

Binns Family House Site

1863-1865



William and Jane Binns were married in 1852 at the St James Episcopalian Church in Melbourne. William was working on Acheron Station in the Upper Goulburn area, but got caught up in the “Gold Fever” and was soon living on the Big River Diggings. They followed the gold strikes from Jamieson heading south and ended up in the Jordan River area only months after gold was first discovered in that area.

Soon after settling here in Blue Jacket, they unfortunately lost two of their children. Eliza died as an infant, and then Thomas died on 15th January 1863 from Dentition¹ and Cerebral Effusion. Doctor T. Dobson could do nothing to help the two year old child who had been suffering from teething problems for over a week. Their daughter Jane Binns Junior was born in the following winter of 1863.

William Binns, a miner and restaurant keeper, is remembered by the naming of Binns’ Gully where his two children are buried. All that remains of their time in the district is this old house site made of rammed earth, and the remains of a chimney, surrounded by several mine shafts.

In 1865 the family moved to the Thomson River Diggings where William Binns Junior, aged ten, drowned on 1st October 1865 trying to cross the flooded Thomson River. No records have been found to say the body was recovered and the death was not officially registered. Only the police report and a small item in the Woods Point paper have brought his name to the surface of history. Another son for William and Jane Binns called ‘George William’ was born a few months later early in 1866 when a note was made in the family Bible that he was the first child born at Aberfeldy River.

William died in 1916, Jane lived until 1924. At the time of her death at the age of 92, she had survived all ten of her children, but the youngest, Maria.

This clock was given to Jane by William the day they were married in Melbourne, and travelled with them both through from the Goulburn River in 1852 through the Gippsland goldfields, to the junction of Donnelly’s Creek and Bald Hills road (presently now known as McEvoy’s Track and Binns Road intersection, where an interpretation sign is now erected depicting their roadside establishment). The clock is still wound regularly and keeps very good time.

Postscript: Blue Jacket is one of those rare places on the Jordan that evokes a ghostly sensation of sorts. Two people at least have reported the eerie vibes of an unknown presence generating from the area known as ‘Binns’. This may be nothing more than the flight of someone’s heightened imagination, or, perhaps the saddened spirits of those whose time at Blue jacket was anything but blissful.

References:

Information from text supplied by Leanne Fitzgerald sourced from Barbara Torley. (Descendants of the Binns Family).
Jericho on the Jordan, A Gippsland Goldfield History by J. G. Rogers 1998

¹ Dentition - the eruption or cutting of the teeth; teething; odontiasis