

CURLEYS HOMESTEAD SITE & ORCHARD

It is difficult to imagine the home that once occupied this site from the jumble of rocks that remain today. It was a substantial home and, as such, is worthy of the title 'homestead' rather than 'hut'.



*A Friends of Glenburn work party at Curleys Homestead site.
Photo: M Lawrence*

The home was a five room timber slab cottage with weatherboard gables, an iron roof, wooden floor and brick chimney. It also had a full length unfloored verandah with an iron roof. A separate timber slab kitchen was half floored and had a bark roof.

Just to the south of the rocks are two stone steps and the scorched remains of a verandah post. There was also a shed on the site that was open-sided and partly roofed with iron. Some rocks close to the small orchard to the south of the homestead ruins could have been associated with that shed.

Why Curley's

For many years the site was referred to as 'Curleys Hut', most likely to distinguish it from Colliers Homestead which is close by. The maiden name of William Collier's wife, Bridget, was Curley. A reference to James Curley (see below) is also a possibility.

Curley's inhabitants

The Portion on which the home was built was conditionally purchased by William Collier in June 1882. The home was probably built in 1882-83 to meet the residence condition that applied to conditional purchases.

When the Inspector of Conditional Purchases visited the home in April 1886, he wrote that William Collier was *'Living upon the land with his wife and family - Good house and curtains everything to make it habitable.'* He also said *'I believe it is Selectors bona fide home.'*

In May 1887, the inspector wrote that William Collier was a *'Married man, wife and family residing with him upon the Selection, he has no other home.'*

Despite the Inspector's comments that it was Collier's bona fide home and that he had no other home, it is likely that William Collier and his family shared their living arrangements between Colliers Homestead (where the Colliers began residing around 1880) and this home.

While they were living in the area they had another three children bringing the total to ten. With the two homes about 100 metres apart, occupying both would have given the members of the family more room.

In July 1887, Collier sold the land on which the home stands, and some adjacent properties totalling 532 acres (215 hectares), to Charles Campbell, Robert

Campbell Close and James Scroggie who were connected with the estate of George Campbell of Duntroon.

We do not know when the Colliers left the area but it was after September 1888 when William's mother, Anne, died there and before May 1890. At that time, William did not guarantee to send any of his children to Kowen School when a successful attempt was made to re-open it.

The family was living in McQuoid Street, Queanbeyan, at the time of the 1891 census and sometime later, they moved to Goulburn.

It is not known if anyone else lived in the home, but James Curley is certainly a possibility. It is known that when he was working for the Campbell's of Duntroon, he spent some time on their holdings at Kowen, which included the portions bought from William Collier. The homestead would have been 'ideal' for him and his growing family. He married Jane Hannaford in 1891 and between 1891 and 1899 they had five children.

The orchard

The small orchard to the south of the ruins contains plums with many suckers. It was probably planted shortly after the home was built in 1882-83.

Please respect this site. It is an important part of the early European history of the area.



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