

## Acton 1928

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The Ngunawal name (on both sides of the Molonglo River) on the area of the Canberra Plain that included the suburb of Acton was *Canberry*<sup>1</sup> meaning woman's breasts and this was the name chosen by the first European owner of the land, JJ Moore. It was the second owner who changed the name to Acton. A number of 19th century baptism, marriage and death certificates have *Canberry* or *Canberra* noted as place of registration/abode. By the late 1850s the spelling **CANBERRA** was the most common spelling used.

Acton in the history of the territory included land on both sides of the Molonglo River including Stirling Park Yarralumla. The first surveyors' camp was on Camp Hill near State Circle. This was in March 1909. The following year a concrete plan room was built on this site and a number of timber offices. The same year offices were set up at Acton on the north side of the river and from that time until the mid to late 1950s this area was the administrative centre of Canberra. At Acton the first nursery was in situ by 1913, along with a hospital, Canberra House (brick), a few cottages for married officials, Bachelors' Quarters for single officers, camp etc. In 1924 fifteen two bedroom timber cottages were built for married workmen. Acton also had the first bank in the Territory.

### ACTON

*Frank Dunshea whose family lived at Acton before 1920 has written his memories of Acton. He wrote the following about Upper Acton (Liversidge Street, Balmain Crescent & area of old hospital). The Upper Acton Houses as well as the Acton Cottages and the few close by houses there were the houses in the higher parts of Acton some of which are still standing and now are part of the ANU. These houses were mainly in Liversidge Street and Balmain Crescent. Mostly residents in Upper Acton were professional people or high grade public servants. They did not mix socially with the Acton Cottages residents but there were several exceptions and there were families from there who took part in a lot of our Acton Cottages' Activities. Some of these were the Hilton Family – Bob Hilton was one of the early policemen in Canberra and the Carrucans. The father of the family was a Belgium immigrant who killed himself with a shotgun in the garage, probably before I was born. I remember Mrs Carrucan as a very pleasant friendly woman. Her two boys Don and Jack became good fishing mates of my brother. Their sister Enid married a US Navy negro who was stationed for a time at Acton Guest House [former Bachelors Quarters] and moved to America after the war. The Makins lived next door to the Carrucans and next door to Jim Bolton who was very skilled at making model aeroplanes which in those days were made from patterns from which you had to cut balsa wood struts and fit and glue them together and cover with stretched rice paper. Motor power was achieved by winding up*

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<sup>1</sup> There are various spellings.

*rubber strips by turning the propeller. Jim made fairly large models that would fly a reasonable distance and usually land successfully. I had some attempts at making smaller models but these usually crashed and were wrecked early in their career. The Stuarts from No 13 Acton Cottages later moved into the Makin's house. George Makin became a top lawn bowler and represented Australia at the sport.*

*Some prominent Canberra people lived in upper Acton. H P Moss one of the early Chief Engineers of the electricity supply was one - Dr McKellar another and of course CS Daley who I think had the title of Civic Administrator and was also regarded as an unofficial mayor of Canberra. He was an unassuming conscientious and gentle man and I think was generally liked. He had the Number Plate FCT 1. CS Daley used to attend functions at the local schools and usually made fairly lengthy speeches. He had an unfortunate habit of continually punctuating his speech with the word 'ERR' and I remember the Ainslie School most of the kids used to count the number of times he said 'ERR' during his speech and you would hear whispers in the audience of say 58...59..60... etc and the teachers would turn around and glare at us. After the function not many of us kids would have any idea of what Mr Daley had said but most would have a pretty accurate account of how many time he said ERR. The Daleys had a son Geoff and daughter Margaret who were friendly but as they went to the Grammar School and didn't become involved very much in our local activities we didn't get to know them very well.*



CS Daley 1927.

Information about burials come from several sources - Jean Salisbury's book, *St John's Churchyard* (C of E St John the Baptist Church, Reid ACT), Riverside Cemetery Records, Queanbeyan and cemetery records on line in the ACT. Woden and Gungahlin Cemeteries are the two main public cemeteries in the ACT.

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### ACTON

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ALLISON, Winifred hd

BRACKENREG, Helen & James hd & lands officer

Ruth Robinson (nee Brackenreg) wrote a book about the family's early life in Canberra. It is called *Yabbies At Acton*. In it she mentions that her parents came to Canberra in March 1913. She says, *My father was*

## Acton 1928

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with the North-West Pastures Protection Board at Narrabri NSW when appointed Inspector with the Lands and Survey Branch of the Department of Home Affairs headed by Charles R Scrivener. Later he was to become a Veterinary Surgeon and a Valuer. His duties in 1913 related to the sub division of land in the ACT for grazing and other purposes and supervision of leases. His first job however, was the eradication of rabbits. After living in a number of makeshift places of accommodation the family finally moved into 8 Liversidge Street after Dr Thompson who moved across the road into No 7. Both Helen and James Carrington Brackenreg are buried in Woden Cemetery. Helen Brackenreg was buried on 28th August 1964 and her husband on 9th September 1957.

DEANE, Ruth & Percival hd & PM's depart

DONOVAN, Anthony head cleaner  
Anthony Donovan was buried on 30th January 1947 in the ex-servicemen's section of Woden Cemetery. He died on 28th January 1947 aged 75 years and his address at the time of his death was c/o W Wallace, Acton. His grave was paid by the RSS&AILA.

EDWARDS, Nina & Leslie hd & draftsman

GRIFFITHS, Sidney car driver  
Sydney Francis Griffiths was buried at Woden Cemetery of 7th March, 1958. He died on 5th March 1958 aged 79 years. His address was c/o Nursery Cottage Acton and his grave was paid by Edward J Griffith of 15 Hotham Crescent Deakin.

JONES, Elizabeth & Harold hd &  
commonwealth officer

c/o Mrs E Ryan KING, Ernest gardener  
Ernest Albert King was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 11th July 1966. He worked at the Butter's residence.

LONDRIGAN, Edmond survey chainman

POTTS, Iris & William hd & civil engineer

ROWSE, William accountant

SMITH, Ivo ps

WATERMAN, Viola & Herbert hd & ps  
Buried in the same grave in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery are Herbert Roy, buried 10th November, 1964, Marie Jean buried 8th February, 1995 and Viola Marian who died on 26th December, 1976.

WILSON, Ellen, Josephine & George hd, hd &  
stableman

George Thomas and Josephine Nellie Wilson are both buried in the same grave at Woden Cemetery. He was buried on 29th September, 1951 and Josephine on 1st June 1967.

WITHERS, Emily & Walter hd & labourer  
Emily Withers died on 3rd January 1943 and is buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery. She was 70 years of age. Buried in the same grave is Walter who was buried on 6th June, 1947. He died on 4th June 1947 aged 75 years and his address was given as 10 Acton Cottages.

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### ACTON COTTAGES, 1928

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Ten timber cottages were erected in 1924. Later another five were added to bring the number up to 15. One was known as *The Big House*. It was originally constructed for Mr Breen, manager of the Bachelors Quarters. He refused to live in it because he considered that it should be rent free as part of his work agreement. The Commonwealth wanted to charge rent. The original tenant list was as follows: 1 W Wallace, Lands Department, 2 Mrs C Wylie, charwoman, 3 C Marshall, Afforestation Branch, 4 E Dunshea, cleaner, 5 E Thurgold, cook Hotel Canberra - crossed out JW Mitchell Bars and earlier Bourke, 6 W Green Lands Department, 7 J H Saunders chauffeur - J Lynch also on the list, 8 T Ryan Works Branch, 9 M Heselden, Forman Plasterer - another list had for same number W Reilly, 10 Mrs Withers, Laundress. Another list had SF Griffiths, 11 S Margules Afforestation, 12 Bachelors' Quarters Staff, 13 J Stuart Works Branch, 14 F Dorman Works Branch, 15 J Preston [later moved to No 2] Hotel Canberra. Between 1917 and 1921 and later a number of men built their own cottages at Acton. A number were hessian walled cottages. The men were F Dorman, E Dunshea, A Anderson, G Wilson, J Cooper, W Blewitt and T Beaver. The Dunshea cottage, shown below, had a wooden floor. The photograph loaned by the Dunshea family was taken in 1919.



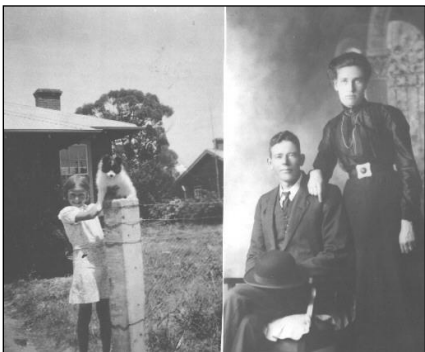
Frank Dunshea in his story of Acton wrote: *The heart and soul of the Acton that I knew consisted of fifteen small weatherboard cottages in a single row with galvanized iron roofs, known as Acton Cottages. They were situated in an area extending from the present wharf on Acton Peninsula, near Sylvia Curley House, heading west in the direction of Springbank Island.*

## Acton 1928

*This area is now covered by the water of Lake Burley Griffin. All the cottages, with one exception, were basically the same and were built as temporary worker's accommodation. They were the same design as the houses at the Causeway in Kingston and at Westlake which was a community situated in an area between the present American Embassy and Lake Burley Griffin. Westlake, was known locally as The Gap. The one exception to this design among the Acton Cottages was number 12. It was a different shape with a front porch and was bigger than the others and was known to us as the big house. The occupant of this house during my early years was a fairly reclusive woman called Addie, and the only name I can recall her being referred to was Addie Big House. This house was later occupied by the McNamee family. [The McNamee family lived at Westlake prior to their move to Acton.]*

DORMAN, Louisa & Frederick hd & turnkey  
Ruth Robinson in her book says of the Dorman family

*There was a family called Dorman living in one of the cottages. They first lived at Queanbeyan and Mr Dorman worked on the construction of the Cotter Dam. He cycled there every day and home again! Frederick William Dorman was buried at Woden Cemetery 13th June, 1960 and in the next grave is Douglas William Dorman buried 11th February, 1944. The Dorman family are mentioned in Father McGilvray's book *The Hallowed High Adventure*. In May 1928 Father Dunleavy made the first baptism in St Christopher's - the baby was Peter Meere. Later that month Father Haydon made his first baptism in the church (in the school building). it was Leslie Dorman. Les was the younger brother of John Dorman who became a successful builder in after years and who in 1930 was presented with the PM Haydon Gold Medal for the pupil of St Christopher's School obtaining the highest aggregate marks in the Goulburn Diocesan Examinations. Jack Dorman, no mean athlete, was doubtless a member of St Christopher's School team which was the premier side in Canberra School's Australian Football Competitions of 1930.*

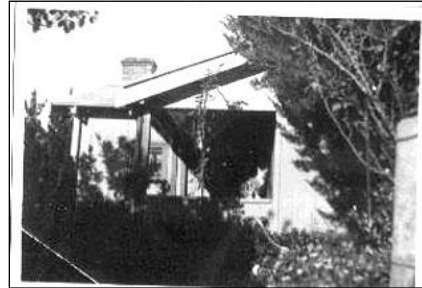


Above: Left Alison Stuart outside *The Big House* 1920s and right her parents Nairn and Alison Stuart

(nee Kinlyside). Photograph loaned by Alison Neiberding (nee Stuart).

DUNSHEA, Christina & Ernest hd & watchman  
Christina Dunshea and her husband are buried in the Presbyterian Section of Woden Cemetery. She died 22nd April 1954 and Ernest Charles in 1959. He was buried on 31st March, 1959. An Eliza Dunshea is buried at Woden. She was buried 21st January, 1940.

Below: Photograph of No 4 Acton, home of the Dunshea family.



Ernest Charles Dunshea was born in Queanbeyan. He married Christina McIntosh of Majura in 1918 and soon afterwards the young couple moved to Acton where they lived in a hessian walled cottage until No 4 Acton Cottages became available in 1924. Ernest's parents were William Henry and Eliza Dunshea and in 1930s the old couple moved into No 4 with their son and his family. William Charles Dunshea died on 1st April 1938 and Eliza Dunshea on 20th January 1940. In 1946 Ernest Dunshea and family moved to Manuka and Mrs McIlvena then took over the tenancy. (Frank Dunshea & Amy (nee Dunshea) West.

Frank Dunshea wrote: *The house my family occupied, number 4, originally consisted of two bedrooms, a sitting room (always referred to as the front room), kitchen, combined laundry and bathroom and a toilet. There was no hallway. The front door went straight into the front room with the main bedroom off it, then through to the kitchen with the second bedroom straight off that, and the backdoor with the laundry outside. The toilet was attached to the house with the door to it being outside at the rear of the house, so you would have to go outside via the backdoor and down the back steps and walk past the laundry windows to go to the toilet. But, we considered ourselves lucky as we were connected to the sewerage system and had both running water and electricity, which is something our grandparents in Queanbeyan did not have. The laundry/bathroom consisted of a fuel copper, concrete tub and a flat bottomed tin bath with a cold water tap and no shower. In later years the baths were fitted with wood fuelled bath heaters. These heaters consisted of a heavy steel cylinder with a removable conical fuel feeder also used as an air intake in the top in which*

*the fire was established. It was surrounded by a water jacket fed in at the bottom and coming out the top. They were known as Puffing Billys as when they were really going (especially when fed with pine cones from the pine plantation behind the cottages) they puffed like a steam train and seemed to be rattling the whole house. The water coming out would be almost at boiling point.*

*The kitchen had a fuel stove and a porcelain sink surrounded by a wooden bench. The stove was almost continuously kept alight with a large kettle simmering away at the side ready to be pushed on to a hotter section at any time to boil the water for a cup of tea should a visitor arrive. The only power point in the house was in the kitchen. It was a porcelain two pin outlet with a switch that had a brass cover and toggle.*

*We had an open wood fireplace in the front room around which on winter's nights you would be able to alternatively roast the front of your body while the back froze or put your back to the fire while your front froze. The houses were originally unlined and in some places you could see outside through the gaps in the weatherboards. The houses were lined with canite after many years and this made a big difference. My father insulated our ceiling by fastening flattened out reinforced cardboard cartons to the ceiling rafters. This was long before the days of pink bats.*

*My parents slept in the front bedroom and my two sisters in the other bedroom. My elder brother and myself slept in the leanto, built by my father at the rear, which only had a rollup canvass blind covering the large open window space, flooring laid on the ground and no lighting. The house was extended by the addition of another bedroom and a small verandah at the front of the house when my paternal grandparents moved in with us. My brother or myself then slept on this verandah with only canvas blinds to keep out the winter cold. The cottages were fenced in by wire netting with a small gate at the front and large farm type gates at the bottom of the backyards. These faced onto a track that ran between the cottages and a pine plantation established in a paddock, with the Royal Canberra Golf Course on the other side of the plantation.*

*We had, like most people in the street, a large vegetable garden in the backyard, some fruit trees, a wood heap, fowl yard and a shed built out of mostly scrap material. The road in front of the cottages was unsealed and without kerbing or storm water drainage. There were only two street lamps which were mounted on the electricity poles that ran alongside the road, one between the front of number 12 and 13 and one in front of Seton's place - No 5.*

### **Our Little Community**

*A lane ran between the lower end of the cottages and a dwelling constructed of scrap material which was*

*occupied by the Llewellyn family and later on when the Llewellyn's moved into number 7 by an English couple Harry and Bessie Chatham after the Saunders family moved elsewhere the fences alongside this dwelling were also the boundary fence alongside the 8th fairway of the Royal Canberra Golf Course.*

*Alec Llewellyn married a well known horsewoman named Bobby Lee and she established a riding school in the area behind number 7 and the pine plantation. The riding school became a very popular Canberra facility. Bobby Llewellyn's Riding School moved to a location near Yarralumla Woolshed on the Cotter Road after many years at Acton.*

*There were other residents who were also considered part of our little community in Lower Acton. The Thurbon family lived in a cottage alongside the main road across from the Acton Hall and overlooking the agistment paddock. The Hospital Superintendent's house was later constructed almost exactly on the same block and was occupied by Dr Lewis Nott, who was to become the first Federal Member of Parliament for the Australian Capital Territory. Dr Nott was a great dog fancier and owned some large red setters. He was a familiar sight standing on the hill behind the house watching the dogs run across the agistment paddock for exercise.*

*There was a Police Cottage on the Lennox Crossing Road on the same side as the Acton Hall where Sergeant Cook, his wife and daughter, Bessie lived, followed by the Brodribb family with daughters Joyce and Pat. The Samuels family lived in a Cottage attached to the Acton Offices. [Prior to that they lived at Westlake.]*



Above: Lennox Crossing in 1926

*A cottage next to the entrance to the Acton Nursery was occupied by Sid Griffiths who worked for the Parks and Gardens and his family and with two other cottages nearby - one occupied by Ned Ryan and family. Some of the people from Upper Acton along Liversidge Street took part in many of our activities - the Hiltons, Carraucans, Boltens and Makins are ones that come to mind. The Kayes, Bates and Cullen families from Springbank were also considered a part of the community.*

## Acton 1928

*There was also in the early days a shack on the other side of the pine plantation from the cottages right opposite our house which was actually in the boundaries of the Royal Canberra Golf Club, built mostly of galvanized iron occupied by and old German man whom we called Bill Smith. He lived a hermit like existence and us kids were all scared of this probably harmless old man. I remember during one flood the water was about a foot deep around his shack and the police arrived in a car and removed him while he struggled and protested. I think he knew more than the police because the water didn't come up much further that time.*

5 FRANCIS, Caroline & Joseph hd & labourer  
Joseph Francis was a member of the Canberra Band and was an ex-serviceman. Mr Francis left town and his wife later moved to Queanbeyan because there was no support for women and children without a bread winner in Canberra. The local Returned Soldiers and Sailors organisation supported her for as long as they could.

GRAHAM, Sarah hd

LLEWELLYN, Janet & William hd & cleaner  
Mrs Bobby Llewellyn daughter-in-law of Janet Llewellyn leased her horses. She was also a good horsewoman and had a famous horse named Trooper. William died on the 16th October 1928 aged 51. He is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery in Reid. He married Janet Graham. *Reference St John's Churchyard* Jean Salisbury. Janet was buried in Woden Cemetery on 24th June, 1965.

11 - MARGULES, Constance & Louis hd & gardener

The Margules later moved to the Cotter River. A number of the family are buried in St John's Churchyard Cemetery. They are: Allan, son of Constance & Louis who died 24th February, 1933 aged 2 days; Louis Edward Constantine Stanley Margules died 13th October, 1959 aged 71; Baby girl, stillborn 22nd March, 1937; Bessie died 20th February, 1937 aged 6 years, Constance Margaret died 8th May, 1937 aged 31 years. Constance Margules was friends with the Stuart family of Acton and often stayed with them when her time was near to have the new baby. Alison Neiberding, daughter of Alison and Nairn Stuart has a bootie knitted for the last Margules baby and said that Constance was a good horsewoman who loved to ride.

3 - MARSHALL, Margaret, Charles & Herbert hd, ganger & tractor driver

Charles Wilkinson Marshall and his wife, Margaret Helen moved into 3 Acton Cottages shortly after the 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1925 and remained until May 1937. They had four children, Frederick John, Tom (born 1923), Ted (born 1937) and Margaret (born 1931). Ilma Keir of Westlake is a cousin of the children. Frederick Marshall.

RYAN, Helenor & Anthony hd & team driver  
Helenor Mary and Anthony Thomas Ryan are buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery. She was buried on 21st December, 1949 and in the next grave Anthony was buried on 7th March 1960.

RYAN, Alice & Edward hd & land inspector  
Alice was nee Blundell and a photograph of Alice, Ned and their young son Norman is in Blundell's Cottage in Canberra. The little boy died on 23rd December 1919 after being bitten by a tiger snake in his bed. Another daughter, Margaret, also died as an infant.

7 SAUNDERS, Dorothy & John hd & chauffeur

John Saunders was chauffeur for John Butters, First Commissioner who lived in Canberra House. John Harold Saunders was buried in Woden Cemetery on 9th November, 1954. John Saunders was 64 at the time of his death on 7th November and his grave was paid by his wife. Their address at that time was 9 Giles Street Kingston. John Saunders also worked as a Supervisor with the Transport Section of Department of Transport.

13 - STUART, Alison & Nairn hd & plumber  
Alison Stuart was nee Kinlyside. Both are buried in Woden Cemetery - Alison Ann on 8th July, 1969 and Nairn Hugh David on 12th September 1956. The Stuart family moved from Crawford Street Queanbeyan to 13 Acton Cottages in September 1924. Their daughter, Alison was 3 weeks old. Mrs Alison Stuart nee Kinlyside was born at Briar Farm and in 1913 moved to Oaks Estate at the end of 1913. Nairn Stuart was born in Sydney and came to the Territory around 1910 to work on the construction of RMC Duntroon. He lived for awhile in De Smet's Boarding House at Duntroon. Below: One of the Stuart family photographs of the Nursery and buildings at Acton around 1913.



THURBON, Ruby & Archie hd & printer  
Ruby Isabel Thurbon died on 18th March 1991 and is buried in Gungahlin Cemetery.

9 - THOMAS, Elvie & Ernest hd & painter  
Yvonne Burnell (nee Thomas) provided the following information about her family. Ernie and Elvie Thomas came from Wagga Wagga to Canberra in

## Acton 1928

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1927. They had four children, a daughter who died in Wagga, Yvonne, Raymond and Stafford. Ernie was a keen member of the Canberra City Band and indeed it was the band and his friendship with one of the members that helped with the decision to move to Canberra. Being a member of the band which had its headquarters at Acton was the probable reason for their move to Acton. Ernie was one of the men who played in the band at the opening of Parliament in 1927. Yvonne recalled that another member was Terry Cross. Her brother Raymond was a keen musician and played the coronet. Yvonne recalled that the following people lived at Acton - 15 - Gardiner, 14 Ware, 13 Stuart, 12 four ladies (this was the Big House built for the manager of the Bachelors Quarters and never used for him. Instead it appears to have been used by employees of the quarters), 11 Margules, 9 Thomas, 8 Tim Ryan, 7 Saunders followed by Llewellyn, 6 Seton, 5 Seton, 4 Wylie, 3 - couldn't remember, 2 Bill Wallace blacksmith, 1 Granny Graham, Mrs Llewellyn's mother. Some of these names are different to that provided in the Electoral Roll - in some cases people did move around but it is more likely in this case that the order is correct but some of the house numbers are out.

Below -Raymond Thomas at Acton.



1 - WALLACE, Flora & William hd & labourer  
Bill Wallace worked as a Blacksmith in the Blacksmiths' Shop at Acton.

2 - WYLIE, Cassandra waitress  
James, son of James and Cassandra Wylie nee Chapman was born in Leeds in England in 1916 and arrived in 1925 with his family. He died on 17th May, 1931 aged 15 years. He is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery. Reference *St John's Churchyard* by Jean Salisbury.

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### ACTON ROAD, ACTON 1928

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ASHE, Rene & Robert hd & builder

CORK, Ernest ps

Ernest James Cork died on 6th October 1970 and is buried at Woden Cemetery. In the same grave is Florence Cork who was buried on 9th August, 1991.

CUNNINGHAM, Dorothy & Ferdinand hd & bank manager

4 - MARSHALL, Dorothy, Herbert & Thomas hd, private secretary & clerk

MAUSER, Rose nurse

MONAHAN, Eleanor & George hd & clerk of the senate

Eleanor Malby Monahan was buried in Woden Cemetery on 15th January, 1959.

STUBLEY, Elizabeth hd

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### LIVERSIDGE STREET, ACTON 1928

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Above: Bruce children are the first two on the right. Jessie (Mrs Gibbs) still lives in Canberra and is the only surviving child. This photograph was taken at Acton around 1927.

5 - BRUCE, Catherine & Alexander hd & superintendent

Mr Bruce took over from Thomas Weston in March 1927 and was responsible for the design and planting of the rose gardens at the Provisional Parliament House grounds. Jessie Gibbs, daughter of Catherine and Alexander gives the following information - Alexander Dickson Esson Bruce was born 8th February, 1884 at Arbuthnott, Kincardineshire, Scotland fifth son of William and Martha Bruce. Alexander Bruce arrived in Western Australia in 1910. He then returned to Scotland and persuaded his wife and children to return to Australia with him - they arrived in Perth in 1912. The family came to Canberra in May 1927 and Mr Bruce took over from Thomas Charles Weston as Superintendent of Parks and Gardens.

DALEY, Henrietta & Charles hd & secretary  
PM's department

Charles Daley was born on 4 July 1887 at Maldon Victoria. He died on 30th September 1966 aged 79. In 1905 he joined the Department of Home Affairs in Melbourne and took up the position of clerk in the Public Works Branch. Daley held prominent positions in the Canberra from the early 1920s. A book, *As I Recall, Reminiscences of Early Canberra Charles Daley* edited by Shirley Purchase - contain many stories about his involvement in the story of Canberra. His wife predeceased him by many years. She died on the 10th September 1943.

MILDENHALL, William ps

Mildenhall took photographs of early Canberra. The collection is in the Australian Archives in Parkes, Canberra. Adele Emma Mildenhall died on 25th February 1983 and is buried in the same grave as William James Mildenhall who was buried on 24th July, 1962.

MOUAT, Iris & Harry hd & surveyor

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## CANBERRA HOUSE (Constructed in 1912), 1928

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Two photographs - top one is of the Prime Minister's Lodge and the bottom one of Canberra House, Acton 1927.



Frank Dunshea: *The Commissioner's Residence*  
[Canberra House]

*Situated on the hill overlooking the cottages, the race course and Springbank, across the road from the Bachelors Quarters, was the residence of the Federal Capital Commissioner, Sir John Butters, surrounded by spacious grounds and an imposing fence and gates. This building was later to become the Residence of the*

*High Commissioner for the United Kingdom and is now occupied by the ANU Staff as a recreational facility. There was also another cottage within the grounds occupied by the caretaker and his family. I think his name was Ernie King.*

*The hill on which the residence was situated was always known locally as Butter's Hill - usually pronounced as Butterers Zill. A road ran up the hill around the grounds and back on to Liversidge Street. [John Butters - later Sir John was the First Commissioner and lived in Canberra House. It was renovated for his use. He lived there 1925-1929.]*

*The hill was a favourite place for billy carts, the main road was a fairly gentle slope. There was another track that curved around the side of the hill on the cottages side that was more adventurous and another very rough track that went straight down the steepest part of the hill. It was only after many dares that anyone attempted to go down this track and it usually resulted in a broken cart and many bruises.*

BUTTERS, Lilian & John hd & chief  
commissioner

Ruth Robinson: *Later the Butters family occupied the Residency and more houses were occupied at Acton...What a small community we were; tennis at the Residency was a very important social event. Later a court was built on the river side of the Acton houses, but it did not have quite the same atmosphere as the Residency court in its garden setting. When the Butters came in 1925 the house became the social centre again for our parents and also for us children. Sir John and Lady Butters (Sir John knighted in 1927) had four children, Molly, Enid, Margaret and John, who was born in Canberra.*

HAMMOND, Robina children's nurse

RENNIE, Mary cook

WORSFOLD, Lillie hd

Photograph of old hospital Acton taken in the late 1990s.



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## GENERAL HOSPITAL -

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This old timber building is still in use by ANU. Canberra Historical Journal New Series No 15, March 1985 - Brackenreg lives and times by JR Brackenreg - The hospital was written about in the following manner: *First doctor. Work started on the hospital in*

# Acton 1928

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1913 and it was completed in 1914. Excluding doctors at Duntroon, Dr Thomson was the first full-time government doctor in Canberra and played a part in the building of the hospital. The "Queanbeyan Age" of 30th October, 1914 reported "...Dr Thomson is the medical officer in charge. Miss Charles-West the Matron and Misses Stuart and Windle staff nurses."...My mother, writing of Dr Thomson says: "...the great worry of his life was the lack of care for maternity cases and he managed to open a small hospital but it closed after he left in 1917." The hospital reopened in 1921 with Matron Lawler in charge. She was a noted horsewoman and was also a qualified chemist. There was not another full time medical officer until Dr James arrived in 1926...

BALE, Isabella nurse

BALLARD, Marlee nurse

BATHERSBY, Mercie nurse

BOULTON, Jessie nurse

CAREY, Iva nurse

DONALDSON, Annie housemaid

HALL, William nightwatchman

KEEGAN, Francis wardsman  
Francis Patrick Keegan died 14th July 1985 and is buried at Gungahlin Cemetery

LAUGHLIN, Gertrude nurse

LEIGHAN, Mollie chef

McKID, Marjorie nurse

MILLAR, Leo wardsman

PAGE, Beatrice nurse

PETRIE, Winifred nurse

PHILPS, John wardsman

PITCHER, William wardsman

SAUZIEN, Mena nurse

SEVIL, Marjorie nurse

TASKER, Ethel nurse

TATARINOFF, Mary nurse

WALKER, Alexandra nursing sister

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## LANDS & SURVEY CAMP, ACTON 1928

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FRASER, Archibald watchman

JONES, Horace labourer

JONES, Frederick labourer

McTAGGART, Francis nurseryman  
Francis Edward McTaggart died 22nd September 1976. Buried in the next grave at Woden is Amy Ellen McTaggart who died 25th December 1997.

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## POLICE STATION, ACTON 1928

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The first Police Station and cells were at Molonglo where Sergeant Cook was in charge.

FELLOWS, William police constable

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## The Acton School.

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Ruth Robinson states the following about the school: *The first school for the children of the early civil servants was on the flat at Acton near Mr Weston's experimental nursery. It was held in the hall which also doubled for meetings and social occasions. Later the hall was moved to the road and eventually became the Trades and Labour Hall. The school was known as a Provisional School, a term used to describe a school of not less than ten pupils. The school had four teachers in its short life of 1920-1923 - namely Mr Caldwell, Miss Kilgour, Miss Fitzgerald and Mr Mervyn Nash. Miss Kilgour, a South Australian teacher was the sister of Mr Kilgour who lived in one of the Acton Cottages and had three children at the school. Mr Nash was a teacher I knew and I remember being frightened of him. He ruled by the cane - it reposed on his desk at all times.*

Ruth Robinson listed the children who attended the school - *JR (Dick) Brackenreg, Andrew O'Brien, May Dorman, Leo O'Brien, Hector Horsburgh, Joane Horsburgh, John Kilgour, Walter Kilgour, Jean Kilgour, Jack Rolland, Margaret Rolland, Maitland Rolland, Bob Vautin, Betty Vautin, Sybil Edwards, Alice Avery, Harold O'Brien, Grace Curley, Fred Curley, Mavis Curley, Freda Cox, Fay Cox, Kitty Bates, Edith Gordon, Phyllis Corkhill, Pat Corkhill, Clara Kaye, Gordon Kaye, Don Smith.*

*The following children were too young for school but went occasionally - Jack Dorman, Percy Thurbon, Eric Dunshea, Ruth Brackenreg.*



# Acton 1928



Above – mud map of Acton by a relation of Ilma Keir of Westlake