

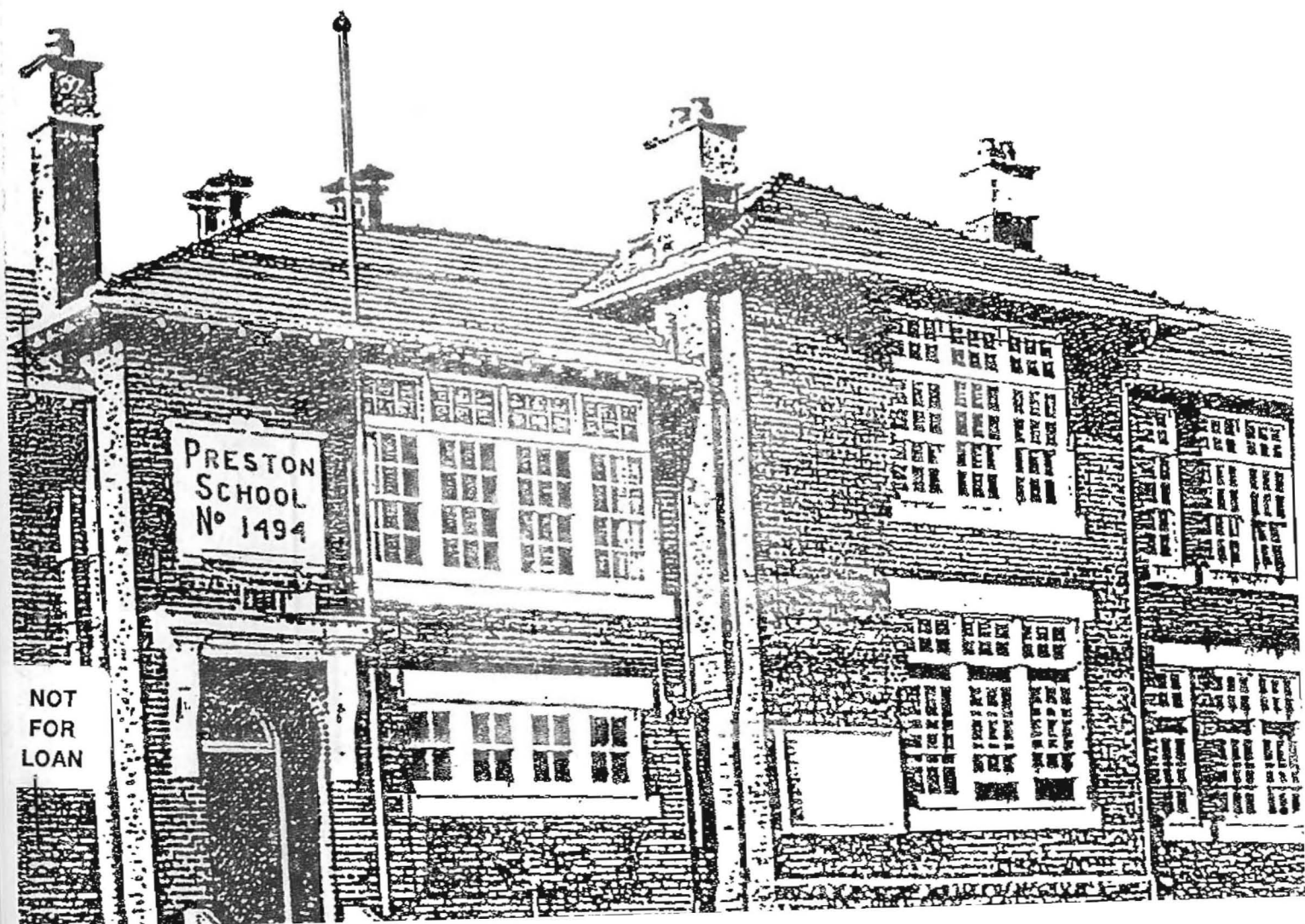
PRESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS: #1



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"THE TRADITION'S  
BEGINNINGS"  
1840's - 1902

WRITTEN BY MR JOHN WOOD



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FOR  
LOAN

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Melbourne was slowly developing in the 1840's and outlying rural areas were being settled by farming families. Preston was so isolated from Melbourne in its bush setting that "there was not a house between that place (Preston) and the Parliament Houses, and not a road of any kind between it and Melbourne."

In 1841 Samuel Jeffrey from Tyrone Ireland, bought 40 acres in the area and farmed it. He named his holding "Irishtown" and advertised his farm's whereabouts on his wagons, with which he operated a cartage business, to and from the goldfields, in lean times. Thus Preston was well known as "Irishtown". Jeffrey also added a further 40 acres to his farm later on. As a layman of the Wesleyan Church, he took great interest in the education of local youth. His basalt and stone barn was used for services and his home was used for Day School and Sunday School, with him as self appointed teacher. He donated part of "Irishtown" to the Wesleyan Church for the first wooden church in the area.

A Church of England School also catered for the education of the young in the area, the two church schools came under the control of the Denominational Schools Board. In 1851 the Common Schools Board replaced the Denominational Schools Board and the two schools were re-registered.

A non-denominational school was opened (through private effort) to the south of "Irishtown" in 1865. It was Gowerville Common School No. 824. The need for more schools had developed as "Irishtown" and Gowerville areas became more closely farmed. Preston received its name in the 1860's.

Preston's character changed in the 1860's as more manufacturing industries moved into the area.

Gowerville Common School No. 824 was left at the extreme eastern edge of the riding, as the population became

The Jika Jika Shire Board of Advice No. 160 (which was situated in Northcote) suggested that schools be centrally located in each of the three ridings. Land was sought for a "new" school in Preston (North).

The three Common Schools still continued.

In 1872 the Common Schools Board was taken over by the Education Department. Gowerville became Gowerville State School No. 824 on its original site, thus it was the first State School in Preston!

The Board of Advice urged "that there be a school for Preston riding capable of affording room for 250 children, and the most suitable site is in Tyler Street" in 1873. The land was part of "Irishtown" - two acres at £100, bought from Samuel Jeffrey. (Tyler Street was named after an English nurseryman - James Tyler.)

In 1874 tenders were advertised for the erection of "a brick or stone school to accommodate 160 children." It was to cost £825.

Mr. Robert Burr Parsons (with his assistant John H. Rennie) was the successful contractor.

In September 1874 Samuel Jeffrey complained that cattle were entering the school site and damaging his grain crop, after work on the school began, and the school site was quickly secured in 1874.

On 28th October, 1874, Robert Burr Parsons died in hospital, after injuries sustained in a dray accident on his way home from the site. While his affairs were being sorted out a delay of some weeks followed. John H. Rennie completed the contract.

A 5 ft. 2 in. high fence with rails strutting and palings of 39 roads was



The first Headmaster, Mr. Andrew Hanna, and his wife Mary Hanna, came to Preston State School No. 1494, Tyler St. after gaining promotion and transfer. Their appointment was recommended on 16th December, 1874, and took effect on 31st December, 1874. Their son, Henry Cooke Hanna, came as a pupil/teacher.

The Wesleyan and Anglican schools, which began soon after the area was settled, were struck off the Department's Roll on 31st December, 1874, and closed in favour of Preston S.S. No. 1494, which was classified as a "new" school on 1st January 1875. It was Preston's second State School, after Gowerville No. 824.

The Hanna's were appointed as from 1st January, 1875. Andrew Hanna couldn't open the school on 11th January, 1875 as he had not obtained the keys by then. Henry C. Hanna commenced duty on 6th January, 1875. The Board of Advice No. 160 was notified on 12th January 1875.

Furniture was ordered on 11th January 1875, and came on 12th January 1875:

- 1 master's desk
- 1 table
- 1 chair
- 4 12 ft desks
- 3 9 ft desks
- 2 book presses.

On 14th January, 1875, Mr. & Mrs. Hanna opened the school for business.

"Preston  
16th January, 1875

State School 1494

Sir,

I have the honour to report that I opened the above school for the enrolment and classification on the 14th...

I have the honour to be  
Sir

There was no official opening of Preston S.S. No. 1494 which upset the Board of Advice, which was unaware of the occupation of the building, and which was hoping that, as the Minister of Public Instruction had promised, the Board of Advice should have been communicated with prior to the school being opened. The Board of Advice also felt that after the great deal of interest and local effort given to get a school erected, it should have been able to assist the Head Teacher in the opening. We regret that there was no official ceremony because no record of the event exists today, and there is no original roll to find out who attended on the first day.

A School Clock was applied for on 30th January 1875 and Night School commenced from 7th April in the same year. In 1877 the school site had a dividing fence erected to create a Girls' Yard and a Boys' Yard.

The inadequate wooden school at Gowerville was replaced by a new brick building, on a new site in Hotham Street, South Preston, where it was closer to the centre of the riding, in 1877. Its name remained Gowerville State School No. 824.

In 1878 the Hanna family moved to Footscray State School No. 253, from Preston S.S. No. 1494.

In the same year a drain "across the ground, halfway up the slope, to prevent the flow of water in wet weather running around the school building, soaking into the foundations" was urged. The drain was actually completed in 1984!

The first Board of Advice report stated in part that,

"Upon the roll of Preston State School are found 188 children. The average attendance is 101. There are 105 children in the school at the time of our visit. The school was clean, and the school business was being attended to and the children orderly."

"It is absolutely necessary that a shed be erected to shelter the children before the summer months, as there is not even a tree to shade them from the heat or the rain."

A resident policeman was appointed to Preston in the 1880's and houses encroached upon the school site along High Street, to the west. The school began to be vandalised by young men and boys who were not connected with it, and it fell into disrepair.

In 1884 Yan Yean water was connected to the school (four years after Gowerville S.S. No. 824) replacing the tanks which were previously used.

In 1889 Henry Cooke Hanna and his wife Margaret were appointed to Preston as Head Teacher and Infant Mistress, renewing the family association with the school.

During the 1890's an economic recession forced the amalgamation of Preston S.S. No. 1494 and Gowerville S.S. No. 824.

Mr. H. C. Hanna rode his horse "Dick" between both schools as their sole Head Teacher, from 7th June 1895. Running both schools in unison saved £26.0.0 per annum.

Staff at Preston consisted of:

Head Master - Class 4  
Female Assistant - Class 5  
Female Assistant - Class 6  
2 Pupil Teachers  
Male Assistant.

Whilst the adjunct system operated, some pupils from Preston S.S. attended Gowerville from Grades 4, 5 and 6, as they lived closer to Gowerville. Some children near the railway line travelled by train to Gowerville S.S. and to Northcote S.S. No. 1401.

In 1900 the Board of Advice wanted a Head Master at Preston S.S. because supervision and efficiency were unsatisfactory, due to increasing numbers of pupils, and prolonged absences as the Head Master travelled to and from both schools.

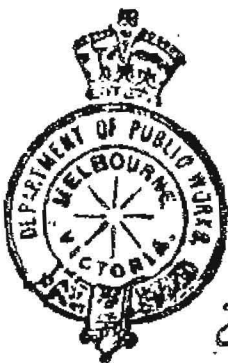
Preston now had 178 children in average attendance and Gowerville 468. Gowerville S.S. No. 824 was more appropriately named Preston South S.S. No. 824 in 1901. Amalgamation of the two schools ceased on 18th February, 1902.

Preston's enrolment topped 200 in 1902. Both schools were pleading with the Education Department for extensions.

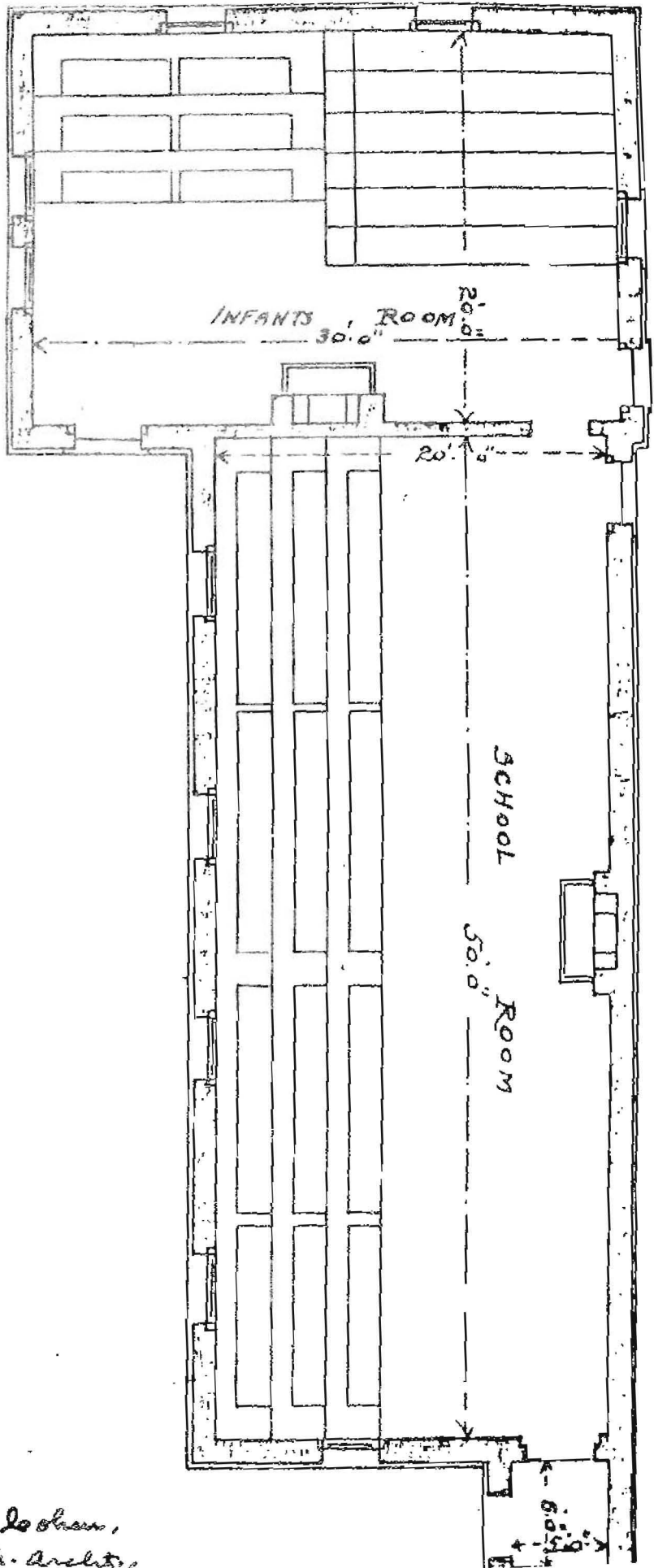
I wonder how many people today realise just how important the influence of the Hanna family was in founding the Tyler 'Street Tradition and maintaining it? Perhaps a future historian will find many other people and events which helped the school become widely acclaimed for its spirit and successes.

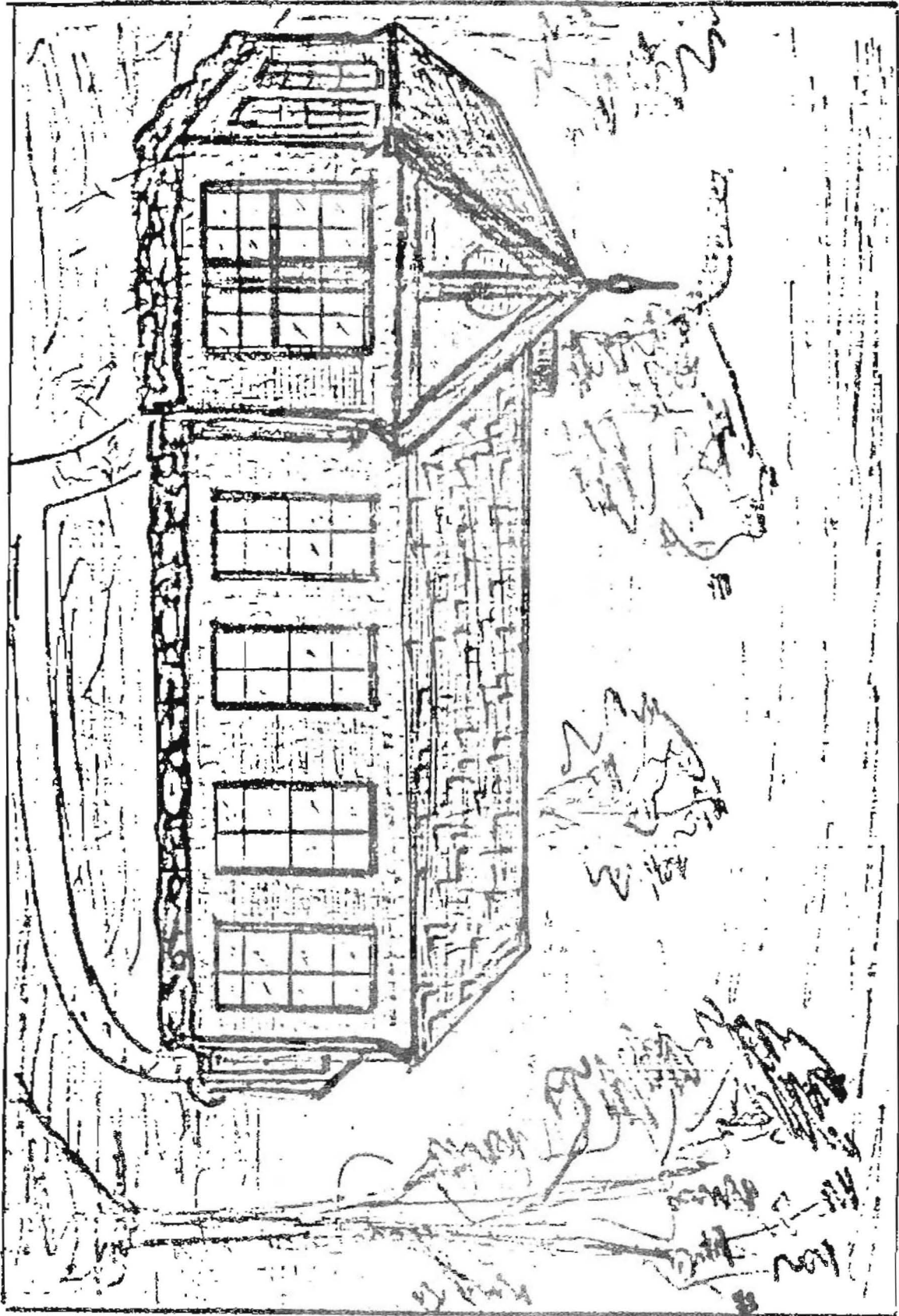
J. Wood

State School No 1494  
Fresno



J. P. Lockman,  
Arch. Archt.







ATTENDANCE ON 16th January, 1875.

There is no original roll to find out the names of those attending on this day, however Mr Sydney Bartlett, who attended the school in the 1880's, was able to remember these family names of pupils.

Arnold, Adamson, Bartlett, Brockhouse, Burley,  
Bussell, Brown, Breeze, Barrod, Brockenshire,  
Cady, Chandler, Crawley, Crispe, Cox, Dredge,  
Driver, Emery, Franks, Gilbert, Gibbs,  
Gannaway, Gardiner, Gamble, Griffith, Hattam,  
Harvey, Henderson, Heath, Hope, Jacobs, James,  
Jeffrey, Kinsman, Lyons, Marshall, May, Michael,  
Moylan, Midgley, Moulder, Norton, Nankervis,  
Ozare, Payne, Peecham, Robinson, Rogers, Royal,  
Sheffield, Short, Staples, Sinclair, Seeber,  
Seager, Steers, Saunders, Trudgeon, Thompson,  
Tyler, Thakes, White, Wood, Westmorland, Widow,  
Walker, Young.

The children of some of these families could have been the original enrollees on 16th January, 1875.