

# St. George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

*SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2002 EDITION*



Portrait photograph of Miles Franklin: National State Archives

**Stella Miles Franklin**  
**(1879-1954)**

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Meetings are held 8:00 PM the second Tuesday of the month (except January) in the Meeting Room 1st Floor, Rockdale Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale. Members, please bring a plate. Visitors are welcome.

## SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER EVENTS AGENDA EVENTS

**October 28<sup>th</sup> Bus Tour to the Northern Beaches \$21.00**

This tour will be to the Northern Beaches stopping at the Baha’I House of Worship  
Mona Vale Rd, Ingleside for Morning Tea. Please bring your own Mug.

9:00 am the Community Bus will depart from Ormonde Parade, Hurstville

For enquiries ring Mrs Joan Fairhall 9546-5555



### SKERRICKS



- ❖ To Betty Williams we hope you are on the way to a speedy recovery.
- ❖ All our love to Stella Ericsson, we hope you are feeling better.
- ❖ To all those who are not feeling well we offer our best wishes for your speedy recovery as well.

### BUSH CURES AND MEDICAL QUACKS

Quinine and Holloway’s Pills are the two staple remedies in which men in the Bush pin their faith: stay, there is a third; a well known colonial recipe is to mix 2 ounces of Epsom salts with a pint of water, and load yourself with blankets after taking it. In addition to its other effects, the dose produces a violent perspiration. In the bush every man is usually his own doctor: I doubt very much if a regular medical man would find confidence or employment.



From “A University Man’, *Colonial Adventures, 1871*”

**MEMORIAL TO MILES FRANKLIN**  
**STELL PARK**  
**CARLTON**

On the western side of Carlton (Sydney) is a reserve called Stell Park. And In a garden backing on to the Railway land is a semi circled garden in which on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1983 a memorial was laid just above ground level of a plaque in memories of MILES FRANKLIN the writer who had died in that vicinity on September 19<sup>th</sup> 1954.

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The plaque is worded <sup>(1)</sup>:

This plaque is in memory of  
STELLA (MILES) FRANKLIN  
A talented writer and founder of the  
Miles Franklin Literary Award  
to encourage Australian writers.  
Born 14.10.1879 Talbingo, NSW.  
Died 19.9.1954 Sydney.  
Resided Grey Street, Carlton  
“A Great Australian”

Sponsored by St. George-Sutherland Branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers 1.10.1983

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Miles Franklins full name was STELLA MARIA SARAH MILES FRANKLIN. Miles (or Moyle alias Myers) was the surname of her maternal great-grandfather who was transported on the “Scarborough” in the First Fleet. Because of the prejudice against women writers this was the first name chosen by this brilliant writer because of its masculine ring. <sup>(2)</sup>

Miles Franklin lived in the area of Carlton for 21 years. Her cottage a weatherboard home at 26 Grey St. Carlton still stands, though it was threatened with demolition In 1972. <sup>(3)</sup>

Writing came naturally to Miles and she kept almost everything she wrote. The plaque laid at Stell Park is at least a small memento in her memory. It is of brass, roughly cast and of the size of approximately 45 cm x 30 cm. with raised lettering set into a cement block perhaps 6 or 7 cm. above the soil of the garden. Unfortunately unless you knew it was there it would be unseen to the average user of the Park. At the time of the unveiling of the memorial two Waratah Trees were also planted in the garden but these have long gone. <sup>(4)</sup>

The former young boy who had delivered the newspaper to Miles Franklin was chosen to unveil the plaque, but by now he was a mature man named Ron W. Rathbone and was the ex-Mayor of Rockdale. It was Rockdale's Council who had built the half circled garden and planted the various shrubs of Acacia and Bottle Brushes besides the Waratah's.

Originally recognition of Miles Franklin's tie with Carlton was muted by a local historian George Aitchison who gave classes on Australian History to two Adult Leisure Learning Groups at Hurstville and Mortdale. These groups were quite enthusiastic for some sign of recognition to be given locally to Miles Franklin but no-one other than George Aitchison took the initiative. At first it was suggested a plaque be placed outside her residence at 26 Grey Street, then it shifted to an engraved plate on a Park bench, then a Commemorative Tree. However the hardest thing was to get someone to take the idea seriously.

National Trust were written to about the significance of the weatherboard cottage in Grey St. who wanted colour transparencies, slides etc., but no-one was able to provide suitable ones - the first ones were under-exposed. Then the Heritage Council of New South Wales were written to and after a further contact was made with them a form was sent out for completion, returned complete forthwith, then nothing!

An abortive attempt was made to the Australian Bicentennial Authority (N.S.W. Bicentennial Council) but nothing resulted there, and so as a last resort the local Fellowship of Australian Writers was contacted and the scheme took off from there.

Miles Franklin against much prejudice and with much perseverance wrote many published works, some under nom-de-plums, such as -

My Brilliant Career (1901)  
Some Everyday Folk and Dawn (1909)  
Up the Country (1928)  
Ten Creeks Run (1930)  
Old Blastus of Bandicoot (1932)  
Bring the Monkey (1933)  
All that Swagger (1936)  
Pioneers on Parade (1939)  
My Career Goes Bung (1946)  
Back to Bool Bool (1951)  
Prelude to Waking (1950)  
Cockatoos (1954)  
Gentlemen at Gyang Gyang (1956)

There are other manuscripts, diaries and Literary papers which can be seen in Sydney's Mitchell Library, the National Library Canberra, La Trobe Melbourne and she also wrote countless journal articles and reviews as well as non-fiction books. (5)

Miles Franklin was not just a journalist turned writer but also involved in the feminist cause and spent 9 years early this century in America working for the women's labour movement and editing a magazine Life and Labour.

I think it is fitting that such a plaque was inaugurated but I do not think it is self-explanatory enough nor conspicuous enough. The intention was good, though hard to get rolling, but for such a time as MILES FRANKLIN lived when enormous pressures were placed on women I don't think her perseverance, ability nor work are told sufficiently in either the wording, size nor placement in the Park.

Incidentally Stell Park has nothing to do with Miles Franklin's first name having been Stella but was named after a Family named Stell who had lived in their tiny weatherboard home on four blocks of ground opposite the reserve.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. St George and Sutherland Shire Leader 12.10.1983, p. 4.
2. Aitchison, G., Kogarah Historical Society Newsletter, August 1983, pp. 3-5.
3. Aitchison, p. 4.
4. St George and Sutherland Shire Leader, op. cit.
5. Adelaide, D, Australian Women Writers – A Bibliographical Guide. Pub. Pandora Books, Sydney, 1988.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adelaide, D., Australian Women Writers - A Bibliographic Guide, Pandora Books, Sydney, 1988.  
Barnard, M., Miles Franklin - The Story of a Famous Australian, Pub. University of Queensland Press, 1987.  
Henderson, B., (Ed.) Monuments and Memorials, Pub. Royal Australian Historical Society, 1988.  
Kogarah Historical Society Newsletter, August, 1983.  
St. George and Sutherland Shire Leader, October, 1983.

## **SOME "FIRST'S" OCTOBER & NOVEMBER IN THE COLONY OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY**

- Oct. 1 C.J. Latrobe reached Melbourne as Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, 1839.  
Leichhardt set out from Jimbour for Port Essington 1844.  
Sydney Herald became a daily paper, 1840.  
First Church in Australia (Rev. Johnson's and paid for by him) destroyed by fire, 1798.
- Oct. 2 H.M.S. Sirius set out from Port Jackson for Cape Town for provisions, 1788.
- Oct. 3 Hume and Hovell set out for Western Port from Appin 1824  
Melbourne University opened, 1855.
- Oct. 4 Arrival of the Australian fleet in Port Jackson, 1913.  
Second reading of the bill to constitute the University of Sydney passed, 1849
- Oct. 5 Theatre Royal, Sydney, opened in Sydney, 1833.
- Oct. 6 The "Rose Hill Packet" first vessel launched in Sydney 1789  
The first sitting of the High Court, 1903.
- Oct. 7 Captain Cook sighted New Zealand, 1769.
- Nov. 1 Stamped envelopes (first in the world) issued Sydney 1838.  
First election of municipal Councillors, Sydney, 1842,  
First Civil Jury empanelled, 1824  
First cabinet under Responsible Government in Tasmania formed with W.T.N. Champ, Premier, 1856.
- Nov. 2 Settlement at Rose Hill, 1788.
- Nov. 3 Sturt set out from Sydney on his expedition to Murrumbidgee, 1829.
- Nov. 4 Death of Sir James Martin, 1886.
- Nov. 5 Birth of William Bland, 1789.
- Nov. 6 Commodore Erskine proclaimed protectorate on the south coast of Papua, 1884.  
Nauru Island captured, 1914.
- Nov.7 The first Melbourne Cup Race, 1861  
Governor Brisbane arrived in Sydney, 1821.

Extracted from: A Calendar of Events in Australian History, compiled 1933 by K.R. Cramp, M.A., F.R.H.S., O.B.E., Honorary Secretary and Past President, Royal Australian Historical Society.

## SOME MORE FIRSTS

The first child baptized (in the New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages gleaned from Church records) was actually before arrival of the First Fleet at Port Jackson for Mary Tilley who arrived here as a Convict January 1788 had a child William Tilley who was baptized on board the "Lady Penryn" (Penrhyn) 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1787. He was obviously conceived when Mary was in Worcester Gaol from early 1785 till the end of 1786.

To put some background to this happening we find Mary Tilley (nee Abell) convicted for theft at Worcester March 5, 1785 left Spithead, England on the "Lady Penryn" a transport 104 feet long with a beam of 27-1/2 feet, built at the Thames yards. This ship's Master was William Cropton Sever and the Surgeon was Arthur Bowes who at Teneriffe superseded Surgeon volunteer John Turnpenny Altree who had proved unequal to his position.

Most of the convicts embarked January 6, 1787 but a few late arrivals were taken on making the number up to a possible 101 women. Some of the women proved difficult to control and prostitution could not be prevented. April 19<sup>th</sup> it was decided to place five of the women in irons for the offence and the second mate was dismissed. The behavior and language of some of the women was so bad they had to be gagged temporarily - only two women died, one an 82 year old who had suffered from dropsy for many years and another died of consumption.

However we find on Sunday May 4, 1788 that Mary Tilley married Thomas Tilley (an "Alexander" convict known as Tilly/Gilly) with Reverend Richard Johnson officiating and Thomas Restill Crowder (a convict from the "Alexander" and also known as Restil/Restell/Risdale/Crouder) and Martha Davis (wife of a Marine) as witnesses.

Two weeks later May 19, 1788 little William Tilley (known as Abell), son of Thomas Tilley, died at Port Jackson aged just 13 months followed by the death of his mother, Mary Tilley July 19, 1788.

**THE FIRST MARRIAGE** (from the same records above) was shortly after arrival at Port Jackson on February 10, 1788 between William Parr (from the "Alexander" and convicted at Liverpool Quarter Sessions for swindling January 7, 1785) and Mary McCormick/McCormack (from the "Friendship and convicted also at Liverpool August 12, 1784 for receiving and buying stolen goods) with Rev. Johnson officiating again. Four other marriages took place on the day and Mr. Johnson's Clerk along with E.B. Perrott, M.S. Freeman and D. Baird witnessed the signatures though as seven of the party could not sign many signed with a cross only. This ceremony took place at the corner of what is now Bligh and Hunter Sts.

**THE FIRST BURIAL** (again from the above records) was for James Bradley (also known as Bradney) convicted at Justice Hall in the Old Bailey June 29, 1785 and embarked on the "Alexander" which had been built 1783 at Hull. His death occurred February 3, 1787 being the first of 11 male convicts to die by April 15, 1787 on the "Alexander". Bradley's crime was that of stealing 'a white linen handkerchief valued at two shillings'. He had been incarcerated for over two years and then died before even leaving his homeland's shores.

Sources: History of The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, N.S.W. Records.  
Orphans of History, Robert Holden.  
Sydney Cove 1788, John Cobley.  
The Convict Ships 1788-1868, Charles Bateson.  
The Crimes of the First Fleet, John Cobley.  
The First Fleeters, Aust. Document Library.

Provided by Bettye Ross