



THE PIONEER

RURAL & RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY

Rachel Henning's Stroud of the 1800s

This article will look at Stroud during the second half of the 1800s through the letters of Rachel Henning¹. She moved from England to Australia in 1854 and stayed until 1856 when she returned to England due to homesickness. In 1861 Rachel returned to Australia permanently.

In November 1866, Rachel wrote to her sister, Annie, and stated that her husband was going to Stroud the following week to make enquiries about land to purchase which would take some time to occur.

In February 1867, Henning commented on income, stating that their annual income was 205 pounds which was 'quite enough to live on most comfortably in the bush'. Also, the wool from their 100 sheep would give them approximately twenty pounds per year. Rachel went on to say that she had a preference for Stroud out of town, rather than being 'close to a gossiping village'.

In March 1867, Rachel wrote to her sister, Etta, to advise of the purchase of the Stroud property and the plans for the house to be built. She commented that they had made a good deal with the carpenter to build their home for 115 pounds.

Henning described the property and where it was located. 'The place we have bought is called "The Peach Trees" – I believe because some shepherd planted some peach-trees (sic) at the old station. ... It is about eight miles from Stroud, but a good road all the way ... it will be a pleasant ride once or twice a week to get our letters'.

Rachel told Etta of her first wedding anniversary in Stroud. She said that they 'went to church in the morning ... and after dinner we rambled about the garden of an old deserted house'. Henning continued that they 'climbed a steep green hill above Stroud and sat down there in the shade till sundown'. One can only imagine that this steep hill was Silo Hill.

Quite topical for Stroud today, Henning wrote to her sister on March 18, 1870, and discussed Stroud's flood, noting, 'We have had almost incessant rain for nearly three weeks, and it



is still "hard at it". She explained that 'in this dry country the heaviest floods seldom last for more than a week'. This is quite a different way to let loved ones know of a natural emergency like we experienced in April 2015 when the world learned of our predicament through television, radio, and social media.

On February 1, 1872, Rachel wrote to her sister to advise that she was leaving "The Peach Trees" and Stroud due to isolation from town, Sydney, medical expertise, and the market where they sold their farm animals.

Rachel Henning has provided an insight into Stroud life and that of regional Australia in its pioneering days.

Sharon Burke ©2015

This article has been written from the book of Rachel Henning's letters which can be accessed at www.gutenberg.net.au

¹ Rachel Henning became Rachel Taylor after marriage but she will be referred to as Rachel Henning in this article as that is the name that she is remembered by.



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