

4.3. Time to leave the Henty's...Fawkner and Batmans's brawl for Melbourne....

Exciting!

"Well Sam, that was a very successful day. One win, and one fourth with the good Timor pony cross mare. As for the colt, he is very well bred from racing stock in England, but I don't think he can run out of site on a dark night."

I just grinned. I was driving Mr. Thomas's carriage. Mr. Thomas Henty was sitting alongside me, and Mrs. Henty was sitting in the back, sheltering underneath her parasol, surrounded by parcels from her friends. Mr. Thomas's black Magistrates brief case containing official business was tucked away. We were returning from the races, where Mr. Thomas was on the Official Committee, and where he also presented two horses to race. The horses were tied to the back of the carriage and were following very quietly.

" I think he just wants to run with the other horses Mr. Thomas, and doesn't want to be the best."

"Hmm, I think you are right. Maybe I should send him over to Edward at Portland. He could be used as an all purpose saddle horse. I don't think John can use him at Perth, and I certainly don't want to burden Francis with him at Red Hill.

Red Hill was the property at Launceston that the family had bought, in preparation for the day when Mr. Thomsen would return and want to live at Cormiston.

" Sam, I regard you as if you were a younger addition to my 10 children. I really like the kindly way you handle the stock and conduct yourself. I suspect you enjoy preparing our stock for shipping, looking after them on board, disembarking them and then helping them settle at their new surroundings.

All my sons and the Captain of the Thistle speak highly of your attitude and skills."

" I really enjoy working for the family Mr. Thomas. So does my Dad. My Mum loves working at Cormiston, in the kitchen.. Sister Louise is also happy being courted by Benjamin, who works in Mr. Reed's merchant office in Launceston."

" I know, but I think its time for you to get some other experience. Now that Portland Bay is progressing strongly, we have less occasion to ship livestock. Our boats are becoming more frequently used on longer Trading passages. Mostly organized by James and Stephen. Although James is still arguing with the Government in England about our land holdings in Perth, and here at Launceston. We must have access to land free hold that we can afford to purchase."

I had heard a little bit but I really did not understand land ownership complexities.

"Have you heard of Mr. John Batman and Mr. Pascoe Fawkner?"

"Only a little."

"Well Mr. Batman on behalf of himself and fourteen very influential Government friends, like Mr. Joseph Tice Gellibrand the ex Attorney General, Mr. John Hilder Wedge Government Surveyor, and others including a Magistrate, Postmaster, Sheriff, Chief Constable and Henry Arthur he nephew of Governor Arthur, have formed an association called the Port Phillip Society.
"



John Batman's house in Van Diemens Land.

"This is so they can obtain large tracts of lands across the Strait and force the Government of New South Wales and Governor Bourke to grant to grant them ownership. And as you know our family, guided by my eldest son James is fighting both the Government in England and the Governors of New South Wales and Van Diemens Land, for a fair business dealing in developing other land here in Van Diemens land and across the Strait at Portland. Our business purchase of land at the Swan River was unfairly presented to us and has cost a lot of money for a hopeless settlement."

" I know Mr. James is in England."

"He is. Anyway let me continue. Mr. Batman went across to the Port Phillip area with three helpers and seven New South Wales blacks, and supposedly purchased land from the local natives for a few cheap items. He had a deed, that was drawn up by Mr. Gellibrand and signed by the native chiefs, giving him the land just about forever. Now he is back in Launceston boasting that he is the largest landowner in the world. King Batman. I'm not sure how that would stand up in a Court of Law. I think it is dishonest situation."

At this stage in the conversation all I could do was to listen intently.



John Batman supposedly "signing a treaty."

" However Mr. John Pascoe Fawkner, who I believe, as a boy aged eleven years, was present when Captain Collins founded a short lived settlement at Sorrento in Port Phillip bay many years ago in 1803, also wants to start a settlement in the Port Phillip area. Mr. Fawkner and I have discussed several times our Portland Bay settlement. So I think it would be good for you to become attached to his discovery party and go with him to gain more experience in handling livestock on boats. "

"There will always be paid work for you with my family, if it doesn't work out for the long term. Now why don't you discuss it with your Father and Mother, and also that chap Benjamin. Then if you wish I can arrange for you to meet Mr. Fawkner. But be quick, Mr. Fawkner is getting desperate to cross the Straight on his expedition .He earnestly told me that he had planned to go across the Straight well before Mr. Batman, but the selected boats became unavailable .I had occasion only yesterday to deny him and his party passage on the schooner Sally Anne a day ago. Calling in to Port Phillip on the way to Portland could have compromised our boat and cargo insurance.

I wanted to go. So I was to meet Mr. Fawkner.

I recall my conversation with Benjamin, who was supportive of my working temporarily for Mr. Fawkner, because he thought Mr. Fawkner was like his employer Mr. Reed. Both self made men.

Benjamin told me that Mr. Reed after arriving in Hobart Town as an immigrant young man walked the one hundred and twenty miles to Launceston and got himself a job in a merchants office. He had also been invited as a guest to Mr. Batman's wedding. However, he Mr. Reed, did think Mr. Batman had done well for himself, being born in Parramatta, moving to Van Diemens Land ,and later on capturing the bushranger Mathew Brady.

Benjamin and myself were crowded into Benjamin's very small office space that was crammed with bits of paper in small shelf spaces. The bits of paper, related to shipping movement's, cargoes inwards, cargoes outwards.

" Sam if the venture fails, we could join a ship and sail to a place called the Hills of Georgia where the Cherokee Indians live."

He said it was pretty close to North Carolina in the America's, wherever that was.

"Gold has been discovered and its free for the taking. It just lies about in water streams and small rocky hills just waiting to be found."

I promised I would think about that.

"Look Sam this is the way I see it," said Benjamin. "Mr. Batman is supported by rich Government Officials and investors, who just want a lot of land. He has done very well for himself for a boy born into a poor family at Parramatta. Mr. Fawkner wants to open up the land across the Straight for all of us who do not have big aspirations."

"He Mr. Fawkner, still has the marks of five hundred lashes on his back, and willingly shows interested people. He was also sent to Newcastle for

three years for breaching the Law. That has made him distrustful of Government Officials, and antagonistic towards officialdom. He claims they value the life of a man to be less than that of a sheep. Furthermore his Father and several others have recently been lashed and sent to Newcastle as prisoners. "

"That's also why he studied the Law a bit and has become a bush lawyer. He occasionally represents people in the court, who he thinks are hard done by the Government officials. He also started the Launceston Advertiser paper and still contributes articles, and still manages his hotel, The Cornwallis."



John Pascoe Fawkner's Cornwallis Hotel, Hobart

Mr. Henty wrote a letter to Mr. Fawkner, who then agreed to meet with me.

"Well Sam," Mr. Fawkner said, "You have been well recommended by Mr. Henty. Did ya know that as a young boy I was a shepherd. I used to spend a lot of days tending sheep and living in a sod hut, only occasionally seeing people? I know that if we are successful in founding a settlement experienced livestock handlers such as yourself will be invaluable, so I would like you to sign on with me, and start now."

He took me across to a large table covered with paper and maps.

"Look this is a copy of Mr. Oxley's mapping of Port Phillip Bay, and where the Yarra Yarra river is situated, and look at this, it's a copy of Captain Charles Sturt's 1829 drawing's of the Murrumbidgee River, the Darling river and the Murray River, all possibly flowing down to Lake Alexandrina near Encounter Bay, between St. Vincent's Gulf and Portland Bay. If all rivers flow westward into the Murray there must be good well watered sheep lands in the country above Portland and Port Phillip Bay."

Mr. Fawkner' enthusiasm was infectious. The expedition promised to be a great experience.

Finally Mr. Fawkner's boat the *Enterprize*, arrived in Launceston after completing its contact to deliver coal from Newcastle to Sydney. With great haste, to beat Mr. Batman's plans, stores and equipment, were loaded. Captain Lacey an investor, who was also retired sea captain, took charge of the party on the seventy miles down the Tamar river to George Town where Mr. Fawkner was to join us after completing some official business.



The "landing place' of Fawkner's party at the Yarra Yarra River (Melbourne)

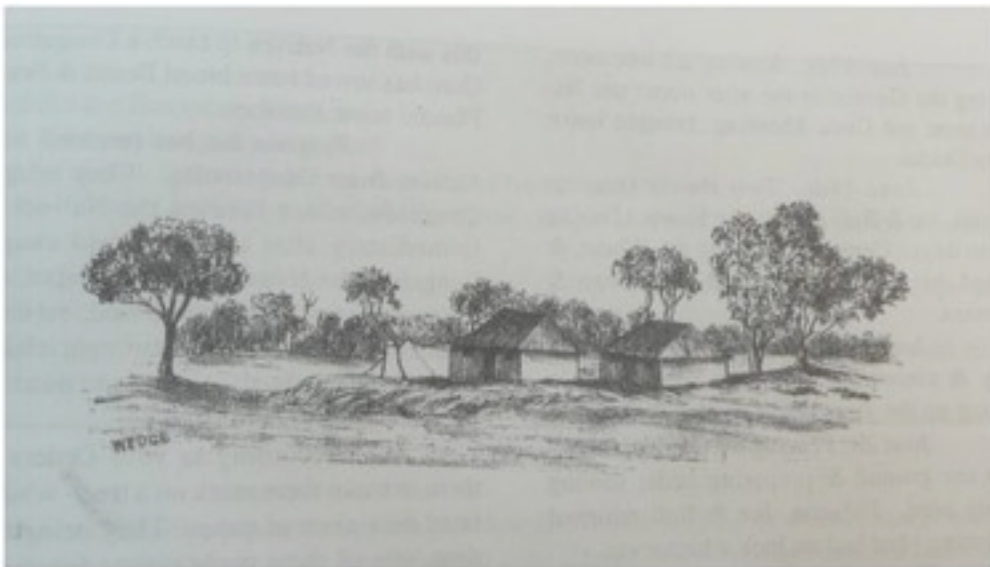
After sailing across the Straight in a NNW direction, we entered some very close headlands into a vast expanse of water. Phillip Bay. Slowly we made our way up the Bay, entered a river for some way, then tied up snugly to the bank.

At a little later date the peace and quiet of the encampment site on the banks of the Yarra Yarra was suddenly shattered. We had anchored quite close to a hill we called Pleasant Hill, subsequently re named by Mr. Batman as Batman's Hill

"Damn and blast you Hilder Wedge, you are a thieving, lying blackguard," shouted Captain Lacey all red in the face.

"What do mean Sir," exclaimed Mr. Wedge.

"You appeared before us two days ago, saying you are from Mr. Batman's party that has camped at Indented Head at the entrance to this Bay, and you are only just looking around, and have no say in the Port Phillip Association matters.



The Batman party cottages at Indented Head. (Geelong)

"After having eaten our food and enjoyed our hospitality, you have just given me a piece of paper claiming this area is attached to that other large area of land in that disgraceful deed, claimed by Mr. Batman to make him the largest land owner in the world, and King of Port Phillip Bay."

"But, but...."

"No buts Sir! Clear off before I set the dogs and my men on you and yours. And take all those blackfella's with you, because if you don't I will shoot them, and yourself"

Well that was exciting! It looked like we would be having a big donnybrook.

"And remember just because you have been a Government Surveyor in Van Diemens Land, it doesn't allow you grab and draw any land you like, and claim ownership of it. Even the Governor of New South Wales doesn't want to allow settling here by anybody."

With that Mr. Wedge and his party departed.

"Well men, we didn't expect that encounter when we originally set sail with Mr. Fawkner," commented Captain Lacey."

We certainly didn't. I clearly remember what occurred when we were just past the entrance of the Tamar at sea on route to Port Phillip Bay. Mr. Fawkner and Captain Lacey had a discussion about Mr. Fawkner's forthcoming Court Hearing about his assaulting a member of the public. He had been bound over not to leave Launceston for two months.

He and Captain Lacey thought it would be better if he Mr. Fawkner, went back to wait for the hearing and not compromise anything we did to form the settlement. So we put back into George Town, and he left the boat there to return to Launceston.

Mr. Fawkner and Captain Lacey had drawn up a plan of action for the settlement and the months ahead, so on the following ebb tide we again set sail for Port Phillip..

We would be a party of fourteen including the Master of the boat and crew, as well as five Members of the Association, and four artisans including a blacksmith and his wife. We were to call at Westernport on the way, see what was going on with the whalers and timber cutters camped there, then anchoring on the Nepean side of the Port Phillip Bay to conduct a small exploration. After all that, our expedition destination was the Yarra Yarra river..

On our way here, a little schooner called the *Endeavour* sailed out of the Tamar with us and sailed back into the Tamar with us, then when we left for Westernport it followed us into that bay, then followed us to the inside part of Port Phillip Bay. Our boats Master Peter Hunter, said that it had several people on board who also wished to explore Port Phillip but they weren't capable of navigating, so they decided to just to follow us.

They were brave fellows.