

What you should know

■ The CSU Regional Archives is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building at the South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.

■ Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.

■ For further information, phone 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au or visit the website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.



Borambola Homestead, 1958.

Place in history

Borambola: a standout property

at the Archives
Wayne Doubleday



Dating back to the 1830s, Borambola is considered to be one of the standout pastoral properties in the history of the Wagga area. Situated on the Tarcutta Creek where it meets the Murrumbidgee, Borambola is 25km east of Wagga, fronting the Sturt Highway.

In the early 1830s the land was taken up by George Macleay, who had accompanied Captain Charles Sturt on his 1829-1930 expedition down the Murrumbidgee River. George Macleay was the son of the then Colonial Secretary, Alexander Macleay.

Reportedly, TS Townsend, the surveyor of Wagga, thought Borambola was such an ideal location as a half-way point between Sydney and Melbourne that the city of Wagga ought to have been built on the site of Borambola Station.

The recommendation was soon vetoed and Wagga continued to be developed where it is today.

In 1851 Macleay sold Borambola to John Gordon who had been working as a manager for Macleay. It would have been during John Gordon's occupation of Borambola that the original homestead was built, known as "Old Borambola".

The property was then sold to John Donnelly in 1865. The Donnellys developed the



Sir George Macleay, founder of the Borambola property.

Borambola estate into a 50,000-acre, thriving pastoral run, taking full advantage of the frontage to the Murrumbidgee River and the Tarcutta Creek. The new homestead was built circa 1860 at the height of the Donnelly's occupation of Borambola.

After successive years of drought, the Donnelly family was forced into bankruptcy and Goldsborough and Mort Co Ltd assumed control in 1895. Following the foreclosure, JA

Gunn managed the station for Goldsborough and Mort until his retirement in 1905.

In 1910 Borambola was subdivided, and according to sources, a GW Simpson acquired Borambola and in turn sold it to Anthony Brunskill. The Brunskills sold off the newer homestead along with approximately 1500 acres to FW Hughes, and retained "Old Borambola" with the original stone stables and Jackaroo quarters from the Macleay era. FW Hughes operated Borambola as a horse stud, at which Hiraji – the 1947 Melbourne Cup winner – was trained and finally put to stud.

A further subdivision occurred in 1961, and even though this property has continually been reduced in size throughout the last century, Borambola has not grown any less spectacular. The homestead as seen from the road sits on top of a gentle foothill facing out to the Sturt Highway towards Gundagai. Within the confines of the property, the extensive views of the Murrumbidgee Plains give an impression of how big this property once was.

The current owners, Basil and Anne McMullen, purchased Borambola in 1992, and have since planted a vineyard that surrounds the beautifully restored homestead and gardens.

The McMullen's success with the establishment of the vineyard and the operation of the cellar door at the homestead is a tribute to the integrity of Borambola, which is still generating produce after almost 180 years of pastoral enterprise.

■ **References:** *Wagga Wagga City Council Rural Heritage Study, 1999*; Patrick Donohue – *Squatting Runs of Wynard County, 2006*; Keith Swan – *A History of Wagga Wagga, 1970*; *The Daily Advertiser* 4/11/1983; Borambola Wines – <http://www.borambola.com/AboutUs.aspx>
■ Compiled by Lauren Carroll