

Chapter 9

THE BUCKLAND ERA

Looking down on the lake I thought it was the nicest and prettiest place I had ever seen. I decided there and then, that I would settle and live here if I could get land. These were the words spoken by Fred Buckland on his first visit to Mallacoota in 1900.

Frederick Herbert Buckland was born at Newbridge on the Loddon River in 1862 to William Henry Buckland and Jane Buckland (nee Venables). His parents were pioneers of Wycheproof and after a while they shifted to Moe where they started a general store and importing business and Fred worked on the railways between Moe and Bairnsdale. In 1892 Fred moved to Delegate where he selected a large acreage and named it *Kirkenong* and it was here he met and married, Helena Margaret Begley, the eldest of her family of 13, in 1897. Over the course of the next 24 years, they had 10 children with the first, Frank, being born in 1898 and the last one, Dorothy, in 1922. In 1900 they decided to make another move and sold *Kirkenong*, which was cut up into a number of farms, and came to Mallacoota where Fred bought *Kerbeethong* (sic) from Carl Mattsson for 500 pounds. He made the trip on horseback and Helena drove a buggy with her two children, Frank & Ted who was a baby in arms - both children having been born at Bombala. They stayed the first night at Bondi (now Rockton) with Rixon; the second night at Timbillica with Jack Allan. The next stop was Gipsy Point, where they stayed some days before

going to *Karbeethong*. Prior to coming to Mallacoota Fred had worked with Edward Lees, district surveyor, at Gelantipy prior to Lees taking up his selection at *Fairhaven*. Their other children, Roy, Nell, Emily, Freda, Neil and Beatty were all born at Mallacoota.

Fred bought a number of farms around the area and not long after he arrived at Mallacoota he purchased *Dead Finish* on the Top Lake from Harry Cape, which he later sold to the Stocks family. The property was eventually sold to Duke of Dukes' Dock, Melbourne and is still in the family today. In 1911, he bought *the Bluff* now known as *Redbanks* at Genoa from Adolphus Switzer but did not live there until 1920 where he remained until 1931 when he sold to a Havard. After the sale, he returned to *Karbeethong* until he eventually sold it to Joe Cramp Snr, but two years later it was back in his possession.

Fred brought sheep down from the Monaro in 1913 and grazed them on the plains between Shipwreck Creek and Mallacoota, yarding them overnight to protect them from the roaming dingoes. They also had a dairy in the old Devlin house and ran the cows on what is now the Mallacoota township between the years of 1914 and 1918. During World War Two he had the contract to build dispersal areas for the Air Force where aircraft could be hidden from the enemy, but after the bombing of Darwin where the Japanese concentrated on bombing the dispersal areas, his contract was withdrawn.

On 8th September 1920 Fred purchased *Marshmead* from Charles David and while he only had it for about two years it remained in the Buckland family for almost 70 years. He also bought the by now empty *Federal* Hotel from the abandoned Yambulla mining settlement.

Around the turn of the century, when it had been considered there was payable gold at Yambulla, the *Federal* Hotel was built. This was a substantial two-storey building built of timber and iron and was the social centre for the miners and their families. In 1908 the Licensing Court required the inside walls to be completed with pine lining and to be painted, including the kitchen and halls. All hessian was to be removed from the ceilings and pine or steel substituted and painted. The water supply was to be increased by at least 2000 gallons; the bathroom was to be properly fitted up with plunge and shower baths. The two existing cesspits were to be abolished and replaced by three erected in accordance with the ordinance. Several months later in December, it was observed the improvements were taking place which spoke well for the trade being done and by the beginning of 1909 the improvements had been completed by Mr C Jess. In the same year, a contractor had started on the telephone line via Wangrabelle to Yambulla. But as the years went by the gold started to peter out and the little township went into decline. A notice appeared in the *Eden Magnet* on 25th February 1918 calling for tenders for the purchase of the *Federal* Hotel. Again on August 28th 1920, another notice appeared calling for tenders for the

MEMORIALS OF INSTRUMENTS.

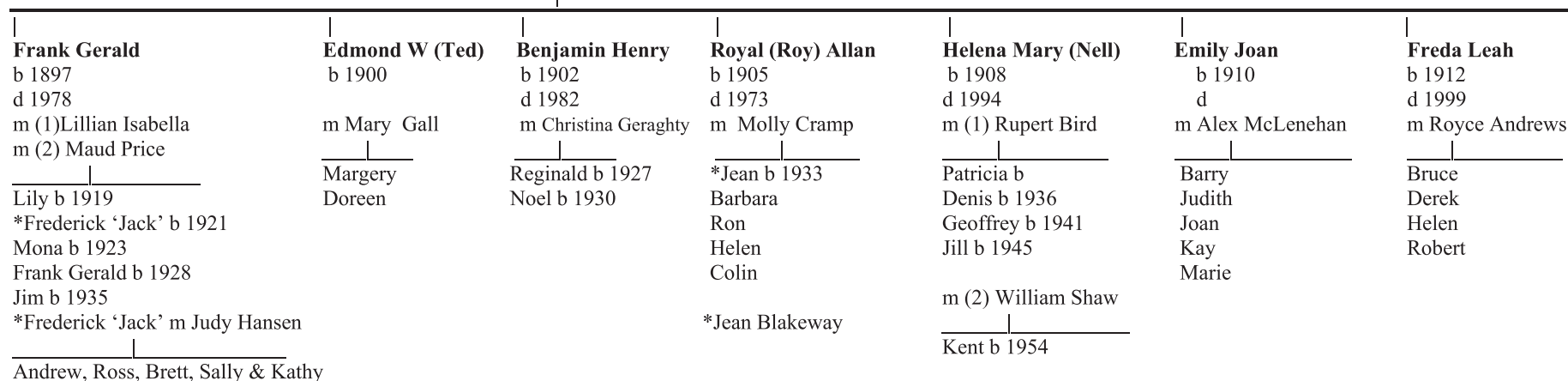
Nature of Instrument.	Time of its Production for Registration.	Names of the Parties to it.	Number or Symbol thereon.
<p>1006 FROM CHARLES DAVID of Coalville Victoria Farmer is The day of proprietor of the within-described Estate and Land pursuant to a Transfer from the within-named Harrie Vincent Garrison ----- registered on the 3rd day of October 1911 at 2-36 o'clock in the afternoon and Numbered 66350---</p>			
	<p>1915 at 12-3 pm</p>	<p>Joseph Charles David The Bank of Victoria Limited</p>	34667
		<p>Frederick Buckland of Malla cross is a transfer from Joseph Charles David on the 8th day of September 1920 and numbered 962509</p>	
<p>Edmond William Buckland of Malla cross gives the proprietor of the within described estate to transfer from Frederick Buckland registered on 14th June 1920 and numbered 1049930</p>			
<p>changes to QUARRIES SETTLEMENT ROAD registered on 10th August 1920 and numbered 1001399</p>			
<p>5460 1001399</p>			

CANCELLED

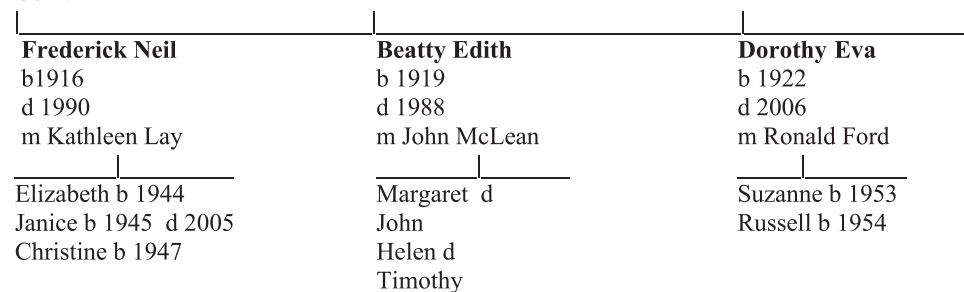
Buckland Family Tree

William Buckland m Jane Venables

Frederick Herbert Buckland b 1862 d 1947 m 1896 **Helena Begley** b 1877



Cont:



purchase of the hotel, buildings, furniture and land and it was eventually sold to Fred Buckland.

His sons, Ted and Ben, dismantled it and the materials were carried over the Razor-back Mountain to Genoa by Tom Hogg's bullock team. Some of the timber and iron was used to extend the family home at *Redbanks*, most of the rest was carted down the river by boat to build the house at *Marshmead* and build the extensions at Karbeethong.



Federal Hotel, Yambulla (photo courtesy Mallacoota and District Historical Society)



*Tom Hogg and his bullock team
(photo courtesy Betty Buckland)*

The small township of Yambulla had overlooked the Wallagaraugh River and was home to approximately 200 miners and their families. The miners' houses were very basic being made from bark slabs, however, if a miner had a family they were usually a more substantial construction of weatherboards with galvanized iron roofs or galvanized iron with malthoid roofs.

Down the hill from the hotel was the site of the first school which opened in 1901 built of galvanized iron. It was later rebuilt on top of the hill and at the height of the mining boasted 40 pupils which far exceeded the ten needed to keep a school open. Bottles from the hotel were used to border the little garden established in the school yard. It was also used as the local dance hall, and the town came alive with the sound of the accordion playing and feet dancing.

Down the road from the school and overlooking the Wallagaraugh River, lies the little cemetery and amongst those buried there in the unmarked graves are two babies who died from whooping cough. At one time it was surrounded by a white fence and gate, but these disappeared over time after the township was deserted. Anything of value that was left behind by the miners when they moved to more prosperous areas disappeared a long time ago. What was left was destroyed by the fires in 1932 and again in 1956.³

In more recent times, a new road was put through and initially was to have gone through the middle of the little cemetery. An Eden woman heard of the plans and requested that it be diverted to go around it as her two baby brothers were buried in that cemetery. Anyone passing along the road now would not be aware of the activity that occurred in the once prosperous mining settlement of Yambulla but the materials that made the substantial hotel live on in the district.

The journey from Eden to the gold mining township was a day's travel by wagonette. Passengers and mail bound for Yambulla set out from Eden at 9.30am each Monday, Wednesday and Friday on a journey which took them up through Towamba and on the Pericoe to Rockton Road. Two kilometres east of the Pericoe homestead a narrow track branched off towards Yambulla a further 15 kilometres away. Having spent an hour at Towamba, at 2.30pm the coach once again set out for Yambulla and finally arrived

at its destination at 6.30pm. The return journey for passengers and outgoing mail began the following day, leaving Yambulla at 9.30am and arriving at Eden at 5.30pm. In 1903, the cost of a one-way ticket was twelve shillings and sixpence and twenty two shillings and sixpence return. All heavy loads to and from the township were carried by horse teams at a cost of 50 shillings a ton.

In the meantime, the Buckland boys had itchy feet and in 1927 they went to Condobolin in New South Wales to try their luck at wheat farming. This seemed strange to everyone at the time because they were all water and boat lovers and Condobolin was a dry area. It isn't known if this venture was a success but for whatever reason, maybe the lure of the water was too great, they gradually returned to Murrumbidgee and nearby areas.

Fred bought Tatham's house, which was situated east of Swimming Point, and Christopher Harrison's old house on Howe Flat and he used these materials to build sheds at Karbeethong. There was a carpet snake in Harrison's house and it came too when they moved the house to Karbeethong, staying there in the bark shed for many years.

Fred was a thin wiry man and was known as one of nature's gentlemen who played a big part in the progress of Murrumbidgee in those early days, indeed until he died in 1947. His official standing was 'farmer', but he was probably better known as boarding house/motorboat proprietor, and to a certain extent, financier.

3 *Jack Loney 'Yambulla Gold'*

Fred owned the second motor boat at Mallacoota which he purchased for 30 pounds. It had been built by John Augustus Dorron and his son, Tom, having cut the ribs and combings from blackwood trees in the forest at Dahl's River and her planks were full length kauri. He then installed a 5hp Regal medium duty engine and named her *Mona* and she was in constant use at Mallacoota for the next 56 years. Jack Buckland used her at *Marshmead* for a number of years, until June 1967 when she was pulled up on the bank of Harrison's Creek, awaiting painting and general servicing. However, nothing happened and Harrison's Creek became her grave.

Some of the Wallagaraugh people occasionally rode to the mouth of the Narrows opposite Bucklands, lit a fire and Fred would observe the smoke and bring the horsemen over to Mallacoota by boat. In 1906, he purchased the *Topsy* and had just had a new engine fitted in Sydney when he took it out with a party on board and the engine exploded seriously burning a Mr Olsen. Only a few months previously, Mr Olsen had lost his own boat at Cunninghame (Lakes Entrance) and had spent 36 hours being tossed around in stormy seas in a dingy.

MARSHMEAD

Marshmead hugs close the long black range
Nearby to the bordering lake
Where Frank and his boys till the fertile soil
That's as rich as a Christmas cake.

I sat by the fire, a bushman's fire
On a wild wet wintery day
In a cosy room of the cottage there
And dreamed the long hours away.

Good was the social atmosphere
As it surely ought to be
Where the kindly welcome and best of cheer
Brings out the peace and amity.

And in this long neglected spot
Only half developed yet
Like a lost gem in the mountains
The little farm is set.

But time moves on, when this pen is still
And the hand that guides is dead
You will see in place of briar and fern
Wide fields and crops instead.

By Frederick Buckland, 1947.

In June 1922, Fred sold *Marshmead* to his son Ted but by 1929 he too decided to sell.

An advertisement was placed in the Bega paper and Mr Thomas Robertson, a licensed auctioneer and official valuer of Bega, arranged to drive Alexander Meaker to Mallacoota to inspect the property. From there they came to *Marshmead* by launch. Meaker was said to be a big coarse man of about six feet four inches and was a timber cutter from Tanja, near Bega.

As Ted was no longer in the area, his brother Roy carried out the tour pointing out a corner post, boundaries and the flats showing where cultivation had occurred. Later, Robertson would claim the house was a nice one and that they had had a general view of the farm from the verandah. Meaker was shown the orchards and pig sheds and Roy highlighted the drains that he and his father had cut through the flats which were necessary for draining the swamps emphasising the necessity of keeping them clear of weeds. As they walked, they saw a pile of netting which Roy explained belonged to the Closer Settlement Board; half of this was free of charge and the other half was to be paid for over a term of years. They visited the barn where they saw the stored chaff, potatoes and maize and continued on to the blacksmith's shop before showing Meaker the maize stalks where a crop had been grown. Eventually Roy asked if there was anything else Meaker wanted to see but he replied that he had seen enough. At the time, Robertson valued the improvements on the property at not less than eight hundred pounds and the flat land from thirty pounds

to fifty pounds once cleared. He considered it was cheap at a thousand pounds.

Three or four days later, Meaker indicated he would buy the property for the asking price—the land being valued at six hundred and twenty nine pounds and the rest for stock and chattels which included the launch. A deposit of three hundred pounds was paid, the balance to be paid in instalments with interest. Meaker paid Robertson the deposit and seemed quite happy with the deal and the contract was signed in August 1929.

However, six years later the deal went sour and an article in the 'Gippsland Times' on Thursday 6th June, 1935 reported an action for ejection and re-possession of the 218 acres by Fred Buckland who was acting as agent for his son, Roy. At the same time, Alexander Meaker counter-claimed for rescission of contract and return of deposit and damages totalling four hundred and ninety nine pounds and ten shillings. Mr G H Wise appeared for the plaintiff (Bucklands) and Mr Engell of A P Agg and Co of Bairnsdale for the defendant (Alexander Meaker). Meaker blamed fraudulent misrepresentation and fraudulent non-disclosure as a reason for his failure. He maintained there weren't eighty acres of rich flats as claimed by Roy Buckland and that they weren't adequately drained in a wet season as stated in the advertisement. This he claimed to have discovered only after the first three years he was on the property as they had been dry seasons.

His Honour, Judge Macindoe, was incredulous that it had taken Meaker six years to discover that there weren't eighty acres of flats. When questioned, Fred Buckland stated Meaker had spent about half a day on the property when he went to inspect it and denied Meaker's claim the flat land was only a marsh, but in fact was equal to the Orbost flats. Fred did agree he told Meaker the flats were good enough to rear and fatten sixty pigs every year.

Fred also stated that there were about thirty acres under maize and other crops but when questioned, Meaker argued that there were only about fifteen acres sown down with maize and other crops and denied that he had even walked over the flats. He also claimed the house was not in good order and that Roy did not state that the drains had to be kept clean. He also denied telling Robertson it was a nice place and when asked by Judge Macindoe if he thought it was a nice place, he said *No!* Meaker was then asked why he had bought it and he claimed that Robertson had talked him into it. He said after several years he stopped cleaning out the drains and as a result the cultivated land reverted to sword grass and swamp rushes. Meaker probably also discovered the difficulties associated with rearing pigs in such an isolated area as the lack of roads would have meant driving the pigs through the bush on foot to markets in New South Wales.

James Latta, farmer of Mallacoota, also gave evidence and stated he grew beans on a couple of acres on *Marshmead* for two years and in later times had three and a half acres under beans. But when asked if he had harvested the crop

of beans, he replied, *No, the frost did.* He claimed that when Meaker took over fifteen or twenty acres were cleared. The total area of flat land was about eighty acres with sixty acres being morass, the balance cleared and under cultivation. Tree ferns, Lilypilly, lightwood, sword grass and rushes, stumps and logs were on the uncleared portion when Meaker took over. Latta also claimed that more drainage would be required.

Frederick Clark, labourer of Mallacoota, was also well acquainted with the block and stated it was in fairly good order when Meaker took over, the seasons having been dry.

Another witness, Thomas Begley, farmer at Cann River, stated he had gone with Robertson and Meaker to the property in question and agreed with Robertson's evidence.

By the time of the court case, Mr G H Wise acting for the Bucklands stated the property looked like it had been deserted. Fences were down and gates open. There were no longer any signs of the pigsties and the drains were blocked causing the water to flow out onto the land originally drained. Where there were originally maize stumps, there was now sword grass and other rubbish to a height of about five feet making it impossible to get through. In his opinion the property had gone backwards by over fifty percent.

In concluding, Judge Macindoe stated: *I don't want to hear any more evidence. I am satisfied that defendant in his counter claim has utterly failed. I'm also absolutely satisfied that the evidence of plaintiff and his witnesses is correct and that defendant was not induced to purchase the property by*

any misrepresentation whatever. Defendant made quite a good bargain, and now he comes and raises this monstrous charge. I will enter up judgement for plaintiff on the claim and counter claim, costs to be taxed.

After Alexander Meaker left, Roy and Molly moved back to *Marshmead* from *Lake View* where they had been living with their first child Jean who was by now two years old. While Roy farmed *Marshmead* he didn't actually purchase the property from his brother Ted until May 1938. Jean recalls her father cutting a channel through the marshes using only a horse and scoop to once again turn the swampy area into wonderful river flats for growing beans and maize.

By the time Jean was ten, Roy decided the children needed a better education and they left *Marshmead* and went to Mulgrave to live. There they owned some land and at one stage he and his brother Ben drove some cattle down from Mallacoota. He also owned a market garden in Keysborough for a time before buying a milk bar in Dandenong. This was followed by a complete change when they moved to Busselton in Western Australia dairy farming. In due course they returned to Melbourne and owned several shops in both Coburg and Hawksburn. Eventually Roy and Molly went their separate ways and Roy returned to the Mallacoota area and ran a market garden at *Sunny Corner* for a while. But things didn't go well for Roy and he died in 1973 at the age of 68—he was worn out. Molly survived him by 15 years and they are both buried in the Springvale Cemetery.

For a number of years after they left, *Marshmead* was unoccupied and during this time the blackberries ran rampant completely smothering the garden and fruit trees. To everyone's surprise once they were cleared years later, they found the fruit trees were still alive. Ten years after purchasing *Marshmead*, Roy sold the farm to Frank's wife, Lillian Isabella Buckland on 12th January 1948 and five years later, on 16th March 1953 she sold it to her sons, Frederick 'Jack' and Frank Gerald Buckland. In 1958, Jack became the sole owner.



*Fishing on the Upper Lake, Mallacoota
(Photo courtesy State Library of Victoria)*

Below: Frank Buckland and his fishing parties returning with the day's catch, Mallacoota (Photos courtesy Buckland family)





*Frank and Lillian Buckland, Mallacoota
(photo courtesy Buckland family)*



Marshmead, 1951 (Photo courtesy Buckland family)



*Frank's wife Lillian Buckland (Snr) on the right at Marshmead
(Photo courtesy Buckland family)*



Frank with young son Jack (Photo courtesy Buckland family).

Fred Buckland died in the Orbost Hospital, aged 85 years on September 5th 1947 of a coronary. He had lived 77 years in Victoria and eight in New South Wales and was buried in the Orbost Cemetery. Helena Buckland, who was 15 years younger than her husband, died in the Pambula Hospital in 1951 at the age of 75 and is buried in the Pambula Cemetery. Her mother lived to 97 years and did not see a train or the sea until she went to Sydney when she was in her mid 70s.

The eldest in the family was Frank who was born in January 1898 and no doubt the best bushman and best bush story teller in this part of Gippsland and was just about the last left of this old brigade. When Frank reached school age there was no school as yet at Mallacoota but William Allan had engaged a governess, Miss Eva Oakley, to teach his children – Sid, Russell, Myrtle & Rene, and Frank was included in the class.

As a returned soldier of the First World War, Frank married the nurse who nursed him in an English hospital after being wounded but nothing could have prepared her for the life she would lead in Australia. Arriving in Melbourne on the ship, Lillian thought she had come to the end of the world but the train trip to Bairnsdale only served to make her wonder just where she was going. Then came the drive to Mallacoota – more end of the world; could it get any worse? As if this wasn't bad enough she then had to endure a boat ride across the inlet to *Marshmead* all of which she found very scary!

But perhaps she loved gardening as photos taken in those days show a beautiful garden. Frank and Lillian had five children, Lily, Frank, Jim, Mona and Frederick (Jack). They spent some time in Condobolin but on their return they lived at *Marshmead* until they came to *Sunny Corner*, where Frank built a house at the mouth of the Narrows. He then went on to conduct a thriving boat hiring service. Frank's wife Lillian died in 1970 at the age of 78 and Frank in January 1978 aged 80; they are both buried in the Mallacoota Cemetery.

In March 1953 Jack and Judy moved to *Marshmead* and began dairy farming. Judy (Hansen) was born in Warragul and grew up on a farm near Warragul before her family moved to *Fairhaven*, *Marshmead*'s nextdoor neighbour. Judy milked up to 60 cows by machine in the old dairy below the farmhouse and one of her first tasks for the day was to start the diesel generator each morning so the house

had power. It was something she didn't always enjoy, but something that had to be done.

The milk was not only for their own use but also fed the poddy calves and the pigs. When the cows were dried off in winter, the pigs were fed maize. The cream was separated and taken to Mallacoota in the *Mona*, and then to Orbost by road transport. When the Orbost factory closed, the cream was taken twice weekly to Pambula to meet the bus for Cobargo and they did this until 1979. Logging had begun by this time and had created good road access to the property, something not available until then. When the factory at Cobargo finally closed, dairying ceased in favour of beef cattle. In the 1970s Jack cleared more land, the hill country up to the top shed and the area where the sewerage dams are now.

The following is from a letter written by Jack's uncle and previous owner, Ted Buckland, to Judy and Jack in 1975:

We were very pleased and surprised to get the nice long newsy letter from you Judy, it is a wonder that you have time to write with all you must have to do. I was amazed that you milked all those cows. Marshmead has come a long way since Mary and I first went there. I remember cutting a track through the wild willow scrub from where the house is now to the drain from the swamp to get water for the camp, when we were building the house. Your letter brought back a lot of memories; they were pretty hard working times for both of us. I think Mary did pretty well and although we did have the phone on it was more often than not out of order, and she

only had Lassy, the half kangaroo dog, for company. It was pretty wild in those days too, you could hear the dingoes howl at night. It wasn't the thing to ask a woman who wasn't used to the bush to stay there at night on her own, but I am afraid I had to do it a few times. We were only at Marshmead for about eight years yet it seemed quite a long while.



Jack and Judy on their last visit to Marshmead in 2006

Well Judy, you seem to be living a full and interesting life, but 4.30am milking and two trips a week to Pambula, and now thinking of starting a factory, I suppose you have gone into this thoroughly, Jack. Anyway I wish you all the success you hope for.

Because of their remoteness, particularly in the early days, they had to be almost totally self sufficient. They grew their own veggies, their fruit trees were well established and they raised pigs and cattle, which they killed for meat. Tank water was used for household use while the creek water was used for washing and hosing down the dairy after each milking. Even when the creek stopped running in dry times, water was still able to be pumped from the remaining waterholes.

Jack and Judy reared five children and once school age like many other children living near the rivers, they travelled to school in Mallacoota by boat, the oldest child being 'captain'. The boats used were old and slow by modern standards and getting to school meant a long slow and sometimes hazardous trip and they were often restricted by the weather conditions.

On one occasion, Judy said the kids had just left for school when a huge storm broke out. She became very anxious but it turned out that they were fine; however, a large branch had fallen down from a tree where their boat was normally moored.

As young Andrew said at school one day, *I also live on a farm, the most easterly dairy farm in Victoria, across the other side of the lake from Mallacoota, and bring my brothers and sisters across in the boat. With all the fishermen about, it isn't safe to swim!*



A post rescued from the old dairy shows the names of some cows that Judy milked. Pansy, Misery, Darkie, Rosie, Lemon, Polly, Possum, Swift, Lady, Julie, LuLu and Betty were just some of the cows Judy milked twice a day.



The weekly cream run to Mallacoota



Andrew, Brett, Sally and Freddy (photo courtesy Buckland family)



Snap shots of early Marshmead (photos courtesy Buckland family)