CALM LIBRARY ARCHIVE
NOT FOR LOAN

018599

THE LIBRARY
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
& LAND MANAGEMENT
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Tender CF 223

THE HISTORY OF LESCHENAULT INLET

HISTORICALLY, Leschenault Inlet is the most important geographical focus in the South-West region since the inlet, Bunbury's great virtually unpolluted waterway, is the birthplace of Anglo-Saxon settlement.

Public interest now focuses on this fine expanse of water and habitable foreshore, a significant section of which CALM is now developing as one of the finest future playgrounds of the South-West. CALM's interest lies in 1000ha of the north-western section of the inlet, mainly Leschenault Peninsula, which it plans to develop into recreational sites that will rival Rottnest Island.

The plan entails:

* Completion of a community recreation and camping area at the southern (Bunbury) end of the peninsula.
* A look-out tower, family beach facilities and a substantial parking area at the Buffalo Road or northern end of the inlet.
* Camping-grounds or hostel accommodation, a ranger station, small-boat landing facilities, picnic and recreation areas and bicycle paths at Belvidere.

The original inhabitants of the inlet region were the Nyoongar people, about whom not much is known in relation to the inlet. The waters, at that time about two-thirds salt, held an abundance of fish and marine life and sustained a remarkable gathering of bird life, including thousands of black swans. Though Leschenault is a true inlet and not an estuary, which means most of its water comes from the sea and not from the Collie and Preston Rivers that flow into it, the river inflows at times caused substantial localised salt dilution, attracting a heavy waterbird population in certain areas. The abundance of food was a storehouse for the Aborigines.

But the Aborigines seemed to devise only primitive food-gathering methods. Indeed, before the coming of the white man the Western Australian Aborigine had not learnt the art of fashioning a canoe for fishing but relied on fallen logs to cross waterways.
That seems to explain why the Aborigines did not exploit the inlet more as a very substantial food base.

Lieutenant Henry William St. Pierre Bunbury(1), after whom Bunbury is named, in December, 1836, was stationed at Pinjarra. That month he made an historic survey of a route from Pinjarra to The Vasse, making him the first white man into Port Leschenault, now Bunbury, by the overland route.

---

1 "Early Days in Western Australia, being the Letters and Journal of Lieut. H.W. Bunbury, 21st Fusiliers."

Paul Wood (1990)
[for CALM]

Describing his trek from Miellup (now Myalup) to Leschenault Inlet, Bunbury, the first white man to come upon the head of the inlet(1) wrote: . . ."We soon got into a more open flat countr lightly timbered with tooarts (tuart-trees) with abundance of grass and not many bushes, and saw a thick tea-tree swamp about half a mile on our right, forming the head of the estuary (sic), upon which we soon arrived ourselves by a well-beaten path through a most rich and luxuriant crop of grass and sow-thistles. The tide was out and a considerable extent of sand and mud was left bare round the head of the estuary upon which were congregated to feed immense flocks of brown ducks and teal, while the water was equally covered with swans and pelicans. The mud was too soft and deep for us to approach any of them or even to leave the solid ground along the banks.

"A beautiful scene now presented itself as down the estuary to the southward. The vast extent of water before us lay smooth and still as a glassy lake, the sea breeze having fallen with the setting sun which threw out in dark relief the pointed and steep sandhills on our right, over which were sprinkled a few large gum-trees and peppermints, and the shadows of these hills, gradually lengthening, stretched across the estuary, on the left bank of which appeared a dense thicket of tea-trees and spearwood fringed with very large grass-trees and backed by a well-wooded range of sandy limestone hills. Ahead of us point after point of land appeared, jutting into the estuary, or derbal, gradually becoming more and more indistinct until lost in the dim distance, while beyond, a little on the right, appeared a high remarkable hill or promontory forming the south head of Port Leschinault (sic) Inlet, now going with the warm tints of evening.

". . .We pursued our course along the low bank with a dense thicket on our left, through a rank and rich growth of grass and sow-thistles for about three miles . . . It gave me pleasure to find myself on the Port Leschinault Estuary with so little difficulty or trouble, as also to find that the natives received us so amicably, though I anticipated some annoyance from their numbers on the morrow. . .The numerous and well-beaten paths near the bank of the estuary indicated the constant presence of considerable numbers. Indeed, nowhere had I hitherto seen, even on the Murray [River], where the natives are numerous, such distinct paths as here or so many deserted huts, some of them made with some care of the paperbark, i.e., the bark of the tea-tree, others of the leaves of the zanthoriza, which afford excellent protection from rain but are not so warm.

"Soon after dark I was attracted by the appearance of numerous lights, gleaming and flashing in various directions along the

---

1 Later to become the Prinsep Estate's Buffalo Station.

borders of the inlet, and was at first somewhat startled. . . . I soon discovered that the numerous lights I saw along the water's edge were for the purpose of attracting the fish, which are speared by this means in great numbers both in the shoal water on the flats, where the natives wade out carrying firesticks to spear mullet and cobblers, and also on the banks of the river, where fires on a large scale are made where the water is deep close to and several natives watch the approach of the fish with their spears. Cobblers especially are thus taken in great quantities as well as larger fish such as jewfish, taylor (sic) and black snappers. . .

"At this season food was plentiful--both fish, the favourite of which seems to be the mullet, and °munghites' as they call the flower of the banksia, from which they extract by suction a delicious juice resembling a mixture of honey and dew. Two kinds are commonly used, one the ordinary species with rather smooth bark, and leaves but slightly serrated, the other the large oak-leaved banksia Gigantea. The former is the sweetest and easiest for the beginner to suck, the latter flower contains most juice if one can get at it; but without habit one only hurts one's mouth and gums: in both of them beware of ants--the taste is horrid. . .

"Here I saw a spear I never met elsewhere, one 11 or 12 feet long and used without the mero (woomera) to kill fish like the taylors and other large kind that frequent the deep water close under the banks of the rivers. The usual fishing spear is lighter than the war one and generally without a barb, and it is very interesting to watch a party of men pursuing a shoal of mullet in shallow water, endeavouring to cut them off from the deep parts and following with unerring sight the course of the fish under water, until they get within reach to throw the spear, which they generally do without the mero and with excellent aim. It is an exhilarating sight and a favourite sport with the young men, the mullet being considered by them the best fish they have, being very fat. They also spear on the flats great numbers of cobblers. . . . The fish is very good to eat.

"Mullet are also caught by the natives in immense numbers at the mouths of the little salt-water creeks by means of weirs which are left open for the tide to rise. With the tide vast shoals of mullet, principally small fry, enter, and, the weir being suddenly stopped up, they are caught as the water filters off with the ebb, or, more often, the women are sent in to drive the fish with their hands into corners where they are easily taken. I know nothing sweeter than these fish are in April or May when they are caught in this way and cooked, native fashion, on hot ashes, the small fry bolted whole."(1)

---

1 Ibid, pp.74-88

Bunbury further recalled: "I remarked the way a large fish is cooked by them, such as a taylor or a jewfish, and a capital way it is. The fish, having had its scales scraped off, is wrapped up in thick folds of tea-tree bark, which should not be from the outside so as to burn readily; this is then covered up in warm sand and ashes, not too hot, or with any lumps of live fire, and left to bake, when it comes out beautifully cooked and with a very agreeable acid taste imparted by the bark."(1)

On his return to Port Leschenault from the Vasse, Bunbury recorded that on 21 December 1836 he slept on board the schooner(2) after fishing their way down the inlet. Next morning they "succeeded in capturing six swans with the longboat." He told of "thousands swimming upon the surface of the estuary . . ."(1) There has been ample testimony to the thousands of waterbirds that frequented the inlet waters, even as late as the 1930s.(3) Other observers have reported an abundance of wildlife in the early days of white settlement right up to the 1940s. One settler on the western side of the inlet told another settler at the head of the inlet he had seen a thousand black swans at times on the western side of the water.(4)

Vivienne May wrote in 1901: "In the morning I took a wagonette and drove out to explore Bunbury, going first to the Leschenault Estuary (sic), a sheet of water divided from the sea by a strip of land 10 or 12 miles long. The surface was dotted with wildfowl and its depths are full of fish. The Collie and Preston rivers fall into the estuary (sic). On the shore there are plenty of black swans and wild duck which seem to be quite tame."(5)

"There were thousands of black swans on the upper reaches of the inlet on Saturday afternoon. For hundreds of yards the water was black with the representative of WA's emblem."(6)

The first white man to set foot in Leschenault Inlet was midshipman Bonnefoy (Bonnefoi in modern French) de Mont Bazin.

---

1 Ibid, p. 147.
2 The Government schooner Champion on which Lieutenant-Governor Stirling travelled from Fremantle to The Vasse and return.
3 Interview with long-time Australind resident the late Miss Marjorie Alice Ridley, of Eastwell Road. The edge of the inlet was only 100 metres from her residence and daily she strolled along the rush-filled edges. She was a keen observer of nature.
4 Interview with Mr Morgan Smith, September 1989, long-term occupier of Parkfield, an original farming property at the head of the inlet alongside Buffalo Road.
5 Vivienne May, "Travels in Western Australia," p. 112, 1901.
6 Bunbury Herald, 9 June 1914.

HOW THE INLET WAS DISCOVERED

LIEUTENANT Bunbury was not the first white man to discover Leschenault Inlet. That honour goes to a midshipman on a French exploration ship 33 years earlier.

The discovery of Koombana Bay and its adjoining Leschenault Inlet was brought about by an event two years earlier more than 100 kilometres away. That event was the loss in dangerous surf of a longboat and the 19-year-old crewman Thomas Timothee Vasse from
the French exploration ship Geographe (The Geographer), after which Geographe Bay is named, in the Busselton precinct in June, 1801. The name of Vasse was given to the district for many years after.(1)

The expedition commander was the redoubtable Post-Captain Nicolas-Thomas Baudin. He returned two years later to see if some trace could be found of the valuable longboat and perhaps Vasse. He found none.

But two days later, on March 11, 1803, Baudin became the first white man in recorded history to make a landfall in Koombana Bay. Had he not returned that two years later to look for Vasse and the longboat that his ship so sorely missed, the chances are that he would never have discovered Koombana Bay.

Baudin dropped anchor at noon off the mouth of the bay, not prepared to risk the 37.7m (124ft) corvette Geographe and its 100 men on board, in the bay's unknown waters. He ordered first-class midshipman Citizen Bonnefoy--the French Revolution had begun only 15 years earlier and even the captain was addressed as Citoyen (Citizen) Commandant--to take the longboat and a couple of crew and investigate the bay.

Gaspard Bonnefoy de Mount Bazin--now in modern French Bonnefoi--traversed the bay then crossed a sandbank into what he described as a lagoon and became the first white man to set foot on the shore of Leschenault Inlet. He named Middle Island, which was as far as he went along the inlet. He went no farther because Baudin had instructed him to be back on Geographe precisely before sundown. In his report to Captain Baudin, Bonnefoi recorded that they "came upon a very large quantity of very wild teal, some pelicans and other seabirds." On land was a lot of remains of fires near one of which they found the bones of a very large kangaroo on which still clung some of the flesh.(2)

---

1 The district was officially Vasse till 1888 when it was renamed Busselton.
2 Bonnefoi's report in his own handwriting to Citizen Commander Baudin and Lieutenant Hyde of the French Navy, photocopy from Mitchell Library in J.S Battye Library. Translated from the French by Paul Wood.

Baudin named Leschenault Inlet after his botanist on board, Jean Baptiste Louis Claude Theodore Leschenault de la Tour. Leschenault would not have pronounced his name LESH-en-awlt, as we do with the emphasis on the first syllable but as the French do--Lesh-NO, with the accent on the final syllable. The Koombana Bay entrance was also named Port Leschenault.

Dr A. Collie and Lieutenant Preston discovered the Collie and Preston rivers, which flow into Leschenault Inlet, in November, 1829.(1)

Three months later Lieutenant-Governor James Stirling with "an expedition of gentlemen volunteers" led by Surveyor-General J.S. Roe made a sweep in the schooner Eagle from Fremantle to the Vasse River. They landed a detachment of the 63rd regiment at what was to become Macleod Point on the North Shore of Port Leschenault (later named Bunbury) to protect possible settlers. Macleod Point was named after Lieutenant Macleod, in charge of that detachment.(2)

Stirling had a particular interest in attracting settlers because he held more than 33 590 hectares (83,000 acres) abutting on what was later to become Stirling Street, mainly south and west of that street, the north side of which when the first townsite plan was drawn was the townsite limit. He had accepted the land instead of collecting his salary, a deal looked on with favour by the Home Government because of the shortage of Home Government money for the infant colony. Stirling recommended the country around Port Leschenault to settlers as "offering fertile soil and being good for stock stations" and said the North Shore military station would offer security from natives for settlers.(3)

---

1 Government notice of March 22, 1830, J.S. Battye Library.
2 The detachment stayed five months on the North Shore at the end of which no district settlers had arrived for the soldiers to protect. They then transferred to Augusta, where settlement had begun.
3 Macleod Point is often wrongly spelt McLeod, sometimes MacLeod, even in some official papers.

THE ABORIGINES

One of the most informative records of the early Nyoongar native tribe living in the Leschenault Inlet precinct has been left by civil engineer F. Robert Austin, former assistant surveyor in Western Australia, said to have discovered the Kimberley Goldfield, the first goldfield in the colony, in 1885.
Austin left his "Account of a tribe occupying the country around Port Leschenault, Koombana Bay--where Bunbury now stands . . . in 1841-43"--11 years after that part of the country had been first settled (1830).(1)

The back country to which the report refers was known to the natives as i-lap(2) (now Eelup), the eastern foreshore of Leschenault Inlet.

Austin noted the coastal soil as sandy. All around were large areas of zamia (Macrozamia Fraseri), a plant that attained a very great size.

He believed there were never more than 12 to 20 heads of families that constituted the Aboriginal groups between Koombana Bay and the Murray River. Each had its own particular territorial division, and they appeared to avoid too close intermarriage.

Rock carvings and mural paintings were not observed on the immediate coastline--nothing like the beautiful examples Austin had discovered on the Murchison Goldfield.

---

1 "Notes of Savage Life in the Early Days of West Australian Settlement," by Walter E. Roth, MRCS, BA., Oxon, Royal Society of Queensland, 1904, vol. 17, pp 45-69. Roth, Queensland Northern Protector of Aboriginals, read the paper before the Royal Society of Queensland on 8 March 1902. He compiled the paper from Austin's extensive notes. The note that Austin was there 11 years after first settlement is incorrect. If Austin arrived in 1841 he was there three years after pioneer settler John Scott and family settled at Eelup in 1838.
2 Ibid. Note the little difference in i-lap and Eelup (John Scott's) original spelling in trying to render the native sound in English, a language poorly equipped to render faithfully Aboriginal sounds. From Battye Library Archives: L. Glauert, former Curator of Perth Museum says: "It must be pointed out that certain [Aboriginal] words cannot be accurately rendered in English--thus B or P, D or T, C or K have often been used indiscriminately. As an example, Benger (swamp) is often rendered Pinjar--e.g., Lake Pinjar, north of Perth." In the published RSQ report i-lap is printed with a lower-case "i." It is not known whether that was Roth's or Austin's intention or whether it was a printer's error. Normally a place-name would take a capital first letter.

Nyoongar hunting methods along Leschenault Inlet were primitive. The Nyoongar lived with the rhythm of the seasons and a finely-honed instinct for survival. Until whites arrived they never caught fish with nets, hooks or lines but speared their fish in shallow waters in estuaries and lakes. They made weirs in swampy channels, formed of brushwood intertwined on stakes with here and there a pocket on the bottom of which was a kind of basketwork. Kangaroos were stalked, speared and trapped by digging along their tracks deep pitfalls covered with twigs and earth. The pits, about three metres long, 2.5 metres deep and about 25 centimetres wide, were just wide enough for the hind legs to fall into. Wallabies were caught in drives of fences along ravines, sometimes with wattlework woven into a basketwork-like mesh with sticks at the end. Commonly a hunter planted himself in the thick foliage of a tree close to a spring when an emu approached. He attracted the emu with a tuft of cockatoo feathers on top of his 3.6-metre spear. In open country the native would sneak up to the unsuspecting bird under cover of bushes held in front of him. Cockatoos, parrots and other birds, especially in flocks, were brought down with sticks or boomerangs.

The natives caught crayfish with their hands and culled grubs from grass-trees and black wattles. They ate many kinds of roots and yams. Among yams the wor-rain, noted for its thick yellow blossoms, was common, growing as deep as a metre and as thick as a finger and even as a wrist. They roasted all meats and most vegetables, the very nourishing bullrush roots in particular being slowly cooked in ashes.

A kind of defined heritage area of country was laid down for each family of the tribe. Its territorial rights to its own ka-la or fireplace were respected, the land being divided among the sons when the owner died. Infringements were looked on as trespass. If an individual of the same tribe but of a different family traversed the area he would take only the little food he needed. When swans were nesting or a whale was cast ashore, other tribes would come along by invitation. Gluttony was regarded as unpardonable and in that way the Aborigines were very self-sacrificing. When food showed in abundance the neighbours were invited to partake.

When trading with other tribes, all that the Nyoongar could barter were their spears fashioned from local "spear" wood, which grew plentifully near the coastal swamps. They sought in exchange wil-gi (now wilga), a red ochre which they mixed with fat to smear over their bodies. They bargained for Darling Ranges quartz for their spears but that changed to glass when the Europeans came. They sought also stone tomahawks (kod-ja) from the ranges or the Kojonup district; woomeras (mi-ra) and throwing-sticks (dau-ak), both made of acacia from the Avon district, and corkwood shields (hi-la-man) from the same district. They rubbed the red ochre dry in their hands or pounded it with a stone to fine powder, mixing it with snake entrails or iguana fat held on a stick over a fire. Besides serving decorative purposes, the red ochre kept ants,

sandflies and other insects at bay.
The Nyoongar never used roads, bridges or canoes. But when a tree fell across a river they used that for fording. They were expert swimmers, hand over hand--dog-paddling.

The Nyoongar wore a cloak (bo-ka) of kangaroo hide with a collar 12 to 15 centimetres deep, the cloak, hairy side in and the outside coloured with wil-gi, hanging to just below the knee. The males showed raised scars on breast and arms. In cold weather the adults carried a lighted firestick under their mantles to keep warm. The stick was held in the left hand between two pieces of bark that gripped it like a coal in a pair tongs.

Fire was produced by twirling a vertical stick on a horizontal piece, usually a grass-tree or stalk, which was bitten out with the teeth. Friction set alight fine dry shreds of fibre scraped from the inside of a dead log.

The hair of the male was cropped with a sharp quartz stone but not as short as the woman's. The men cut their whiskers from between the ear and the angle of the jaw to leave a beard and moustache. Some of the older men shaved the moustache. Teeth were not knocked out to show initiation as with the northern tribes of the State. The nose was bored but the wearing of a nose-pin was exceptional.

The natives usually carried a quartz spear, a fish spear and two barbed spears. On the warpath they would discard the fish spear for another quartz spear. Boomerangs (kai-li, now kylie) were made of jamwood acacia, which grew favourably for the required shape. Older men used them for fighting, younger men for throwing at birds. Austin recorded that he never saw an individual carrying more than one boomerang at a time.

The people lived in the open normally. But in wet, wintry weather they used huts, sometimes using breakwinds. The huts could be of grass-tree leaves or paperbark.(1)

1 Ibid. Roth.

FIRST SETTLEMENT

The first settlers in the Bunbury region--in January 1938--were the farmer family of John Scott, wife Helen and sons John, 17, and Robert, 14, and Daniel McGregor, 22, born of Helen's earlier marriage to Alexander McGregor, who died while Daniel was a baby.(1)

Scott arrived at Fremantle with his family on 5 March 1831 in the 343-tonne packet Eliza with passengers and cargo for the newly-established Swan River Settlement(2).

Why John Scott left his Scottish farm to risk the dangers and rigours of pioneering a home in a two-year-old settlement on the other side of the globe is not known. Depressed agricultural conditions in England and Scotland with poor farm-produce prices and comparatively-high farm-labour wages may have disenchanted him. The people suffered. Rioters in country districts protested against conditions, the severe prison sentences of the times failing to settle the troubles.

Scott left no personal record of his reasons for migrating. But some of Scott's descendants said Captain Stirling--later Governor Stirling of the Colony of Western Australia--a native of Dumpellier, a town only a few kilometres from Scott's native home near Hamilton, may have inspired the move. No authentic records that the two men knew each other exist. But it seems more than likely they did since they came from the same locality. In the new settlement they had a business relationship that led to Scott's becoming the true founding father of the Bunbury district. Scott called himself a gentleman farmer and Stratham, the name of his River Clyde holdings in Scotland, was brought with him to become a place-name on South-Western Highway, between Bunbury and Capel.

---

1 From a soon-to-be-published book, The Scott Family: Bunbury's Pioneer Settlers, by Paul Wood. Quotations from the book by permission of the author.

2 The Swan River Colony and the Swan River Settlement were colloquial names which the British Government never recognised. In correspondence the Home Government always referred to the Colony of Western Australia.

When the Scotts arrived in Western Australia they settled at Guildford where, among other things, Scott took care of blood mares that Lieutenant-Governor Stirling had brought from Scotland. Scott cared for the animals free of charge. But after six years Scott felt the colony had not lived up to its promise and he decided to shift his family to Port Philip Bay in Victoria. According to Scott, the Lieutenant-Governor asked him to stay.(1) The two men agreed that Scott should go to Port Leschenault (later Bunbury) to found a settlement and to be Stirling's agent. According to Scott, Stirling assured him that if he should remain he would have "as good a farm as could be picked for myself and my sons forever after me, free of rent."(2)

The Scotts were to drive the cattle, including some of Stirling's beasts, overland. Daniel McGregor was in charge of the party, which included three men Scott took with him as employees. Towards the end of December 1837 they set off for Pinjarra, then connected to Perth by a rough dirt track, but from then on had to blaze a track for the wagons through undergrowth and forest to Leschenault Inlet. Meanwhile Stirling had arranged for the colonial schooner Champion to take him and officials, together with John and Helen Scott, sons John and William and Helen's maid, to Port Leschenault. The droving party arrived at the inlet three or four days before Champion sailed into Koombana Bay early in January.

Champion anchored near the inlet sandbar and the Scott settlers proceeded by flat-bottomed boat into the inlet to what later became known as Scott's Landing, east of the present Parade Hotel and at the foot of the present Richmond Street, and which was to service Scott's farm. A 130-hectare (320-acre) site had been selected for Scott's farm on the Preston River. It was called Eelup, the native name for the area.(3) The meaning is unknown. Eelup was on Stirling's grant and he immediately selected 356 hectares (880 acres) adjoining for development as his own farm.

Kimberly reports that in the first year Scott's party "cleared and planted about five acres of soil, and by great industry soon had 150 acres under cultivation. Some soldiers were quartered near at hand to protect them, but the natives proved friendly, and often laboured on the farm all day long in payment for food that was given them."(4)

The second settler in the district was close behind Scott and family. On 4 February 1838, about one month after the Scott family had begun to carve out their farm, Thomas Little arrived at Fremantle in the 400-tonne Gaillardon after a seven-week voyage from Calcutta with his wife and family, his foreman Milne and 23 Indian labourers.(5) Little had come to found a new Prinsep estate in Australia to supplement the Prinsep estates in Singapore and Van Dieman's Land.

1 Perth Inquirer, 1879.
2 Ibid.
3 Compare with the name i-lap, reported by Austin 11 years later.
4 Kimberly, "West Australia--A Narrative of Her Past," 1898, p. 104.
5 The Western Australian Journal, 10 February 1838, p.22.

A Perth newspaper welcomed the Gaillardon this way: "A more frequent and regular communication between this colony and India is now opened by the establishment of the Bengal Australian Association and the arrival of the first vessel--the Gaillardon. . . . By late arrival we have the introduction of a class of labourers--the hill coolees (sic)--to pave the way for the importation of a larger number. The projected establishment for breeding horses in this colony for the Indian market is an experiment highly promising, and one in which we have every reason to take a considerable interest, and indeed greater than any of the other colonies, because we are nearer the spot [India] whence a supply of labour to carry on the operations may be obtained. . . . The first adventure embarked in this settlement is the property of Charles Prinsep, Esq., who is about to establish a farm for the purpose of rearing horses for the Indian market."(1)

Prinsep had told Little to use his initiative in choosing the site for the venture, aimed mainly at raising horses for the British Army in India. Little became the second settler when he purchased the tongue of land between Leschenault Inlet and the Indian Ocean, 741.4 hectares (1832 acres) of sandhills with richer flats here and there along the inlet foreshore. He named the homestead Belvidere in honour of the Prinsep mansion in Calcutta.(2) That mansion is now the Public Library in Calcutta.(3)

It was the best land Little could buy on behalf of the Prinsep estate. The first-class land of the region was already taken--Stirling, Colonel Lautour (who never visited the colony) and the Henty brothers (who stayed only 12 months or so), together with smaller selectors tying up 115 744 hectares (285,999 acres)(4). But it allowed the Prinsep operation to start until land forfeited by other settlers became available.

Little developed the Prinsep Estate as a horse-and-cattle venture. There were two cattle herds--one of English, the other of Bengali cattle or water-buffalo. The water-buffalo were kept at the Bengal Station at the extreme northern end of the property where four Indian labourers from Goa looked after them. The buffalo were used for ploughing and clearing and as beasts of burden. The homestead on the Bengal Station was named Buffalo. By 1854 612 head of Bengali cattle were in the herd.(5)

---

1 Ibid.
2 "The Prinsep Dynasty," by A.C. Staples, "Early Days," the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, vol. 8, part 1, 1977.
3 A.C. Staples, "They Made Their Destiny; History of Settlement of the Shire of Harvey, 1829-1929," Harvey, 1979, p. 64.
4 Lands Department records.
5 From the private papers of T.W. Paisley, headmaster of Bunbury Central State School in the 1890s.

Later Buffalo Station was rented to an English settler named Jackson, who lived there for many years with his wife and sons. Belvidere, which was about 1.5 kilometres across the inlet from the more inhabited eastern side, maintained communication mainly by rowboat. That was quicker than the roundabout route on horseback along the head of the inlet where horses could be bogged. Some could not be dug out and were lost.(1)

H.C. Prinsep took control of his father's property from W.B. Mitchell, a Yorkshireman, in 1873. By coincidence, Mitchell had taken charge of Belvidere from W.O. Mitchell, who had run the station when Little left Belvidere to farm his own property at Dardanup, which he had bought from the Henty brothers, who had pulled out of the district to settle in Victoria. The two Mitchells were not related. W.B. Mitchell was the father of Sir James Mitchell, later Premier and Governor of WA.

Prinsep frequently recorded in his diaries from 1873 on for the next 10 years: "Smoke at the letterbox. Rowed across." Anyone who wanted to talk business with Prinsep set up a smoke signal near Belvidere's letterbox on the eastern shore at Wattle Point, directly opposite the homestead across the inlet. There were plenty to talk business. Prinsep told of "Mark Lyons going to New Zealand with 30 horses from Bunbury," and "Jackson bought our pigs at three pounds ten to be paid in sandalwood." In time the market appeared not to be there for Belvidere horses and the venture died, hastened by the death of Charles Robert Prinsep, Prinsep's father. Thomas Hayward, pioneer Bunbury trader and MLA for Bunbury and Wellington(2), wrote that he recalled that in the 1870s W.B. Mitchell, then running the Belvidere horse-raising venture, went to India with a shipment of horses "all of which were sold to the Government for a good price." He added: "Afterwards several lots were taken to Singapore and Mauritius by Messrs Avery and Adam but this trade was abandoned eventually as it was not very remunerative."(3)

---

1 Interview with Mr Morgan Smith, of Parkfield, October 1989.
2 Elected to fourth Western Australian Parliament as member for Bunbury, 24 April 1901; elected to fifth Parliament as member for Wellington, 24 June 1904; died 24 September 1915.
3 Thomas Hayward's diary, written in 1910, in J.S. Battye Library.

Henry Charles Prinsep, son of Belvidere owner Charles Robert Prinsep, one-time justice of the peace, Under-Secretary for Mines and Protector of Aborigines, recorded in 1918 how Indian buffalo came to be run on the Bengal Station at Belvidere.(1) Harry Prinsep was born in Calcutta in 1844. His father was Advocate-General of Bengal.

He wrote: "My father was very fond of investing his money in newly-discovered lands. He was also fond of horses, and his idea, I believe, was to establish horse-breeding stations from which could be drawn first-class animals for the Indian turf or for the army. . . His intention was to establish an estate at Port Phillip (now Melbourne) but this was altered in a rather curious manner. Mr William Brockman, of Herne Hill, a pioneer of the Swan, was deputed by his brother settlers to go to India and purchase cattle in order to replace those which they had tried to establish there [at Herne Hill]. It was thought that the Indian cattle might suit this country best. Mr Brockman arrived in Calcutta and bought a number of the small-humped variety but was rather staggered when he found it almost impossible to induce any ship captain or any shipping firm to charter a vessel to the unknown and uncharted harbour of Fremantle.

"He found himself, as it were, interned in Calcutta, and he became known to my father. My father, seeing his difficulty and desiring to help him, bought the cattle so that Mr Brockman might return at once to this country and report. Having these cattle on his hands, the next thing was what to do with them. He happened to know a retired soldier who had started a building and contracting business in Calcutta and which, I believe, was not very successful; this was Mr James(2) Little, and my father arranged with him to take charge of the cattle, and having succeeded by his influence in business circles in obtaining a small vessel to carry them, he embarked Mr Little, his wife and family of two boys thereon. The vessel was chartered for Port Phillip, and Mr Little was provided with letters of credit to buy land to the value of five thousand pounds in the vicinity of that place and start his cattle run.

"As luck would have it, Admiral Stirling(3), the then Governor of the Swan Colony, happened to arrive in Calcutta, and my father,

---

1 H.C. Prinsep, "Early Days in W.A.," "The Magistrate," June 1918, p.85. 347.96MAG, J.S. Battye Library.

2 Thomas Little, of course. Strange that Harry Prinsep should make such an error since he knew Little well. He recalled that when Little went to live at Dardanup on his own property "in after years I spent many a pleasant hour with him. He was a well-read and experienced man, very loyal to the recollections of my father, although my father's mind had been turned against him as a practical manager." Loc. cit.

3 Correctly, Stirling was vice-admiral at the time.

hearing of it, invited him to his house. Of course, there was much talk of Australia, and Admiral Stirling, by the end of the evening had persuaded my father that Swan River was more advantageous as a theatre of operations than Port Phillip and . .

my father altered the charter of the vessel to Swan River with instructions to Mr Little, and by the advice of the admiral to continue up to Champion Bay and settle himself there. But when the vessel arrived in Fremantle Mr Little met Marshall Waller Clifton, then Chief Commissioner of the Western Australian Land(1) Co, and he persuaded Mr Little it would be better to turn his attention to Koombanah Bay (now Bunbury) rather than to risk such a dangerous district as Champion Bay. . .

"Mr Little built a house and called the place Belvidere after my father's home in Calcutta. Mr Little brought about 30 Hindoos, among them six women who were very useful in making gardens, herding the cattle and rowing the boat to and from Bunbury. Mr Little and the Clifton family were very good neighbours for many years.

"More land had, of course, to be obtained, and Mr Little became acquainted with the Messrs Henty Bros, who had taken up 60,000 acres on the south side of Collie, eastward from where Dardanup now is. They [the Hentys] were unable to do more than the location duties required on one-third of this area, and being desirous of shifting themselves to the growing colony of Victoria, they offered their estate of 20,000 acres, known as the Henty Grant, Location 9, Wellington, for sale, Mr Little obtaining my father's permission to buy it for, I think, three thousand four hundred pounds.(2) He also bought a square mile from Mr W. R. Bunbury,(3) close to Dardanup, now known as Paradise; he also bought another 800 acres, which was subsequently known as Prinsep Park, adjoining Paradise on the South-West. Altogether he had secured about 24,000 acres of land. It was a fine estate as regards area but in this district rather unmanageable.

---

1 A common error, even among historians. The founding Australind company was simply the Western Australian Company. Anthony Hordern, a Sydney businessman, floated the Western Australian Land Company in London in 1883, 45 years after the Western Australian Company, to build the Albany-Beverley railway, which it completed in 1889 on the land-grant system.

2 Loc. cit., p.86.

3 One of the Richardson Bunburys, an early settler at Picton with his mother, Lady Richardson Bunbury, the family originally from Ireland. No direct connection with the Lieutenant Bunbury after whom Bunbury is named but there is said to have been two branches of the Bunbury family, one of which went to Ireland centuries earlier. Descendants of the Richardson Bunburys survive in the Busselton district, where they have farmed for more than a century.

"There was room for more than cattle on it, and as my father had succeeded in obtaining farming tenants for his Van Dieman's Land property, which had hitherto been a horse-breeding station, he decided to bring all the horses over to Western Australia, which was looked upon as being in a more favourable position for communication with India. They were brought, but with a certain amount of loss. Mr Little told me that on one occasion news was brought to him at Belvidere that a vessel had arrived at Bunbury with 29 horses for him from Tasmania. He went down and met the captain at the port. The captain demanded his freight as per his charter, and Mr Little having paid it, went on board to take delivery but found they were all dead, having died from various causes during the voyage, shortly before reaching port. That was one of the little difficulties that the early settlers in WA had to encounter.

"Of course, my main occupation was breeding horses for the Indian market(1), though I had to farm a good deal of land to support the employees, and also did a good deal of dairying. I succeeded in sending away several shiploads of horses. Steamers were not used on this coast in those days. . . The vessels carrying horses used to take about six weeks to reach the Indian ports, and, of course, there was some mortality on the voyage, but on the whole I had very little bad luck that way. We used to send grooms with them, only a few of whom returned, the rest either getting posts on other vessels or being absorbed in the Indian police."

Little official information on the horse export trade is available. Kimberly reports that "in 1848 Mr Prinsep introduced a few horses from Tasmania for his horse-rearing estate near Bunbury"(2). He reports further that in 1855 "the exportation of horses was proving a large source of revenue, and shipments were sent to India almost every year. From 1844 to 1853 horses valued at 4478 pounds sterling were exported. Nothing was done in this trade in 1854 but in 1855 and following years large returns were received. In 1858 some 401 horses, valued at 14,035 pounds sterling [35 pounds each] were exported. The total export from 1855 to 1860 was 708 animals, representing 22,993 pounds sterling [average 32 pounds]. The York Society had excellent grounds, therefore, for encouraging the introduction of the best strains of horses. Mr Phillips, of Culham, was obtaining a splendid race, and Mr Princep (sic) at Dardanup was also devoting considerable capital to the industry. The Western Australian witnesses before the Committee of the House of Lords on Convicts in 1856 all referred to this trade with jubilation, and ex-Governor Fitzgerald glowingly described the merits of Western Australian animals"(3). How much the Prinsep Estate contributed to that trade is not known.

---

1 Prinsep, loc. cit., 30 September 1918, p.132.
2 Kimberly, "West Australia, A Narrative of the Past,"1898, p.143.
3 Kimberly, loc. cit., p. 178.

Continuing his narrative, Harry Prinsep wrote: "Mr Little's reign came to an end after some(1) years . . . Mr Bickley, a former Calcutta businessman in Fremantle, managed the estate through his son-in-law, Mr W.O. Mitchell, until 1860. Things were not going very well, and my uncle, who managed the business of my father, who then was paralysed and a great invalid, thought fit to make a change, and knowing Mr James Mitchell, of the firm of Laroche, Nainby & Co, who managed the produce of our own Singapore estates, heard of Mr W.B. Mitchell, who was a Yorkshire man, a thoroughly good businessman, a splendid judge of horses and a good farmer, came out and very soon got things straight, though he told me it was very uphill work. He managed for six years until I came out."

---

1 Sixteen years. Little left in 1854 to farm his own property at Dardanup. Prinsep was not always as specific as he might have been. But he probably did not know accurately since Little left Belvidere 16 years before Prinsep's time. W.O.Mitchell followed to manage Belvidere till 1860. William Bedford Mitchell, father of Sir James Mitchell, took control in 1861. Up till 1866 his Prinsep Estate duties, based on Belvidere, included the export of horses and jarrah railway sleepers to India. From 1866 till 1869 he directed operations from Prinsep Park, Dardanup. Report of Jenny Staines, interview with Mitchell relatives and perusal of Mitchell's diary at Donnybrook, 1988. Notice that Prinsep says W.B. Mitchell "managed for six years till I came out," whereas W.B. Mitchell's diary shows he managed Belvidere for eight years. For the time factor, Prinsep seemed to rely entirely on memory of what he had been told.

Harry Prinsep continued(1): "My wife and I used frequently to ride over and sometimes spend the night with the Milligans at the northern end of the estuary. The tenants(2) were North Island(3) people, of the name of Milligan(4), who kept a large dairy(5). Three miles north, at the head of the estuary we had an Indian cattle station, the remains of the original herd brought down by Mr Little. They were funny little things(6) with humps on their shoulders, but were very wild, having been neglected at the time by Mr W.O. Mitchell, Mr Bickley's son-in-law, had charge of the estate, and many of them had spread for miles up the coast and had got very fierce, especially the bulls, and, being so small, could rush into the thickets where no horse could follow. So the only way to make any use of them then was to shoot them in the bush. I kept a man at the station on purpose for this. He used to go out with packhorses and big bags and shoot the animals miles off, skin them, cut them up and bring them to his house and salt them down. About once a month the bullock dray from the head station at Paradise used to go over and bring back the salted meat. These Indian cattle were the principal meat supplies for our stations for many years. Sometimes as many as 42 people were fed on it, including small outstations on the Henty Grant. I did not like it much though the humps were supposed to be a delicacy"(7).

"Milligan and I, meeting Fowler, inspected the Indian cattle and decided to draft 35 of them into the English herd(8). There were 10 cows left, and I gave Milligan his choice as a present for his general assistance and great help"(9).

---

1 Loc. cit., 31 July 1918, p. 102.
2 They were tenants of the Western Australian Company, founders of the failed Australind venture.
3 "North Island" is incomprehensible. North Ireland is correct. Prinsep made several obvious errors in his script, surprising for a man of his educational background, and there is evidence of a typographical scramble in the magazine article at one point. See footnote 4.
4 Mrs Frances Atherton, of Donnybrook, a Milligan descendant, confirmed that her grandparents, James and Eliza Milligan, arrived from Northern Ireland in the 1850s. Interview at Donnybrook November 26, 1989.
5 Tom Atherton, husband of Frances Atherton and retired Lowden farmer, who worked on the Cowarup Hill property in the 1920s while it was still in Milligan hands, says the property could run no more than 60 cows, some of them dry, therefore it could not have carried a big dairy. But it may have been considered a big dairy by 1860 standards. Staples says: "The Milligan land may never have yielded more than a meagre return for the labour spent on it, hence the younger James's preference for employment elsewhere" [as manager of Belvidere]. Loc. cit., p.161. Staples records that in 1901

James Milligan decided to sell part of the property to clear a debt, [p. 162.] a fact that Tom Atherton did not seem to know.

6 Cf. Frank Rodgers, of Cooks Park, son of original pioneer James Rodgers, who described them as "great buffaloes," South Western Times, 11 November 1958. Frank Rodgers was born in 1876. It is doubtful whether he told the truth when he gave the interview at age 82 to the South Western Times but relied on what he had been told as a child. He says he could remember "when at Belvidere was a colony of Indians who plied their ploughs, using great buffaloes, and tended avenues of date palms and fig trees." Allowing for Rodgers's memory to begin at age four (1880), his recollection would begin 10 years after Prinsep was at Belvidere. Prinsep has already said the buffalo, "funny little things," had begun to run wild before his time [in the 1860s] and that he kept a man to shoot them for meat. Prinsep never wrote anything about Indians plying their ploughs and "avenues of date palms and fig trees." The Rodgers story appears to be an embellished figment of the man's Taj Mahal concept of what he thought it might have been. It was probably the first time Rodgers had won newspaper recognition and he basked in the reflected glory, spinning a good tale to win public attention.

7 Loc. cit. 3 July 1918, p.103.

8 Ross McGillivray, "An 1854 Challenge to Modern Builders," South Western Times, 6 April 1971.

9 Prinsep Diaries, 21 April 1869, 2882/A, micro 499A, Battye Library.

No 5 block on Leschenault Road alongside the inlet, where Cathedral Avenue is now, was occupied by James Milligan in the 1850s. Old maps identify the site as "Milligans"(1). Mrs Frances Atherton, a granddaughter of the original settler, and her husband Tom confirm that the property was known as Cowarup Hill(2). James Milligan came to the district when William Owen Mitchell managed Belvidere; later Milligan's son James managed Belvidere in the days of Harry Prinsep(3).

Mrs Frances Atherton says(4): "I was a Milligan from Australind, and all the comings from and goings to Belvidere were made from our place. My aunt Mary Milligan(5) and her brother Jack had a farm there, Cowarup Hill(6), at the top end of the avenue of paperbarks. My parents died when I was a baby and I had two sisters. Aunt Mary reared us(7).

"Mr Frank Venn, of Dardanup Park, built the big thatched-roof kitchen at the back of the big house [Belvidere]. One very hot day a spark from the stove got into the thatch and . . . it burnt down. The big house was never white--always a red-brown colour. It had five bedrooms, bathroom and a huge dining-room. Mr Venn also built a jetty into the estuary as the water was so shallow it meant walking a fair distance, and as weed and mud were thick it wasn't a good idea walking through it as cobblers were plentiful.

"Mr and Mrs Venn always spent a lot of the summer holiday with their family at Belvidere and left their car at our place [Cowarup Hill]. They had two rowboats to go back and forth. The boats were left in the estuary in front of our place. Uncle Jack looked after them in winter and dragged them into the rushes for safety.

"We had a telephone--a luxury in those days--and should an urgent message come through for the Venns, my sister and I would go over to the estuary on our side and sit under a tree that grew right on the water's edge. We called it a "Gidgie" tree. We took a single sheet and put it on a long pole tied to the tree and we would sit there until we received a white signal from Belvidere. Sometimes it would be hours as they could be over at the sea beach on a picnic.

---

1 A.C. Staples, "They Made Their Destiny," p. 161-2.
2 Mrs Frances Atherton, interview 26 November 1989.
3 A.C. Staples, loc. cit., p. 161.
4 Letter from Mrs Frances Atherton to Bunbury Historical Society 26 November 1987.
5 Mary Milligan, 77, never married. She was born at Belvidere and lived all her life at Cowarup Hill. Ibid.
6 Cowarup Hill is Mrs Milligan's spelling. Newspapers of the 1890s spelt the name Kowarup. Cowarup Hill is now Marina Waters, off Cathedral Avenue. Mrs Frances Atherton, interview at Donnybrook 26 November 1989.
7 Ibid.

"When the Venn family had grown up and they came no more to Belvidere, they sold the property to Mr Lewis McDaniel, who used it as a cattle run and often had people staying in the house. At one stage his sister-in-law and family came from Broome for several months. After a while a Mr and Mrs Finch and family came and stayed. They were from Collie and had hit bad times. But that ended in tragedy when out in the boat one morning the gun accidentally went off and their youngest son was killed. They soon left and after a long while Mr and Mrs George Heppingstone moved in for quite a while. Mrs Heppingstone had her brother, Hugh O'Connor, with her. Hugh and Kitty O'Connor were the son and daughter-in-law of Mr Charles Yelverton O'Connor, who put the water main through to Kalgoorlie.

"Belvidere house was burnt down one night--a very sad end to a very lovely holiday house"(1).

---

1 Mrs Frances Atherton, letter to Bunbury Historical Society 26 November 1987 and interview two years later to the day, 26 November 1989.

THE FARMING SCENE

Because of the total absence of stock and cultivation figures for small localities in the Wellington district, it is not possible to give district or locality early-settler farm yields. Policemen collected farm statistics but those at Bunbury, which affected the Leschenault Inlet area under study, were destroyed as soon as the abstract for the district as a whole had been calculated(1). From the beginning of settlement in 1838 till 1847 the earliest Wellington settlers (most were in the inlet precinct) clearly concentrated on sheep with a cattle-to-sheep ratio of 1:4. But in 1847 the price of sheep had fallen to four shillings each from one pound sterling in 1843. Despite improved prices the number of sheep did not reach the 1847 figure again for 14 years. Beef at sevenpence a pound was clearly better than mutton. It is probable that the surrounding district was too set and swampy for sheep, soils were deficient in food minerals and farmers preferred cattle, which could be moved readily over long distances to new pasture to avoid coastiness. Staples defines the district as a 1:1 cattle/sheep district up to about 1874(2).

Victorian pioneers in the Port Philip district were each credited with investing in 1853 between 2000 pounds and 5000 pounds sterling in sheep. An Australind settler of the time could barely raise 10 pounds sterling to buy a 10-acre block of land(3).

Suitable shepherds for flocks as they roamed the unfenced bush for scanty food were hard to come by. If shepherds absconded the flock disbanded and became lost. Sometimes shepherds even sold sheep. In 1869 R.H. Rose bought a flock of sheep for pasturing on the limestone soils of Parkfield. Rose, 20 December 1869: "Rode over to the sheep--found 40 missing." Rose, 4 January 1870: "This morning found 60 sheep which were lost"(4). In the 18 months he persisted with them, the sheep caused Rose endless worry. They had to be washed against scab, which later became a serious epidemic, men had to be engaged to shear them, they were lost repeatedly and men had to be sent from the homestead to find them, the first shepherd was discharged for incompetence(5).

There is evidence that wheat was grown in the area under study but the acreages were not large. Farmers appeared to grow wheat for self-sufficiency, selling small surpluses for items they could not produce on the farm, where they were self-sufficient in dairy produce, garden produce and meat. They appeared to produce only enough wheat for their own flour needs, bran and pollard for the stock and a little more to cover the cost of the Forrest family milling. The rapid increase in wheat prices from five shillings a

---

1 A.C. Staples, ibid, p. 217.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Rose diary, Battye Library.
5 Ibid.

bushel in 1848 inspired no increased production for five years till 1853. Acreages did increase a little for the next 11 years but then cultivation began to decline, probably because of rust infestation.

Farmers may have accepted the advice of Crown Lands Commissioner Sir Malcolm Fraser in 1875 that they should cease growing wheat and grow silkworms and olives instead(1). "Again and again our attention is drawn to the old homestead sites with their spreading mulberry trees and the small groves of olives"(2). Farmers alongside the inlet were luckier. They planted salable crops of potatoes.

Frank Rodgers records that his parents had 10 sons to care for on Cooks Park, 4000 acres of bushland that extended from the top of the inlet to about eight miles eastwards. Bread was baked in the homestead ovens 16 loaves at a time three times a week. Fish were plentiful and natives would barter their catches for potatoes grown on the Rodgers property. Potatoes were not bagged for market. They were dug, cleaned then buried in pits till a ship was due to take them to the Fremantle markets. A bullock train took them to Bunbury port(3).

In evidence before the Commission of Agriculture in Bunbury on 3 December 1887(4), James Rodgers(5), pioneer farmer of Cooks Park, on the estuary, 10 miles from Bunbury, said he went there in 1862.
Question: "What did you commence on?"
Rodgers: "I had nothing but myself and my old woman. I came out(6) on service with Mr Piggott [of Springhill], where I earned the price of 15 head of cattle, and I got a bit of land under tillage lease. I was getting 50 shillings a month from Mr Piggott--good wages in them days."
Question: "And what landed property have you now [15 years later], Mr Rodgers?"
Rodgers: "I have 6000 acres in freehold and 10,000 acres under lease at the head of the Harvey [River]."
Rodgers said he had 700 acres fit for potato-growing, or good wheat land. The rest was sandy. He attributed his success to under-draining. In Ireland farmers used broken stone for under-draining; here he used broken mahogany [jarrah] chipped. He had about 30 acres cleared for cultivation. He was paying five pounds an acre for partial clearing, $10 an acre for clearing for ploughing. That season [1887] he had planted eight acres of wheat,

---

1 Votes and Proceedings, Legislative Council, 1873, Report of Commissioner of Crown Lands, p. 8.
2 Staples, ibid., p. 225.
3 South Western Times, 11 November 1958.
4 Battye Library, Q630, 9941. The commission: Chairman H.W. Venn, Edward R. Brockman, A.R. Richardson, W. Padbury, J.H. Monger.
5 The commission incorrectly recorded his name as Rogers.
6 From Ireland.

eight acres of rye and about two acres of potatoes. He did not cultivate the same ground every year except potato ground, which was swamp land. Generally, he sowed wheat over his potato ground, which averaged 30 bushels to the acre.

Rodgers said he did not change his seed wheat every year. He used a bushel and a half to the acre. He grew a tremendous crop of rye, averaging from 30 to 40 bushels to the acre.

He used a weed from the estuary (sic) for manure, and since his land was under-drained, the substance did not drain away.

He had 160 head of cattle and 20 horses. He made as much manure as he could from the dairy cattle. Many of the other cattle never came home. He did only enough dairying to supply family wants. He kept a few pigs, cured their bacon and ate it.

He generally made his money out of potatoes. He had grown a ton to the chain, or 10 tons to the acre. This year [1887] he had grown 47 tons off eight acres of swamp land. He always had two crops a year. He planted his swamp crop in January and his other crop in July, manuring every third year.

He planted potatoes whole for the summer crop but they could e cut for the winter crop. The size of the seed made no difference. Half a ton of large seed would go no farther than 7cwt of small seed. He used any mortal sort of seed he could get. The old red potato was the best he had met. He could grow them as large as a glass tumbler. The red-and-white was a fine keeping potato.

He always found a sale for his potatoes. The previous year [1886] he got 10 pounds a ton, the year before eight pounds 10 shillings, the current year [1887] only seven pounds 10 shillings.

He had tried other root crops and could grow mangolds(1) but because he thought his potatoes paid better he stuck to them. He had grown any amount of field peas and fed his pigs with them. Pig melons grew fine and were splendid for pigs and cattle. If there was a market for them he could grow 100 tons a year easily. Lucerne was very good but he would rather have other grasses--the "Yorkshire fog" or a soft meadow grass. He had picked up a handful of it in a neighbour's field and put it in his pocket for seed, and now he had five acres of a splendid crop.

Fruit trees did fine with him. He had peaches, pears, apples and oranges--splendid oranges and he intended putting in a lot of them. Olive-trees had not done very well with him.

---

1 Or mangel or mangel-wurzel. A large kind of beet used as cattle food.

From the Bunbury Herald, 7 July 1908: "Those who have travelled along the Australind road, beside the Leschenault Estuary (sic), could not have failed to notice a long strip of cultivation running parallel with the road. This is the property of the brothers Rodgers, and has been worked for very many years.

"Twenty years or more ago the father(1) of the present owners found a market among the then small population [of Bunbury] for 1000 bags of potatoes, dug in one season, the result of a 12-ton-to-the-acre average. The only fertiliser used was farm manure and seaweed. The latter in those days was beached on the estuary in great quantities. The seaweed is no longer deposited in this vicinity, due, probably, to the existence of the Bunbury harbour breakwater.

"Even now the Rodgers brothers use artificial fertilisers sparingly, if at all, but 12 tons to the acre averages are not unknown to them."

From the diaries of Henry C. Prinsep, written at Belvidere, which show that the isolated community was self-sufficient to a degree in 1873:
10 January: "Our pumpkins getting on admirably."
15 January: Neeribun made a smoke [signal] and I sent the boat [across to Wattle Point]. He brought 2lb of honey."
6 February: "Plenty of rockmelons ripe."
7 February: "Went to pick mulberries in the morning."
8 February: Uncle Spicer and I went to Rodgers' flat and picked a bucket full of figs off the big fig-tree."
9 February: "Ward and Jackson came in the morning. Took the boat to the Wattle Point stakes and returned in the evening with nearly 40 fish. Josephine caught two ornate ones off the jetty. Ward took his two private pigs."
1 March: Jackson arrived and took away 112lb of pumpkins for R. Rose(2)."

---

1 James Rodgers, who appeared before the Commission on Agriculture in 1887 in Bunbury.
2 Of Parkfield.