

## A Brief History of Ambleside Homestead

In 1872 William Edwards, Silversmith of Collins Street was granted Crown Allotment 53k of 210 acres in the Parish of Scoresby – From east of the rear yards of Joan Avenue, including Olivebank Road, north along Forest Road and east to Nyora Street. Two years later Edwards forfeited and in 1875 Edmund Percy Amesbury of 'Fernlight', St. Kilda was granted license of 60 acres in The Basin (CA 75) and 210 acres in Ferntree Gully (CA 53k).

Within a year he had improved the land by £150 but regrettably his wife's illness prevented further work and they sailed on the *True Briton* in January 1877 for London. Just prior to leaving the Crown awarded Edmund Wicks of Moonee Ponds Crown Allotment 53k (Ferntree Gully) and CA 75 (The Basin). Ebenezer Prout Newcombe of St. Kilda, timber-getter, also applied but was declined and is more noted for timber in the Bendigo and Ballarat districts.

In May 1877 Edmund Wicks fenced with 53 chains of stub or picket fence, 252 chains of post and two rail fence, built a five-room slab and weatherboard home with a galvanised iron roof and two chimneys, together with a stable, a cow-house and a piggery, sunk two dams, had 11 acres under cultivation, planted 339 fruit trees, rung 30 acres of timber and cleared 20 acres of scrub on his land at The Basin while leaving 210 acres mainly untouched.

Three years later Edmund Wicks passed away in November 1880 and his wife Janet was appointed administrator of both sections of land in March and the following year leases the 210 acres in Ferntree Gully to Ephraim Hansen in October. Hansen moves his family closer to part of CA 53 in 1883 owned by George Wilkes and his brother Andrew Hansen moves to CA 38 owned by Collier (site of the present Knox City Shopping Centre on Stud Road).

According to the 1869 Land Act and the Rate book Ephraim built the one-room 'cottage' at Ferntree Gully by 1882 but then moved to this land just months after the death of Wilkes and hurriedly built the bedroom wing to 'cottage' as his son, Ephraim, is one-year-old in 1885.

In 1887, when the seven-year lease had expired, Ephraim Hansen then purchased CA 53k for £211 (£1 per acre) in June (mortgaged) when his daughter Lena is born. Perhaps finding the 210 acres a financial burden he sold 20 acres to John Ainsworth of Emerald Hill, Tailor in the November.

Two years later, in 1889, Hansen's father in-law died and Probate for Jacob Schneider was finalised enabling Hansen to re-purchase the 20 acres, only 11 days before John dies, returning to the original 210-acre land. This also enables the funds for building 'Ambleside' for his wife and children ages 5 and 3 in 1889. He is listed in The Berwick Rates Book (Scoresby Riding) as having 180 acres with house valued at £180 when previously the value was £42 containing only the cottage.

The northern half of the land was subdivided in 1917, and Forest Road was created with a further sub-division in 1922 of the southern section leaving 34 acres. In 1927 Hansen's wife

passes away followed by his daughter in 1940 and he joined them two years later, the same year as his son in-law John Murphy (1942).

This leaves Ephraim Junior alone in the house who sub-divided the land again in 1945 reducing 34 acres left by his father to 21 acres. Ephraim then passes away five years later that leaves this side of the family childless.

In 1951 William John Pizer purchased 'Ambleside' (Vacant Possession) at Auction (he even bought the lino on the floors) but the sale falls through. It took another 11 months for Oliver Louis David, plasterer, to purchase it and he changed the name to 'Ambleside' from the Lakes District in England. He passed away in 1975 but bequeathed 2-acres and the house to the City of Knox which became the headquarters of the Knox Historical Society Inc.