

## Dusty Miller

For the first 10 years of settlement in York, from 1831 to 1841, there was no blacksmith. Horses had to be taken to Guildford to be shod.

John Henry Monger Snr, who had bought the land to the north in 1837 (Suburban Lots A1 and A2), on which he constructed the York Hotel and Monger's store, was so frustrated by this that he constructed a blacksmith's shop and advertised that it was available from 16 August 1841.<sup>1,2</sup> Sun dried bricks were being made in York from 1840.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, Monger built the blacksmith's shop outside his boundary, and the Resident Magistrate Richard Goldsmith Meares complained and prevented Monger from putting a blacksmith in this shop.

At this time, Avon Terrace only ran two blocks, from South Street to this street and fortunately for Monger, the Government asked him if they could extend Avon Terrace through Monger's land to the north. Monger demanded compensation, and after some haggling in correspondence, it was agreed that he would be granted this land, Town Lot 1 in compensation.

Before all of this could be surveyed and documented, Monger had to apply to the Governor for permission to occupy the shop and permission was given on 14 April 1842.<sup>4</sup> Monger also applied to occupy an island in the middle of the river as a summer garden but this request was refused.

## George Oliver

So Monger advertised in January 1842 that he had "re-opened his blacksmith's shop" but it was not until March 1843, that Monger employed George Oliver who had arrived in the colony in October 1841.<sup>5</sup>

So George Oliver was the first blacksmith here from 1843 until, in 1847, he drowned while trying to cross the Avon River: "We are sorry to say it is reported, and we fear the account is too well founded, that another melancholy accident has occurred from drowning, in consequence of the rivers having been so swollen from the late rains—viz , that Mr. G. Oliver, of York, has lost his life in attempting to cross the Avon. Mr. J. Drummond, jun., was in search of the body, but we have not yet ascertained whether he has succeeded in finding it."<sup>6</sup>

In a map of about 1849<sup>7</sup>, the building was shown as being occupied by Solomon Cook, who came to York to set up business as a wheelwright, coach-builder and iron founder.<sup>8</sup> So it is natural that he would be in a building intended for a blacksmith. However, Cook had other plans, namely to compete with his landlord as a publican. Solomon Cook obtained a "Publican's Spirit Licence" on 11

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<sup>1</sup> Inquirer, 1 September 1841, p.6.

<sup>2</sup> Rodger Jennings: Over the Hills, A history of York 1834-1880, p.96.

<sup>3</sup> John E Deacon: A Survey of the Historical Development of the Avon Valley with Particular Reference to York, Western Australia During the Years 1830-1850, UWA, 1948, p.89.

<sup>4</sup> CSF 16/49/366/116: CS to RM 14 April 1842.

<sup>5</sup> Rica Erickson, ed, Dictionary of Western Australians.

<sup>6</sup> Inquirer, 8 September 1847, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> York Townsite Plan c. 1849 Courtesy SROWA, York 14C, item425 cons 3868

<sup>8</sup> Australian Dictionary of Bibliography.

February 1851 for a pub called the “Dusty Miller”.<sup>9</sup> This must have been the public house which was referred to as opening in November 1851 to become the third in York “where the inhabitants scarcely number 100 souls”.<sup>10</sup> Solomon Cook intended to appear to have leased the property from Monger intending

Cook sold his pub to William Dunham in April 1852 who expanded the premises.<sup>11 12</sup> The Henderson Engraving does show two sections of building approximately in this location, so I assume this is the expanded pub.

The name of Cook’s pub was changed from the Dusty Miller to Dunham’s Hotel. He ran the pub with his wife Caroline. William Dunham had formerly run the Half Way House, south of the Lakes, which was by-passed as a route to York in 1850.

Many meetings of the York Agricultural Society were held at Dunham’s Hotel. Dunham didn’t pay his bills and in December 1854, Lionel Samson sued him for 114 pounds for goods sold (which we presume was liquor). The Samson business is still in existence and still sells liquor.

The last reference to Dunham’s Hotel (mistakenly called Duncan’s Hotel) is in October 1855.<sup>13</sup>

There is a photograph of the building taken in 1931. The slits in the walls are not there, so they must have been added later, probably to use as a stables so the horses could have fresh air.

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<sup>9</sup> Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 14 February 1851, p.2.

<sup>10</sup> Inquirer, 26 November 1861, p.3.

<sup>11</sup> Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 23 April 1852, p.3.

<sup>12</sup> Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 14 May 1852, p.6.

<sup>13</sup> Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 12 October 1855, p.1.