

Citation No. 2 - Mount Kororoit Dry Stone Wall Precinct

Melton Dry Stone Walls Survey Nos:	(See description)
Location:	Leakes Road, Mount Kororoit Road, Finches Road, Plumpton
Critical Dates:	Construction of dry stone walls: most c.late 1850s – late 1860s, with alterations c.1900; construction of dwellings and farm complex c.late 1850s – 1890s
Existing Heritage Listings:	HO144, HO146
Recommended Level of Significance:	STATE



Statement of Significance:

The Mount Kororoit Dry Stone Wall Precinct is significant as a collection of characteristic and outstanding dry stone walls in an intact cultural landscape, largely unchanged since the 1860s, which also includes a volcanic eruption point of geological and historical significance; a nineteenth century farm complex; and an 1860s selector's bluestone cottage. It is significant in terms of the number, variety, aesthetic and technical quality of its all-stone walls, which include types very rare in Victoria such as galloway-walls and distinctive double-single walls; for the quality and quantity of its former post & rail fences and composite walls. The precinct demonstrates nineteenth century rural settlement patterns, and has high potential to provide both research and educative information regarding mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century fencing practices within Victoria. The landscape qualities of the precinct includes the remnant riparian vegetation of the Kororoit Creek, and its winding passage through the precinct; the intact, rocky summit of the volcanic cone; views to and from the volcanic cone, the views provided

by the C19th landscape of dry stone walls enclosing fields of crops and stock; and the C19th buildings of the farmstead.

The Mount Kororoit Dry Stone Wall Precinct is historically significant at the STATE level (AHC A3, A4, B2, D2). It is a cultural landscape arranged around Mount Kororoit, which is of state geological significance and was an early landmark for the Port Phillip explorers and pioneers. The precinct includes an important variety of wall types, including some that are important in the history of dry stone wall construction such as rare galloway-walls, double-single walls, and also composite 'half-walls' with post and wire. Many walls are distinctive for their use of large stones in the upper, rather than the lower courses which are instead constructed of tightly packed small stones. Some of the walls would appear to be unique for their use of massive longitudinal coverband stones (or rocks) at half height. All of the wall faces are uncoursed as a result of the characteristic shape of the fieldstone on Melbourne's western plains, and are excellent representative examples of this type of wall.

The precinct demonstrates early farming settlement patterns of Melbourne's western plains. It is historically significant for its association with the Moylan farming family, who were notable participants in the sporting, social, religious, and political life of the Melton district. The property also had close associations with Sir WJ Clarke's Diggers Rest Plumpton and the Melton Coursing Club, and early aviation. The precinct is enhanced by its historic and aesthetic integrity as a cultural landscape, which includes Mount Kororoit Farmstead, a highly intact nineteenth century farm complex part of whose layout is defined by dry stone walls; and an 1860s bluestone Selector's cottage directly associated with an

excellent dry stone wall of the same date.

The Mount Kororoit Dry Stone Wall Precinct is aesthetically significant at the STATE level (AHC E1). The dry stone walls which cross the landscape in regular enclosure patterns, make a fundamental statement about human interaction with the volcanic landscape of which they are a part. Numerous individual walls, including Walls A277, A275, A274, and A272 have excellent sculptural qualities and are situated in visually dramatic ways which is expressive of the farming history of the Shire, and the craftsmanship of their builders. The volcanic cone of Mount Kororoit can be seen from as far away as the Calder Freeway with views to and from Mount Kororoit taking in most of the Shire. It is a visually dramatic element in a largely flat plain, and has a summit which is not greatly compromised by new structures, which is rare in Melbourne's Western region. The reaches of the Kororoit Creek which lie within the precinct, has old-growth River Red Gums (some of the oldest in any part of the Creek), good instream vegetation and deep, rocky pools which preserve birdlife and other fauna. The creek corridor has steep banks and boulder outcrops which create a visual and spatial character of enclosure, which is in sharp contrast to the open landscape of plains beyond. Dry stone walls have been built down to the water line or along the banks of the creek, and a C19th dry stone ford crosses the creek to the north of the farmstead, affording glimpses of the history of the place, in an otherwise pristine natural landscape.

The Mount Kororoit Dry Stone Wall Precinct is scientifically significant at the STATE level (A1, C2). The precinct demonstrates the volcanic origin of the landscape, and is associated with the unusual geomorphology of Mount Kororoit, which is the best example in Victoria of a scoria volcano covered by later lava flows which have filled the crater and earlier scoria deposits. The walls also have potential to yield research information regarding nineteenth century rural settlement patterns and farm management, and ways of life on Melbourne's western plains. In particular they have high potential for research of mid nineteenth century wall construction techniques, and early twentieth century modification of these for changing farming practices.

The Mount Kororoit Dry Stone Wall Precinct is socially significant at the STATE level (AHC G1). The precinct has the potential to educate the community in regard to wall construction techniques, and also nineteenth

century farm management, settlement patterns, and ways of life.

Overall, the Mount Kororoit Dry Stone Wall Precinct is of STATE heritage significance.

The following information from Council's GIS records all the walls in the Mount Kororoit precinct. (Note that through address idiosyncracies and the size of the main property, some walls that are situated on the west side of Kororoit Creek have a Leakes Road address.)

WALL NO	NEAREST ROAD
A259	Leakes Road
A260	Leakes Road
A261	Leakes Road
A263	Leakes Road
A264	Leakes Road
A265	Finchs Road
A266	Finchs Road
A269	Leakes Road
A270	Leakes Road
A278	Leakes Road
A279	Ryans Road
A280	Mt Kororoit Road
R242	Holden Road

Description:

The dominant feature of the precinct, and the source of the fieldstone used in the construction of its walls, is Mount Kororoit, one of about 400 inactive eruption points that have been identified on Victoria's western volcanic plains. Most were active between 4.5 million and 20,000 years ago. Like many of the volcanoes on these plains, which stretch from the Darebin Creek to near the South Australian border, Mount Kororoit lends a dramatic and distinctive character to an otherwise flat landscape.

Geologically Mount Kororoit is of State significance. It is the archetypal example of the small complex eruption points that occur on the plains between Melbourne and Woodend. It is an unusual scoria cone in that late-stage lava flows erupted from and filled the throat and crater of the volcano, covering earlier scoria deposits. The evidence of the lava flows is seen in the rocky outcrop of lava and lava agglomerate that cap the volcano.¹

Apart from its geological context, and the walls and fences, the precinct includes buildings of considerable heritage significance in themselves. The Mount Kororoit Farm complex HO 62, comprising the homestead, detached kitchen/cottage, small outbuilding, stables, fowl house (or pigsty) and shearing shed, dating from the 1850s-1890s, is an important surviving example of a nineteenth century farm complex, within a rural setting enhanced by the layout and location of buildings and yards, and further distinguished by the dry stone walls, peppercorn and palm trees and the quarry faced sheep holding yard beside the Kororoit Creek. The late 1860s bluestone selectors cottage HO 61 is a rare intact property associated with the Selection Acts in the Shire of Melton. Of 113 Selections in the Shire of Melton this, and the less intact HO 38 at 189-193 Blackhill Road Toolern Vale, are the only 1860s places to survive. The significance of the cottage is enhanced by its relatively intact historical landscape context, including Wall A275.

The cultural landscape includes Mount Kororoit and the Kororoit Creek valley, making it one of the most undulating and attractive dry stone wall landscapes in Melton Shire. Although many of its walls are not visible

from public roadways, it is the best precinct in the Shire in regard to the visibility of multiple walls from a variety of single points.

The only walls that are not on land that was by 1892 in the Moylan ownership are the few that were built on the Clarke pastoral estate (Wall Nos. R242, A259, A266).

The precinct contains a number of wall structural types that are unique in Melton Shire and rare in Victoria. These include:-

- Galloway-walls: walls that usually have a traditional double wall lower half, upon which is built a single width wall with substantial interstices, to create a crocheted, or filigree appearance. This type of wall was named after the walls built on the west coast of Scotland, but which were also built on the west coast of Ireland. Although useful in such windy locations, their primary purpose was to deter stock from attempting to jump such an unstable looking edifice. These are Wall Nos. A272 and A276.
- All-Stone Double-Single walls: constructed of tightly packed small stones in the lower half, and a single width of large stones on the upper half. Some of these walls are divided by huge long stones placed along the wall (rather than into the wall in the traditional style), forming a plinth (or 'coverband') for the upper course. Unlike the galloway-walls the upper half is tightly packed. These are Wall Nos. A277 and A274 (possibly built at the same time, and originally the same wall) and A273.

These are all historically important or visually outstanding all-stone walls. Another long high all-stone wall of which a substantial portion remains intact (although parts have collapsed completely) is Wall A275 (the wall in the foreground of the main photograph in this report). The significance of this wall is enhanced by its location between the Selection era bluestone cottage (and later derelict timber cottage) and the redgums of Kororoit Creek, and its excellent view over other walls to Mt Kororoit.

A general characteristic of the all-stone walls in the precinct is that there is no coursing, no doubt a result of the round shape of the local fieldstone. Another unique feature of many of the all-stone walls is that many employ massive stones, or rocks. Some of these may have been quarried, perhaps from the outcrops on Mount Kororoit, or the large quarry near the creek,

¹ Rosengren, N, 'Eruption Points of the Newer Volcanics Province of Victoria: An Inventory and Evaluation of Scientific Significance', a report prepared for the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and the Geological Society of Australia (Victorian Division), 1994, pp.21, 201

rather than obtained from the surface of the ground. The use of the largest stones at the top of most of these all-stone walls is the reverse of the usual dry stone wall, in which the heavy difficult-to-handle stones were placed at the bottom of the wall. The survival of these walls is a testament to the success of this method.

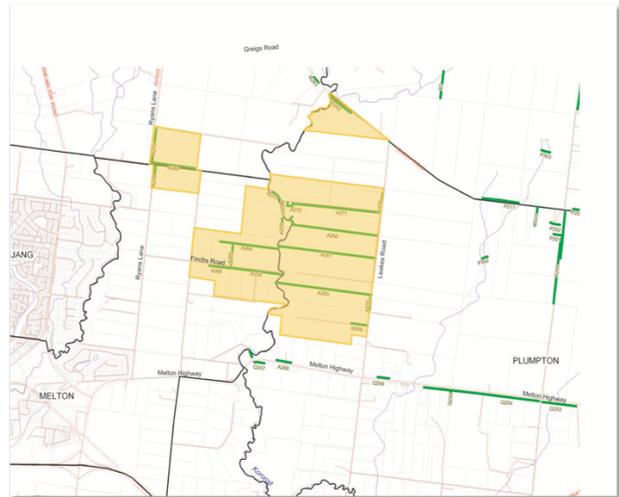
In addition to the impressive all-stone walls, there is a very good representation of the more common composite stone and post and wire walls, a number of which would appear to have originally been all-stone walls. However some, for example Wall Nos. A260 and A261, appear rather to be excellent examples of walls that were originally built as 'half-walls', with neatly-built stone bottoms and either post & rail (originally) or post & wire tops. Historical (documentary) evidence calls this initial observation into question, and suggests that some of these walls may have been deliberately modified.

The precinct is unique in the Shire for the large number of post & rail fences (posts only, no rails survive). The group includes one purely post & rail fence (Wall No.278), and several remnant composite post & rail and stone walls (Wall Nos.A260, and A271).

Another feature of the precinct, rare in the State and unique in the Shire, is the dry stone causeway over a gully on the west side of Kororoit Creek. It is a substantial structure, some 3 metres high at its highest point, and 14 metres long and 4 wide, with very well-built battered dry stone walls, with very large end stones, acting as a safety barricade to the wall of the structure. One of the two barricades or rails has however been removed to allow farm machinery to cross.

The former Clarke boundary walls on Finchs Road (Wall Nos. A259 and A266) have been severely affected by rural residential subdivision of its length. The different owners of the wall have kept it in various states of repair, with most repairs being unskilled and idiosyncratic, diminishing the unity and cohesion of the wall. The introduction of new boundary plantations alongside has also changed and broken down the walls' context and cohesion.

Mount Kororoit dry stone wall precinct



History:

CONTEXTUAL HISTORY

Fencing in Nineteenth Century Rural Victoria

- **Fencing 1850s-1870s**

The majority of dry stone walls in Victoria appear to have been built in the 30 year period from the 1850s to the 1880s.

In 1826 rural affairs commentator James Atkinson reported that he knew of no example of dry stone walling having been erected in the colony of New South Wales.² Initially pastoralists employed shepherds to look after sheep. They guided the sheep to pasture during the day, and in the evening returned them to folds, constructed of wooden hurdles or brush fences, near their huts (or outstations). There are several dry stone walls on Melton's Kororoit Creek that are thought to have been associated with early pastoralists: an outstation associated with Yuille at Caroline Springs, and the remnants of a wall that are thought to have been associated with a shepherd's enclosure.³ Other fencing was used on the squatters' homesteads:- the 'home paddock' (likely for the squatters' precious horses) and

² Kerr, JS, 'Fencing, a brief account of the development of fencing in Australia', *Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology Newsletter*, Vol. 14.No.1, March 1984, pp.9-16.

³ Melton Heritage Study Place Nos. 467 and 81.

the ‘cultivation [or kitchen] garden’. Early fences were also required to separate stock for breeding purposes. These fences were usually of post & rail, vertical timber slabs or other primitive paling material.⁴ (However at Greenhills in Toolern Vale there are some remains of a dry stone wall that would appear to be the remnants of an original homestation garden.⁵)

Two major and related events in the early 1850s radically changed this situation. Firstly, the exodus to the gold-rushes made it difficult and expensive for squatters to retain labour for shepherding. And secondly, the extensive survey, subdivision and sale of Crown land in the early 1850s provided security of tenure to pastoralists, and incentive for them to invest in major improvements, including permanent fences, on their stations. Pastoralists were also encouraged to fence their land to ensure that neighbouring farmers didn’t allow their stock to stray upon the open expanses of their stations.

Nevertheless, until the 1860s, extensive fencing of properties remained the exception rather than the rule. The first boundary fences in the Barrabool Hills of Victoria were only erected in 1854, and boundary and paddock fencing ‘only gathered momentum after the mid 1850s.’⁶ This was no doubt due to the extensive sale of Crown Land as freehold in the 1850s, as well as the increasing availability of capital due to the gold boom, and the increasing availability of labour including professional stone wallers as alluvial gold declined in the late 1850s.

Slowly, fences began to replace shepherds on the pastoral estates. Early maps of Melton Shire show that pastoralists built walls and fences relatively sparsely – only on property boundaries and to enclose huge paddocks (about 5-10 square kilometres in the south part of Clarke’s *Rockbank* estate).⁷ In dramatic contrast the same historical maps (and the mapping survey undertaken as part of this Study) show concentrated patterns of walled paddocks established on farms in the same areas at the same time. The creation of small paddocks enabled mixed farming, by securing crops and gardens from stock, and managing stock for breeding.

4 Kerr, *loc cit*; Allan Willingham, ‘The Dry Stone Walls in the Corangamite Region: A Brief History’, in Corangamite Arts Council Inc, *If These Walls Could Talk, Report of the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Conservation Project*, Terang, 1995, p.44

5 Melton Heritage Study, Place No.055

6 Kerr, *loc cit*

7 Shire Map Series (1892); Army Ordnance Map, 1916: ‘Sunbury’.

This Study shows that, in the south of the Shire, virtually all of these fences were dry stone walls. Dry stone walls were also used to protect the homestead from stock, to construct stockyards, fowl houses and pigpens, and possibly, on a few of the larger farms, to provide aesthetic effect.⁸

Given the expense of establishing a farm from nothing in a wilderness, and the experience of many small farmers as agricultural labourers before coming to Australia, it is almost certain that the walls on all but the largest farms would have been constructed by farmers themselves rather than by professional wallers. For example, general hand William Ison and his wife arrived on a Werribee farm in the mid 1850s, and found there a small wooden cottage and a young German in charge, ‘who had already done some clearing of the stones which covered the land ... We set to, and cleared about 10 acres, and had it fenced in with stones by the next sowing time.’⁹ The quality of wall construction would have depended on the experience of the farmers and their seasonal hands at the craft. William Robinson who settled in the Tarneit area in 1872, was a stonemason who turned his skills to fieldstone, building a house (which does not survive) of the material and numerous fences (some of which do survive along Robinsons Road).

The tracks that wandered across the landscape gradually became straight roads, constrained within the boundary walls of freehold rural landholdings. Slowly but surely the wide open land became plotted and pieced with fences. However until the fencing of properties was completed, straying stock remained a problem. Reserves for impounding stray stock had been established early: ‘by early 1851 a poundkeeper’s hut or house and a couple of fenced paddocks near a water supply had been established at more than forty inland sites.’¹⁰

8 Alan Marshall, asking an old waller why the walls on a particular property were so high, was told that ostensibly the reason was to keep steers in (they jumped fences), but the real reason was ‘just so that he could say he had the best walls in the Western District, the biggest and the best, and buggar you.’ (cited in Corangamite Arts Council, 1995, p.114). On Melbourne’s western plains district however, such finely constructed walls were generally associated with formal gardens on only the largest properties, such as the Ha Ha walls on the Eynesbury (Melton Shire) and Werribee Park (Wyndham Shire) pastoral estates, or Greystones (Moorabool Shire).

9 Murray, E, *The Plains of Iramoo*, Henwood & Dancy, Geelong, 1974, p.111. (Murray notes that in 1974 these walls were still standing.)

10 Priestley, Susan, *The Victorians: Making Their Mark* (Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, McMahons Point, 1984), pp. 68-9

The outbreak of the highly contagious sheep disease, 'scab', which reached epidemic proportions in the 1850s, hastened enclosure of the pastoral estates.¹¹ Western District squatter Neil Black quickly enclosed his Glenormiston run, and in 1854 George Russell ordered five miles of wire: '...the importance of fencing is becoming every year more apparent.'¹²

Likewise, the appearance of pluro-pneumonia in Australian cattle in the early 1860s impressed cattlemen of the need to isolate their properties from travelling or straying stock.¹³ That 'dreadful disease' also encouraged the erection of property fences by Melton dairy farmers (and was responsible for less use of local Commons by Melton's farmers).¹⁴ The construction of fencing that was encouraged by sheep scab and cattle pleuro pneumonia was also fostered by legislation. At the beginning of the pastoral period in Victoria, common law held that, generally, a landowner was under no obligation to construct or maintain boundary fences, or fences adjoining a public road. However, as a result of Australia's rapidly expanding pastoral industry, trespass of stock, and the need for security, the Victoria's *Fences Statute 1865* gave landowners the right to claim equal contribution towards the construction or repair of boundary fences from the owners of adjoining lands.¹⁵

By 1876 the presence of 'substantial stone walls' appears to have been hallmark of a good farm in the Melton district, the *Australasian's* 'Travelling Reporter' making sure to note these on the farms of Ralph Parkinson, George Missen, John Moylan and Isaac Gidney.¹⁶ However little is known of dry stone wallers who worked in the Shire at the time: Irish brothers John and George Funston worked in the Toolern Vale area from the 1850s; Patrick Connor worked on Mount Aitken in the 1860s; and Dick (the mason) Mitchell, and Arcoll (Arkell) worked in the Mount Cottrell area before 1872.¹⁷

• Types of Fencing in the Nineteenth Century

The great variety and combination of nineteenth century fencing arose 'as much from material shortages and the need to use what was procurable as from a desire to improve the utility and durability of fencing.'¹⁸ As is the case with the rest of the Shire, most of the walls in the Mount Kororoit precinct are 'composite' stone and post & wire, rather than all-stone.

The *Fences Statute 1874* lists numerous types of fences, including 'walls' (stone walls) and 'combination' type fences. Walls that divided properties had to be a minimum of 4 feet high (1.22 metres), with a base of 'not less than 2 feet wide at the bottom', and '9 inches at the top'.¹⁹ Although the specifications for road boundary fences were not given (the Crown being exempt from the legislation) it could be expected that the walls on these public boundaries would be at least as high as those that divided neighbouring properties.

Post and rail fences were the most common early fence type in Australia, no doubt due to the prevalence of forests and woodlands, in contrast to stony land, across Victoria. They appeared early and were prominent in the study area. In 1854 William Westgarth, on his way to the goldfields Royal Commission in Ballarat, recorded that he 'struck west through post and rail fences onto the Keilor Plains'.²⁰ By the 1860s timber fencing, probably from the Grey Box forest in the west and south-west of the Shire, was common in the vicinity of Melton. But as local farmer John Chandler recorded, such fencing prone to loss in the bushfires that swept south from the ranges over the plains.²¹ Even in the volcanic area near Aitkens Hill to the north of the Shire, nearly 80% of squatter John Aitken's fencing was either 'post & rail' (either 2 rail, the most common, or 3 rail), or 'post & 2 rails with (2 or 3) wires', or 'post & rail with 5 foot palings'. The balance was 'stone walls'.²² These figures might

11 Kerr, *loc cit*

12 Willingham, *op cit*, p.45

13 Kerr, *loc cit*

14 Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 1864, p.94 ; John Chandler, Michael Canon, *Forty Years in the Wilderness* (Loch Haven, Main Ridge, 1990), p.175

15 Lawlink: New South Wales Law Reform Commission website: 'Report 59 (1988) – Community Law Reform Program: Dividing Fences'; Parliament of Victoria website: Law Reform Committee, 'Review of the Fences Act 1968'

16 The *Australasian*, October 1876.

17 Bilszta, JA, 'Dry Stone Wall: Faulknors Road, Mt Cottrell, Shire of Melton', 9/9/1990, unpublished paper

18 Kerr, *loc cit*

19 The Fences Statute 1874 (Fences Amendment Act, November 1873), Clause 4 (i-xi). Other types of early fencing are described in Michael Cannon's *Life in the Country: Australia in the Victorian Age*: 2, Nelson, West Melbourne, 1978, pp.89-90; and Graham Condah's *Of the Hut I Buildd*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1988, p.89.

20 Lack, J, Ford, O, 'Melbourne's Western Region: An Introductory History' (Melbourne's Living Museum of the West Inc, Melbourne Western Region Commission, 1986), p.27

21 Chandler, J, *Forty Years in the Wilderness*, Loch Haven, 1990, p.174

22 Map, 'Index of Fences' on John Aitken's Mount Aitken property (after Crown Land sales). PROV 460/P0/39365. (The stone walls would appear not to survive.)

reflect squatters' early preference for timber fencing, and an early dearth of professional dry stone walling skills, not remedied until after the gold rushes. In 1868 on the same property Henry Beattie erected much more stone walling, but also built nearly twice as much '3-rail fence' in the same year.²³

Post and wire fences were first introduced into Victoria in the 1850s, but the price of the metal posts (which could often not go down into the dry hard ground in Victoria) made them 'exceedingly expensive.'²⁴ The very thick and soft 'black bull wire' was soon superseded by galvanised steel wires which, with droppers to keep the wire stable, allowing greater distance between fence posts, reducing the costs.²⁵ With progressive improvements, including local production of wire, use of timber posts, and winding and straining devices, by at least the early 1870s wire was the cheapest type of fence.²⁶ The invention of barbed wire in the 1870s, and its widespread use in Victoria in the 1880s meant that it could secure cattle as well as sheep, and it became the standard fence type from this time.²⁷

• Dry Stone Walls

The Mount Kororoit cultural landscape includes three major types of dry stone walls: all-stone walls; 'galloway' walls; and composite walls. In 1856 a government agricultural reporter travelling through the eastern part of Melton Shire (the Parish of Maribyrnong) commented that: 'A few good stone fences the only improvement worth noting.'²⁸

A dry stone wall was the best solution:- 'Where stone was abundant, timber scarce, transport of fencing material expensive, skilled labour available, and where cheaper alternatives were unavailable.'²⁹ From about the mid-late 1850s, when freehold ownership exploded and the price of labour declined, and through the early 1860s when the price of labour remained cheap, the labour-intensive construction of stone walls remained

very competitive.

Stone walls were built wherever stony ground made them possible, or necessary. While most farmers built their own walls to clear stony ground and manage stock and crops, pastoralists could afford professional wallers.³⁰ In the mid 1850s brothers John and George Funston, stone wallers and farm labourers from Ireland, are known to have been erecting walls on the Mount Aitken and Gisborne Park estates.³¹ The Mount Aitken station accounts in 1868 showing the employment of a John Starkie for four weeks to help Henry gather and cart stones, and the engagement of 'Paterick [sic] Connor, Stone Wall Fencer' to erect 34 chains of stone walling at the very low rate of only 8 shillings per chain.

The popularity of stone walls with farmers is evident in the Lands Department files relating to the 1860s Selection Acts, which record the type, length and price of fencing 'improvements' made by each selector. A detailed examination of 21 selections in the Mount Cottrell, Rockbank, Mount Kororoit and Diggers Rest–Holden areas reveals that stone walling constituted by far the largest proportion (60%) of the 32.3 kilometres of fencing built on those properties by c.1875, despite the fact that it was the most expensive. Post & wire fences, one of the cheapest types of fencing then available, comprised only 6% of all fences erected. Post & rail fences, a little cheaper than the best stone walls, and a little dearer than the cheapest, constituted 9% of the fences. (Note that many other 'composite' varieties of fences were constructed from these three primary materials. There were also a small number of 'stub' or picket, and 'log' fences.³²)

Stone walling resolved two problems: the need to clear the land of rocks, and the need for fencing.

23 Beattie, Steward K, *The Odd Good Year: Early Scots to Port Phillip, Northern Australia, Gap, Gisborne and Beyond*, Southwood Press, Marrickville, 1999, p.63

24 Willingham, *op cit*, pp.45-6

25 Cannon, 1978, *op cit*, pp.89-91

26 Survey of 21 Selectors in the Holden – Mount Cottrell districts.

27 Willingham, *op cit*, p.46; Kerr, *loc cit*; Cannon, 1978, *loc cit*

28 Victorian Parliamentary Papers, 'Statistics of Victoria for 1856', Appendix No.1, p.46

29 Vines, G, 'Comparative Analysis of Dry Stone Walls in Victoria, Australia and Overseas', in Corangamite Arts Council, 1995, *op cit*, p.56

30 Ann Beggs-Sunter, 'Buninyong and District Community News', Issue 211, August 1996

31 Judith Bilszta, Melton Heritage Study Research, Place No.029 (3/8/2005)

32 Research of PROV VPRS 625 (Selection Act files) for the Keneally, Slattery, Reddan J, Reddan M, Tate, Rhodes C, Rhodes, McKenzie, O'Brien P, McLeod, O'Brien J, Moloney, White, Mangovin, Carrige, Moylan Mary, Moylan Margaret, Parry, Moylan, MP, Moylan T, and Watts selections. This sample is primarily of selectors on stony country, Hannah Watts, in the forest off Chapmans Road Toolern Vale being the only exception; interestingly, the cost of her post & rail fences were half the price of the others, no doubt reflecting the relative proximity of materials, with none of the other properties having ready access to local timber. Another possible bias of the sample is the over-representation of Moylan properties. But it remains a good sample of fences built in stony country in the period late 1860s to mid 1870s.

Unquestionably, as was the case elsewhere, the key reason for the preference for dry stone walls on Melbourne's western plains by selectors was the need to clear stony land to enable cropping and grazing (dairying).³³

Apart from the relatively small areas that were sold under the Selection Acts, there were many other areas of dry stone walling in Melton Shire. Apart from the Mount Kororoit walls, property sale advertisements in the local paper suggest that the properties on the Keilor Plain east of Toolern Creek were almost entirely walled.³⁴ Advertisements for stone wallers in the Buttlejorrk, Diggers Rest and Rockbank Estate areas appeared regularly until 1890. Between Toolern Vale and Diggers Rest the Beaty family built many kilometres of medium sized stone walls along boundaries, and a few larger walls inside their properties for stock. Other walls, including one of substantial composition (on what was formerly the Campbells' Toolern Park property), are scattered lightly around Toolern Vale. The highest concentration of walls is situated in the southern plains of the Shire: the 1850s small farming communities of Mt Cottrell and Truganina, and the paddock and boundary fences of WJT Clarke's *Rockbank* station.

According to Vines the dry stone walls of the Keilor-Werribee Plains 'form a reasonably distinct regional style quite different from either the interstate examples or the Western District walls'. This regional style is characterised by:-

'... Walls constructed using the local rounded, smoothly weathered, basalt field-stone of variable size. They are generally fairly low walls, averaging 1.2 metres with a width at the base of an average of 0.83 metres and battered sides on a slope of about 5-10 degrees off the vertical. Coursing is uncommon although coping is almost always found on intact walls and through stones can usually be identified at regular intervals of about one metre. The coping stones are often quite large, rounded boulders of a maximum dimension of 400-500 millimetres. Because of their rounded shape the stones are rarely suited to the close-fitting construction seen on the Western district walls, either for the main part of the wall or the coping. As a result, the rabbit proofing techniques involving close

*plugging, overhanging coping, or other methods are never found in this region.*³⁵

These regular round stones lack interlocking, and often surface friction, and were never the ideal building material. The author of the 1848 'Rural Cyclopaedia' considered round stones objectionable 'as they are ever rolling off'. The small wedge stones which held these round stones in position were easily dislodged.³⁶ Similarly, the 'round stone fence' surmounted by turf was described in Loudon's 1857 guide to British agriculture as a 'very indifferent fence', whose only apparent benefit was that it cleared the land of stone and could be built by labourers. It was found to be unstable when built to a standard wall height. Stock could easily dislodge its copings, and 'great trouble and expense are annually required to keep it in repair'.³⁷ Despite this, as can be seen in an apparently scarce example of this type in Corangamite (the Foxhow Road Wall), a sturdy wall of very respectable height could be built by careful selection and coursing of stones, and the use of copestones and extensive plugging.³⁸

The Fences Statute's specification of walls to be a minimum 4 feet (1220 mm) high seems to have been the 'average paddock height' for which tenders were called in sheep country.³⁹ Walls in cattle country were built higher 'to discourage the cattle from leaning over to reach greener pastures and dislodging coping stones'. While numerous Western District dairying walls are higher, 'walls enclosing cattle were generally at least 1.4 metres (4 feet 7 inches) high'.⁴⁰ This standard also seems to have been applied in Melton, where the Moylan's high walls on Mount Kororoit Farm measure 1400 mm.

Although there is no conclusive evidence of it in Melton Shire, elsewhere boundary walls were built higher than internal walls. Vines states that: 'In almost all the dry stone wall regions in Victoria, the ... most substantial

35 Corangamite Arts Council, *op cit*, p.58

36 Willingham, *op cit*, p.41

37 Loudon, JC, *Encyclopaedia of Agriculture*, 5th Edition (Longman Brown Green Longmans and Roberts, London, 1857), p.496

38 Corangamite Arts Council, *op cit*, p.28

39 Willingham, *op cit*, p.41. (The 1300 mm height was chosen as one of the categories for Study field survey. Almost all of the walls in the Shire had a base width of 700-800 mm.); Corangamite Arts Council, *op cit*, pp.49, 113

40 *ibid*, pp.17, 21, 130; Rod McLellan, 'The Dry Stone Walls of Victoria's Western District', *Historic Environment* Vol 7 No 2, 1989, pp.28-32

33 Selectors were in fact obliged under the Selection Acts to cultivate 10% of their land area.

34 Bilszta, 1990, *op cit*.

walls are located along the boundaries of properties. Subdivision of properties into fields was evidently a secondary consideration once the property had been fenced. Additional stone walls would be constructed to subdivide the property into paddocks if the field stone was so abundant as to allow these.⁴¹ Perkins (whose stone wall education was in Britain) states similarly that: 'Inner boundaries however were not built as high as the boundary fences, which are also known as March Dykes.'⁴²

• Galloway Walls

A type of all-stone wall that is rare in Victoria, of which good examples can be found in the Mount Kororoit cultural landscape, is a variation of the 'single' or 'crochet' wall, often also referred to as a 'Galloway dyke'. Its origins are the enclosures commenced in 1720 in south west Scotland, and which became 'well known and esteemed' throughout Britain, and recommended for the 'Western Isles' of Scotland.⁴³ Similar 'filigree' walls that stand up well to the wind' were also used on the wind-swept Clare and Galway coasts of Ireland.⁴⁴

However the primary purpose of the galloway-wall was not to rebuff the wind. In 1812 it was described as: 'the rudest and the simplest in its construction ... formed of large, ill-shaped stones' placed atop a standard double wall. The light showing through the wall frightened sheep and cattle from attempting to jump the walls. The Argyllshire Survey provides a clear description:

'The upper courses of galloway-dykes ought to be made as narrow and open as possible, to afford the least footing for sheep and to let them see through. And if the first course of single stones should project a little over the double wall, so much the better. Of all the dykes this is the most formidable for sheep. A double wall of twice the height will not turn them with equal certainty. The tottering appearance, and seeing light through the stones deters them from any attempt to scale it, together with the want of footing on the top. These walls may be made with the coarsest stone, and when they are properly made, with the centre of

*gravity resting on the stones below, they stand better than a double wall.'*⁴⁵

The first galloway-walls were one stone thick for their entire height, but these were more difficult to build, and were modified to a single stone wall for the higher part only. The walls were said to be cheaply erected and repaired. The virtues of the 'superior Galloway dyke' were still being praised in Loudon's 1857 Encyclopaedia.⁴⁶

The one known example in the Western District is primarily one stone in width, and features very large irregular stones in the upper part of the wall. Its serpentine plan is presumed to have provided additional lateral support in view of it being only one stone wide.

There are both variations of the galloway-wall in the Mount Kororoit cultural landscape:- the original style one-stone thick wall (albeit with more modest interstices); and the later double lower wall (using small stones) with a single 'crochet' wall above (using large stones).

In addition, there is another variation wherein small stones are used to build the lower wall, while the top portion is a single stone in width, tightly packed and plugged (with no interstices). (These walls are called here All-Stone Double Single Walls.) A very unusual feature of these walls is that all the large stones are situated on the top half of the wall (sometimes sitting above very large flat stones), while the small stones are used on the lower half. The only known walls that share some common characteristics with these walls (although lower, and apparently of lesser quality construction) are those built by Andrew Lamont at Dundonnell in the Western District.⁴⁷

• Composite Walls

In the Melton Shire, and Melbourne's western plains area, most of the remnant early fences are a combination of low stone walls with spit timber post with wire above (or more rarely, timber rail). Many, perhaps the majority, of 'half walls' in Victoria were constructed because of limited availability of fieldstone.⁴⁸ Peel states what is likely to be the primary reason for their construction:-

41 Corangamite Arts Council, *op cit*, p.60

42 *ibid*, p.130

43 Colonel F Rainsford-Hannay, *Dry Stone Walling*, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright Drystone Dyking Committee, Gatehouse-of-Fleet, Kirkcudbrightshire, 1972, p.104

44 *ibid*, p.85

45 *ibid*, p.103

46 Loudon, *loc cit*.

47 Corangamite Arts Council, *op cit*, p.73; also National Trust of Australia (Victoria) File No.5490, 'Dundonnell'

48 Corangamite Arts Council, *op cit*, p.80

*'With increasing distance from a timber supply, less timber was used in fence construction and wire fences, or stone walls in the stony country, became more common. Again, where less stone was available, stone walls and wire fences were combined, with the stone wall portion consisting of anything from a single row of stones to a substantial wall three or more feet high with only one or two wires on top.'*⁴⁹

For example, says Peel, timber for the Sunbury vicinity was sourced from the Mount Macedon area, but as Sunbury was also at the edge of stony country, split timber, stone and wire were all used, commonly in the same fence.⁵⁰ And, as Vines has shown, the 'combination' fencing is also common on the Keilor and Werribee plains.⁵¹ The reason for part stone wall - part wire fences of the Melton Shire study area relates to the quantity of stone in the area. And so the most typical stone fence of the study area reflects the particular geography and history of the Melton Shire, and is important for this reason.

Many other of Victoria's composite stone walls would appear to be the remnants of original all-stone walls that were later repaired by part-demolition and incorporation of post & wire fencing, or else just built up to a 'workable height' by the addition of post & wire fencing (perhaps to accommodate a transition from sheep to cattle).⁵² Mitchell states that 'Stone walls ... have since been electrified or had post and wire worked into their construction'.⁵³ Other examples of such walls have been recorded.⁵⁴

Some 'composite' stone walls were definitely not built as such. Farmers sometimes gathered 'floaters' as they appeared, stacking them under fences, making a rubble stone fence, rather than a professionally built 'dry stone wall'. Melton farmer Mary Tolhurst had stone walls on her childhood property, but also tells how, prior to sowing a crop, the men would take the horse and dray and pick up stones and place them along and under the

property's post & wire and post and rail fences.⁵⁵

However the construction of half stone walls was not always simply an accidental by-product of the amount of fieldstone available, or deterioration of original walls, or need to increase wall height, or the need to progressively clear land. An 1861 treatise on fencing by a Scottish manufacturer includes a diagram showing wire fencing on top of stone walls.⁵⁶ And experiments with combining fencing materials to most economic effect were undertaken early in Australia. In 1851 John Learmonth in the Western District erected a boundary fence in which the lowest rail was replaced by a stone dyke (or wall).⁵⁷ It appeared to Learmonth: 'that in some part this would add little to the expense, and at the same time would add to the durability and safety from fires.' Contracts for the same fences were being deliberately let in 1927, where a 'two foot walls with cope stone on a 2'6" base, with barb wire' was built at *Turkeith* near Birregurra.⁵⁸

In the Shire of Melton 'half-stone walls' – with the stone less than 18 inches high – were also built deliberately. The exact reasons are probably lost to time, but present farmers know that they had benefits in terms of preventing sheep crawling under the lower wire, and in preventing draught horses from scratching itch mites in the hairs of their legs.⁵⁹

Many of the Melton composite stone and wire walls have neat coping stones intact. These all appear to have been built in the traditional manner in relation to base width and double wall construction (perhaps to comply with the Fences Act definition of a 'sufficient' wall). Other composite walls are less neatly constructed. These generally have a higher percentage of round-shaped stones, and consequently a higher wall batter and a more pyramidal, less vertical, shape. While some of these have obviously had posts inserted into them, it is also possible that some might have always been composite walls. The relative instability of stone walls built with the 'round stone' that predominates in Melton Shire may also have encouraged the original wall constructions to have been kept low, and topped up with wire.⁶⁰

49 Peel, LJ, *Rural Industry in the Port Phillip Region 1835-1880*, MUP, 1974, p.108

50 Peel, *op cit*, p 108.

51 Vines, G, *Built To Last: An Historical and Archaeological Survey of Dry Stone Walls in Melbourne's Western Region* (Living Museum of the West Inc, 1990).

52 Vines, 1995, *op cit*, p.60

53 Mitchell, H, 'Building Dry Stone Walls', *Grass Roots*, No.48, April 1985

54 Richard Peterson, Daniel Catrice, 'Bacchus Marsh Heritage Study', 1994

55 Mary Tolhurst, February 2002.

56 Willingham, *op cit*, p.46

57 Kerr, *op cit*. (Dyke was the Scottish word for stone wall.)

58 Mary Sheehan (author of Colac Otway Heritage Study), 11/8/2005

59 Personal conversations, John Morton, and Charlie Finch.

60 Loudon, *loc cit*

Our natural association of ‘the richest areas for dry stone walls’⁶¹ with areas where fieldstone is most abundant is not the complete explanation for the different extent and quality of stone wall construction in different areas. While the availability of stone is the ‘supply’ side of the equation, there is also a ‘demand’ side: the need for fencing; and the economic feasibility of clearing land and building walls.

As mentioned previously, both historical and present maps of dry stone walls in Melton Shire show strikingly greater densities of walls in farming areas than on large pastoral properties. This is despite the fact that, as in the southern part of the Shire, both the pastoral and farming land-uses are situated in exactly the same volcanic landscape. So, while the greatest numbers of extant walls in the Shire were built as part the Clarkes’ vast *Rockbank* pastoral estate, the greatest concentrations are situated on medium and small sized farms. Another contrast between pastoral and farming properties evident in the fieldwork undertaken for this Study is that in all but one case (Clarke’s boundary wall No.F96 on Faulkners Road) the most substantial stone walls – the most ‘all-stone’ and the highest walls – are also to be found on farms and small grazing properties rather than on the large pastoral estates. Farms had a greater need for fencing, in order to separate stock from crops, and for construction of dairy yards, small dams, pigsties and cowsheds, than did large sheep-runs, which only required fencing of boundaries and large paddocks. This more intensive use of the land would also have meant that it was worth investing more in the land, including clearing the property of fieldstone.

At least three of the 21 selectors examined in the district (the Holden area) had stone coverage that was too expensive to clear. The Land Department inspector reported on Ellen Slattery’s selection, which appears to have been the worst: ‘I consider the land to be unfit for cultivation; it would cost from £20 to £30 per acre to clear some part of it, as it is a mass of rock.’⁶² While most of the volcanic plains would have cost much less than this to clear, even with a very conservative estimate of only £1 or £2 per acre, stone clearing would still have been a substantial cost likely to have been economical only for the more intensive land uses; that is, for farming rather than pastoralism.⁶³ Being unskilled work, farmers

(and their sons and itinerant labourers) would also be in a position to do it themselves cheaply.

So, even if there was sufficient fieldstone to build substantial stone walls, it was not always economical to clear it. In Australia the comparatively large size of landholdings, the high cost of fencing from scratch, and the predominantly pastoral land use, is likely to have had a significant influence on the form of stone wall built. Whereas in Europe there is a high proportion of high all-stone walls, in Australia paddocks with enough stone to build high all-stone walls may not have been economical to clear.⁶⁴ In the Melton Shire exceptions to this occurred in the larger and more successful mid-nineteenth century farms and small grazing properties (such as the Moylan, Beaty and Hopkins properties), on which some substantial stone walls (generally near the homestead) were constructed. The other major exceptions in Melton are the large and finely built Clarke dry stone wall dams. These, together with the magnificent boundary walls built by the Manifolds in the Western District to protect against rabbits, also support a conclusion that the use of stone was related not just to its quantity (the supply), but also to the special needs of the owners (the demand): for farming; or to countervail the peculiarly dry climate on Melton plains; or to combat the devastating rabbit plague on the Stony Rises. Cultural circumstances, for example, the local pool of skills in the Western District, and local traditions (such as belief in stone walls as a fire retardant), no doubt also played a part.⁶⁵

Analysis of the 21 Selection Act files provides some grounds for arguing that composite walls such as ‘post & wire and stone’ may in fact have been particularly associated with the Melton district. The printed

been light, suggest that he spent approximately £1-2 per acre on ‘clearing stone and sundries’ (PROV VPRS 625, Unit 273 (18276)).

64 Gary Vines, posting in Heritage Chat, 11/8/2005

65 While it has not been analysed, it would seem that many of the large stone walls in the Western District (eg, the Kolora, Derrinallum and Purumbete areas) were built by farmers c.1900 (Corangamite Arts Council, 1995, pp.76-142 and passim). The primary reason for the farmers’ high walls, no doubt, was the amount of stone on the properties. But the ‘demand’ side may also have contributed. This was a period when dairying was transforming from a cottage to an export industry: the quality of the soil, or the rainfall, might have made this investment in the land worthwhile at this time, whereas it did not in Melton Shire. This is clearly very speculative, but perhaps demonstrates a need for more general research on the relationship between economics of farming and fence construction.

61 Eg, Vines, 1995, *op cit*, p.58

62 PROV VPRS 625 Unit 304 (20712), Inspector Yeoman, 10/9/1875

63 Figures provided by selector Alexander McLeod, whose density of rocks appears to have been unremarkable and may have

£638.0.4 (c. £4/acre).³ T & J Moylan also purchased the similar sized property immediately south - Crown Allotment C at the same time.

Crown Allotment B, Section 27 on which the homestead was established, and adjacent Crown Allotment C, were the first of numerous contiguous allotments that the brothers purchased from the Crown and from neighbours. In 1855 John Moylan purchased from George Morris the 102 acre allotment immediately north of his homestead on which Wall A277 is constructed.⁴ In 1858 he purchased a 131 acre allotment that Martin Sullivan had just purchased from the Crown; this allotment, situated on the south east corner of Holden and Leakes Road, had no water frontage and was purchased for c. £3.10 acre.⁵ In the same years 'John Moylan of *Brookville*' (the original name of Mount Kororoit Farm) also purchased two properties of total area c.280 acres (Allotments B and C, Section 1, Parish of Holden), which were also contiguous with his northern boundary.⁶ In 1864 the Crown sold the allotments upon which Mount Kororoit was situated (Allotment D, Section 1 Parish of Holden, and Allotment E, Section 27 Parish of Kororoit): John Moylan was the purchaser of these allotments, c.179 acres in area.⁷

In the meantime Michael Moylan was purchasing additional small allotments to the immediate south of the main Moylan holdings. These lots were being off-loaded by purchasers of allotments created by the Victoria Freehold Land Society, which had subdivided of Section 22 and and part of Section 27 (Kororoit) into small and awkwardly shaped allotments. These purchases occurred as early as 1855 and continued until at least 1866.⁸ In 1879 John Moylan (who the conveyancing document advises was 'illiterate and unable to write') sold to Michael Moylan several of the family allotments, including the Allotment C, Section 27, Kororoit, which was adjacent to the homestead that Michael had established from his previous purchasers.

3 Parish Plan, Parish of Kororoit; and Torrens Application files.

4 VPRS 460/P0/33210. Torrens Application (John Moylan): 5/1/1902

5 *ibid*

6 *ibid*

7 Parish Plan, Parishes of Kororoit and Holden.

8 VPRS 460/P1/32416, Torrens Application (Michael Moylan). Also TA No.2933. One of the persons who sold to Michael Moylan was a Mr Tudgey. Perhaps this was the 'Mr Tugby' who is thought to be buried on View Monte (Mr Charles Finch, personal conversation 24/1/2002). Tudgey may have stayed on to work on the property.

This bluestone property overlooking the Kororoit Creek and set in a terraced garden of large trees, named *View Monte* by Michael, is now in ruins. Many of its mature exotic ornamental trees remain.

The Moylans were building up a large farm and grazing property. It was apparently not all smooth sailing however. In 1870 John and brother Thomas let the Supreme Court resolve a dispute they had over the original two allotments in which they had an 'undivided moiety'. The court awarded the homestead allotment to John and that to the south (allotment C) to Thomas. In 1874 (through intermediary William Sincock), John purchased allotment C from Margaret, the widow and administrator of Thomas' estate.⁹

In 1871 John Moylan had taken out a mortgage of £500 on his homestead block; this was discharged just a few years later - in 1874.¹⁰ It is possible that, as often occurred, this mortgage was used in part for property improvements, including construction of the weatherboard homestead that remains on the site today. Cameron records that John Moylan had a family of five sons and two daughters.¹¹

In 1876 the *Australasian* 'Travelling Reporter' provided a lengthy description of the activities and development of the property:-

'... we pass along the foot of a lofty hill called Mount Kororoit, and after travelling for about a mile and a half arrive at the fine grazing farm belonging to Mr John Moylan, who is resident of about 21 years standing. This property contains about 2000 acres and it is divided into 17 paddocks, the total length of fencing being 23 miles. Though now this farm is used entirely for grazing, a few years back it was usual to have 60 or 70 acres under crop every season and good returns were generally obtained. Within the last few years however it has been found more profitable to feed sheep and cattle, a less outlay being required for labour and the return being more certain.

The number of sheep kept is 2500, principally crossbred between merino ewes and Leicester rams. Mr Moylan is gradually working to the pure long wool class and has for several years been using imported Tasmanian rams from Mr Field's celebrated flock, many of the sheep at

9 VPRS 460/P0/33210. Torrens Application (John Moylan): 5/1/1902

10 *ibid*

11 Cameron, *loc cit*

the present time being nearly pure Leicesters. Some few years back, a trial was made with Oxford and South Downs, but though they were found to be very hardy and gave a good carcass, the wool was much shorter and less valuable than that obtained from animals with the Leicester blood in them. According to Mr Moylan's experience Leicesters are the most profitable kind of sheep being hardy in their constitutions yielding a large quantity of wool and producing a heavy carcass for the butcher.

There are about 90 head of cattle, a mixed herd but the Hereford breed predominating as this class is found to be more hardy and better adapted to the locality which is very much exposed, than shorthorns or other breeds. A good proportion of the herd are milking cows and dairying is carried on to some extent, buttermaking being the speciality.

About 70 acres of the pasture has been improved by the sowing of rye grass and white clover and it is the intention of the proprietor to lay down more land with them every season.

The proprietor's residence is a neat and commodious building, very pleasantly situated, the various outbuildings being substantial and conveniently arranged. In front of the residence is a garden and orchard of about two acres planted with a good variety of fruit trees, a belt of blue gums and native oaks [casuarinas] which are doing very well and answer the purpose admirably. Provision is made for a good supply of water by means of a large underground tank, measuring 16 feet in diameter by 18 feet in dept, bricked and cemented, which is never dry.¹²

This report confirms that the present homestead (built by John Moylan c.1872-1876), as well as the property's extensive fencing, were built by 1876.¹³ Most of the 23 miles (37 kilometres) of fencing referred to would have been dry stone walling, as 13 kilometres of walling remains in the precinct today, despite much having been removed.

The *Australasian* reporter then went on to note Michael (the brother of John Moylan) Moylan's farm immediately to the south:-

'The adjoining farm belongs to Mr Michael Moylan; a

brother to the owner of the last mentioned one and has been occupied by him for about 21 years. About 45 acres are under cultivation this season, but formerly it was usual to have about twice as much cropped every year. The land is subdivided into several paddocks by substantial fences and with the exception of the area under crop is all used for grazing. About 70 head of cattle are kept at the present time – a mixed herd with a good proportion of cows amongst them, whose produce is made into butter. There are several very good farm horses amongst them being a promising colt by Mr Lyle's Young Lord Clyde and another by Mr Fell's Scottish Chief.

An acre has been sown to lucerne which is doing very well and furnishes a good supply of food for the pigs who [sic] thrive upon it, receiving scarcely anything else except the refuse from the dairy. There is a very comfortable residence on this farm attached to which is a small garden; the various outbuildings are of a substantial description.¹⁴

This farm (View Monte) was at that stage smaller than John Moylan's, and comprised (at least) Crown Allotment D, Section 27, and CA A Section 21, Parish of Kororoit. This land includes Walls A261 and A263. These are not the high stone walls that are usually associated with cattle, although the above report notes that the property ran cattle and horses. (However, many walls on this property were removed by a later owner, and these may have included higher walls.)

• **The Moylans on the West Side of Kororoit Creek**

According to local memorialist Alec Cameron, writing in the early twentieth century, two of the three elder brothers owned farms on the east side of Kororoit Creek, while the farm of one (obviously Thomas) was on the west side of the creek.¹⁵ Thomas, despite his share in the Mount Kororoit Farm land, always gave his address as 115 Little Lonsdale Street West (Moylan Lane was named after him).¹⁶

During the mid 1860s the Moylan family had been busy staking out c.80 acre allotments on the opposite (west) bank of the Kororoit Creek that had been opened up for selection. The several Moylan families were large

12 The *Australasian*, 28th October 1876

13 See also Shire of Melton, *Ratebooks*, 1872-1899, re the homestead.

14 *ibid*

15 Cameron, *loc cit*.

16 VPRS 460/P0/33210. Torrens Application (John Moylan): 5/1/1902

(John Moylan had five sons and two daughters¹⁷) and many of their Christian names were repeated, especially between generations, so it is very difficult to know exactly which Moylan family was actually purchasing these allotments. (Some allotments also appear to have been later transferred between families.) However, five of the eight allotments with frontage to the west bank of Kororoit Creek were selected by Moylans.¹⁸ These included MP (Michael Patrick) and T (Thomas) Moylan, who may have been the elder brothers themselves (who had somehow contrived not to have owned other land). Others however were definitely second generation family members:- MH (Michael Henry), M (Mary), and Margaret who was the sister of 'Michael' (although it is not known which Michael).¹⁹

By 1892 the ownership of all of the 8 contiguous c.80 acre selection allotments with frontage to the west side of Kororoit Creek was given as 'Moylan'.²⁰ On one of these allotments is a small and substantially intact bluestone cottage overlooking the Kororoit Creek, with the excellent Wall No.A275 in front of it. On 31st May 1866 a Selection licence for this property was issued to John Mangovan (possibly Mugavin), who described himself as a 'farm servant' who owned no land. He duly obtained freehold possession of it on 3rd April 1871.²¹ Fortunately this property, Crown Allotment 2A, Section 17, Parish of Kororoit, is one of the best documented of the selection properties on the west side of the creek, which provides some background into the Moylan interest in it.²²

How the Moylans came by Mangovan's property, and perhaps some others (M Carrige, and S Parry also originally selected two of these 8 allotments), might have been by a widely practised abuse of the Selection Acts. Of the eight adjacent allotments with Kororoit Creek frontage that had been put up for selection, two pairs had virtually consecutive application numbers, suggesting that they were applied for at the same time. These were application number 6242 by MP Moylan, which allotment was adjacent to that obtained by application number 6244 of an S Parry. Application number 5860 by T Moylan was adjacent to

application number 5861 by John Mangovan. In 1871, the conditions for improvement having been complied with, Crown Bailiff H McCann approved Mangovan's claim to freehold for the allotment, but not without reservation. While reporting that he was 'not aware of any objection to sale', he reported on 7th July 1871 that:-

'I think there is hardly a doubt but this allotment was selected in Mungovan's name as a dummy of John Moylan as he was not in the district at the time it was pegged out and applied for; but a dispute having arisen between the parties Mungovan has continued to hold the land and reside on it.

In my previous report respecting improvements etc I have made a slight mistake owing to the fencing on the south side of the block not being on the boundary line of the block held by Thomas Moylan. I have sketched out the plan the situation of the house and fencing; the house being on the boundary line of the adjoining block. I now value the fencing and half house and gardens at £225.

As the statements about the fencing on the north side of the block are so conflicting I have given Mangovan one half and Mary Moylan [on the north side] the other, as I do not see any other way of settling the matter.

I may also state that I believe Mangovan is only holding this land for Thomas Moylan but the whole affair is so mixed up that it is impossible to arrive at any definite conclusions.²³

The map that McCann appended to his report shows the existing bluestone cottage. However the cottage straddled the boundary of Thomas Moylan's lease on Crown Allotment No.3 to the south. Although the bailiff suspected that Mangovan was a dummy for John Moylan, the evidence of their consecutive application numbers, and the house being built across their boundary, suggests that it might have been Thomas Moylan (who was in dispute with John at the time) with whom Mangovan had been working from the beginning. In fact it is not apparent that any other member of the John Moylan senior family selected these allotments. Indeed, when John Moylan senior transferred and bequeathed his estate to his family in 1879 and again in 1888, none of his property was situated on the west side of Kororoit Creek.²⁴

17 Cameron, *loc cit*

18 Allotments 1B, 2, 3, 3A, and 4B.

19 PROV VPRS 627/P/42 (File 4136/31)

20 Shire Map Series (1892), Parish of Kororoit

21 *ibid*; PROV VPRS 627/P0/61, Application No.5861, Section 31 Land Act 1869.

22 Parish Plan, Parish of Kororoit.

23 PROV VPRS 627/P0/61 (File 5861/31)

24 VPRS 460/P0/33210. Torrens Application (John Moylan):

So, while by 1892 the Mangovan selection was in the ownership of 'Moylan', which particular Moylan family this is is uncertain. In 1873 the executors of the late Thomas Moylan advertised the sale of 461 acres of 'superior agricultural and grazing land situated on the Kororoit Creek', and 'comprising cottage, dairy etc.'²⁵ This was likely the Mangovan cottage. In 1901 when Mount Kororoit Farm (the John Moylan property) was surveyed, the survey still did not include any land on the west side of the creek, so it is likely that the property was purchased by Michael Moylan.²⁶

Ratebooks indicate that by 1899 an Arthur Moylan was resident in the former Mangovan cottage.²⁷ Michael Moylan had a son Arthur;²⁸ it is possible but unlikely that John or Thomas also had a son by that name. In 1905, when Frederick Finch purchased the late Michael Moylan's *View Monte*, Irishman Steve O'Callaghan, who was building stone walls for the Moylans, was reported to be living in the bluestone cottage that had previously been occupied by Arthur Moylan.²⁹ It is likely that Arthur Moylan constructed the adjacent weatherboard cottage (now derelict) either in the late nineteenth century or very early twentieth century. Today the property is once again part of the larger Mount Kororoit Farm.

• The Last Years of the Moylans

Thomas Moylan died in 1871 (his farm on the west side of the creek was put up for sale in November 1873³⁰), and Michael Moylan of *View Monte* died in 1882. In 1879 and again in 1888 John Moylan senior transferred his farm to his sons Michael (the mechanic mentioned above) and John junior. John senior's wife Margaret died in 1885 aged 68.³¹ John senior died in 1893, aged 83 years. He had been a Melton Shire Councillor, and a Trustee of the Melton Cemetery. He was described in the local paper as being 'highly respected'.³²

By 1892 the several branches of the family owned most the land north of Finches Road, south of Holden Road, west of Leakes Road and east of Ryans Road.³³

5/1/1902

25 The *Express*, 22/11/1873

26 Lands Victoria, Torrens Application 33210, Plan of Survey (11/10/1901)

27 Shire of Melton, *Ratebook*, 1899

28 The *Melton Express*, 21/12/1918

29 Mr Charles Finch, personal conversation, 24/1/2002.

30 The *Express*, 22/11/1873

31 The *Express*, 31/10/1885

32 *Melton Express*, 29/7/1893

33 Finch, *op cit*; the Shire Map Series (1892), Parish of Kororoit.

His sons, bachelor brothers Michael and John junior shared the house with their unmarried sister Elizabeth. The *Express* carried the following report on the property in 1899:-

'Brookville the residence of Messrs Moylan Brothers is situated on the east bank of the Kororoit Creek and at the foot of Mount Kororoit. It is a beautiful wooden building containing eight rooms with about an acre of garden which is tastefully laid out near the house with flowers and fruit trees.

There is a plantation of pine and blue gums. Some of the pines were killed during last summer's heat.

The outbuildings which consist of stable, buggy shed, carpenter's shop, store room, etc., are all well worth looking at. There is a place for everything and everything is in its place.

Mr Moylan has had a new wool shed erected which, I am sure may be termed the model shed of West Bourke. Everything that could be thought of is there to lighten the labour of the shearers.

The wool press I may mention can be worked easily by one young man through some patent invention of Mr Moylan's own handiwork.

Mr Moylan keeps to sheep but he also has some cattle. I saw two young shorthorn heifers just calved and had been reared in Gippsland. All would tip the scale at between 9-10 hundredweight.

There is a splendid view in every direction.

The Messrs and Miss Moylan are noted for their hospitality and I am sure they would give anyone a cordial welcome who wished to see their beautiful homestead.

Their paddocks are also the favourite hunting grounds in Victoria.³⁴

In addition to its size, the beauty of its redgums, mount and creek, and the hospitality of its owners, the property's many substantial dry stone walls would have contributed greatly to its popularity amongst hunt clubs.

A few of the northern allotments were owned by WJ Clarke by 1892.

34 The *Express*, 30/9/1899

Michael (a locally renowned mechanic/inventor³⁵) died in 1901 after three days illness, and transferred his substantial real and personal assets to his brother John.³⁶ He was 40 years old. In recording the death, the *Melton Express* commented that:-

'The deceased had good mechanical ideas and had many things about the place made to his design amongst which was a wool press which one man could operate easily, also self operating gates, etc and also many other things which would take a more able pen than mine to particularize. He was unmarried and resided with a brother and sister up to the time of his death which took place on Monday.'

He was also an ex-Councillor of the Melton Shire Council and was much respected by all who knew him.³⁷

As with all of the John Moylan family, he was interred in Melbourne.

In 1905 Margaret (widow of Michael senior), sold *View Monte* to Frederick Finch, a Beaufort labourer who had struck it rich in the 'Sons of Freedom' mine at Eurambeen.³⁸ She died at her son-in-law's residence in Newmarket in 1918, aged 88.³⁹

Spinster Elizabeth Moylan died at 'Mount Kororoit' in 1917, aged 66 years.⁴⁰ Her bachelor John junior died in 1924, after which a sale notice for the 'Mount Kororoit Estate, Melton' appeared in the *Express*:-

'... Mt Kororoit comprises the richest volcanic and red chocolate soils, the greater portion being level to slightly undulating, with nicely sheltered creek gullies. Portions of the land have at times been cultivated and the whole estate is in great heart, thoroughly cleaned up for grazing and carrying luxuriant pasturage.'

... The Homestead on No.1 Lot comprises comfortable weather board dwelling of six rooms, kitchen, extensive outbuildings, substantial woolshed and wool press, stabling, machinery and buggy shed etc., all well planned in the homestead yard. Stock yards, large

*underground tank, garden, ornamental trees, etc.'*⁴¹

The accompanying Melton Report notes the estate has been in the hands of the family for over 75 years. The Clearing Sale notice lists the estate's interest in Border Leicester sheep. John Moylan had bred from ewes of the Sutherland, Staughton and Hodge flocks while a number of Shorthorn cattle and dairy cows were also featured.

And so ended the Moylan families' associations with the area. By the end of the century the family had also acquired the balance of the allotments originally taken up by the seven other selectors west of Kororoit Creek, as far as Ryans Road.⁴² Nineteenth century ratebooks indicate that there had been approximately five separate dwellings on the property during the nineteenth century. By 1916, as now, there were three: *Mount Kororoit Farm*, *View Monte* (ruinous), and the adjacent bluestone and weatherboard cottages (MHS Place No.144).⁴³

During their time the Moylans had been leading participants in Melton sporting, social, religious, and political life. They were noted sportsmen, participating in Melton's early Queen's Birthday sports (Michael was one of three foot runners in a hurdle race to break a leg). The family had long been associated with the development of the Catholic Church in the locality.⁴⁴ John senior and Michael junior (son of John) had both been Shire of Melton Councillors. John was described as 'highly respected',⁴⁵ and Michael had been noted locally for his inventiveness.

The Mount Kororoit Farm Moylans were always known for their hospitality.⁴⁶ They had been associated with the Hunt Club meets on the Keilor Plain, and John senior entertained the Vice Regal party at the Mount Kororoit Farm homestead.⁴⁷ John junior was also interested in racing and owned several jumpers.⁴⁸ Along with a great number of the male population of the Melton district, they had also enjoyed greyhound coursing. The Plumpton Paddock was developed with their assistance, coursing dogs having been bred on the property.⁴⁹

35 Cameron, *loc cit*; the *Australasian*, 28th October 1876. It seems that several of the Moylans had a gift for ingenuity, which may have been a factor in the unorthodox construction of many of the walls on the property (which have stood the test of time).
36 VPRS 460/P0/33210. Torrens Application (John Moylan): 5/1/1902
37 *The Express*, 1/6/1901
38 Finch, *op cit*
39 *Melton Express*, 21/12/1918
40 *The Melton Express*, 15/2/1917

41 *The Melton Express*, 29/11/1924
42 Shire Map Series (1892), Parish of Kororoit.
43 Army Ordnance Map 1916: Sunbury
44 Bilszta, *op cit*.
45 *The Express*, 29/7/1893
46 Cameron, *loc cit*
47 *ibid*
48 Cameron, *loc cit*
49 Bilszta, *op cit*

Later, John junior was President of the Melton Coursing Club; Club meetings were held on his property, and he donated several cups as prizes.⁵⁰

John Moylan junior appears also to have been active, at least as a host, in the introduction of early aviation in Victoria. A combination of the Moylans' technical mindedness, their hospitality, and Houdini's first controlled sustained Australian flight at nearby Diggers Rest in 1910, were probably the background to a major early aviation gathering held at Mount Kororoit Farm. Photographs dated 1913-14 record the 'Austin Equitorial Balance Aeroplane camp' on 'John Moylan's Mt Kororoit estate'. This event was probably associated with a local historical record that a plane flew off the top of Mt Kororoit in 1913.⁵¹

(J.T. Collins Collection, La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria)

John Moylan's 'Mt. Kororoit' estate, Melton, 1913-1914.

(Houdini's plane had been housed in a similar tent a few years before.)



In 1973 photographer John T Collins took a series of photographs of the Mount Kororoit Farm homestead buildings which would serve as a guide for any future restoration work of the buildings.⁵²

The complex of early farm buildings on Mount Kororoit Farm is itself of borderline State heritage significance.

50 Cameron, *loc cit*

51 Australian National Library 'Picture Australia', State Library of Victoria photograph 1093259.

52 State Library of Victoria: 'Melton: Mt Kororoit' (2/3/1973)

Their significance is enhanced by their broader cultural landscape setting, which includes the 1860s bluestone selector's cottage, and an outstanding legacy of dry stone walls set underneath their source, Mount Kororoit.

Mount Kororoit Farm was identified as being of significance at a community workshop held in association at Dunvegan, Melton, on 7th September 2001.

The Dry Stone Walls

Most of the walls in this precinct were built on the Moylan properties, and the balance on the Clarke estate. The Melton Dry Stone Walls Heritage Study has shown that approximately 45% of the dry stone walls surviving in the Shire today were erected as part of the Clarke Rockbank pastoral estate. Of the balance, it is estimated that three larger farmers – the Beatys on Blackhills Road (8.5%), Hopkins & Farragher on Hopkins Road (7.4%), and the Moylans on Mount Kororoit Road (5.6%), between them built another 21.5% of the remaining walls. The residual one third of the walls in the Shire were built mainly by smaller farmers and selectors.

• The Moylan Walls

Most of the 23 miles (37 kilometres) of fencing that is noted on the Moylan property in 1876 would have been stone walling. Some 13 kilometres of dry stone walling remains today, despite the fact that much is known to have been removed.

One of these walls (Wall A273) would certainly be that which protected the garden and orchard referred to in 1876. It is the main legacy of this garden, of which only one or two ornamental trees, and nothing of the orchard, survives. In addition to its structural qualities, it is therefore also significant as an unusually substantial legacy record of nineteenth century farm practice. A significant proportion of the walls that survive on the property are higher walls (c.1400 mm) that are associated with cattle (as distinct from sheep) in the Western District, and this was almost certainly their purpose on this property.

On the west side of the creek Crown Bailiff McCann's 1871 drawing of the Mangovan selection showed nearly 2 kilometres of 'stone wall', a portion of which remains today as Wall A275.⁵³ This wall then was built between

53 Some 90 chains of these walls were credited to Mangovan, as

1866 and 1871. It is a well-constructed high wall in the orthodox style, very different to the walls on the east side of the creek (John Moylan's Mount Kororoit Farm) which are either double-single walls, with heavy stones above smaller ones, or composite stone and post & wire(rail). Wall A275 thus appears to have been constructed by a different builder than most of the walls on the property. While Mangovan may have been this builder, his description of himself as a 'farm servant' rather than a professional waller, and the professional construction of the wall, suggests that he was not.

The fieldnotes of surveyor John Jenkins who surveyed the John Moylan property in 1901 describe the boundary fencing, and also show parts of a number other fences:⁵⁴

- Near the homestead on Mount Kororoit Road Jenkins marks 'stone walls' in the position of those identified as in this Study as Wall Nos.A277, 274, 273, 272. These are the major walls double-single walls at the western end of Mount Kororoit Road.
- At the east end of Mount Kororoit Road (southern side) is marked: 'Post & Rail fence'. This is the wall marked as A271, which is now mostly post & wire and stone, with sections of the original post and rail and stone remaining. So, either Jenkins did not mark the stone wall, perhaps because it is very low, or else the stone was or added later.
- Parallel and to the south of A271 the long internal paddock wall A260 is marked as 'stone wall' (only the east end of this wall is recorded). Today this wall is a well built composite stone wall, with post & wire (or mesh) today, but previously with post and two rails. This inconsistency is a mystery. Further archaeological investigation of the wall (including comparison of the stone base with that of the all-stone wall further west) is likely to provide useful information regarding fencing practices, including the alteration of walls, in the Melton district (and perhaps more widely) at the turn of the century. It is also possible that the inconsistency is the result of a mistake by the surveyor, who perhaps presumed that the all-stone wall at the west end of A260 continued to the east, or else that the stone base was

some were shared with the Mary Moylan selection to his north. They were valued at 30 shillings per chain, the standard rate of building stone walls at the time.

54 Lands Victoria, Torrens Application 33210, John Jenkins' Field Notes, 11/10/1901

the basis of him describing it as a 'stone' wall (unlikely given his other description). Presuming that it was not a mistake, it must have been that the wall was demolished, or mostly demolished, and a post and rail (and wire) fence added after 1901. This would contradict other information regarding post & wire being cheaper than post & rail at that time; such a decision may have been influenced by the obvious tradition of post & rail on the property. A proof that walls were altered in this way at this time, and the possible reasons for such, would also be very useful.

- Parallel and to the south of A260 the property's long southern boundary fence A261 is described in 1901 as being:- 'wire fence' at its eastern end, 'post & rail & wall' in its middle part, and 'stone wall' at west end. Currently Wall A261 is a post & wire & good (quite high and well built) double wall. The stone wall has neat and uniform coping that would indicate a discrete job, a purpose-built 'half-wall', rather than a gradual accumulation of stones to clear fields (as is recorded as having taken place elsewhere). It is highly unlikely that the surveyor made a mistake in this case, as he so meticulously described the three different types of fencing that made up this boundary wall.

If, as seems likely, the stone wall was added later to the base of the fence, this again raises questions of interest regarding contemporary fencing, and changes to fencing. Building such a neat wall, indicating a distinct job, implies a specific purpose; perhaps to keep sheep from crawling under the wires. Possible evidence of separate wall and fence construction is evident in that the wall in some places infringes on the lower wire. But again there is opportunity for more detailed archaeological examination providing significant information regarding the staging and form of fence/wall construction, and changes in construction c.1900.

- Jenkins marked the western side of Leakes Road to the north of Mount Kororoit (at that time owned by Clarke) as having a 'stone wall'; this wall no longer exists. On the same alignment to the south of Mount Kororoit he marked a 'P&R fence'. This post & rail fence partly survives today (its posts largely intact, but without any rails) as fence A278.⁵⁵

55 This 1901 post & rail fence had been designated a 'stone wall' by surveyor Claude Purchas in 1899. Either Purchas was wrong, or this is further evidence of wholesale conversion of stone walls

Part of 1916 Ordnance Map (Sunbury), showing the location of walls in the Mt Kororoit Dry Stone Walls Precinct at that time. The walls identified in this Study are highlighted in yellow; it can be seen that these comprise the majority of the original walls. (In addition several walls that were mistakenly omitted from the 1916 Map have also been marked in yellow.)



Charles Finch reports that Irishman Steve O'Callaghan was building walls for the Moylans when his father purchased the property in 1905. His son Steve met Frederick Finch during World War One. In 1905 O'Callaghan was camped in the bluestone cottage that had previously been occupied by Arthur Moylan, and originally John Mangovin.⁵⁶ It is presumed that O'Callaghan was working on the former Michael Moylan senior property, and building new stone walls. He may have been responsible for conversions such as that which perhaps took place on Wall A261 (which was the boundary fence between the original John and Michael Moylan properties).

It is also possible that O'Callaghan built some of the other all-stone walls on the property today. He may have built, or repaired/rebuilt, Wall A275 in front of the bluestone cottage in which he was living (it is after all the only one of the original Mangovin walls to have survived). Similarly, it is possible that he built other Moylan stone walls on the west side of the creek, such as A264, A265, or the stone causeway in that paddock.

The dry stone wall causeway built over a gully on the

to post & rail fencing by the Moylans c.1900.

56 Charles Finch, personal conversation, 8/9/2006; *Melton Express*, 21/12/1918. This is likely to have been Michael Moylan's son Arthur. (Although it is also possible that Thomas had a son by the same name).

west side of the creek has had one of its dry stone wall barriers/balustrades removed by Charles Finch in order to move large modern farm machinery across it.⁵⁷ This was one of the common reasons for the loss of dry stone walls in the mid twentieth century. Also at this time Mr Finch put the stone wall on the '50 acre paddock', on the northern boundary of *View Monte*, through the stone crushers. (The western end of Wall A261 was an all-stone wall.) The dry stone walls (light honeycomb stones) on the west side of Leakes Road shown on turn of the century plans were similarly crushed for road stone, and also used for landscaping for the original Chadstone shopping centre (in turn removed in a later redevelopment).⁵⁸

• The Clarke Walls

Unlike farming properties, the vast majority of *Rockbank* walls were boundary, rather than internal paddock, walls. Three of the walls in the precinct are in fact such walls: Walls A259 and A266 were built on the road which divided the Clarke and Moylan properties; and Wall R242 was built on the Clarke Holden Road boundary.

We have a record of R242. On 8th August 1899 it is marked as a wall (as distinct from a fence) on the field notes for the survey of the adjacent Clarke estate.⁵⁹ Henry Rendall of Rockbank, Station Overseer, attested in a statutory declaration that 'the fences or walls' shown on the plan had been erected and continuously maintained 'for the period of 15 consecutive years ... at the least' (the time of his residence in the area). So, the boundary wall had been erected by 1885 (and probably considerably longer).⁶⁰

The only other known historical record of a Clarke wall in the vicinity is the west side of Leakes Road, south of Holden Road, which was marked as a 'wall' by Purchas in 1899.⁶¹

57 Charles Finch, personal conversation, 21/1/2002

58 *ibid*

59 Lands Victoria, Torrens Application AP32123, Claude Purchas' Field Notes, 8/8/1899

60 PROV VPRS 460/P/32123, Henry Rendall, 14/7/1900.

61 Lands Victoria, Torrens Application AP32123, Claude Purchas' Field Notes, 27/7/1899. Note that on consolidated plan of 12th August 1899 Purchas shows it as a fence.

Thematic Context / Comparative Analysis:

Shire of Melton Historical Themes: ‘Pastoral’, ‘Farming’

Comparable Places in Victoria:

There are very few dry stone walls on the Victorian Heritage Register, the most notable being the Bessiebelle Sheep Washes and Yards (H2033). While even this is dry stone wall whose significance is related partly to its special (now rare) purpose, all other dry stone walls on the VHR appear to be subsidiary to places identified for other reasons, such as homesteads, cemeteries or other reserves. The most comparable type of dry stone wall on the VHR would be associated with the Wuchatsch Farm (H0950), but again, the dry stone wall is a subsidiary part of the ethnic architectural and broader historical values of the place, without any other special or intrinsic qualities. There are many dry stone walls included in the Victorian Heritage Inventory, but these are not generally researched, compared, or assessed, in terms of their significance as dry stone walls.

The National Trust has classified the Stony Rises (L10273) essentially for its geological and natural landscape values rather than the cultural value of its dry stone walls. Otherwise (apart from the Bessiebelle Sheepwash), the most comparable place recorded by the National Trust is the Woolert Village Reserve (B7161), which is the boundary of an early township reserve preserved by a remnant dry stone wall in poor condition, and the nearby Clonard Homestead (B7162), which similarly includes a few modest dry stone walls in fair-poor condition. Otherwise, as with Heritage Victoria, the dry stone walls on its register are associated with pastoral homesteads (often as garden walls), or part of other complexes such as lighthouses.

A number of individual walls have been identified in more recent municipal heritage studies, including Hume, Wyndham, Moorabool, Colac-Otway, and Southern Grampians.

The two previous specific studies of dry stone walls undertaken in Victoria provide the best foundation for comparative assessment. These are the Gary Vines / Living Museum of the West study, *Built To Last; An Historical and Archaeological Survey of Dry Stone Walls*

in Melbourne’s Western Region (1990); and the survey undertaken by the Corangamite Arts Council in 1992 which was used in its publication *If These Walls Could Talk*, first published in 1995. Neither of these studies was intended to be comprehensive, but rather to canvass a cross section of walls in their districts, describe different types, and identify the most outstanding examples.

Thus the possibility of categorical comparison of the Mount Kororoit Precinct at a statewide level is limited by the *ad hoc* identification of most dry stone walls by heritage agencies, and the limited extent of previous dry stone wall typological studies in other parts of Victoria. However the two studies that have been done do cover the principal dry stone wall region in Victoria and Australia – the Camperdown (Pomborneit, Kolora and Derrinallum) region – and Melbourne’s western region, another major region of dry stone walls in Victoria, and the region which enables the most direct comparison with the walls in the Melton Study.

From all this comparative information it is evident that the Mount Kororoit Precinct contains excellent examples of some of the most rare or most historical types of walls in Victoria: the galloway-wall (or galloway-dyke, dyke being the Scottish word for dry stone wall), and ‘double-single’ walls. It also has a dry stone causeway, of which only one other example is known in Victoria.

- Galloway Dyke (Wall). No other example of this historically important type of wall was identified by Vines. One example of a pure galloway-wall was identified in the Corangamite Arts Council survey, at Pomborneit, where it was described as a ‘Single Wall’, being built one stone thick over its length of 300 metres, and 1400 mm high. This wall is also distinguished for its serpentine plan, which is presumed to have added lateral strength. It is sometimes referred to locally as ‘the crochet wall’ due to its very open structure.⁶²

Walls A272 and A276 in the Mount Kororoit Precinct are variations of the galloway-wall. The former, in only fair condition, is rare in that, like the above wall, parts of it are single wall. It is longer than the Corangamite wall, but its structure is not as open, it is not as high, and it does not have a serpentine plan. Wall A276 has a double lower wall, but its interstices are open as in a galloway-wall.

62 Corangamite Arts Council, *op cit*, pp.12-13, 23.

- **Double-Single Walls.** Two Derrinallum walls are identified as 'Galloway Dykes' in the Camperdown survey.⁶³ They appear closer in form to the type of walls described as 'Double-Single' walls in the Mount Kororoit Precinct (Walls A277, A274, A273), in that they have a double lower wall and several courses of single upper wall, but without interstices as is the defining characteristic of a galloway-wall. The Derrinallum walls are 300 and 500 metres long, and 1600 mm high, which compares to the two most intact Mount Kororoit examples, which are 500 and 400 metres long, and 1400-1500 mm high. Some of the Mount Kororoit Precinct walls of this description are distinguished by massive coverband stones that divide the double from the single parts of the wall.
- **Causeway.** A similar dry stone wall structure to the Mount Kororoit Precinct causeway is identified at Stoneyford in the Camperdown study.⁶⁴ The Stoneyford causeway is larger than that in the Mount Kororoit Precinct. The Mount Kororoit Precinct causeway has a dry stone wall balustrade/barrier (one missing) which the Stoneyford causeway does not, and also has a slight curve.

The fact that two of the four photographs on the cover of *If These Walls Could Talk* are the 'Galloway Dyke' and 'Single Wall' is indicative of the significance for these types of walls within the outstanding Western District dry stone wall oeuvre.

In conclusion the Mount Kororoit Precinct contains an excellent group of rare types of walls, as well as some outstanding examples of all-stone and composite dry stone walls, in a single compact cultural landscape which also includes a volcanic eruption point of high geological significance, a highly intact and significant farm complex, and an intact selector's stone cottage in a landscape context of high integrity.

Comparable Places in Shire of Melton:

The precinct is one of the densest concentrations of dry stone walls in the Shire of Melton. It is unique in the Shire in terms of the number, variety and quality of its all-stone walls, for the quality of its composite walls, and for its quantity of former post & rail fences and composite walls.

63 *ibid*, pp.12-13, 25; see also pp. 71, 73. See also National Trust of Australia (Victoria) File No.5490, 'Dundonnell'.

64 *ibid*, p.32

The most comparable precincts in the Shire of Melton are those precincts centred on eruption points:- the Mount Cottrell Precinct, the Mount Atkinson Precinct, and the She-Oak Hill Precinct. It is also comparable, to a lesser extent, to the 'gateway' precincts, in particular the Greigs Road Precinct, the Western Highway Precinct, the Melton Highway Precinct, and the Robinsons Road Precinct.

The precinct contains the largest collection of remnant post & rail fences (posts only, no rails survive) in the Shire. The only more intact example identified in Stage One of the Melton Heritage Study in 2002 was a length of about 750 metres on Riding Boundary Road, which retained several short bays with remnants of rails (MHS Stage One Place No.429).

The walls in this area were not surveyed in Vines' 1990 study of dry stone walls in the nine municipalities of Melbourne's western region.

Condition:

The walls in the precinct are generally in good condition.

Integrity:

The integrity of the walls in the precinct varies, from low, moderate to high. Archaeological investigation would help to establish the extent to which the structural type of many dry stone walls (especially from all-stone to composite walls) have been altered over time.

Recommendations:

Precinct recommended for nomination to Victorian Heritage Register

Individual walls are recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Heritage Overlay.

Precinct recommended for inclusion in the Melton Planning Scheme Significant Landscape Overlay.

Other Recommendations:

It is recommended that a Dry Stone Wall Conservation Management Plan be conducted for the precinct as a matter of the highest priority. While it might be seen fit to conduct this jointly with a broader CMP that includes the buildings on site (the Mount Kororoit

Homestead is highly significant; the bluestone cottage also important), the dry stone wall component should be undertaken with the assistance of a professional dry stone waller who would assess threats to the walls (especially from rabbit burrows), and help to develop a feasible conservation program. It would also propose a management regime for walls that are now in multiple ownership. The CMP might include an education component, and incentives for works by owners. The CMP could also undertake preliminary assessment of the fabric of the walls in order to provide further information about fence and wall construction and change in the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Wall A277.

An outstanding Double-Single All Stone Wall: long and high, and in excellent condition.



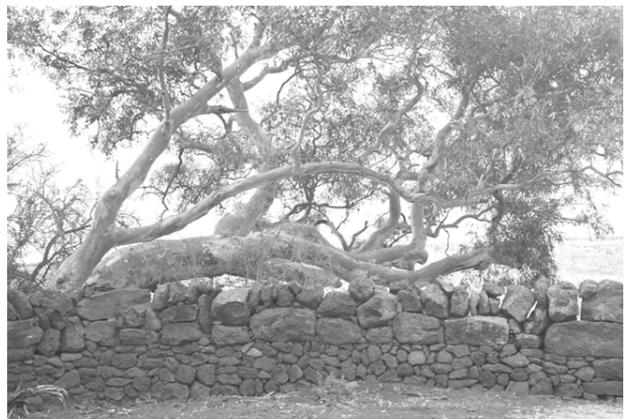
Wall A277.

The stones below are very tightly packed (other sections of the wall have even smaller stones more tightly packed). Stones on this side of the wall are more covered in moss; on the opposite other side some 10-15% of the surface is exposed quarried stone surfaces.



Wall A277.

A union of Mt Kororoit stone and Kororoit Creek River Red Gum. Built in the distinctive Double- Single Wall style used by the Moylans, with courses of massive single stones atop a double wall of closely packed small stones.



Wall A277.

Some gate openings were constructed of massive coarsely shaped stones.



Wall A272.

This part of the wall is entirely of single stone width, in a crochet or filigree pattern, in the style of the original Galloway Wall.



Wall A272.

A rare solid stone vertical gatepost, a traditional style. This is one of only two known examples remaining in the Shire.



Wall A272.

This part of the wall has a lower half of small double stone, with massive blocks at half height forming a base or coverband for a course of large, mainly vertically positioned, stones, in a style resembling the more common (half) Galloway wall. Mt Kororoit Farm homestead in the background.



Wall A275.

This wall features in the foreground of the cover photograph of this citation. Built by or for selector John Mangovin in the late 1860s. It is a well-built orthodox double wall, but (in the manner of most walls built of local round stone) without coursing. Extensive portions of the wall are intact, but other portions are dilapidated.



Wall A272.

With Wall A273, in the distinctive Moylan style, perpendicular to it. (Wall A273 was almost certainly the orchard / garden wall referred to in 1876). Not visible here are blackthorns which overgrow portions of Wall A272, and which might be vestiges of original wall planting.



Wall A275.

Showing one of the causes of its deterioration: undermining by rabbit burrows.



Wall A274.

Double-Single All Stone Wall, although separated by shearing and farm yards, is on the same alignment as Wall A277, and may have been built at the same time.



Wall A276.

Another Double-Single Wall with Galloway upper half. With the quarry face behind (perhaps the source of some of the stone used on the walls on the property) it forms a stock paddock.



Wall A279.

Ryans Road. A modified All Stone Double wall. Mt Kororoit in background.



Wall A258.

Ryans Road. A composite Post & Rail & Stone Wall, with low double wall carefully built with large coping stones. (Destroyed in 2009).



Wall A260.

Running west from Leakes Road. Excellent example of a composite Post & Rail & Stone Fence. The low wall appears to be professionally built.



Wall A261.

Running west from Leakes Road. An excellent original Post & Wire and Stone wall. Its large coping stones are uniform and placed at a vertical angle.



Wall 259.

Finches Road. Part of now fragmented Clarke Rockbank Estate boundary wall.



Wall A260.

The opposite (western) end of this long wall is of All Stone Double construction.



Wall A271.

Mt Kororoit Road. The remnant original Post & Rail & Stone wall with rabbit netting (top) has been converted into a Post & Wire & Stone wall (bottom). The wall base is a traditionally built double wall construction.



This rare dry stone causeway over a gully (near Wall A264 north of Finches Road) has a slight curve. Its upper courses are in fact barriers to prevent vehicles running over its side. The opposite side barrier was pushed over to accommodate larger farm machinery.



Typical early Melton small dry stone beached dam, on Ryans Road at junction of Walls A279, 280 and 258. The dam is marked as 'Water Hole' on a 1916 map of the district.



1860s Selectors Cottage, with derelict later weatherboard cottage. Wall A275 is in behind the camera.

