

Lynburn Station



Built in 1872, by Campbell Taylor, Lynburn Homestead is the second oldest building still remaining in the Esperance region.

Lynburn Station is located on land that has been home to the Wudjari Nyungar people for many thousands of years. The Thomas River, which flows past the homestead, is a significant cultural corridor for the Wudjari people as they historically travelled along it from the coast to further inland.

Campbell Taylor was born in 1842

in Albany. His parents, Patrick Taylor and Mary Bussell, met on board the James Patterson, the ship that brought them both to Australia in 1834. Mary's family, the Bussells, settled in the area that would become Busselton. Mary and Patrick were married, and moved to a farm called Candyup, near Albany. They went on to have six children, including Campbell. Campbell's older sister, Maggie, married Edward Dempster, one of the Dempster brothers from Northam.



Campbell Taylor applied for a lease of land around the Thomas River in 1870 and moved a flock of sheep to his new landholdings the following year. His was the first pastoral station to the east of Esperance. The lease included 125-acres of freehold land for the homestead site, and a surrounding pastoral lease of one hundred thousand acres. In 1872, he began to build a homestead on the site, which he called Lynburn.

The homestead building was constructed from locally quarried stone, with a mud mortar. The walls were almost 2 feet thick. The roof beams were made from local yate timber, and the roof was originally made of thatched river rushes. The homestead was extended over time to include a kitchen, sitting room, four bedrooms, a cellar, and a verandah. They also built a large stone reservoir for water, and a channel to collect the water, which is still in place today.

In 1874, a large shearing shed was built near the homestead, from river stones. Lynburn Homestead was built with the assistance and labour of the local Indigenous people. The Taylor family had been on good terms with the Menang Nyungar people who lived near their Albany property, and Campbell grew up with the Menang people as his companions. At Lynburn, he got on well with the local Wudjari Nyungar people, and regularly employed them to work as stockmen and shearers.

After Campbell Taylor settled in the Cape Arid area, several other families followed, such as the Ponton brothers and John Sharp in 1873, and the Brooks family in 1874. Henrich Dimer, who had jumped ship from a whaling vessel near Albany, later joined the community as well.

Campbell supported these people when they first arrived, helping them to get established. They would often borrow supplies from each other, especially as they were frequently waiting for months in between the ships that brought new supplies or mail.

In 1877, Campbell's father Patrick died, and he inherited Candyup. This led to a lot of travel between Thomas River and Albany, a distance of more than 500 kilometres. Of course, he was travelling on horseback, through uncleared land with no roads – an exhausting journey he would have had to undertake many times.

In 1883, Campbell married Charlotte Gresham, a governess from Melbourne. She was an accomplished painter who had trained as an artist at the National Gallery of Victoria. Charlotte moved into Lynburn and joined the growing community of people in the area.

Eventually, managing both properties proved to be too much, and in 1887 Campbell decided to try and sell Lynburn. He advertised the property for sale in the newspapers without any success.

As the gold rush started in Coolgardie, many of the stockmen and shepherds that pastoralists like Campbell relied on went to seek their fortune in the goldfields. This changed the way they ran their properties. Without stockmen, Campbell had to borrow money to put up fences around his property. The debt he incurred as a result of this decision would later cause problems.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Imagine moving to a new place back in the 1800s. How would you keep in touch with family and friends back at home? How would you get news from the rest of the world? For the new settlers in this region, most mail was sent by ships, and it could take many weeks to receive a reply. The Telegraph line was an improvement, but communication had to be kept short!

The Telegraph Line

In 1875, work began on a telegraph line which would link Albany to Eucla, and then connect to South Australia. In 1876, the telegraph line reached Israelite Bay, and the telegraph station was opened. This brought a new way of communicating between the settlers in the remote area, and those in Albany and Perth, which could be lifesaving, on some occasions.



Charlotte Gresham

Charlotte Gresham was born in Melbourne in 1860. She came to Albany in 1880 with her sister Jessie, after her father died. Charlotte had trained as an artist at the National Gallery of Victoria, and was an accomplished painter. She and Jessie ran a school for girls in Albany for a short time. Charlotte and Campbell married in 1883, and later, her sister Jessie would marry Willie Dempster, Andrew Dempster's son.



In 1900, tragedy struck...

Campbell and Charlotte set out for Esperance to cast their votes in the Federation referendum, held on July 31st, 1900. They were travelling with a young Aboriginal man, probably one of the workers on the station. Along the journey, the cart hit a stump and overturned. While Charlotte and the young man travelling with them were thrown clear, the cart fell on Campbell, injuring him severely.

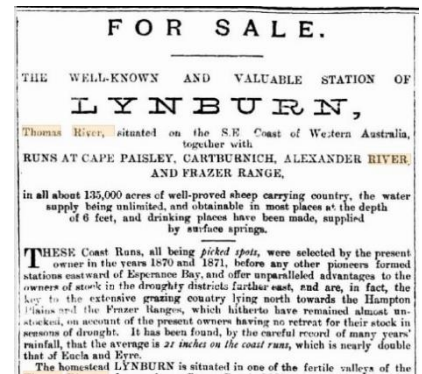
Charlotte sent the young man back to Lynburn for help. When they received the telegram, Willie Dempster and Laurie Sinclair, from Dempsters' Homestead in Esperance, set out immediately in a boat. Campbell was carried to the coast on a stretcher, a distance of about 3 miles, where he was picked up in the boat and transported to Esperance, arriving that same night. His injuries were very serious, so Campbell was put on a

steamship for Albany. Sadly, he died 2 weeks later.

After Campbell's death, Charlotte inherited the station and managed it herself for a

time, but due to declining wool production, Lynburn was not making much return, and so Charlotte advertised the station for sale again, with 6000 sheep, in October 1900.

The station did not sell, and in 1901, the bank foreclosed on the loan Campbell had taken out earlier. Charlotte went back to Melbourne where she made a living as a writer and painter.



In 1902, Lynburn Station was purchased by Sir James Lee Steere for £2,900, about \$418,000 in today's money. The property was managed by Lee Steere's daughter and son-in-law Marian and Alex Turnbull. One of the couple's children, Alexander Phipps Turnbull, enlisted in the army in 1914, and served in the 10th Light Horse Regiment in the First World War. Tragically, he was killed in Gallipoli in 1915. His family, completely devastated by his death, left Lynburn soon after, leaving much of their furniture and linen behind.

After the Turnbull family left Lynburn, the station changed ownership several times. It was then taken up by Louis and Dorothy Chopin, along with Walter Dimer, in 1932. Dorothy was the granddaughter of Stephen Ponton, one of the early European settlers in the area.

The Chopins moved to Lynburn with their four children - Amanda, Billie, Neale, and Ross. They lived there until 1938, when they moved into Esperance. Walter and Sydney Dimer, two of Henry Dimer's sons, purchased the station in 1948. They farmed the land but did not live in the homestead.



Over the years, the buildings were unused, and fell into disrepair. After the Israelite Bay Telegraph Station was closed, the population in the area had dwindled. By this stage, Lynburn was nearing 80 years old, already a respectable age for a building constructed from humble materials.

In 1958, Geoff and Pauline Grewar purchased Lynburn Station from the Dimers. They renovated the buildings, saving both the homestead and the shearing shed from collapsing. The thatch roof, which had been destroyed in a fire, was replaced by tin. Lynburn is now owned by Stephen and Michelle Fowler, farmers from Condingup.

Activities and Research

1. Albany was the first colony established in Western Australia. When was it established? What was it first called? Candyup was located on the Kalgan River – can you find it on a map?
2. Campbell Taylor had good relationships with his neighbours in the Cape Arid area – can you find Lynburn Station and Thomas River on a map, and then mark in where some of the other pastoral settlements were located? How far did they have to travel to visit neighbours?
3. Sending a telegram in the 1800s cost 1 shilling for the first ten words, and 1 penny for every word after that. (1 shilling was equal to 12 pence, around \$10 in today's money). Make up a telegram conversation telling a friend some news – keep each message short!
4. When Charlotte Taylor moved back to Melbourne, she made a living writing about her experiences at Lynburn station for the newspapers. Imagine that you are Charlotte, and make up a newspaper article about living in the remote area of Cape Arid.
5. Alexander Phipps Turnbull served in World War I. Go to the Australian War Memorial website (www.awm.gov.au) and search for him. In the digitised collection, find the photos of Phipps and some of his letters home to his family from the war. What can you learn about him?
6. When the Grewar family bought Lynburn Station, it was in bad condition. The renovations that they undertook saved the building and shearing shed from collapsing. Why do you think that it is important to preserve old buildings like Lynburn Station?

Watch this episode of the Esperance Historic Homesteads documentary series online at: <https://youtu.be/toBmLmHtcHI> or scan the QR code →



Produced by Karli Florisson 202

References

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 Photographs courtesy of Esperance Museum and The State Library of Western Australia



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