

PENOLA HOUSE



156 Avon Tce, York

Penola House is on York Town Lot 1. The original gazetted town centre as planned by Robert Dale ran from here two blocks to the south.

In 1840, Bland permitted the York Agricultural Society to use the land between from Monger's Lots A1 and A2 (that is, the land north of what is now Christie Retreat) to Guildford Road (Macartney St) "extending as far westward as may be required" for its annual fair.¹

John Henry Monger Sr

From May 1840, the Government expressed a desire to 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 Town Lot 1 in compensation.

For the first 10 years of settlement in York, there was no blacksmith. Horses had to be taken to Guildford to be shod. John Henry Monger Snr was so frustrated by this that he constructed a blacksmith's shop and advertised that it was available from 16 August 1841.^{2,3}

This must be the brick building on Christie Retreat at the rear. Facing the building from the street, the left hand side is the stable, with slits not windows so the horses could have fresh air, and the right hand side is the shop.

¹ Rodger Jennings, *Over the Hills, A History of York 1834-1880*, Hesperian Press, 2020, p.83.

² *Inquirer*, 1 September 1841, p.6.

³ Jennings, p.96.

Monger still did not have title and so he had to apply to the Governor for permission to occupy the shop and permission was given on 14 April 1842.⁴ Monger advertised in January 1842 that he had “re-opened his blacksmith’s shop” but it was not until March 1843, that Monger had a tenant in George Oliver who had arrived in the colony in October 1841.⁵

The Crown Grant to Lot 1 was to John Henry Monger Sr on 29 September 1843 “in consideration of a certain piece or parcel of land resumed by us for works of public utility and convenience”⁶. This was the first Crown Grant in the town centre.

Solomon Cook

In a map of about 1849⁷, the building was shown as being occupied by Solomon Cook, who played a very important part in the story of York.

Solomon Cook was born in Penobscot, Maine in 1812, and was the son of a blacksmith.^{8 9}

He arrived in Albany in 1837 on the Whaler *Dismount*.¹⁰

[In 1846, he was in a whaling partnership with John Thomas and John Craiggie. This was dissolved on 24 May 1847.¹¹ He was naturalised (became a British subject) on 3 July 1847.¹²

[In October 1847, Solomon Cook was granted a sawyer’s licence by the Government Resident, Albany.¹³]

He also appears to have worked as a carpenter and blacksmith in Albany.¹⁴

Solomon Cook was naturalised (became a British subject) in March 1849, along with Dom Rosendo Salvado.¹⁵

His first major project after leaving Albany was to construct Canning Bridge.¹⁶

Solomon Cook then came to York and set up business as a wheelwright, coach-builder and iron founder.¹⁷ Solomon Cook obtained a “Publican’s Spirit Licence” on 11 February 1851 for a pub called the “Dusty Miller” which from a contemporary plan, must have been this building.¹⁸

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

⁵ Rica Erickson, ed, Dictionary of Western Australians.

⁶ Landgate York Town Lot 1, Crown Grant ET 781 dated 29 September 1843 to John Henry Monger, Victualler.

⁷ York Townsite Plan c. 1849 Courtesy SROWA, York 14C, item425 cons 3868

⁸ ancestry.com

⁹ Australian Dictionary of Bibliography

¹⁰ Dictionary of Western Australians

¹¹ Advertisement in Inquirer 14 July 1847,p.1.

¹² Dictionary of Western Australians

¹³ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 16 October 1847, p.4.

¹⁴ Dictionary of Western Australians

¹⁵ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 3 March 1849, p.4.

¹⁶ Inquirer 20 June 1849, p.2.

¹⁷ Australian Dictionary of Bibliography.

¹⁸ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 14 February 1851, p.2.

Cook was at the time constructing a mill on the corner of Avon Terrace and Macartney Street, on lot 4, three lots to the south, and built the first steam engine in Western Australia to power the mill.^{19 20}

²¹

William Dunham

Cook sold his pub to William Dunham in April 1852 who expanded the premises.^{22 23} The Henderson Engraving does show two sections of building approximately in this location, so I assume this is the expanded pub.

The name of the pub was changed from the Dusty Miller to Dunham's Hotel. Dunham 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 1849 with King Dick's Line.]

Many meetings of the York Agricultural Society were held at Dunham's Hotel. Unfortunately, Dunham didn't pay his bills and in December 1854, Lionel Samson sued him for £114 for goods sold (which we presume was liquor).

Dunham appears to have overcome these difficulties as in July 1859, Monger "conveyed" the property to Dunham and took a mortgage of the property. In 1865, the property was reconveyed back to Monger.²⁴

Dunham became a farmer, renting land from Monger.²⁵

Ellis

Behind Solomon Cook's pub was a small house in which Mr Ellis lived²⁶. You can see this house on the 1849 plan of the town.

A man called Ellis lived near Monger at Monger's Lake in the 1830s when he was sawmilling, and therefore probably worked for Monger. A Mr Halliday "met his death by violence" near the Lake and at first "natives" and then Ellis (a "timid man"), were suspected of the shooting.²⁷

Ellis appears to have followed Monger to York and became a tenant of Monger, living in a small house at the back of Town Lot 1.²⁸ A "T" Ellis was a sandalwood gatherer.²⁹ Therefore it is likely that it is the same Ellis and he was both a tenant of and cutting sandalwood for Monger.³⁰

¹⁹ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 26 July 1850, p.2.

²⁰ Inquirer 16 October 1850, p.3.

²¹ Inquirer 28 January 1852, p.3.

²² Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 23 April 1852, p.3.

²³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 14 May 1852, p.6.

²⁴ Landgate: refer to deeds 9, 10 and 11 lodged on the application to bring the land under the operation of the Transfer of Land Act.

²⁵ Landgate, Deeds and Ordinances VI/390/2453 Last will and testament of John Henry Monger 10 August 1867 registered 10 March 1868.

²⁶ York Townsite Plan c. 1849 Courtesy SROWA, York 14C, item425 cons 3868

²⁷ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 26 January 1833, p.15.

²⁸ 1849 survey of York.

²⁹ Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 7 August 1847, p.4.

³⁰ A.M. Clack and Jenni McColl: York Sketchbook, p. 48 say that Monger was exporting sandalwood from 1845.

In December 1851, a ticket of leave man, Thomas Martin, was charged by his master Ellis, with leaving his employment. Ellis lived in a house just to the left and the brick building to the left was a pub called the Dusty Miller, owned by Solomon Cook.

Thomas Martin said that Ellis was in the habit of taking him to public houses and making him drunk. He begged to be sent back to head-quarters and said he would never make a shilling if he had to stay in York and work for Thomas Martin. Ellis called a witness Constable Moss who said that he had never seen Ellis make Thomas Martin drunk. But the magistrate, Walkinshaw Cowan asked Moss if he had ever seen Ellis and Martin drinking together, and Moss said he had often seen them drinking here at the Dusty Miller. The magistrate (who was opposed to alcohol) fined Thomas Martin 5 shillings and ordered him to be sent to the road party.³¹

In Henderson's engraving of York from Mt Brown, the building towards the river below Cook's pub is most probably Ellis's house.

George McLeod

In the late 1860s, the hotel buildings were leased by Monger to George McLeod, a baker, who used the premises as a boarding house.³²

George McLeod, born 1834, was a former convict who had run a boarding house in Perth before moving to York.^{33 34}

George Monger

On John Henry Monger's death in 1867, Lot 1 was left under his will to his youngest son, George Monger. Landgate: From declaration made by George Monger on 11 June 1884.

George was born in 1842. At 14, in 1856, George went on a trip to England with his father and sister³⁵. While they returned in 1859³⁶, George did not return until 1865. He farmed in the York region, including Fern Hill, and explored the North East of York with Whitfield in 1870.³⁷

In 1868, George Monger built the front house,³⁸ stable and other buildings on Lot 1 which he occupied for "some" years.³⁹ [George McLeod started a new boarding house in Blandstown.⁴⁰]

Union Bank

The large nave like room at the front on the south side was either part of the original building or was added before November 1877.⁴¹ The highly ornate architect designed addition was in Free Gothic style⁴², and typical of what a bank might do to attract attention to itself.

³¹ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 10 December 1851, p.4.

³² Rica Erikson, Dictionary of Western Australians.

³³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 31 October 1862, p.2.

³⁴ Inquirer and Commercial News, 1 April 1863, p.2.

³⁵ Inquirer and Commercial News 17 March 1858, p.2.

³⁶ Short biography at Battye Library.

³⁷ Rica Erikson, Dictionary of Western Australians.

³⁸ Inquirer and Commercial News, 27 May 1868, p.3. Is this an incorrect reference to George's home?

³⁹ Landgate: From declaration made by George Monger on 11 June 1884.

⁴⁰ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, advertisement, 29 November 1872, p.3.

In 1878, George Monger leased his building to the Union Bank of Australasia Limited, a bank based in Adelaide. In March 1878, the bank announced that a branch of the bank will be opened for general Banking business in York “under the management SP Needham as soon as the necessary alterations have been made in the premises taken for that purpose”.⁴³

The bank opened for business on 9 April 1878.⁴⁴ It was the first bank to open in York.⁴⁵

It is probably no coincidence that Monger’s new store diagonally opposite was being constructed at this time.⁴⁶ The bank’s leases continued until July 1900.⁴⁷ ⁴⁸ The Union Bank then moved to what is now 148 Avon Terrace, which it purchased and where it had constructed its own offices.

Mary Aurora Crowder (Higgs)

The property was purchased from George Monger’s estate by Mary Aurora Crowder (wife of Frederick Thomas Crowder) of Cottesloe Beach in October 1901 for 1,000 pounds. The Crowder family announced their intention to spend a few months each year in the town.⁴⁹ She subsequently married Robert Arthur Dawson Higgs and became Mary Aurora Higgs.⁵⁰

George Payne Ding

After the Union Bank ceased to be a tenant, the property was leased to George Payne Ding, who used the property as a boarding house and also ran a restaurant.

The first newspaper mention of the name “Penola House” is in an advertisement dated 17 January 1903 so it would appear that the Dings called the building Penola House.⁵¹

George Ding moved from Penola House to the right hand side of what is now Settlers House in May 1909, about the time that Mrs A Pyke’s Temperance Hotel moved from there to 152 Avon Terrace.⁵²
⁵³

Around this time, there was a theft from a room occupied by James Ding. The thief forced open a small metal cash-box and stole 3 one pound notes, a gold ring, a silver watch and some curio coins. The cash-box was later found near Monger’s Bridge.⁵⁴

⁴¹ Photograph of York believed to have been taken by James Manning in about November 1877.

⁴² Apperly, R, Irving, R and Reynolds, P, A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture, Angus & Robertson, 1989, pp.82-85

⁴³ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 23 March 1878, p2.

⁴⁴ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 5 October 1901, p.2.

⁴⁵ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 18 May 1878, p.2.

⁴⁶ Eastern Districts Chronicle 16 November 1878, p.2; 13 December 1879, p.2.

⁴⁷ Landgate: From declaration made by George Monger on 11 June 1884.

⁴⁸ Indenture of Lease noted on Certificate of title XIII/369. The rent was 90 pounds per annum with a right of purchase at a price of 2000 pounds.

⁴⁹ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 5 October, 1901, p.2. She is possibly a Monger descendent because of the second name “Aurora”.

⁵⁰ Landgate: Certificate of Title 13/369.

⁵¹ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 17 January 1903, p2.

⁵² Eastern Districts Chronicle, 8 May 1909, p2.

⁵³ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 24 February 1911, p.1.

⁵⁴ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 15 May 1909, p.2.

Mrs Kirk

A Mrs Kirk then ran Penola House.

Mrs Jacobs

In November 1924, Mrs Jacobs purchased the business and commenced to run Penola House and the house underwent “extensive renovations”.⁵⁵

Subsequent owners

The ownership of the property was transferred to York Farmer William Thomas Craig in July 1925. And in the following year, it was transferred to Grace Veronica Fisher.⁵⁶

The building appears to have continued to be run as a boarding house.

The entire contents of Penola House were sold at an auction on 7 November 1942.⁵⁷

The property was transferred to Claremont school teachers Alan and Janet Keeley in August 1970, and then in 1987 to its previous owners, and then in 2000 to its current owners.

Mural

The exterior wall of the property now has a mural designed and painted by Brenton See.

Rob Garton Smith
President, The York Society (Inc)
(February 2022)

⁵⁵ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 7 November 1924, p2.

⁵⁶ Landgate: Certificate of Title 806/89.

⁵⁷ York Chronicle, 30 October 1942, p.2.