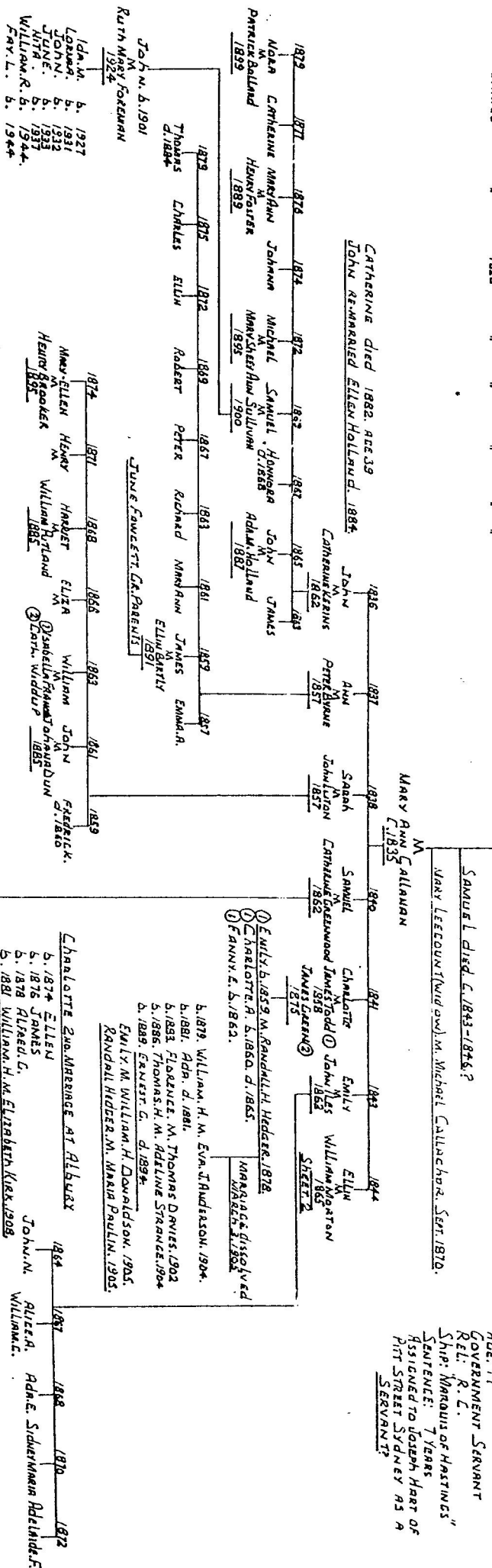
JOHN LE COUNT
ANN LE COUNT
SARAH LE COUNT
SAMUEL LE COUNT
CHARLOTTE LE COUNT
EMILY LE COUNT
ELLEN LE COUNT
ELLEN LE COUNT (MY MOTHER)
NELLIE LEE, LEOUNT

NOTES FROM THE SHIPS RECORDS
SAMUEL LE COUNT
AGE: 17
OCCUPATION: GRAND BOY
EDUCATION: NONE
M/STATUS: SINGLE
RELIGION: R.C.
NATIVE PLACE: LONDON
CRIME: STERLING CLOTH
WHERE TRIED: LONDON
SENTENCE: 7 YEARS
COMPLEXION: RUDDY - FOX PITTED

CHILDREN OF THE MARRIAGE
CHARLES BAPTISED 1802
ANN " 1804
MARY ANN " 1807
SARAH " 1808
SAMUEL THOMAS " 1810
JOHN " 1813
WILLIAM " 1815
HENRY " 1818
RICHARD " 1820
THOMAS " 1823
JAMES " 1826

BORN DETROIT 22, 1810
SAMUEL L. DIED C. 1843-1846?
MARY LE COUNT (WIDOW) M. MICHAEL CALLACHOR, SEPT. 1870.
CATHERINE died 1882, AGE 39
JOHN RE-MARRIED ELLEN HOLLAND. 1884.
Catherine KEVIN 1862
JOHN 1865
ANNE 1867
SARAH 1867
SAMUEL M. 1862
CHARLOTTE GREENWOOD JAMES TODD 1863
EMILY 1863
WILLIAM MARGARON 1863
SARAH 1864
EMILY 1864
ELLEN 1864
JAMES GREENWOOD 1875
SARAH 1875

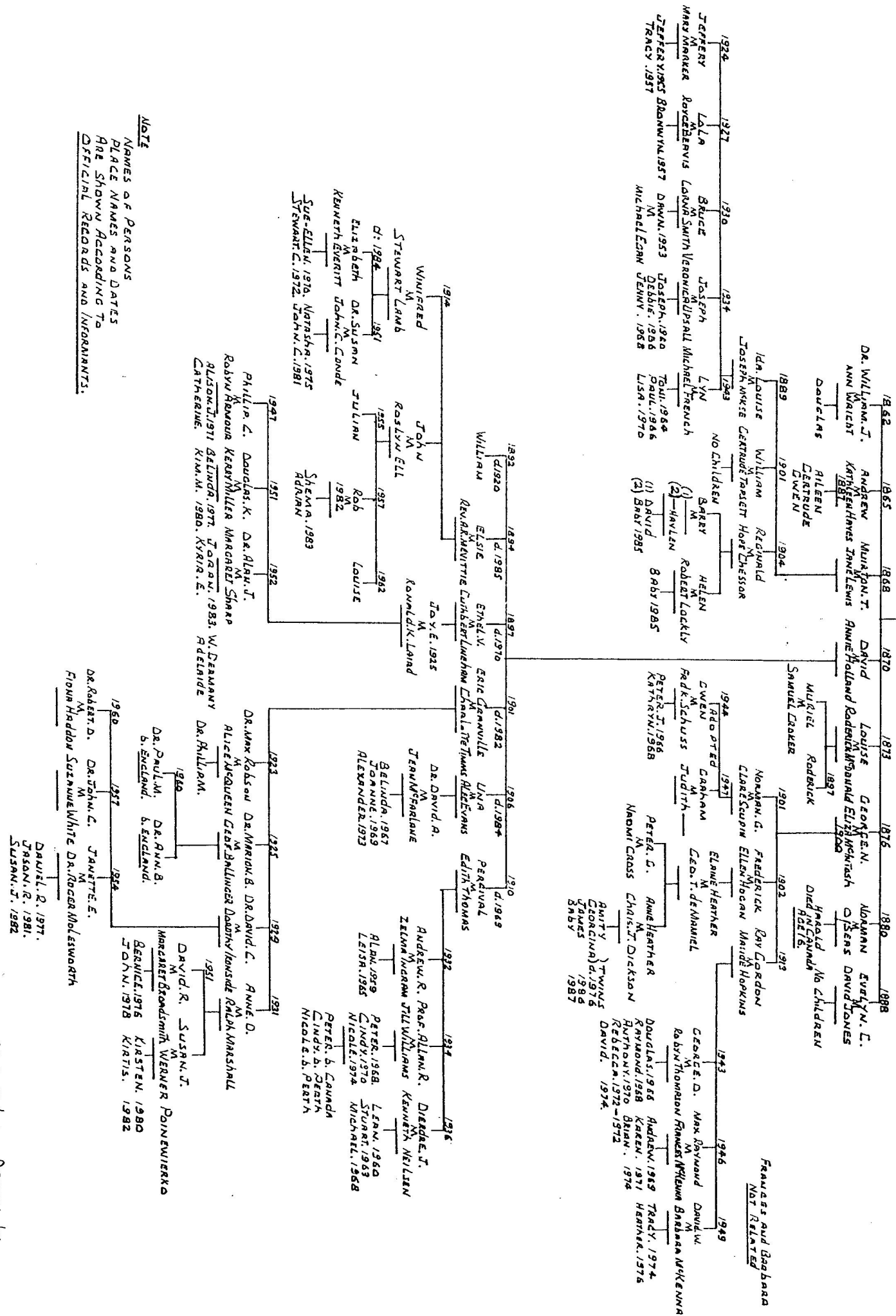
1828 CENSUS OF COLONY
SAMUEL LE COUNT (LE COUNT)
AGE: 17
GOVERNMENT SERVANT
REL: R. C.
SHIP: MARQUIS OF HASTINGS'
SENTENCE: 7 YEARS
ASSIGNED TO JOSEPH HART OF
PIT STREET SYDNEY AS A
SERVANT?



NOTE
NAMES OF PERSONS
PLACES NAMES AND DATES
ARE SHOWN ACCORDING TO
OFFICIAL RECORDS AND INFORMANTS

1802
1805
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2009
2012
2015
2018
2021
2024

The Children of
Ellin and William Morton



NOTE
 NAMES OF PERSONS
 PLACED IN THESE DATES
 ARE SHOWN ACCORDING TO
 OFFICIAL RECORDS AND INFORMANTS.

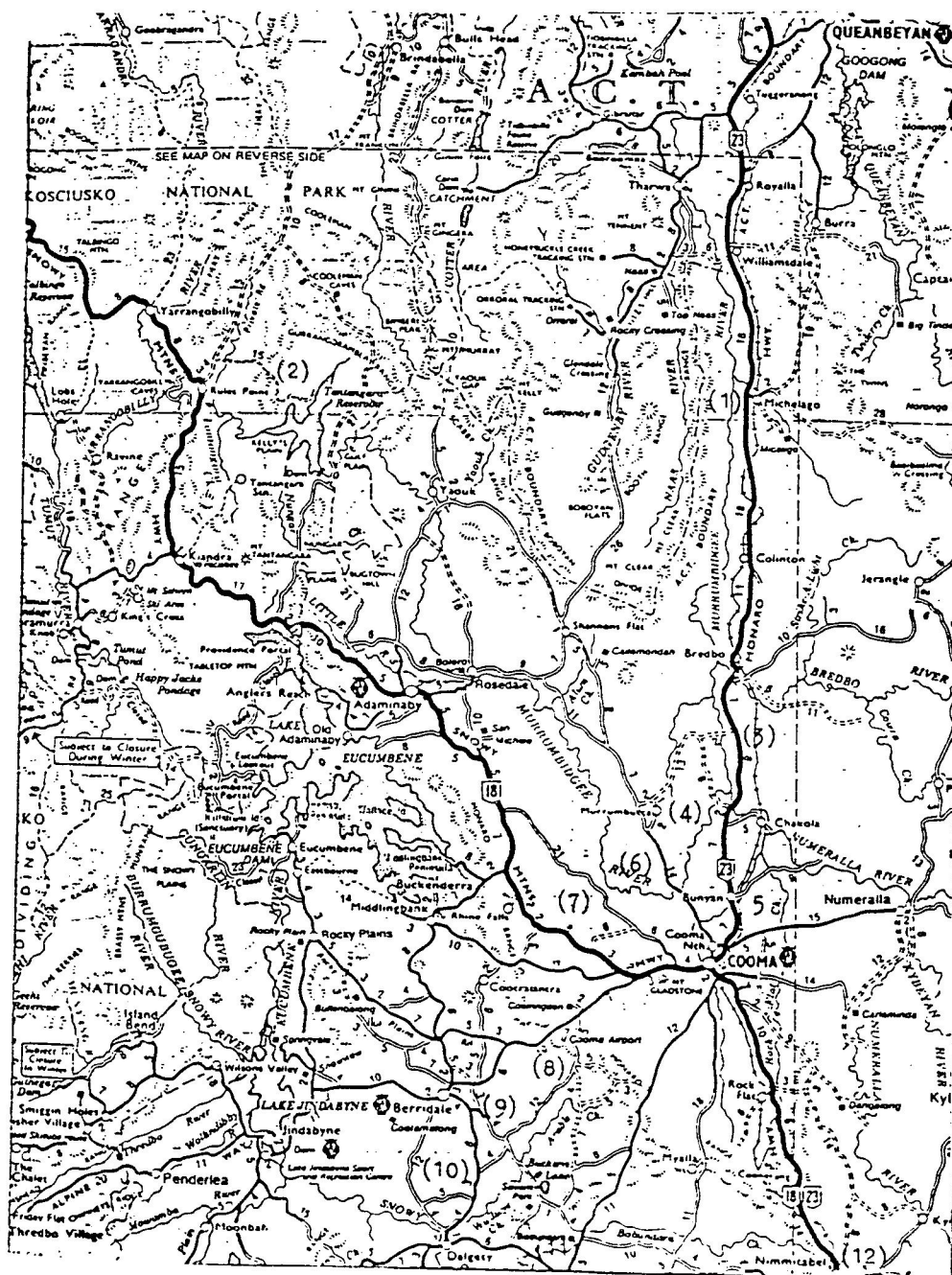
FRANCESS AND BARBARA
 NOT RELATED

PREPARED AND DRAWN BY
 Roland B. (Ray) Poulton.

REFERENCE TO LOCATIONS

(Approximate)

- (1) Michelago, Southern limit of legal occupation 1836
- (2) Dairymans Plains
- (3) Billilngra Station (John Cosgrove)
- (4) Riversdale Station
- (5) Bunyan, birth place of Charlotte, Emily and Ellin
- (6) Rosebrook Station
- (7) Wambrook Station
- (8) Pioneer cottage, Slacks Creek
- (9) Gegedzerick, birth place and marriage of Ann Le Count
- (10) Pioneer Cottage, near Dalgety
- (11) Maffra, possible birth place of Sarah
- (12) 'Nimitybelle' birth place of Samuel Junior



To the memory of
Samuel Thomas Le Count and his wife
Mary Anne (Callanan)
and their children

John 1836 -- 1917

Ann 1837 ---

Sarah 1838 -- 1908

Samuel 1840 -- 1910

Charlotte 1841 -- 1921

Emily 1843 -- 1922

Ellin 1844 -- 1926

AN EPITAPH TO SAMUEL LE COUNT

As the sun sinks low over Monaro
At the close of another day,
The search for my kin continues
Along its mysterious way.
He came to the Colony in 'twentyeight
But not for wealth or fame,
So I search the archive papers
Looking for his name.
Assigned seven years to a man named Hart
To find Mary Anne and make a fresh start,
When a son they had created
To the south they all migrated
In a land not many knew
Where, perhaps Samuel took work as a shepherd,
About the "Downs of the Maneroo".
In their few short years together
All the children had numbered just seven
Then the Good Lord above was spoken
And Samuel was called to Heaven.

INTRODUCTION

William Poulton, 26 a convict, came to the Colony of New South Wales in 1831.

Samuel Thomas Le Count, 17 also a convict came in 1828.

After their release from servitude they each left Sydney Town and went off in opposite directions. William chose to go north to the Hunter Valley region, which in 1839 was becoming more closely settled.

Samuel ventured south in 1836 or 1837 into the remoteness of the Monaro, and the Snowy Mountains, to a place that was outside the legal limits of occupation. The isolation may well have been one of the reasons why so little is known about the Lecount family today.

The children of William and Bridget Poulton were able to at least write their name.

Six of Samuel's seven children, and his wife Mary Anne were illiterate, extending into adulthood.

The story of William and Bridget Poulton, and their family has been recorded in a book written and published by Ms M Poulton of Beecroft, Sydney.

An account of what I have been able to research into the lives of Samuel and Mary Anne, and their children is written within these pages.

The destiny of William Poulton has been established, but for Samuel Le Count it is clouded in mystery, in the final analysis fate played a hand and brought these two families together halfway It was at Goulburn that my father, George Poulton, met my mother, Ellen Lecount.

ROLAND B (RON) POULTON
Great-grandson
20 April 1989.

WRITER'S NOTES

This story is not intended to infer that the first Le Count family were subjected to all the hardship and difficulties that I have described because nothing of their actual life has been recorded. It is however, designed to illustrate an idea of what their existence may have been in the bleak, inhospitable remoteness of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales and to demonstrate the guts and the tenacity that the pioneers must have possessed. Samuel Le Count and his family were a part of those people.

The incidents and events I have outlined may, or may not be exactly as they happened, but the dates and locations have been taken from official records.

The sources from which the contents of this booklet came were : family records, newspaper reports, church records, registers, cemeteries, state archives, and Federal Capital Archives.

Place names, and names of persons are spelt as provided, however some could be incorrect.

Historical references have been used from various publications, in particular, Lauri Neal's "Cooma Country", Felix Mitchell's "Back to Cooma 1926", and "The Men of '38 and Other Pioneer Priests", edited by Frs. Linane and Mecham, 1975.

Photograph taken at parents' home, Batesmans Road, Gladsville. Circa 1916.



Left to right standing : Jack William Poulton (son of George), Lila Alice Poulton (daughter of George), John Poulton (brother of George).

Seated : Oliver Poulton (son of John), baby Roland B Poulton, George Poulton (brother of John), Louise Fanny (wife of John), Ellen (Nellie) Poulton (née Lee Count).

PARISH REGISTERS OF ST LUKES CHURCH, OLD STREET, FINSBURY, MIDDLESEX

THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES AND ANN LECOUNT

BAPTISMS		BORN
28 November 1802	<i>Charles</i>	7 November
25 November 1804	<i>Ann</i>	25 October
6 November 1808	<i>Sarah</i>	14 October
11 November 1810	<i>Samuel Thomas</i>	22 October
7 February 1813	<i>John</i>	15 January; Fan-maker, Golden Lane
22 January 1815	<i>William*</i>	4 December; Fan-maker, Kingsland Road
17 May 1818	<i>Henry</i>	
4 June 1820	<i>Richard*</i>	16 May; Fan-maker, Hand Court
21 September 1823	<i>Thomas*</i>	30 August; Fan-maker, Ann Court
31 July 1826	<i>James*</i>	10 July; Fan-maker, Robin Hood Court

One other baptism noted at :
St Mary Lambeth, Surrey (now London)

9 February 1807 *Mary Ann*

** Died in infancy (a child less than seven years old)*



St Lukes Church, only the shell remains. (Photo 1986)

229. SAMUEL LE COUNT, JOHN OWEN, and WILLIAM WARREN, were indicted for stealing, on the 19th of November, 10 yards of woollen cloth, value 3/- the goods of James Harris.

JAMES BUTLER RIDGWAY. I am shopman to Mr. James Harris, a linen-draper, of Farc-street. On the evening of the 19th of November, an opposite neighbour sent a young man to say there were three suspicious characters about our door—I took my hat and went to the opposite side of the way, and saw the three prisoners all go to the shop—they each of them took hold of a piece of woollen cloth and moved it—they then stood about three quarters of an hour, watching the movements of the persons in the shop; I then saw Warren go in, and take hold of the cloth; I ran over, and he dropped it close to the door; I seized him and Le Count, and took them into the shop; the officer brought in the other; when Warren took the cloth the other two were at the window, and holding up their fingers as signals.

JAMES VIXT. I am a constable. I saw the three pri-

soners at the shop; I went down Moor-lane, and watched them; I saw them at the window, and they went several times to the door, and went away and whispered, and then they went to the door again; I then saw Ridgway run over; there were some persons going by at the time, and I did not see the cloth taken, but I saw Owen running, and I took him—I had watched them for about ten minutes.

JOHN CARLISLE. I was watching the prisoners for about half an hour—I saw one and another go to the door, but there were people passing, and I did not see the cloth moved.

LE COUNT'S Defence. I was waiting for my father.

OWEN'S Defence. I was looking in at the window, and then walked away.

WARREN'S Defence. I was looking into the shop, and this gentleman came and struck me, and threw me into the shop.

Owen and Warren received good characters.

LE COUNT—GUILTY. Aged 17.

Transported for Seven Years.

OWEN—GUILTY. Aged 16.

Confined Six Months.

WARREN—GUILTY. Aged 15.

Confined Three Months.

SAMUEL THOMAS LE COUNT

27 January 1987, Ms Roma Mason of Canberra, a descendant of Emily Poulton, my father's sister, has written to me explaining that she had attended a function in Canberra and sat next to a stranger from Queanbeyan (Ms Elaine de Mamiel). Continuing to write, she said that having little to talk about in common, their conversation drifted to the topic of ancestry, when Ms de Mamiel remarked that she was researching her forebear, Samuel Le Count Senior.

Roma Mason is a second generation cousin whom I have never had the pleasure to meet, although present at the Poulton reunion held at the Nabiac Showground in October 1986, some two hundred had gathered for the occasion.

Samuel Le Count Senior was my great-grandfather, and Roma's letter set in motion my probe into the family's early history, which I believe is the first study to be undertaken. My great-grandparents left no photographs, keep-sakes, or anything what-so-ever that could identify me to them, with the exception of course, of my mother. My children, now grown-up, have in the past enquired of my forebears, but mostly I have had nothing to relate.

This search into the past has been absorbing and continues to be set with mystery, at times exciting and other times disappointing. Prior to receiving Roma's letter I was completely unaware of the one time presence of convicts in my midst, or of my grandfather's elopement with an eighteen year old.

I recall I was aware that my mother's parents were Samuel Junior and Catherine (Greenwood). I was quite young.

Since commencing this research in January 1987 I have corresponded with the Catholic Presbyteries at Cooma, Queanbeyan, Goulburn, Bungendore and Yass. Enquiries have been made to the Historical Societies at Cooma and Braidwood, and historians at Queanbeyan and Goulburn, and more recently the confirmation of the marriage of Charles Lecount to Ann Dennis in 1798 and the birth of their son, Samuel Thomas in 1810.

My wife and I have searched records that may have contained traces of the family following the arrival of Samuel in the Colony in 1828. Visits to the Archives Office of New South Wales, the Mitchell Library, the Lands Department, and the Port Macquarie Municipal Library have been very rewarding. Some information has been given by descendants, in particular Ms June Fawcett of Warwick Farm, Sydney.

Certified copies of documents from the Registrar General in Sydney have given proof of evidence where required. Books dealing with the discovery of the Monaro and its early arrivals have been studied.

During March 1988 I visited the Monaro district, staying a few days with Herb and Laura Mould (née Wellsmore) at Dalgety on the Snowy River, whilst there I was able to locate and photograph what could possibly be, according to local residents, the birth place of William Henry Leecount in 1863. The two roomed stone built dwelling has been restored and additions made to it. I also visited St Patricks Roman Catholic Presbytery Cooma, and had the pleasure of meeting the Parish Secretary, Mr K J McFadden who was kind and helpful in giving me photocopies of the original church register entries of Ann Lecount's marriage to Peter Byrne in 1857, and Mary Leecount's (widow) second marriage in 1870.

Fifty years ago, during the 1930s I had opportunity for a closer look into the Lecount household, but unfortunately I had practically nothing to guide me apart from the knowledge that my mother's maiden name was Ellen Leecount. I was young and shamefully not greatly concerned I suppose to find out. Young people were mostly like that in such matters.

When the Great Depression was at its peak I was just 18 years old, most were out of work, including myself, my two brothers and my father. I left home and journeyed west to Condobolin, mother's sister Catherine Alice was living there with her mail contracting husband, James Riley. I found work on a sheep station at ten shillings per week and keep, then in August 1938 I went to work with a shearing contractor, as a shed-hand. The work required travelling about the country to the various shearing locations.

Whilst on my way to Coonamble, my first job, I met up with a shearer, his name was Urban Calistus (Cliss) Wellsmore, his home was at Paupong, about thirty-five miles south west of Cooma, deep in the Snowy Mountains. It so happened that my new found friend and I were working for the same contractor and would be travelling to the same places throughout the season which would terminate about the Monaro district in November or December.

Cliss Wellsmore died in 1973, aged 59, but my friendship and association with the remaining members of the family continues to this day.

During my absence away in the country on the shearing run my father sold the home at Arncliffe, Sydney, the home that I had known since my first days at school. As Christmas 1938 was approaching my parents left Sydney on a holiday to Western Australia, and I was concerned as to what I would do when I returned to Sydney at the conclusion of the shearing season. However, my friend did not hesitate to invite me to return to his Monaro home with him, and probably with the urge of adventure I accepted his offer. His parents and other family members welcomed me as a son and a brother. I was 23 years of age.

For the next couple of years Paupong was to be my home, and if I was not away with Cliss on the shearing run, I would help out on the property. I was there on January 14, 1939, the day that was recorded in history as 'Black Saturday', the day that bush fires turned the country-side into a blazing inferno, everything that I possessed was lost when the homestead was destroyed by the flames, a nearby sheep dip probably saved the lives of some of those present.

During the shearing season of 1939 and 1940 I worked at 'Murryong' Station near Queanbeyan, 'Urriara' Station in the Brindabella Ranges, Andrew (Boy) Charlton's property at Tarago, also locations about Goulburn, Cooma, Dalgety and Berridale. Most of these places the Lecount family worked and dwelt one hundred years before me, all this I was completely unaware of. The significance of my new found friend pointing out to me where once many years beforehand, a Lecount family had lived, I have only just realized the importance of, as after commencing this historical probe, records have shown a strong possibility that it was the birth place of Ellin Lecount in 1844. All that remained of the dwelling I saw that day in 1939 was a mound of rubble overgrown with briars.

Today the Monaro Highway passes through the tiny village of Bunyan (Ellin's birth place) five miles north of Cooma. Bunyan almost became the town that Cooma eventually was, and on the direct route south from Queanbeyan. It is claimed that Bunyan came from the native word 'Boonyan' meaning pigeons' resting place, Bunyan was not originally known as such, at first it was known as Reids Flats, after Doctor Reid who established a run on the extensive flats in the area about 1828. 'Pinjura' was also a name given to Reids Flats, and 'Binjura', Emily Lecount's birth place in 1843 was a name used in the area both for a property and the Parish, it became known officially as Bunyan in 1858. Reference is made in "J A Perkins Papers" (Mitchell Library) that on 'Rosebrook' in 1845 was situated a hotel and store kept by a Jew named Solomon, this situation was commonly known as Jews Flats, later as 'Bunyan'.

The foregoing historical notes by J A Perkins indicate that 'Rosebrook' and Doctor Reids Flats (Bunyan) were possibly one and the same locations. David Reid claimed his father, Doctor Reid, occupied a station on the "very best portion of the Monaro Plains that was in 1828. He occupied stations comprising the larger portions of Lower Monaro until the year 1840 the distance from the boundary of our country to Bombala was forty miles".

J A Perkins further adds in his "Monaro District Items" that perhaps the first sheep brought to the district were those of Doctor Reid, grazing them on what is now 'Rosebrook'. Reid's son, David, took all Reid's flocks from the area once the Duttons arrived with 10,000 sheep there was not sufficient grass to graze them.

In the Colonist of 1840, notice appeared of the death of Doctor Reid on 6 July, at the age of 65. He had been one of the first settlers and one of the oldest Magistrates in the 'Maneroo'.

In 1838 the Dutton brothers acquired 'Wambrook Station' (15,000 acres) whilst being the owners of nearby Rosebrook.

Mr Laurence Harnett became the proprietor of 'Rosebrook' (15,360 acres) in the early 1840s, his son William Edwin was born there in 1843. Laurence was drowned in 1848 whilst attempting to cross the Murrumbidgee River, which I believe flowed through both properties.

Three of Samuel and Mary Anne's children were born at or about Doctor Reid's Flats, as early as 1841 and baptised in 1845, and their first born, on Monaro, baptised in 1841 was sponsored by Mr and Mrs Laurence Harnett.

The vast open flats around Bunyan were used extensively for lucerne growing, which in the earlier years was first grown by Maurice Harnett on Rosebrook.

When visiting Cooma in March 1988, the lucerne paddocks we travelled through by train were a picturesque sight under irrigation, in contrast to the surrounding country stricken by drought.

Combining the information I have gathered with my broad knowledge of the Monaro district together with the close association I have with some localities in the Cooma area, and a little imagination I will endeavour to piece together the bits of a giant jigsaw that began some two hundred and ninety years ago.

My research begins with the marriage of Charles Lecount to Ann Dennis on 16 May 1798, by Banns, at St Lukes Church on Old Street, Finsbury, Middlesex London. The witnesses to the ceremony were Edward Dobson and Richard Reeves.

The following paragraph, in brackets, though not substantiated, as yet, but compiled from International Genealogical Index (IGI) records is highly likely to be relevant to the origin of Charles Lecount, the father of Samuel Thomas (A John Lecount married Elizabeth? in London in about 1690. A son John, born 1692 married Anne ...? in 1740. A son Charles, born to them in 1756, possibly married Sarah Barnett in 1790 at St Lukes on Old Street. Later to marry Ann Dennis, in spite of the fact that Charles' marital status was recorded as 'bachelor'. Only research may give the answer).

However, the particulars of the marriage and details of the birth of their eleven children were obtained through the International Genealogical Index, four of the children died before attaining 8 years of age all boys. Their fifth child, born on 22 October 1810 was baptised on 11 November 1810, Samuel Thomas Lecount.

Transportation from England began in 1619 with convicts being sent to Virginia, where their presence supplemented the American slave trade, and it continued until America refused to accept any more of Britain's human refuse. Transportation had also become an essential part of the British penal system. For the more serious crime, hanging was the penalty, and for those that were reprieved they were transported beyond the seas, for the lesser offences, seven years, fourteen years and life were handed down. It made no difference who you were or what you represented.

And so it was on 12 October 1828 when Samuel Lecount stepped ashore at Sydney Cove to serve out a seven year sentence for stealing. On 6 December 1827, shortly after his 17th birthday young Samuel in company with two other youths was on trial at the 'Old Bailey' charged with stealing ten yards of cloth, value three shillings the goods of James Harris. All were found guilty and sentenced, John Owen age 16, confined six months, William Warren age 15, confined three months, Samuel Lecount age 17, seven years transport to the Colony of New South Wales. Owen and Warren received good characters, reading now from a copy of the court proceedings, their guilt appeared doubtful. After being held in England for some six months, in gaol or aboard one of the many hulks used for that purpose, Samuel sailed from London on the convict transport 'Marquis of Hastings' in the charge of Master John Jeffry Drake on 30 June 1828 probably with the feeling that he would never see his parents or homeland again.

This was Samuel's second brush with the law, it was on 1 October, shortly before his 17th birthday he was before the court charged with stealing a person's handkerchief. He was found guilty but apparently discharged on the recommendation of the prosecutor. Samuel, in his defence, said he was on an errand to a shoe warehouse, a statement which bears some significance later in this story.

According to the IGI records, it appears that Charles Lecount had a brother Samuel who had a son Samuel, christened at St Sepulchre, London in 1808. This is the only other Samuel of the period traced, and two years older than Samuel Thomas. Samuel Lecount, born 1808 had a daughter Elizabeth christened at St Lukes, Finsbury. I believe all the Lecounts listed on the IGI are brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles etc. This calculation could be incorrect, but once again deep research is the only positive solution.

He came to the Colony as a boy, a convict, devout Roman Catholic and most surely afraid of the unknown. The 1828 Census of the Colony lists him as a servant assigned to the employ of Joseph Hart of Pitt Street Sydney. Nothing is known of his life in the period of his sentence. On 7 March 1835 Samuel was granted his freedom, along with his personal details and general description two distinctive features are noted, his nose was inclined to the right side and there were two thumbs to the right hand.

On 25 April 1836, Mary Anne Callanan gave birth to a son, 20 May 1836 the child was duly baptised John Lecount at Saint Mary's Cathedral Sydney by the Reverend Father John McEncroe, sponsored by Ellen Callanan. Particulars of the ceremony show that Samuel Lecount is the new born's father, but no proof or documented evidence can be traced of their marriage, as yet, but it does not mean they were never married Research has shown that the Church of England was, for over fifty years the Colony's only officially and acknowledged religion. It was supported financially by the Government and although the earliest Church of England registers in New South Wales date from 1788, the first year of settlement, and it was not until 1825 that the Government passed an act that formally validated the practice of keeping such records. The first Catholic Priest to keep parish registers in New South Wales was Joseph Therry who arrived in the Colony in 1820, the year the registers begin. Before this time many Catholics including convicts chose not to be married by a clergyman of another faith, nor to have their children baptised for the same reason. As time passed and the number of Irish immigrants arriving in New South Wales increased, Roman Catholic priests were officially authorised by the Government in an act of 1834 to record the baptisms, burials and marriages of Roman Catholics.

Nevertheless, Samuel and Mary Anne may have married soon after he was granted his freedom, possibly before the act of 1834 became fully established, but on the other hand I found a record of marriage for Thomas Wellsmore (Wilsmore) to Mary Barrett dated 26 September 1836 at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. Record keeping however, was not strictly adhered to prior to 1856 when civil registration became law. Some records may have been lost when St Mary's was destroyed by fire in 1865.

Samuel, accompanied by Mary Anne and young son left Sydney and travelled south to the 'Maneroo' sometime after May 1836. A record of birth of their second child has been traced dated 1 December 1837 (1838) and her marriage record states her place of birth as 'Gegedzerick', about nineteen miles south west of Cooma.

The first record of white men visiting Monaro was that of Captain Mark Currie, RN with Brigade Major John Ovens, Joseph Wild and at least one Aborigine. In May 1823 they set out from Bong-Bong near Moss-Vale for the purpose of exploring the then unknown country south of Lake George. After travelling some days it was 4 June they learned from the natives in the area that the open country before them was called 'Monaroo'. The terminal point of this expedition was south of the Bredbo River, and about twelve miles north of Cooma. They found the open country still stretching south, bounded to the west by mountains topped with snow. They turned back following a different route to that of the outward journey. It is believed that Currie halted his southward push because of the shortage of food. Before long the flocks of sheep and the herds of cattle began to take possession of these Maneroo Downs, which Currie had seen and which he remarked were of an interesting nature connected with sheep grazing and so essential to the staple produce of the district and of the immense value in the development and eventual settlement of the colony. The truth of his words being so evident today.

The meanings of many Aboriginal names were elusive but there seemed to be fairly general agreement that the word 'Maneroo', 'Monaroo', or 'Maneira' signified a woman's breasts or rolling open downs. One reference suggested "treeless downs". The name suited the soft rolling country from Michelago southward. The geographical boundaries of the land constituting Monaro were variously defined, but for the purposes of this account of the Lecount family I will be concerned with the geographical area bounded by Queanbeyan in the north, Braidwood in the north east, Nimmitabel in the south-east, Jindabyne in the west and Kiandra in the north-west, with Cooma at its centre.

By Government order of October 1829 the boundaries of nineteen Counties were defined as comprising the limits of approved occupation. An area of 34,505 square miles covered the Nineteen Counties and it was not until 1830 that the limits of location extended as far south as Michelago, about thirty miles north of Cooma. Monaro was beyond the Nineteen Counties, the imaginary line of the Nineteen Counties divided two different worlds. Within the Nineteen Counties settlement was officially encouraged, police protection was provided, roads were made and provision existed for local justice and the like. Outside the Nineteen Counties no land could be granted or sold, occupation was prohibited and any man who dared to trespass had to rely entirely upon himself. The Government not only refused to aid such transgression, but also punished it. Those that went beyond the Nineteen Counties had to view any official as an enemy, such men who dared defy the Government squatted on their forbidden land, and subsequently became known as squatters.

CERTIFICATE OF FREEDOM.

No. 35/117

Date, 7 March 1835

Prisoner's No. 29/1408

Name Samuel C. Bount

Ship Infants Hastings

Master Drake

Year 1828

Native Place London

Trade or Calling Laborer

Offence Stealing Cloth

Place of Trial London G.D.

Date of Trial 6 December 1827

Sentence 7 Yrs

Year of Birth 1812

Height 5 feet 6 inches

Complexion Ruddy & freckled

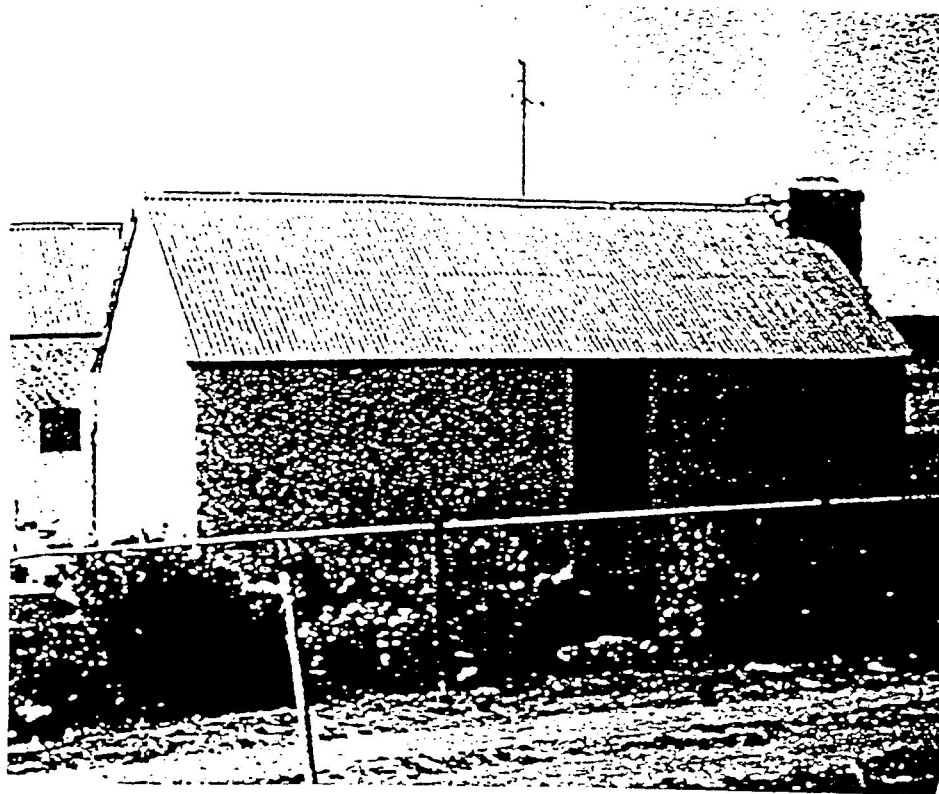
Hair Brown

Eyes Hazel

General Remarks: nose a little

inclining to the right
side - two tumors on
right hand JH

An artificial law limiting grazing land to the Nineteen Counties was not really going to stop the young, the hardy, and the far-sighted, apart from being outside the law, what did make it hard for these men and their women folk, pushing out beyond the boundaries, was the utter isolation and loneliness. How far south these obscure settlers had penetrated none knew, and in the majority of situations the wealthy graziers of today are the descendants of the struggling and illegal sheep men of yesterday.



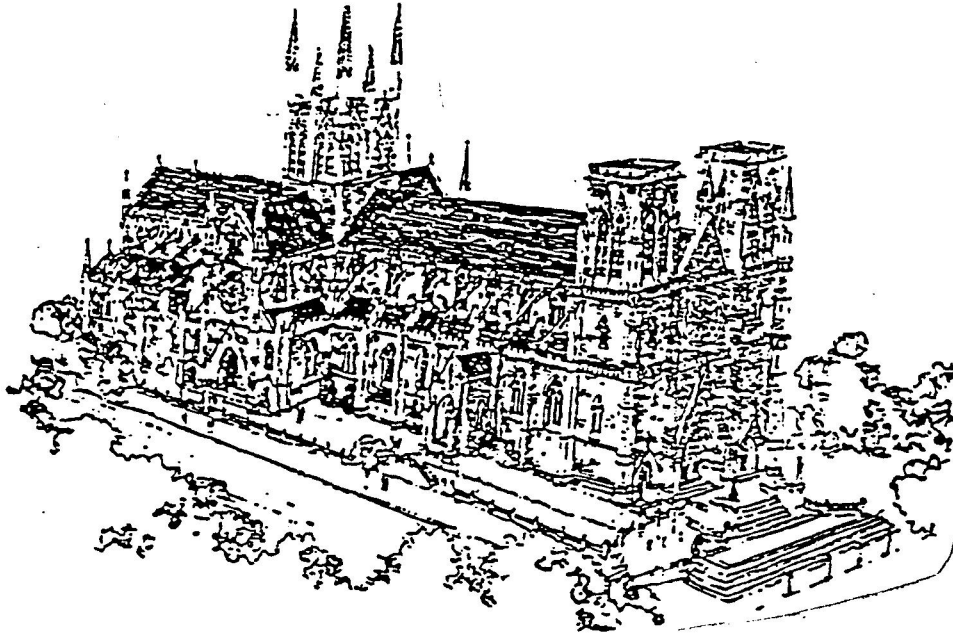
Two room stone built dwelling at Slacks Creek (March 1988)

By 1827 settlement had reached what is now known as Gegedzerick (native for look-out) near Berridale, and birth place of Ann Lecount, the present owner of Gegedzerick Station (originally 38,400 acres) is Mr O C Woodhouse. An interesting feature here is a two roomed stone cottage, which according to the local residents, the pregnant mothers, last century, would come to have their baby born. Slacks Creek is nearby and from it they probably collected household water. It is more than likely that William Henry Leecount was born there in February 1863, his birth registration states place of birth as 'Slacks Plain', his parents abode at that time was given as Wambrook, District of Cooma. Wambrook Station was a short distance across the unfenced country, wire fencing did not come into use until about 1875.

The building of St Mary's Anglican Church of Gegedzerick, started by the Brooks family in 1849 was not opened until October 1860. The church was solidly built from local granite, the original roof of split shingles was later covered with galvanized iron. The first baptism was that of Edward Suthern in the same year, and first marriage in the church was celebrated in 1861 of Henry Brooks and Augusta Maria Brooks, both of Gegedzerick. The church still stands today, within the grounds of a small cemetery, a head-stone dated 1842 can be seen. The township of Berridale is just one mile further west along the Mount Kosciusko Highway, and was the home town of my shearer friend of the 1930s, when he died in April 1973 I returned to Berridale to attend his funeral, he was buried in Gegedzerick Cemetery. (Berridale, unlike today, did not have much tourism in 1940, it was a quiet close knit village with a couple of stores and a pub. 'Peels Inn' since 1948 has been owned by Mrs Lorna Peel. In the summer of 1940 the village came close to destruction with bush fire, but for the actions of the volunteers, of which I took part it would have ended in disaster.

On 16 August 1857 Ann Lecount (18) married Peter Byrne (40) in the private residence of Mr James Bennett of Jeff's Creek near Gegedzerick. The ceremony was solemnised by Fr Charles Bernard Quinn RCC. Ann and Peter were employed as servants on 'Bolongbolong' a property which today could be partly covered by the waters of Lake Eucumbene. On the record of marriage Ann's father was described as 'shoemaker', Peter's father, a 'butcher'. Ann and Peter, after their marriage settled on a property in the Cooma district known as 'Billyrumbuk'. When Peter died at Cooma in 1879, aged 62 there were eight children living. Emma, their first born in 1857 married Joseph Stopp, whose father, George had a lime burning plant in Cooma and carted the stone for building Cooma's first gaol in 1862 - 1864. Ann remarried William Joseph McCarthy in April 1881. Today the name of Byrne is widespread in the district of Cooma.

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, SYDNEY



A BRIEF HISTORY

- 1820 ---- Frs Therry & Conolly arrived as the first official Catholic chaplains to the Colony of New South Wales.
- 1821 ---- Governor Macquarie laid the foundation stone of the first St Mary's chapel.
- 1835 ---- John Bede Polding, the first Bishop arrived.
- 1865 ---- The first St Mary's is destroyed by fire. (A stone column outside the eastern door is all that remains).
- 1868 ---- 8 December, blessing of the foundation stone of the new St Mary's (the present building).
- 1882 ---- 8 September, Archbishop Vaughan dedicates the Cathedral which was then in use.
- 1913 ---- Foundation stone for the completion of the building laid by Archbishop Kelly.
- 1928 ---- 2 September, St Mary's Cathedral opened.

Architect : William Wardell 1823 - 1899.

Samuel's trade or calling is not positively known although various documents indicate that he was a shoemaker, and his reference to the shoe business in his defence at the Old Bailey trial in 1827 is further indication, even though he was only 17 years old. What he did during his seven year assignment with Joseph Hart is not known. Efforts so far have failed to trace Hart's position.

The available records can only support some seven years of his presence on Monaro, and during that time, one child, perhaps two were born about twenty miles south-west of Cooma, then down to Nimmitabel, twenty-three miles south-east where Samuel Junior was born in 1840, followed then by a move to Reids Flats (Bunyan) five miles north from Cooma where Charlotte was born in 1841 followed by Emily, 1843 and finally Ellin in 1844. All this must be unmistakable evidence that Samuel was on the move for some particular reason.

The whole of the population of Monaro on 2 March 1841, which means all the country south from Michelago, was 1509 males, 374 females, and at Queanbeyan in the same period there were 56 males, 16 females and 10 houses. The settlement proclaimed as Cooma in 1847, consisted in 1851 of 47 people.

Samuel's method of travel to the Monaro, 270 miles south from Sydney is also unexplained, it is unlikely that he and his wife and young son made their own way as his knowledge of the hinterland would be nil, and many questions would arise here as to the mode used in crossing streams, finding direction and overcoming other unforeseen obstacles. The method of travel at that time would be to either walk or the use of a dray or cart drawn by a bullock to carry the family possessions. The journey taking anything up to six weeks, depending on the weather, would be overshadowed by the possibility of being held-up by bushrangers, and the danger of attack from Aborigines. There were no made roads, just tracks, and certainly no 'sign posts'. An alternative to his migration is the possibility he was engaged in Sydney following the granting of his freedom to take employment on one of the few runs that had been taken up. The employer to arrange for he and his family their safe conveyance.

Samuel and Mary Anne's third child Sarah, was born 4 December 1838 (1839) and the exact location is not known, the registration only stated 'Maneroo', but the registration of one of her children gave Sarah's birth place as 'Snowy River' (one description is as vague as the other).

For Sarah's baptism in June 1841, the sponsors (or Godparents) are noted as Mrs Bowman and James O'Hara, which gives rise to the speculation that Samuel and Mary Anne and their two children, John and Ann may have left the region of Berridale (Gegedzerick as it was know then) and travelled in a southeasterly direction, about fifteen miles to 'Pinch Gut' (now Maffra) and within a couple of miles of the Snowy River. At this time and location Bowman was listed as a squatter, it is possible that it is also the birth place of Sarah. Afterwards the family moved on to 'Nimitybelle', a further eighteen miles eastward, and the birth place of Samuel Junior in April 1840?

In 1860 when the gold rush started, this cross country track connecting to the coast at Twofold Bay was used by those on their way to Kiandra. At Bobundra, just two or three miles from Pinch Gut, the 'Woolpack Inn' was established as a stopping place for the weary travellers. The country was mostly open but hilly.

Ann, Sarah and Samuel Junior were baptised possibly at a group ceremony on 1 June 1841 by Father Michael McGrath RCC but the location of the event is not known. The sponsors for Samuel Junior were William Ryan and Mrs Thornton. Morgan Thornton appears as a lease holder at Nimitybelle (later as Nimmitabel) in the early 1840s, and along with Ryan, both names exist in the area today.

It will be noted that a priest only visited the Monaro once, or at the most twice a year, therefore the parents would have to maintain a written record of the children's births until the arrival of the priest, in this instance from December 1837 to June 1841. It is assumed that Samuel was able to read and write although his wife was illiterate, what facilities would be available in those early times?

The birth/baptism record of Ann, Sarah and Samuel was unavailable from the Registrar General in Sydney, I obtained a copy from Ss Peter and Paul Family Research Group, Goulburn. There appears to be errors in the dates shown, but would only involve one year one way or the other.

According to Farquar McKenzies Journal of 1837, it seems that early settlement around Nimmitabel may have taken place about the late 1830s or early 1840s. It is claimed that the Aboriginal name for the area meant a "place where many waters start or divide". Local tradition has it that the first hotel known as the 'Nimitybelle Inn' was so called because the waters from one pitch of the roof, upon reaching the ground, ran east to the coast and from the other, west through the tableland, thus to be created the starting place of the division of waters.

A landmark in the village is the old mill built by John Geldmacher, a naturalised German settler. About 1865 he began to assemble materials, and during the next seven years laboured, almost unaided, on the construction. Early in 1872 the work was completed and the mill was ready for use. This was originally intended as a flour mill to be wind operated, but owing to a lot of protests by horse owners, the project was abandoned. The revolving blades threw shadows onto the roadway.

In 1959 Nimmitabel was chosen as the location for the Warner Brothers film "The Sundowners" with Robert Mitchum playing the leading role. Nimmitabel was chosen because the story called for a place that had the appearance of a 1920s village and apart from a very short strip of bitumen, Nimmitabel and its buildings had that appearance. In the Australian Women's Weekly of 21 October 1959 "..... Nimmitabel, 3300ft above sea level had been practically taken over by Warner Brothers for making the film The Sundowners. Members of the film unit, cast and crew, had doubled the population" Horses, buggies and phaetons were angle parked. Two T-model Fords and old Indian motor bikes were drawn up outside the pub.

Felix Mitchell, a meticulous solicitor, and an early resident compiled an account for Cooma's 1926 celebrations, when, it was claimed, Cooma had reached its first one hundred years of life. We owe a great vote of thanks to Mr Mitchell for his work of recording and collating the material he collected from the families of the early pioneers.

At the time of occupation there were only three runs west of what is now Cooma, 'Coolringdon', 'Gegedzerick' and 'Wambrook'. William Glanville is one of the very first of Monaro pioneers arriving in 1832 and worked as a stockman at Wambrook, at the time owned by Samuel Bowler and Joseph Ward. Glanville has left it on record that at the time of his arrival there was one other stockman named Joseph Slack, who a couple of years later formed a station for himself nearby and is today known as 'Slacks Creek', about ten miles south west of Cooma, toward Berridale.

In 1836 Glanville took a mob of cattle to Sydney for Joseph Ward, to be sold, returning at a later time with a load of stores for James Kirwan who was about to open a store in Cooma. Once again it is speculation that Samuel, his wife and young son may have returned with Glanville to Wambrook Station. There is also a strong possibility that Samuel was at Gegedzerick. Reference to Wambrook in respect of the Lecount family has greater significance in the years ahead.

Conditions of employment for the shepherds and stockmen on the Monaro were found to be extremely rugged under the lonely conditions of the bush, where labour was always in short supply. Anyone willing to work hard was an asset, quite often the go slow tactics of some of the convicts were difficult to cope with, so there was deepening need for self reliance, independence and resourcefulness. It was not unusual to find a 14 or 15 year old lad managing a remote Monaro run with only one illiterate shepherd to help him.

Shepherds in the 1830s were paid £20 a year, and the hut keeper or watchman £18. On some runs, depending on the owner, rations were sometimes provided, weekly rations might amount to ten pounds of meat, two pounds of sugar and four ounces of tea per man. Daily the shepherd would take his flock of up to 1500 to pasture within a short distance of the hut while at night the sheep were folded within a stockade made of portable hurdles and guarded from wild dogs by the sometimes armed hut keeper. These men could be confined to the bush for a twelve month period and during that time see scarcely a soul from day to day, all weathers and seasons, live on nothing but damper flour and water baked in wood embers mutton, salt meat, black tea and tobacco smoke, sleep at night in a hut alive with fleas, and neither wind nor water proof.

Living conditions on Monaro and in Cooma were generally very primitive in those early days. Families lived in bark huts at first, then came the timber slab walls and bark roof. Chimneys for the open kitchen fire were rough constructions made from odds and ends, some were timber and plastered with mud to ensure they were fire proof, others were built from stone and mud. These dwellings caught fire easily because of the method used for cooking, and because of the material they were made of. Camp ovens were used, as well as big cauldrons hung from a hook over the central part of the fire. These cauldrons boiled the water cooked the family stew and simmered the everlasting corn beef, bread was baked to one side of the main cooking fire in the recessed area of stones. Carcasses were hung on hooks suspended from the kitchen rafters. Draughts were a part of life, snow and frequent storms burst in through the cracks, the floor was stamped earth, or made from suitable flat stones, beds were long sheets of bark and sacks stuffed with dry grass for a mattress. Toilet facilities were also primitive, at first, nothing then a trench a short distance from the hut.

During the summer months washing and bathing were undertaken at about weekly intervals at a nearby stream. However, in the long bleak Monaro winter, the families all purpose tub would be drawn up before the open fire in the kitchen.

Children were very numerous and although clear eyed and rosy cheeked they were still shy like the other bush creatures about them. They mostly could not read or write and their conversation was strictly limited, they might be able to tell you of a mare in foal or what they had for dinner. They were used to being part of the working force of the household, they were the shepherds, they were the water carriers, they were the messengers trudging long distances perhaps to pass a note onto the next family.

The girls of the family had a hard time as they were growing up, they were expected to help continually with all household chores, and whilst looking quite feminine in their long dresses and high necked blouses, were slaves to their impractical fashions, hours would be spend ironing knife edged pleats and endless rows of ruffles. Shoes when worn were a boot type of structure, heavy and not very elegant.

The boys of the family, even if they had a chance for some schooling of a kind were expected from the age of ten to take a man's share of the work load. It is recorded by a Monaro family that the dullness on Sundays was somewhat dreary, nothing happened and everything became kind of "death like", the old letters also described how household chores of any kind were not allowed on the Sabbath.

What the girls' compensations were seemed something of a mystery, except in some cases to take a job as a servant or house maid at some distant property to find a husband, usually working at the same place, marry young and go through the whole grinding process again with up to a dozen or so small children around their skirts. Often the girl's life of chores was cut short at an early age by death during childbirth or immediately after from milk fever. Confinement for most young mothers was in their own small huts, some would go to a neighbour, perhaps ten or more miles distant, the new born baby took its chances along with the difficulties of survival and everything else. After a time as more women came to live on Monaro there developed an interchange of self help, one woman would be present during the confinement and birth of another's child, acting as nurse, doctor and midwife. Eventually those that were good at this kind of thing and increased their knowledge with experience, became fulltime midwives. To these women, Monaro owed quite a lot.

Women were very few and far between on Monaro for many years, among the first was Mrs Harnett. Probably the first white woman at Adaminaby was Mrs York who was accidentally burnt to death. One of the first women pioneers to cross the Snowy River was Mary, the 16 year old bride of James McEvoy, in 1836.

The people of Cooma and the surrounding area were for many years without medical assistance close to hand. In 1837 Doctor William Hayley settled in Queanbeyan and was the first doctor recorded as practising in the surrounding districts including Cooma, but Queanbeyan was sixty or seventy miles distant. In 1839 according to "The Australian" the list of medical practitioners did not include any for Monaro, the nearest medical assistance listed at that time was James Ellis RN at Yass and Alfred Johnston at Goulburn. In the Government Gazette of 1844 Doctor Erasmus Wren and Doctor Kinnear Robertson were both listed as medical practitioners for Monaro Plains.

A death certificate issued in March 1860 in respect of Frederick Luton, the fourteen month old first child of Sarah Lecount and John Luton did not give the cause of death, but it is believed that the child died of burns. At the time John and his wife Sarah were living at Cabramurra, John was a gold digger attracted to Kiandra when the precious metal was first found. The certificate was issued by Doctor Healey (Hayley?) of Queanbeyan, with the notation "not certified".

On 13 November 1841, Charlotte was born, followed by Emily in October 1843, and finally Ellin on 14 September 1844. The place of birth was given as Reid's Flats, Maneroo and the baptism of the three girls was not celebrated until 12 March 1845, the ceremony was solemnised by Father Michael Kavanagh RCC at an unnamed parish in the County of Murray. Their registration bore the surname 'Le Compte'. In contrast, the surname of Ann, Sarah and Samuel Junior was recorded as 'Le Count'.

The spiritual needs of the Catholic population on Monaro began to be met when at the beginning of 1840, 25 year old Father Michael McGrath was sent along to lighten the work load of Father Charles Lovat in the extensive Yass-Goulburn District which embraced all the southern part of New South Wales. Father McGrath was given the Goulburn end when he began his ministry in February 1840, the immense district he had to travel embraced the 'Maneroo' from Goulburn to the sea then down the coast as far as Gippsland, then back home through Cooma and the present Australian Capital Territory. It was a tidy parish no doubt.

One story of a settler and his family living at Braidwood is told, there was no church or clergymen of any denomination, once every three or four years was as much as we could hear Mass or see a Catholic priest. The story goes on When my son was born Father McGrath was then travelling about and baptised the child, when my daughter was born, visits by clergymen were still rare therefore when the infant was three weeks old her mother carried her on foot to Goulburn, where Father Bennan, who succeeded Fr McGrath, baptised the child. Braidwood is some fifty miles from Goulburn, there were scarcely a dwelling between the two places, bushrangers were active, and the difficulties all round were so great as to make this story almost incredible, yet it was taken verbatim from Freemans Journal of August 1862.

In 1843 two priests were sent to work the Maneroo with headquarters at Queanbeyan, they were Father Michael Kavanagh and Father John Kenny. (Fr McGrath had been transferred to Norfolk Island). The parish now embraced Twofold Bay, Bega, Moruya, Cooma, Bombala and extended to the Snowy River by Adaminaby and Jindabyne, beyond Dalgety (Buckleys Crossing) to Gippsland. In the meantime the two priests worked with a will to clear up the troubles, in the first year of their residence in the Maneroo they performed no less than ninety baptisms from Queanbeyan to Twofold Bay then westward via Bombala to Jindabyne. When the partnership was dissolved Father Kavanagh attended the immense mission area single handed.

These men had to be capable of enduring hardship, they survived the rigours of the living of the time, salt meat, with seldom a green vegetable, except perhaps stinging nettle masquerading as spinach, damper and black tea. Then too, the loneliness of their presbytery tucked away in a dark sordid corner of a village with a handful of people, or standing desolate beside the track, it was merely a place to keep the parish register, or rest for the night after long hours in the saddle, to begin it all again the next day. And how often the evil smelling slush lamp has thrown a shadow on the wall of a tired form nodding over the bench or struggling through the fifteen decades of the Rosary.

Then there was their accommodation when travelling, and they were mostly travelling, there was scarcely a decent house in the whole of the Colony at the time. The early arrivals, for the want of capital and skills made for themselves and their family, a dwelling which was little better than a gunyah, of sheets of stringy bark, later came the slab hut with earthen floor and bark roof. The stringy bark tree was the most useful tree in the country to the early home builders.

In describing Father Kavanagh's roving mission, Father Coffey wrote, "The highways were the wheel ruts made by the drays meandering in and out and round about as the bullocky steered his team from place to place". The only way of crossing a river was in a make-shift craft fashioned out of a hollow log. Father Kavanagh had often to avail of the offer of an Inn, as the way-side public houses were known as a place of worship, and with commendable foresight, but little tact, he invariably gave the pledge to the congregation before dismissing them, but as a counter punch the wily Inn keeper would charge the priest a pound a night for accommodation for himself and his horse.

A turning point came to pastoral occupation in 1836, soon after surveyor General Mitchell's expedition, in this same year under Governor Burke, the first attempt was made to regulate the squatting outside the Nineteen Counties. By an act of Council it was decided to admit the right of the squatters to graze their stock, and an annual licence fee of ten pounds was imposed. Hitherto, in the settled districts squatters had been charged an annual licence fee of twenty shillings for every one hundred acres occupied. This was obviously unsuitable for lands outside the Nineteen Counties and by 1836 the futility of the trespassing laws had been recognised. Thereafter, nothing could stem the flow of settlement to the south after Mitchell's report of 1836 had become known. Already by 1839 there were almost as many stock as could be found in the whole of the old settled districts.

By a proclamation of 21 May 1839 the existence of Monaro as a district, under the control of Mr John Lambie, as Commissioner for Crown Lands, occupation of land was permitted, subject to licence, beyond the limits specified for settlement.

It was bounded on the west by the Murrumbidgee River and the Great Dividing Range, on the south by a line from the headwaters of the Murray to Cape Howe, on the east, by the coast northward to Moruya. The boundary then turned inland to the headwaters of the Shoalhaven River, northward along its upper reaches, and westward to rejoin the Murrumbidgee at a point near the southern tip of today's Australian Capital Territory.

During the lusty boisterous years of the 1840s, few problems in the Colony could have been more difficult than that facing Governor Gipps from October 1837 to July 1846 in his dealings with the squatters. The community over which he had charge was restive and concurrently passing through a period of acute economic distress. During the years referred to above, Samuel, his wife Mary Anne and their seven very young children were most likely struggling for survival somewhere in this remote and inhospitable Monaro country side.

During the winter, the spring and the summer of 1846 the district suffered dreadfully for the want of rain, the water and feed became so scarce the cattle began to die, and more than 30,000 sheep died of starvation, the whole country had the appearance of a desert. However, by the end of 1849 the pastoralists were in a much stronger position throughout Monaro.

John Lambie was the first public official on Monaro and the first Magistrate to adjudicate in the town of Cooma. For a number of years he administered the whole of the civil work of the district, when a court of Petty Sessions was established in Cooma in 1847 he was appointed Chief Magistrate. A street in Cooma bears his name. When I visited Cooma in March 1988 I walked along Lambie Street where a good number of the historical buildings have been preserved. John Lambie died on 3 August 1862, he was buried in the Christchurch Cemetery, Cooma.

The total population of the Cooma village in 1856 was 116, 123 buildings were weatherboard or slab, there were three houses of bricks or stone, two of the houses had a shingled roof, the remainder had bark or thatch. Fire was a continual hazard, most of the buildings were of flammable material and open fires were the order of the day. Cooking was primitive so it was not surprising that news of fires was common. Commissioner Lambie was one of the unlucky ones in this respect he did not have just one fire, he had three, all in the same year of 1859. In May the first of Lambie's fires destroyed his stables, the second fire in October was of a more serious nature, some furniture was saved but all Lambie's scientific work and papers, his valuable library and his many records collected for over twenty years were destroyed. This fire caused a great loss to everybody, because valuable records are now incomplete, the cause of the fire was never discovered, but Lambie's servants were charged with arson and later acquitted. The third fire in December happened as he was preparing a midday meal, when the fat in the pan caught alight, he attempted to throw it through the open doorway, but the thatched roof caught fire. With the loss of John Lambie's precious records, so too may historic information concerning Samuel Le Count be also lost.

The first Anglican Church on Monaro was that of Christchurch Cooma, erected in 1845. The first Roman Catholic Church was St Andrews, erected at Nimmitabel in 1856. In 1858, Father Michael Kavanagh drew up plans for a Catholic Church to be built at Cooma, in 1860 a stone church was built and the first marriage took place there on 5 January 1861.

The register of marriages solemnised in the district of Cooma, and all Monaro, are held at St Patricks, Cooma, commencing 1856. There is however, a gap in the records from 20 January 1861 when Father Kavanagh was in charge, until 1 February 1863 when Fr Patrick Newman took over. This period, unfortunately is the period in which Samuel Le Compte and his brother John Lecount were married, consequently losing any prospects of gaining possible further personal details omitted from the Registrar General's records in Sydney.

Father Kavanagh resigned in 1863, having served a very vast region for 25 years. Fr Kavanagh rode an estimated 40,000 miles on horse-back in ten years, and if the bush youngsters did not know their catechism it was not because he had not rounded them up. Fr Michael Kavanagh returned to Ireland in 1868, and where he died is not known, but he was still living in September 1875, at the time of the death of his brother, Father John.

Wages in the village of Cooma in 1857 were generally up on those of shepherds and stockmen, the annual rate for a live-in female cook was £25 to £30, laundresses £26 to £30 and general servants £20 to £26.

All trace of Samuel and his family is lost following the baptism of Charlotte, Emily and Ellin in March 1845, until the marriage of Ann to Peter Byrne in 1857. During this twelve year period of silence the children were growing up, Ellin the youngest, would be 13 years of age. The location of this growing up period is not known, but there is a strong possibility that it was at 'Wambrook Station' or 'Rosebrook' perhaps Queanbeyan?

The sudden stop to further children being born (or registered) was a fair indication that something was amiss. The finding of a record of marriage with Mary Leecount and Michael Callachor prompted me to write to the Secretary of St Patricks Parish Cooma, Mr K J McFadden, enquiring if the old registers were still held, and possibly containing more information than that shown on the records of the Registrar General, Sydney. Mr McFadden replied confirming that Mary Leecount, 53 living at Wambrook, widow, had married Michael Callachor, 62, bachelor shepherd of Dairymans Plains (Kiandra) on 26 September 1870. The letter also stated that a notation to the record of marriage that Mary Leecount (Le Count) had been "a widow for about twenty-four years". This would establish that Mary Anne became a widow about 1846, but she was illiterate and at the time of her husband's apparent death would not be capable of making notes. Maybe the statement she made was based on the pregnancy or birth of Ellin, if so, then it's possible that Samuel could have left this world in early 1844. The family may have been living in an isolated area.

Search of the relative archives and enquiries to the various Catholic Presbyteries on Monaro and Goulburn have failed to find any trace of a record of his death or burial.

A letter from the secretary of St Raphaels Parish Queanbeyan has advised that deaths were not recorded there at the time, but burials were and records were kept from December 1844, but there is no record of Le Count or Le Compte listed. Another letter from Father Brian Maher at St Mary's Bungendore has informed me, following up his research programme, that in the 1840s the priest only visited the Monaro twice a year, so that it would be highly unlikely that he would arrive at the time of a particular funeral. Furthermore, there was no church purpose in recording deaths, so that Catholic burial records, if any are very spasmodic. Continuing to write he said, Monaro in the 1840s was so rough and remote that more likely Samuel received no religious ceremony at all.

A book published by the Canberra Heraldry and Genealogical Society entitled "Monumental Inscriptions of Monaro" has no record in the list of all marked graves on Monaro bearing Le Count, Lecount or Le Compte.

Without her husband, and the children without a father, the family faced a harsher future than we could envisage today. Mary Anne was about 27 years old, with seven children, the youngest about 2 years, and the eldest about 7 years.

Even though there was a greater degree of religious freedom in the Colony than in Britain, nevertheless for many years on Monaro there was no religion at all. There were no priests or ministers to infuse the scattered people with moral principles, the souls of Monaro pioneers were unsaved, and their lives were lived in sin. There was no-one to marry them, to baptise their children nor to bury their dead. A woman in an isolated corner of Monaro had to run out to two chance travellers passing in the distance, she asked them if they would mind helping her to bury her husband. Is it possible that this woman may have been the wife of Samuel Le Count?

It was in 1837 that Bishop Broughton wrote his first letter to England in which he regretted his inability to visit Monaro. The area he stated was without ministrations of any kind at all. Such a state of affairs was eased a little on Monaro when Edward Smith was appointed Anglican clergyman to Queanbeyan from 1838 to 1842.

The convict indent papers of the Marquis of Hastings described Samuel as an errand boy, Roman Catholic, and able to read and to write, but with the possible exception of John, the remainder of the family were illiterate. Before Samuel departed his family it is very likely that he taught John sufficient to write his name, the other children probably too young to understand.

The main flow of people about Monaro were illiterate, their children also were illiterate, there was simply no-one to teach them. The Reverend E G Pryce, in his missions around Monaro in 1843 wrote : I am sorry to report that it is not practicable to establish schools for the children here, the people are living so far apart that there is no locality where even a few children could be brought together. This was truly a serious state of affairs.

Samuel was the father of five girls, all were under age when they married, consent being given by their mother. In considering their mother was illiterate, then one should assume that their father would shoulder the responsibility, but there is strong evidence, and I believe that Samuel was not alive to witness the marriage of his daughters, or any of his children.

A Queanbeyan historian writing about the early arrivals in his book "Queanbeyan Pioneers" describes Ellin Le Count as being the daughter of a French settler who farmed in the Brindabella Mountains, southwest of Canberra; born about 1842 and could have been the daughter of Samuel Le Count and Mary Ann (née Gallagher)?? It is written further that Samuel Le Count married Mary Ann Gallagher; was in Queanbeyan in 1858.

I have found nothing to support the foregoing claims. If Samuel had been a farmer, or some other person of importance, or had committed a Colonial offence, then his bonafides would have been much easier to trace, and in consideration of the wide-spread birth of six of his seven children, as much as some seventy miles to the southward in the case of Samuel Junior.

An article appearing in a Canberra magazine dated January 1983, as follows ... "Evelyn Morton's mother's maiden name was Le Count, she came from France ..." A statement partly correct. The author of "Queanbeyan Pioneers" had painted a rosy picture, but in fairness and respect for the memory of the Le Count family, Ellin (baptised Ellin Le Compte) was born at Bunyan (Monaro, New South Wales) on 14 September 1844. She was illiterate at the time of her marriage. Her father, Samuel Le Count was just one of the 168,000 convicts transported to Australia for varying offences. At the time of Charlotte's marriage to James Todd in 1858, the "Goulburn Penny Post" in reporting the event referred to Charlotte as the "third daughter of Mrs Le Count of Queanbeyan". The implication here is that her father was not living. Ellin's mother's maiden name was Mary Anne Callinan, born circa 1817.

Samuel's life in the Colony appears to have been a short one. It is regrettable that his presence was not more than just a name on a piece of paper. Neither his marriage nor his death has been recorded anywhere. His descendants, mostly, know very little about him, as far as I am aware. My feelings are that I know most and I feel sorrow that I was ignorant of it all fifty years ago when I frequented the Monaro, and knowing so many people there.

Why did Mary Anne wait for so long before remarrying, she was a widow at 27 was it because of her children, they would be very young, perhaps Mary Anne did not want the stigma of their father being a convict to fall upon them. Perhaps the three youngest, Charlotte, Emily and Ellin did not know their father at all, and young Samuel was only about 4 years old. I am quite sure my mother did not know her grandfather was a convict, he had died more than thirty years before she was born.

Attempts to trace a death registration of Mary Callachor, formally Le Count, has been made more difficult by the spelling of her surname, which has been found can be transcribed in so many different forms. It appears however, that she could have been the only person conversant with Samuel's demise, the details of which, she has taken to her grave. Whatever happened to my great-grandfather remains a mystery, and the true cause of his death, or whatever, the time and the locality will probably never be conclusively known.

On 27 November 1857 at St Gregory's Roman Catholic Church Queanbeyan, Sarah Leecount (18) married John Luton (28). Father Michael Kavanagh conducted the ceremony which was witnessed by her younger sister Emily (14) making her mark with a cross. Little is known, at this stage, of Sarah and John's life after marriage, except that John was gold mining at "Gibson's Plains" (Kiandra) in 1860, and then traced to Bunyan in 1874 where he worked as a shepherd. John died at South Gundagai in 1902. Sarah passed away at Juneee, New South Wales on 5 May 1908, age 70 years, and was laid to rest in the Roman Catholic Cemetery, Juneee. When Sarah died, there were six of their seven children living, Brian Brooker, a descendant, lives at Wingham, New South Wales.

Charlotte (16^{1/2}) was the next to marry when she became the wife of James Todd, a gold escort trooper from Tuena, New South Wales. They were married at Goulburn on 5 May 1858, according to the form of the Church of Scotland. Charlotte's personal details and parental particulars were not shown on the record of marriage, consent to marry was also not noted, but could have been given "by word of mouth". Enquiries with the Presbyterian Church Archives have been to no avail, in respect of the missing details. Indications are that after marriage they went to Majors Creek, about fifty miles south-east of Goulburn, probably in the line of duty for James being a gold escort trooper.

Following the discovery of gold in the Braidwood-Shoalhaven River district the attention of the bushrangers was soon known, in particular the notorious Clarke brothers who were linked with Ben Hall and Frank Gardiner. Tom Clarke was a willing recruit when Ben Hall wanted local assistance in holding up the Araluen gold escort at Majors Creek Mountain in March 1865. In March the following year the Clarke gang visited Cooma, and after robbing the hotel at Bunyan they raided Rosebrook Station, the property of Laurence Harnett. It is highly likely that Mary Anne and other members of the Le Count family were in the immediate locality at the time. An elderly descendant of Ellin Le Count and William Morton recalls in her memoirs stories she heard as a youngster, she relates that Ellin as a teenager was held up by one of these bandits, but fortunately she was able to escape. (Ida Louise McKee [née Morton] passed away on 11 March 1989, just one month before her 90th birthday).

Thomas Clarke, had in two years committed nine mail robberies, and had bailed-up and robbed on at least thirty-six occasions, John Clarke had taken part in at least twenty-six of these robberies. A total of five policemen had been killed, and one or two badly wounded. Thomas and John Clarke were sentenced to death by Chief Justice Stephen, and were hanged in Darlinghurst Gaol on 25 June 1867 after a career which only began in 1865.

Their mother had four brothers, one was hanged for the murder of a trooper, another served ten years gaol for highway robbery. The third brother was shot dead by police, and the fourth was sentenced to death, and later commuted to life imprisonment for wounding during robbery. The Clarke gang had a short career, but a bloody one. The family background to the Clarkes could partly explain their violent history. John Clarke, the father, died in Goulburn Gaol at the age of 80, after being charged with the murder of an Aborigine.

Charlotte was very young when she married James Todd, they had three children all girls, the first, born in 1859 married Randall Hedger, a name well known in the Dalgety district today, their marriage in 1878, from which there were five children, two girls and three boys, was dissolved in 1905. Both parties remarried the same year, Emily became the wife of William Donaldson. Nothing further is known about them. Charlotte's and James' second child, Charlotte Annie, born April 1860 at Majors Creek, died at Wambrook Station in 1865 from scarlet fever, the child had been sick for five days, and according to the notation on the death certificate, there was no medical attendant. Nothing is known, at this stage of their third daughter, Fanny, born 1862.

In December 1862, James Todd appears as witness to John Lecount Catherine Kerins (Kearns) marriage at 'Wambrook Station', but in 1865 when Charlotte Annie died at Wambrook, James Todd's occupation shown on the death certificate was 'labourer', and the informant to the registering authority was the child's uncle, John Lecount, and to confuse matters further, witness to the child's burial was once again her Uncle John.

There is no further trace of Charlotte or her husband James until 1875 when Charlotte married James Green in Albury as a widow. It is not known when James Todd died. James Green was the son of a retired English Army Officer and Charlotte was 33 years of age. There were five children from the marriage, namely : Ellen, born 1874, before marriage, James 1876, Alfred George 1878, William 1881, and Mary 1885. When Charlotte's husband, James Green died in Victoria in 1899 it appears that the family went their own ways, and the boys although young, apparently had initiative. James Junior previously owning a Murray River steam boat, went to New Zealand. Alfred remained at Beechworth, and William conducted a bicycle business in Corowa before going to New Zealand to seek his brother James, who later returned to Victoria and married Frances Jones. William remained in New Zealand's South Island for sometime engaged in the gas fitting trade, he was also a rowing enthusiast and became the club's 'stroke' for their 'eight'.

Following the discovery of gold in Western Australia, William went to Kalgoorlie and set up a bicycle business. With the advent of the motor car William acquired the Ford Motor Company agency, consequently making good with the success of his business. During a visit to Perth in connection with the motor trade, William met Charlotte, his mother, who had travelled by ship to Albany. William bought her a cottage in Henry Street Subiaco, a Perth suburb.

Mrs Ruby Usher, born 1912, a granddaughter of Charlotte, living in Perth, recalls in her memoirs the beauty of Charlotte and her fashionable dress and beautiful hair.

Charlotte remained illiterate throughout her life. On 9 August 1921, Charlotte passed away at Public Hospital, Perth in her 79th year. On 11 August 1921 she was laid to rest in the Wesleyan Cemetery, Karrakatta, Western Australia. A headstone marks her grave.

Meanwhile at Queanbeyan, Samuel Junior now aged 19 became acquainted with Louisa Gibbs, the 20 year old daughter of a Queanbeyan lime burner, they had an affair and eventually on 15 May 1860 Louisa gave birth to a son. The child was baptised at the Anglican Church Queanbeyan on 15 June 1860 and named John Thomas Lecomte (Lecompte), but on 9 July 1860 the child was re-registered as John Thomas Gibbs. His mother, Louisa, married John Thomas Ruston, also of Queanbeyan in 1868. John Thomas Junior would be only 8 years of age when his mother married Ruston. It is very likely that Louisa's parents cared for the boy in his early years, until he married Emily Taylor of Queanbeyan in 1884, five children were born of the union. Louisa however, had no further children, and died in 1915, aged 75 years.

Emily's sister, Nancy Taylor, married Alexander McIntosh of Queanbeyan, their daughter Eliza Ann McIntosh married George Nairn Morton, a son of William Morton and Ellin (Le Count). Elaine de Mamiel of Queanbeyan is the grandchild of Eliza and George Nairn Morton.

Following the birth and baptism of John Thomas in June 1860 Samuel ventured off to Majors Creek about fifty miles east of Queanbeyan, on the Shoalhaven River, Samuel apparently still in search of adventure fell in love with the young daughter of Maryanne and John Greenwood, a gold digger. The Golden Age newspaper at Queanbeyan dated 17 October 1861 published the following account of the outcome "Majors Creek is not one of the liveliest places in the world but since Sunday it has been a scene of excitement in consequence of the elopement therefrom on that evening of a young lady named Catherine G ... with a young man named Le Count. On Monday parties were out in search of the runaway pair, but no intelligence could be gleaned as to which way the birds had flown. It is supposed they have gone in the direction of Queanbeyan". (It has been earlier referred to that Samuel's sister Charlotte, and her husband James Todd were at this time living at Majors Creek).

Samuel and Catherine eventually continued on down to Cooma and Wambook Station where they were married on 13 March 1862 according to the Rites of the Church of Rome. The ceremony was solemnised by Father Patrick Newman RCC. It is interesting to note here that Samuel was married in the name of 'Lecompte'. Catherine was born at Ashfield, Sydney on 28 December 1843. Her father, John Greenwood gave his consent to the marriage. Their record of marriage gave Samuel's occupation as 'settler', other particulars as to his age, where born and parental details were marked 'unknown'. The same applied to his brother John when he married later the same year.

John Lecount married Catherine Kerins or Kearns also at Wambook on 18 December 1862, Father Patrick Newman officiating. The marriage was witnessed by John's sister Ellin (18) and brother-in-law James Todd. Ellin used the surname Lecompte, as she did at Samuel's marriage, but making her mark with a cross.

Back at Queanbeyan a notice appeared in the Golden Age, dated 24 May 1862 to the effect that "A small farm is to be sold by auction at Woodmans Inn on Thursday June 12, 1862 at 12 noon. The farm consisting of fifty acres with a two room dwelling built thereon is situated one mile from the township of Queanbeyan, well known as being lately the residence of Le Count. The farm is bounded on the north by the land of Mr A T Faunce Esq. 21 chains, on the west by the Queanbeyan River 20 chains, thus securing a never failing supply of water. A substantial slab hut is built on the premises, 27 feet by 14 feet containing two rooms. There is also a small cultivation paddock, milking yard etc. An abstract of title (purchase from the Crown) can be seen and any further information obtained, on application to H Lever Auctioneer, Queanbeyan. TERMS - CASH."

The ownership of the farm and the identity of the missing Christian name, I have been unable to trace. However, I have been able to obtain a map of the area concerned from the Land Titles Office, Sydney.

The consent to marry notation on Sarah's record of marriage gave her mother's place of abode as 'Queanbeyan River', Samuel Junior was also present in Queanbeyan in late 1859 or early 1860. At that time coaches were plying between Goulburn and Queanbeyan and Cooma, the fare was three pounds return from Queanbeyan to either place.

Emily, the sixth child and fourth daughter of Samuel and Mary Anne was 19 years of age, and living at Kyandra (Kiandra New South Wales), 52 miles north-west of Cooma when she married John Iles at Christchurch Cooma on 17 March 1863. Emily was married as 'Amelia' for reasons unknown. She was baptised Emily Le Compte. John's father was Samuel, a farmer and a publican, his mother was Catherine Bruce (née McGuire).

John and Emily's first child was born at Kiandra on 2 April 1864 and named John McGuire, his father was described as 'Publican'. The next two children (twins) were born at Seymour (later as Adaminaby) on 8 November 1866 and baptised William Christopher and Alice Amy, their father once again a publican. Ada Ellen was born on 19 December 1867 also at Seymour, John continuing to be a publican. (Seymour is now about twenty-four miles from Kiandra toward Cooma). On 10 June 1870 Sydney Maria was born at Cooma, John was now described as 'Blacksmith', as was his profession at the time of the birth of Adelaide Florence on 19 October 1872. At this point all trace of the family was lost in New South Wales.

Meanwhile, at the time of Emily and John's marriage, Kiandra was the centre of a major gold find, the precious discovery was made by the Pollock brother whilst grazing their cattle in the area in June 1859. Such a rush was created that by the end of March 1860 'diggers' numbering 3,000 had converged on the place, and by 1863 the population had reached close to 15,000.

Whilst searching early newspapers, held at the State Library, Sydney, some items of interest were noted from the 1860 editions of the 'Alpine Pioneer and Kiandra Advertiser' published by John and Thomas Garrett ...

J J Wright, Commercial Store Kiandra £3/13/- an ounce for gold from the 'Nine Mile'.

Shipping. Steampacket from Merimbulato Sydney every Tuesday - Fare 35/-, returning Friday. Twofold Bay twice weekly 35/-, including provisions.

Coach Service. Daily from Kiandra to Sydney (New Providence to Campbelltown) £9/10/-.

Accommodation. At the 'Camp Hotel: 35/- per week and 2/6 for meals during the 'rush' at the junction of the Thredbo and Crackenback (Rivers).

From the "Monaro Mercury and Bombala Advertiser" March 1862; **Peter Byrne**, husband of Ann Le Count, paid £50 for Crown land at Cooma.

Subscriptions were called to fund a Catholic Chapel, and it was noted the Anglicans were very generous with donations.

Solomon's new 'Cooma Hotel' was opened March 19 1862 - among invited guests were Messrs Maurice, William and John Harnett, sons of Mr Laurence Harnett, who with his wife were sponsors at the baptism of Ann, Sarah and Samuel Le Count in June 1840.

The story of all mining on Monaro pales into insignificance in the light of the romance that surrounds Kiandra, in places, rich beyond imagination, it would seem as though nature had chosen there, a few square miles on the highest point (5000 ft) and in the most severe climate in New South Wales, as a golden store-house.

Through all the Colonies word sped of the golden wonders of Kiandra. Thither from all parts men came, lured by the magic of the yellow metal. Some came from Victoria, across the mountains, others hastened from widely different parts of New South Wales. Travellers by sea landed at Twofold Bay, tramped on through Bobundra and Middlinbank, heading for the 'Eldorado' ... But it was not to last much more than a few short years. Kiandra eventually became a ghost town, many departed wealthy.

Researching the early history of Emily and her husband's family has yielded a remarkable chain of events.

John Iles' father was born in 1804, his mother Catharine Bruce 1809. The family migrated to Tasmania from Iniskellan, County Fermanagh, Ireland about 1850. Their children, all born at Iniskellan were : John 1835, Sydney 1835?, Christopher 1829, E...? 1837, William?, and Samuel Montgomery 1844.

Samuel Iles Senior was the licensed victualler of the 'Pembroke Inn' at Sorrel, a village about eight miles from Hobart toward Port Arthur, the dreaded penal settlement of 'Van Diemens Land'. Quoting from a letter I received from the Reverend Max Jones of the Parish of Sorrel and Richmond, he said : "You will be pleased to know that the Pembroke Inn is still a licensed house and very popular - especially on a hot day."

On 26 October 1854 at St George's Church, Sorrel, Sydney Iles, 19, married Richard Smith, 30, farmer, according to the rites of the United Church of England and Ireland. The ceremony was witnessed by her father, Samuel and D M Lewis. Sydney was unable to write her name, and made her mark with a cross.

Christopher Iles, 38, farmer, married Bridget Hardman, 29, Governess at Mrs Hillyard's house, Bream Creek on 10 June 1867, for the Roman Catholic Church, Bream Creek by the Reverend Daniel F X Beechinor. A notation to the form of marriage stated : "I certify this to be the only entry for the quarter (signed) D F X Beechinor", a further notation stated : "Will the Rev Mr Beechinor have the goodness to sign the certificate at the foot and return. The blanks indicated by pencil crosses should also be filled in (signed) H Auckland?, Registrar 25/7/1867".

18 May 1875 at Marsh Farm, Samuel Montgomery Iles 31, farmer, married Katherine E Spotswood 25, Farmer's daughter, at the Congregational Church, Sorrel. Witnessed by John Iles and E Birchall.

The "Hobart Mercury" dated 28 February 1861 disclosed that Samuel Iles was insolvent, giving rise to the speculation that his son John fled to the mainland - and Kiandra in search of wealth, he would be aged about 26. After some twelve years about the Snowy Mountains John and his family of six children returned to Tasmania and Sorrel, influenced probably by the death of his mother on 14 May 1873 aged 64.

During the twenty or so years Emily and John remained in Tasmania, the early years produced a further four children, two girls and two boys. The first born on 29 April 1875 was named Mabel Ethel, and for the first time since her birth at Bunyan in 1843 Emily's surname was written as 'Le Compte'. Mabel Ethel was born at Sorrel, her father's occupation 'Licensed Victualler'. The second girl, born 8 September 1876 was named Edith Blanch. The two boys did not survive.

On October 12, 1877 the "Hobart Mercury" reported the passing of Samuel Iles, Licenced Victualler of the "Pembroke Inn". Samuel died on October 11, 1877 aged 73 years. The informant to the Registrar was Mr H Forrest, Superintendent of Police, Sorrel.

It is highly likely that his son John continued the license of the Inn until the family departed Tasmania, and crossed Bass Strait, their destination West Australia and Kalgoolie, coinciding with the discovery of gold in 1893.

In contrast to Emily's illiteracy, her children in their adopted home state showed initiative and eventual success. John Junior, it appears, became involved in mining activities and by the time he had settled with his family in Western Australia he would be 30 years of age, and is reported as having been appointed Director of Mining, based in London. He married but there were no children. It is not known what became of his brother, William Christopher. Alice Amy, William's twin sister, married Charles Edward Smith on 17 December 1904 at Perth Western Australia. Ada Ellen married John Adey Scrymgour on 11 August 1902 at Pilbara, Port Hedland. John was an accountant aged 34 from Marble Bar. Ada's age was shown as 29? But should read 35, she was born in 1867. Her father was described as 'Mining Engineer'. Sydney Maria born at Cooma in 1870, married David Jonathon Parker, 30 a school teacher, at St John's Anglican Church Perth on 12 January 1903. Sydney Maria's age was stated to be 26? - 33 would be correct. Her father was now described as a 'Mining Manager' of Kalgoorlie. Sydney Maria was school teaching at Kalgoorlie when she met her husband to be, all the girls of the family were school teachers.

It appears that Adelaide Florence remained a spinster. Mabel Ethel born at Sorrel in 1875, married Ernest H Barnes at Perth in 1900. Edith Blanch, born Tasmania 1876, married Richie Eagle in 1904, he was from New South Wales and reported to be a prominent tennis player.

As an older man John and his wife Emily, retired to Denmark, today a probable holiday resort on the southern coast of Western Australia. John died on 15 October 1919 at his Strickland Street home. The "Albany Advertiser" dated 22 October 1919 published the following: "At the ripe old age of 90 years? (circa 84), on Tuesday last there passed to rest an old Colonist, and one of the early settlers of Denmark, in the person of Mr John Iles. The deceased gentleman has been ailing for some time past, so that when the end came from natural causes it was not altogether unexpected. The body was interred in the local cemetery on Friday afternoon, the burial service being conducted by the Reverend W A Wolseley, B.A. In addition to his wife, who survives him, the deceased leaves a sister (Mrs Sydney Smith of 'Eden'), who is also nearing the ninety-mile post, two sons and six daughters to mourn their loss, it was not long until Emily joined her husband. She passed away on 3 October 1922 at the home of her 50 year old daughter, Adelaide Florence, Cuthbert Street Albany, aged 79 years. Emily was buried in the Church of England section of Albany Cemetery, Western Australia.

Mrs Eileen Iles Echberg, 78, daughter of Sydney Maria and David Jonathon, is the only known descendant of the family I am aware of, living with her husband at Harness Street Kingsley, Western Australia. In October 1990 she was diagnosed as having terminal cancer.

For the first twenty years or so of the twentieth century, Charlotte and her sister Emily were resident in Western Australia, both with interests at Kalgoorlie, whether by design or the 'hand of fate', will probably never be known.

Charlotte and Emily were born at Bunyan, New South Wales, in November 1841 and October 1843 respectively. The information given on both their death registrations is mostly erroneous. For Charlotte her age was stated as 85 years? (79 and 9 months), her parents names unknown, her birth-place likewise, age at first marriage to James Todd in 1858, 22 years? (16¹/₂), age at second marriage to James Green in 1875, 40 years?(33). On the record of her marriage to James Green her father's name was given as Samuel 'Leichardt', and James Green's father a 'Retired Army Officer'. The informant is believed to have been her daughter, Mary (Green Peel) aged 36. Mary died in 1970.

The information supplied on Emily's death record was given by her middle aged daughter, Adelaide Florence. Emily's stated age 76? (79), the occupation of her father, whom I believe died about 1844-45, after being a free man in the colony for only seven years, was stated as 'Army Officer' A shoemaker on Charlotte's marriage certificate.

John and Emily's eight children were from 3 years to 7 years older than their state ages on the death certificate. With the incidence of errors so great and the reference to 'Army Officer' on both registrations gives rise to the very strong possibility that Charlotte and Emily, or their children had been in contact sometime during the early days of their presence in Western Australia?

Indications suggest that Mary Anne returned to Cooma or Wambook Station, from Queanbeyan about 1860 to 1862. It has been proposed that she went to work as a housekeeper at a boarding house in the township of Cooma, with her daughter Ellin helping. Unfortunately, Ellin only 17^{1/2} became pregnant. The child was born 29 December 1862 and registered as William John Lecount, on 9 February 1863. Registrar General's reference number 7032.

William Morton a Cooma storekeeper, and an associate of Mr J J Wright a prominent Queanbeyan businessman, is quoted as being domiciled at the boarding house became attached to Ellin. He accepted her child as his own and they married at Cooma on 4 February 1865 according to the rights of the Church of Scotland. Ellin was the last of the children to marry, and the third to do so away from the Catholic faith, but with the consent of her mother.

William was Ellin's senior by thirty years, he educated her to a point where she was learning to read and to write with her own children. A couple of years after their marriage they moved to the rich grazing district of Weetangerra, near Canberra, and became a farmer at 'Glenloch', Round Hill. William was also a publican at Gunderoo.

The first child of Ellin's (and unnamed father) was educated at the expense of Doctor Andrew, brother of Ellin's husband. He paid for William John to attend Edinburgh University to study for a doctor's degree. On his return from Scotland in 1888 was appointed Medical Officer of the Queanbeyan Hospital. In March 1890 he was sworn in as Magistrate for Queanbeyan. Later the same year he sailed for England aboard the S.S. Carthage enroute to Dundee where it is understood he was to become a partner in a medical practice. William later returned to Australia and for a time he practised at Inverell and finally to North Sydney where he died in 1951.

There were eight children, seven from the union of Ellin and William, most having successful career lives. Their youngest daughter Evelyn, born 1888 became the world amateur champion horsewoman of the early 1920s. When her father died in 1898 Evelyn and her mother came to Sydney to live, and Doctor William John, her eldest born brother paid for her education, she became a language teacher quite fluent in French. In the early part of the century her expertise as a horsewoman took her to the United States. Evelyn also took part in early Australian films, and was one of the first women in New South Wales to obtain a drivers licence. After her mother's death, Evelyn acquired a poultry farm in the Liverpool district. She married David Jones late in life, there were no children. Evelyn retired to Narrabeen where her brother George had built her a cottage, where she died in 1962.

The third generation of William and Ellin produced four doctors and a professor. Doctor David Charles Morton, a third generation descendant was in practice at Port Macquarie and attended the birth of my son Roland at Hastings District Hospital in May 1958. As of the present time the union of William Morton and Ellin Lecount (Lecompte) has in their descendants produced twelve doctors and a professor.

Over the years the Morton family have contributed to, and have been prominent in the history of Queanbeyan and its district. Morton Street in Queanbeyan commemorates their name. William Morton died at 'Round Hill' Weetangerra on 20 September 1898 aged 84 years. He was buried at St Johns, Canberra. Ellin Morton passed away on 6 February 1926 aged 82 years and was laid to rest in Rookwood Cemetery.

John Lecount's wife Catherine, died at Burnsdale, Murrumbidgee River in August 1882 aged 39. Catherine left eight children, four boys and four girls, the youngest 3 years and the eldest, 18 years. A girl died at Wambook Station in 1868 aged 1 year and 3 months. Catherine was born in Ireland in 1843, coming to Australia when she was 19, and going directly to Wambook where she was employed as a servant maid, and becoming the wife of John Lecount almost immediately. She was illiterate.

On 14 September 1884 John married Ellen Holland, a widow?, born at Cooma, aged 36. Ellen was a servant and the daughter of Thomas Holland, a labourer. There is no indication of Ellen's earlier husband, but further research revealed that she and a man named Robert Thompson, of Bunyan had a daughter, Mary Anne born 29 December 1875 and baptised at St Patricks RC Church Cooma. However, on 2 October 1884 just a couple of weeks after marrying John Lecount Ellen gave birth to a son. The child was baptised at St Patricks Cooma, and named Thomas William. No trace of a registration in the name of Lecount or Holland can be found. It is highly likely that Ellen's former husband had died whilst she was pregnant.

When John married Ellen Holland, he gave for the record in the church register, his father's name of 'John' and not Samuel, that he was born in 'Cooma' and not in Sydney, he also dropped ten years from his age, thus giving him a birth year of '1846' a time when his father was beyond this life. John would have been very young when his father died, about six or seven, and his father's name is 'unknown' on the record of his first marriage in 1862. It becomes more evident that Mary Anne could have withheld from the children the secrets of their father's beginning. Another puzzle pertaining to John's second marriage, is that if Ellen was a 'widow' why did she marry using her maiden name?

It would seem that John lived about the Monaro area for the greater part of his life. He and Catherine remained at Wambook after their marriage in 1862 until after the birth of their fifth child Michael in October 1872. When Johana was born 29 May 1874 they were living at Burnsdale, Murrumbidgee River, at the time of Mary Ann's birth in 1876 their abode was Burnsdale near Riverdale. Catherine was born at Riverdale in 1877, with Honorah in 1879 their abode was again shown as Burnsdale, and it was here in 1882 that John's wife died. Catherine was buried in the Catholic section of the Cooma cemetery. No headstone marks her grave.

Riverdale is a property by the Murrumbidgee River near the junction of the Umeralla River at Bredbo, and when Honorah (Nora) married Patrick Bollard (Bollaw) in 1899 she gave her birth place as Bredbo, which would be the nearest Post Office to Riverdale. Two of John and Catherine's girls were named Honorah, the first born died at Wambook in 1868. It was a common custom amongst early families to name a later child after one who had died earlier, particularly if the child died as an infant.

This signature of John Lecount, on the record of his second marriage to Ellen Holland in September 1884, is the only known hand writing of any member of the first Le Count family of nine people.

This Marriage was solemnized between us

John Lecount
Ellen Holland

In the presence of us

Henry Thompson
Sarah Thompson

By (or before) me

John Moriarty Officiating Minister

The following account was taken from the "JA Perkins Papers".

- 13 October 1886 : At the Cooma Police Court today John Lecount, Michael Lecount (14) and Samuel Lecount (17) were charged before Messrs Faulkner and Shannon JPs with sheep stealing from J Cosgrove. The prisoners, who were defended by Mr Montague, were severally committed for trial at the ensuing Quarter Sessions to be holden at Cooma on 2 December next.
- 3 December 1886 : John, Michael and Samuel Lecount charged with stealing a sheep the property of Mr John Cosgrove, defended by Mr Davidson of Goulburn. Mr O'Hara prosecuted, 28 jurors challenged.
- 5 December 1886 : Lecount and sons; jury retired at 11pm last night and found John Lecount not guilty. The prisoners were brought up for sentence this morning. Samuel and Michael Lecount found guilty. Samuel Lecount sentenced to three years, and Michael to two years at Goulburn Gaol and fined £5 each.

Michael married Mary Sheehy in 1895, At age 31, Samuel married Annie Sullivan at Gundagai, New South Wales in 1900. After marriage the family moved to Canbelego, a small mining settlement thirty miles east of Cobar in western New South Wales.

Samuel and Annie had three children, John born 1901, Katherine 1906 and Rita 1910. Sadly, once again the Le Count family was dealt a tragic blow by the untimely death of Samuel at the age of 52, as was with the probable demise of his grandfather, Samuel, seventy odd years before him.

At an inquest conducted by Coroner Mr Neil Morrison it was found that "Samuel Le Count had died from injuries and shock on the 14th day of July 1921 by accidentally falling down the mine shaft". Samuel was buried in the Roman Catholic Cemetery Canbelego.

I was 6 years of age when Samuel (the third) died. As a very much younger man I recall my mother speaking of a Samuel losing his life in a mine accident. There were four Samuels, as I learnt in later years, throughout the generations and I could never remember which of them mother was referring to. My wife, Jean, recalls my reference to this mine accident soon after our marriage in December 1953. The vague knowledge has plagued me ever since I commenced probing the early history of my mother's (and my) forebears, three years ago.

My mother passed away in September 1956, other descendants or relatives in later years were unable to throw any light whatsoever on the mine accident. To begin with I thought it may have been Samuel, our patriarch, but gold or any other type of mining did not commence until about 1850, furthermore there was no trace of Samuel the convict after 1844. Then I considered it may well have been my grandfather, Samuel the Second knowing that he was engaged in mining activities (gold) on the Shoalhaven River (Majors Creek) where mother was born in October 1877. An inquiry to the local Court House at Braidwood in 1987 was without success. With further searching I found that he had died at Goulburn in 1910.

Samuel the Fourth was the second son of Samuel and Catherine (Greenwood) born 1864, he married Emma Martha Harvey in 1898. They had three children, Leslie Arthur 1898, Emily circa 1900, and Albert Edward 1904.

Samuel the Fourth died in October 1925 at Goulburn, Emma Martha died March 1947 at Sydney. A headstone marks their last resting place in the Anglican Cemetery, Goulburn.

Samuel the Third was the son of John Le Count and Catherine (Kearns) he was born 6 July 1869.

On 26 November 1989 I had published in a Sydney newspaper a request seeking descendants of Emily (Amelia) Le Count and John Iles. I had no response but four days later on 30 November I received a letter from William Richard Le Count of Warilla, New South Wales South Coast, a grandson of Samuel Le Count the Third. Richard, born February 1944, had noted a telephone number in his letter, my inquisitiveness prompted me to telephone him and consequently he gave me a scrappy account of his grandfather's death at Cobar, but he did not know when. Subsequently I wrote to the Cobar Court House and obtained Samuel's death registration (copy). And now, after sixty odd years the vagueness of my mother's announcement becomes as clear as day.

William Richard is the son of John, the first child of Samuel and Annie Sullivan, and the last born of seven, the youngest of twins (boy and girl). John married Ruth Mary Wilden Foreman, born at Moruya, at Wollongong in October 1924. She is now in her mid 80s living at Port Kembla, New South Wales.

John Poulton, the eighth child and second son of William and Bridget Poulton, (my great-grandparents) born 17 December 1853 died in similar circumstances to that of Samuel Le Count.

In 1889, John and his wife Maria (Norrie) and family moved from Hunters Hill to Wentworth Falls, in the Blue Mountains. John was a carpenter, in August 1888 the contract was let for the building of the weatherboard church at Wentworth Falls. It was designed by Mr (later Sir) John Sulman, and built by John Poulton, at a cost of £229.10.0. The church still stands today, a symbol of good workmanship.

As a carpenter, John also made the local coffins as required. Apparently an uncle of Maria, a man with a sense of humour, named Jesse James Francis Bowler, known to all as 'Brickie', would try out the coffins for size, and is reputed to have said "It's OK for length but a little tight around the shoulders".

On 8 January 1903, John went to Toll's Hotel, also known as Wentworth Falls Hotel, to carry out repairs to the water pump over the well. Sometime later John's body was found at the bottom of the well. At a coronial inquiry held at the the hotel on 9 January, it was found that John Poulton had died of "back injuries accidentally received by falling down a well". John was buried in the Wentworth Falls Cemetery, he was 49 years of age. A head-stone marks his grave.

Towards the close of the 1880s John Lecount was associated with the Bredbo silver mine. When an explosion occurred in one of the shafts it was at first thought that he was involved. A report by the "Goulburn Penny Post" dated 1 June 1889 stated "....In consequence of the fatal accident at the Bredbo silver mine the managerial inquiry was told that Mr J Lecount worked in the same shaft as the deceased, Mr Louis Sellick. The mine manager stated that the deceased was in the habit of breaking the head from a match and placing it on the end of the fuse, then lighting another match, all with his head bent over the fuse. It was found to be the wrong fuse obtained from the railway. The manager took the usual precaution of getting away at the distance of 170 feet, but the deceased did not have time as an explosion occurred. Death was found to be accidental. It transpired that Lecount was not in the tunnel when the explosion occurred and therefore it was a mistake to say he was slightly injured".

As an older man John Lecount went to Adaminaby to live, and to spend his final days. He passed away on 15 December 1917 in his 82nd year, and is buried in the Catholic portion of the Adaminaby Cemetery. A headstone was never erected to mark his grave, but these pages commemorate his name.

The area around Adaminaby was a cattle station for many years, but at the height of the gold rush a small village settlement developed. It became a halfway staging camp between Cooma and Kiandra. The first sale of land in the township was held on 7 January 1861, blocks were purchased at £4 each. The day finally came when the historic town of Adaminaby had to relocate to make way for the rising waters of Lake Eucumbene. (The native name of 'Adamindumee' meaning 'resting place'). This lake was formed by waters held back by the huge earth and rock fill dam wall 381 feet high and a half mile thick at the base. The lake when full will hold back more than nine times the volume of water in Sydney Harbour.

The new town was to be situated about five miles to the north east of Old Adaminaby. By the end of 1957 the removal operation was virtually completed and most of the people who had elected to stay in the area were occupying homes in the new town. A total of 130 buildings, including 75 houses were moved from Old Adaminaby to the new site, in addition, the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches were carefully demolished stone by stone and brick by brick. They were rebuilt in the new town to the plans and photographs of the original buildings, thus retaining the historical association of the district.

The resting place of the district's early pioneers, the Adaminaby Cemetery was left undisturbed. The engineers of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Authority made the necessary modifications to the project in order to protect the old cemetery from the rising waters of the dam.

Nothing has been found regarding John Lecount's second wife, Ellen Holland. When John died, eight of his children were living, four boys and four girls. The child born shortly after John married Ellen Holland was living, aged 32.

John Lecount Junior, born 1865 married Ada Mary Holland (no relation) at Queanbeyan in 1887. A witness to the marriage was David Morton (born 1870) grandfather of Doctor David Morton, now practising at Gosford, New South Wales.

Ada Mary Lecount died at Goulburn in June 1933, aged 62, she was a particular friend of the poor, and took an active interest in anything pertaining to their welfare during the Great Depression. At the time of her death, her brother, a Member of Parliament was leader of the opposition in the New Zealand Parliament. David Morton Senior married Annie Eva Holland, a sister to Ada Mary.

From my observations Wambook Station played a significant part in the Le Count's early years on Monaro. Apart from what I have already written, Wambook was also the abode of Mary Anne Le Count at the time of her marriage to Michael Callachor in September 1870. Whatever happened at Wambook before 1862, before Samuel Junior married Catherine Greenwood there, remains a mystery. However, I am inclined to believe that my great-grandfather died there between 1843 and 1845, possibly as the result of an accident or sudden serious illness.

Wambook Station, just a few miles west of Cooma on the Adaminaby road, was first taken up in 1827, it consisted of 15000 acres capable of carrying 320 head of cattle and 2000 sheep. In 1841 Oltman Lampe arrived in the Colony from Germany travelling direct to Wambook to work as a stockman. Miles Franklin's mother was born there to Altman and Sarah Lampe in 1850. One incident still recalled from the early days on the station, is an attack by bushrangers in 1839. The story is told that one young Aboriginal boy was caught hiding in the fireplace in the kitchen. When the bushrangers stormed into the kitchen he frantically tried to climb the chimney, only to be shot. It is thought he survived the experience.

During the 1930s the station was sold to Australian Estates, resumed after World War Two, Wambook was then split up into soldier settlers blocks, the homestead block was taken over by Mr Keith Coles from Adaminaby. After a time Mr Coles retired and it is presently owned by his eldest son, Robert. I have written to Bob Coles with the hope that he may have been able to salvage some of the old records with some reference to the Le Count family. He replied advising that the property had passed through many changes over the long years, records were few, and unfortunately was unable to assist in any way.

SAMUEL LE COUNT THE SECOND

Catherine's father, John Greenwood arrived in the colony in 1811 aged 6, the son of a free settler. John, 27 married Mary Ann Pickering, 15, by Banns, according to the form of the Church of England, at Petersham, Sydney on 21 August 1833. John was illiterate. Catherine's mother was the daughter of Charles Pickering and Catherine Byrne (Burn), born February 1818.

Charles, an early convict, sentenced at Norwich to transportation for fourteen years on 11 August 1806, reaching Port Jackson on the transport 'Duke of Portland' on 10 November 1807. Catherine Byrne was convicted at Dublin in June 1807 and sentenced to seven years transportation. She arrived on the brig 'The Experiment' on 25 June, 1809.

Charles was granted free pardon on 1 December 1807 after serving only two weeks of a significant fourteen year sentence. The reasoning for this unusual procedure is not known. In 1810 he petitioned Governor Macquarie to confirm the free pardon granted by Lt. Governor Paterson, consequently receiving his Ticket of Leave in October 1810. Catherine received her Ticket of Leave in March 1811 and granted a free pardon on 6 June 1814. Catherine and Charles had a son Charles born to them on 7 April 1814. On 3 August 1818 Charles Pickering and Catherine Byrne were married by special licence at Newcastle New South Wales, according to the form of the Church of England.

John Greenwood and Mary Ann (Pickering), at the 1841 Census were resident at Ashfield, Sydney, where the record of occupants numbered ten.

John died on 24 October, 1872. Mary passed away 18 April, 1889. They are buried at Araluen (Shoalhaven River) New South Wales.

Samuel and Catherine (Greenwood) remained at Wambrook after their marriage there in 1862 until the birth of their first child, William Henry, at Slacks Creek on 13 February 1863. Catherine was just 19. They returned then to the Shoalhaven River (Majors Creek) from where they had eloped from two years earlier. Their second child, Samuel Junior was born on 25 September 1864 at 'Little Bombay', a small gold mining village four miles west of Braidwood. Emma Mary was the next to greet the world, having been born on 12 May 1868 at far away 'Benerembah Station' on the Murrumbidgee River at Darlington Point, near Hay. Emma was registered in the name of 'Lecompte' by her father, Samuel making his mark with a cross.

Samuel, his wife and three children returned once again to the Shoalhaven district, where John Charles was born in 1870. Samuel apparently became involved in gold mining activities, and remained in the district until about 1884. During those years a further eight children were added to the family including my mother, Ellen (Nellie as she was known) born 25 October 1877. In 1884 the family moved to Goulburn where on 16 March 1885 Leslie Walter was born, then followed on 23 March 1888 Edith Emily. Of the family of thirteen children, Francis James born at Braidwood in 1883, died at Goulburn in 1885, followed by the death of Edith Emily in 1902, aged 14.

At the time of William Henry's marriage in 1887, his father was working on the railway extension to Cooma, which was completed in 1890. William Henry married Mary Toone on 14 July 1887, the ceremony was solemnised by Alberto Dias Soares, Clergyman of the Church of England, at Christchurch West Goulburn. It was here that the religious following of the Samuel - Catherine generation changed from Roman Catholic to Anglican.

William Henry and Mary had ten children, Leslie John their first born became a baker and owning a business in Joshua Street Goulburn. When I went to work at Goulburn in the shearing season 1938, somehow I met up with Leslie and went to his home, but unfortunately I remember very little of our meeting. Leslie married Eileen Clara Anables at Goulburn, there were three children, two girls and a boy Kenneth Leslie. I have written to Kenneth, but he had passed the 80 mark and shows very little interest in my correspondence regarding his forebears. Kenneth has sons named Peter and Paul, I have contacted both, but my letters remain unanswered. Leslie John died 3 August 1965 aged 77. His wife Eileen, 74, died June 1962.

The family of **William Henry** and **Mary (Toone)** has not been without tragedy

Francis William (second born, 1890) married, had one daughter died at 18 years of age.

Constance Catherine, born 1893 married John Walker, there was one son, lost his life during World War Two.

Edith Emily, born 1895 married Jack Jones, no children.

Olive Mary, born 1897 married Thomas Hendry, four children.

Gladys May, born 1899 died 1901.

William Henry, born 1902 married Thelma Pritchard, there were no children. William died during World War Two.

Infant female, born 1904, died 1904.

Helen Beatrice, born 1906 was killed in a railway level crossing accident at Warwick Farm, Sydney on 30 May 1933.

Albert Edward, born 1909 is the sole surviving member of the family, in March 1988 he was living at Marion Street Enmore with his wife (second marriage). Albert firstly married Leila Griffiths in 1934, she died the same year giving birth to their first child, a daughter. Albert then married Emily Mary Nichols in 1941, they had two daughters, Joan born 1943, and Kay L born 1945. Joan died in 1962. Kay, unmarried is living at Marrickville.

In September 1988 I visited Kay, and for the first time met her parents. We discussed at length the early Le Count family, but Albert was unable to give any helpful information, as he too, could neither remember, or was never told anything about them, as was the problem with myself, and others.

Emily Mary Leecount passed away, 18 May, 1989 aged 72 years.

Kay presented me with an old family bible that had belonged to my grandmother, Catherine, it had been in the care of Kay's father over the years. Written on the front piece of the bible are the words "Catherine Greenwood June 1st 1856." The bible was possibly given to Catherine by her parents to mark some special occasion, she would be only 13 years of age then. In the back of the bible there are the names and birth dates of seven of her children, including my mother Ellen. Unfortunately, a couple of the pages are missing, which would quite likely be bearing the names and birth dates of her first six children. Kay's gift is a treasure to behold.

The family name over the years has experienced much change, but the patriarch of the name in Australia was Samuel Thomas Le Count, when he introduced the name to the Colony in 1828. The first child born in the Colony was recorded as Lecount, the following three, Ann, Sarah and Samuel were recorded as Le-Count. Charlotte, Emily and Ellin were recorded as LeCompte. The widow of Samuel Le Count remarried in 1870 as Mary Leecount. Samuel's marriage to Catherine was recorded as Lecompte, and their children were registered as William Henry Leecount, Samuel Lecount, Emma Mary Lecompte, then two as Lecount and the remaining eight as Leecount. My mother married as Nellie Lee-Count, and her elder sister Catherine Alice Leecount married as Alice Kathleen Lecompte, her brother Leslie Walter Leecount was a witness as L Lecompte. My mother's brother and his wife Emma had a son recorded as Leslie Arthur Leecount, but on 14 February 1973 his name was officially changed to that of Le Count, at the time of this action Leslie Arthur was 74 years old, and the change could quite likely had something to do with legal matters.

My mother was the only one of the six girls of the family to be given a single Christian name, by contrast, her younger sister was given the beautiful name of Amy Mary Anne, but she was a truly lovely lady so was my mother.

I vaguely recall searching an old cemetery at North Goulburn adjacent to the old highway where it passes over the railway line, during my first visit to Goulburn in 1938, but what I was looking for I had long since forgotten.

Of the thirteen children of Samuel and Catherine there were only seven that I had personally known, and all living into the 1950s. The remaining six children I was completely unaware of prior to my historical searching. They were William Henry, Samuel, Emma Mary, John Charles, Francis James and Edith Emily. Of the seven boys, three perhaps four remained bachelors, one died in infancy.

Stephen Tazewell, a Goulburn historian has informed me that the Leecount name in that city, though very prominent in early times, does not now exist, and has been that way for some years.

I have often pondered, naturally, of where my parents first became known to each other. The most likely solution came whilst searching the 1891 Census returns looking for the whereabouts of the Leecount family in Goulburn by the surprise discovery that William Poulton and Mary Ann (Morgan), my father's parents, were also living in the Goulburn district.

Further checking the Census disclosed two Leecount families living in Clinton Street Goulburn. Firstly William Henry, his wife and two children, Leslie John and Francis William and secondly, C Leecount with five male and five female inhabitants, this would surely be Catherine attending to the Census to complete the required information. Samuel remained illiterate throughout his life.

Ellen Leecount was now aged 14, and George Poulton about 19. Toward the end of the century William and Mary Ann Poulton came to Sydney to live, and it appears that Ellen Leecount came with them or very soon after. My mother's marriage registration shows her occupation as a domestic servant and usual place of residence was that of William and Mary Ann Poulton.

On 5 April 1898 Ellen (Nellie) and George Poulton were married in the home of William and Mary Ann, 25 Elizabeth Street Waterloo, Sydney. The celebrant was Rev John Breckenham, Congregational Minister.

My mother's original 'marriage lines' I had displayed at the Poulton family reunion at Nubiack in October 1986 was endorsed with the signature of Andrew Skene as witness to the marriage. Andrew was the husband of my father's sister Emily, and the grandfather of Mrs Roma Mason of Canberra. Three months after the Nubiack reunion, at the function at Queanbeyan Roma related to Elaine de Mamiel, whom she did not know, that she had attended a family gathering and had seen a marriage

certificate bearing the name "Leecount", and bringing it more to her attention as she noted her grandfather's name.

Roma Mason, Elaine de Mamiel and myself though completely unknown to each other are genealogically connected. Elaine has been very helpful with my research.

Speculation and imagination have been an encouraging part in my endeavours to recreate the lives of my ancestors, helped along in some cases, only by fragments of information gathered here and there and from birth, death and marriage records. Most of them were deceased before my life really began.

Those of the first Le Count family, apart from my Great-grandfather, to elude my persistent searching, have been Ann, born 1837, and my Grandfather, Samuel Junior. Ann remarried in April 1881. Samuel, born April 1840 was the father to thirteen children of his marriage - two did not survive. He was also the father of a son to Louisa Gibbs at Queanbeyan in 1860 - two years before he eloped with and married Catherine.

Towards the close of his and Catherine's lives, other events that have attracted my attention, give cause to wonder - and speculate. Examining the general census of April 1891 I found a Leecount family of five male and five female inhabitants living at Clinton Street Goulburn, the householder's name was C. Leecount, presumably Catherine. I have long pictured Samuel as the hard working, tough colonist, a typical bushman. But in those early days would not the husband, father of twelve children, be the head of the household?

In 1891 the family total was fourteen persons, two were married, William Henry and sister, Emma Mary, and living elsewhere - two were unaccounted for - was Samuel, the father, one of them?

During the depression of the early 1890s, particularly in the eastern states, public works stopped as did most private building. In March 1892 one bank failed another closed its doors the following January. In April and May thirteen banks in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland closed. By 1891 Samuel and Catherine had six children aged 16 and under, and a further three unmarried, consequently there would be hardship if there was no work.

A search of the 1898-99 electoral roll revealed that Samuel Leecount Senior was the sole occupant of the house in Clinton Street Goulburn. In the 1903 roll his abode was 'Colombo' (Braidwood)- occupation, 'Miner'. He would then be 63 years of age. Nothing further is known of him until his death at Goulburn Hospital on 2 February 1910, in his 70th year.

On 11 November 1902, Samuel and Catherine's youngest child, Edith Emily died at number 10 Harwood Street Pyrmont, Sydney, aged 14 years. (My brother Leslie was born on this day). The Sydney electoral roll for 1903 lists Catherine Leecount and her son Albert Edward residing at 10 Harwood Street - my mother and father at number 6.

On 28 November 1903 in her 60th year, Catherine passed away at Prince Alfred Hospital. Her address then being number 4 Bridge Road, Pyrmont. Her son, William Henry of the same address was informant, and son, Albert Edward was witness to her burial at Rookwood Cemetery. My parents were then living at number 96 Pyrmont Street, the birthplace of my brother Jack William in March 1906.

It is my contention that about the turn of the century, or shortly before, Catherine and some of her children came to Sydney to live. Within two years, from 1898 to 1900 four of the girls married in Sydney, in particular, Catherine Alice was living at Pyrmont when she married in 1899. Did Samuel and Catherine part company?

Sometime during my childhood mother told me little stories, most of them long forgotten, but others deeply etched in my memoirs She worked at Baxters Boot Factory in Goulburn as a very young girl She spoke of William Henry's daughter, Helen Beatrice losing her life in a railway level crossing accident in 1933 A Samuel died in a mine accident, but fifty or sixty years elapsed before I discovered which Samuel it was Her story of the 'Greycliffe' ferry disaster on Sydney Harbour in 1927 in which I believe a Leecount was a victim - I have yet to research The most complex of all her stories is that of a Samuel and mining in Western Australia, a story that has plagued me ever since. Maybe he did leave his family and go to Western Australia - he would not have been the one and only Leecount to do so.

At the time of Samuel's death, there were living in Goulburn - his nephew, John Lecount and wife Ada Mary, Samuel Junior and wife Emma Martha, his son William Henry and wife Mary, nephew Leslie John Lecount, a daughter, Emma Mary and husband Henry Jones (and collectively about twenty children). Not one of their names appeared as informant or witness to his burial on his death registration - rather unusual with so many of his kin about him. All other death certificates in my possession bare at least one name of a relative of the deceased. Samuel was laid to rest in the Anglican section of the general cemetery Goulburn It may have been Samuel's grave I was looking for in 1938?

NOTES ON OTHER CHILDREN OF WILLIAM MORTON AND ELLEN LECOUNT

Andrew Morton : Born Cooma 15 July 1865. Joined the Postal Service at age 13 and progressed to Post Master at a Sydney suburb (Burwood or Kensington). Their three daughters also entered the Postal Department, but never married.

Muirton Thompson Morton : Born Cooma 10 June 1868. Conducted a general store at Nimmitabel for a number of years before retiring to Sydney. He later moved to Goulburn where his sons William and Reginald had a sporting goods and toy shop, later to open a branch in the Woden Plaza, Canberra and expanded to whole-sale supply, Muirton died in 1951.

David Morton : Born Gundaroo 1870. Became an Alderman, was for thirty years Sessions Clerk of St Stephens Church Queanbeyan. David was an early enthusiast of gas, having it installed in his home and store, where he worked. He later opened a grocery store in company with his son-in-law. David died at Queanbeyan 9 December 1947.

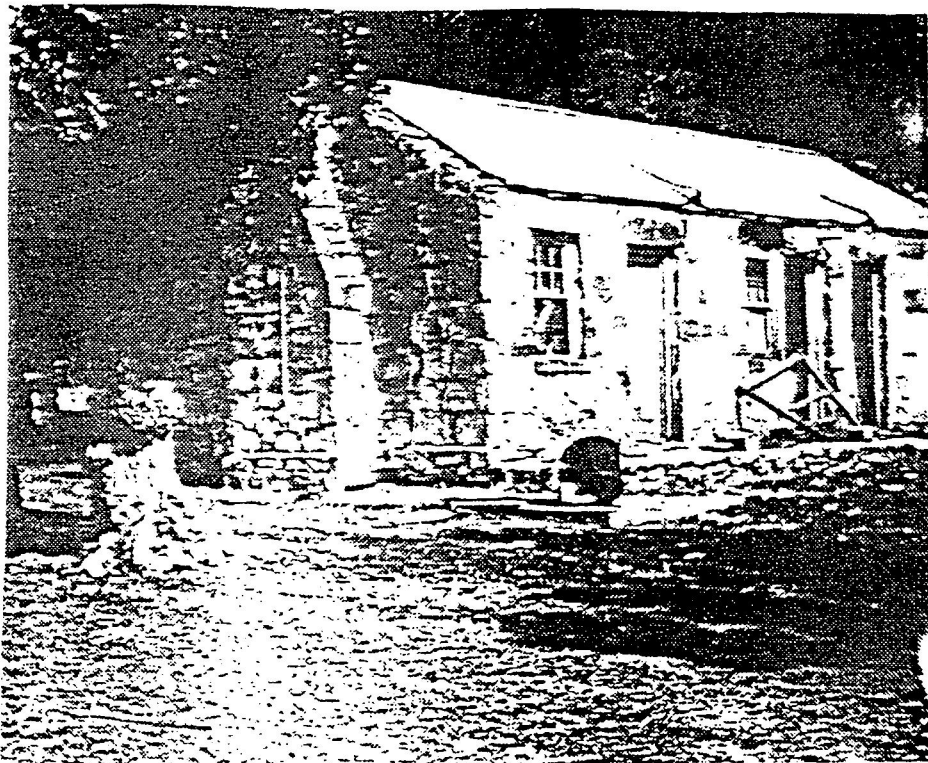
Louise Morton : Born 7 January 1873. Married Roderick McDonald. Louise died in July 1897 shortly after the birth of their second child.

George Nairn Morton : Born 26 June 1876. An Alderman and a farmer was associated with a cordial business, grocery shop and bakery. For the local fire brigade he supplied the horses to pull the fire tender. He died at Queanbeyan in July 1964.

Norman Morton : Born 18 March 1880. After completing his studies in electricity in Sydney, he went to Canada, later to join the army. In July 1917 he went to England where he married a French Canadian, they had one son. On completion of son Harold's education the family were to return to Australia to settle, but tragically on the eve of their departure Harold was killed in a car accident. The tragedy resulted in Norman's ill health and he died a short time after (circa 1946).

THE CHILDREN OF SAMUEL AND CATHERINE LECOMPTE (LEECOUNT)

William Henry :	Born Monaro 13 February 1863.	Died 22 April 1940
Samuel :	Born Shoalhaven 25 September 1864.	Died October 1925
Emma Mary :	Born Darlington Point 12 May 1868.	
John Charles :	Born Shoalhaven River 1870.	
Charlotte Annie :	Born Shoalhaven River 1872.	
Albert Edward :	Born Shoalhaven River 1874.	
Catherine Alice :	Born Shoalhaven River 27 September 1875.	Died 27 May 1960
Ellen (Nellie) :	Born Shoalhaven River 25 October 1877.	Died 11 September 1956
Amy Mary Anne :	Born Shoalhaven River 16 July 1879.	Died 28 July 1950
Arthur Ernest :	Born Shoalhaven River 31 August 1881.	
Francis James :	Born Shoalhaven River 9 April 1883.	Died 1885
Leslie Walter :	Born Goulburn 16 March 1885.	
Edith Emily :	Born Goulburn 23 March 1888.	Died 1902



This dwelling near Dalgety, constructed of granite stones had three rooms with walls 18 inches thick, and like the two roomed cottage at Slacks Creek, stands today as a memorial to the Monaro pioneers.