

Tumbledown Barn

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Foreword: *On 18 October 1997 Chris Counter led a group of people on a tour into the paddocks of the former Riverstone Meatworks to visit the site of a building known as the Tumbledown Barn, one of the earliest buildings in the district, built between 1810 and 1820. The exact location of the Tumbledown Barn had been the subject of confusion, as one early researcher had listed it as being on Peter Farrell's land grant, whereas later researchers felt it was on the land granted to William Sherwin. In this article Chris tells of how he came to be interested in the building and how he confirmed its location as being on the land grant to William Sherwin.*

Editor

My interest in this subject stems from a letter I read whilst opening mail at the Riverstone Meat Works in 1983. The letter dated September 18, 1983, was seeking information regarding the whereabouts of any remains of a building known as Tumbledown Barn, believed to be located within the grazing paddocks of the Meat Works. The writer, Mrs Elizabeth Harvey of Eglinton noted that Tumbledown Barn was possibly the birthplace of Robert McPhillamy in 1818, Charles Marsden McPhillamy in 1821, Elizabeth McPhillamy in 1823 and John Smith McPhillamy in 1825. Due to extreme difficulties experienced in the meat industry at that time the Company suffered drastic staff retrenchments leaving no time to follow up and reply to the letter. A reply was eventually prepared by the Company on April 18, 1984, and permission was given to me to deliver it personally. The reply advised that nobody within the Company knew of any building remains or about Tumbledown Barn.

Research on finding the exact location of Tumbledown Barn starts with information provided by Mrs Harvey, which was an extract from Primary Records of the Archives of the Society of Australian Genealogists Sydney taken from the George Reeve Papers.

Tumbledown Barn two and a half miles from Riverstone Meat Works. Probably built 1810-1820.

The homestead faced Eastern Creek (the east side is the front of the house).

Mr Towers went there in 1897 during the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria. The farm is situated in the angle of South and Eastern Creeks, so is ideal for irrigation.

The photo taken in 1899 shows Mr Jack Towers and family.

The Barn was on the right of the building, opposite gable end to that of the chimney (sic) and next to the top loft. Barn has extensive stabling.

A pepper tree stood and still stands in a gnarled condition a few yards away in front of where the water tank today is standing (front left side of photo).

Tumbledown Barn Building stood till 1912 when the immensely long wooden slabs (which stood in horizontal position) and other parts of the woodwork were pulled down. The half-tree slabs were taken to the Riverstone Meat Works for the purpose of stabling horses.

Tumbledown Barn stands in the 55 acre farm granted to a Mr Peter Farrell.

The old sundried brick chimney and the pepper tree are all that remain.

Robert McPhillamy of Gormans Hill was born at Tumbledown Barn between Clydesdale and Eastern Creek.

These were all the facts known to me about Tumbledown Barn. Strict security prevented me from looking at will around the junction of South and Eastern Creek for any remains of the chimney and the pepper tree. Following a discussion with a works stockman Steven Welk, he offered to take me to the junction of South and Eastern Creek where he knew an old pepper tree stood.

Investigations start with the 55-acre grant made at the junction of South and Eastern Creek in the District of Mulgrave Place to Peter Farrell, on December 18, 1799, by Governor Hunter. The grant was known as Farrell Farm.¹ However, further research discounted the idea that Tumbledown Barn was on this grant. Instead, it was located on land granted to William Sherwin in 1799.

William Sherwin enlisted in the New South Wales Corps on December 29, 1789. It is recorded that he was then a Corporal. He arrived in New South Wales in 1791. The following year he received a 500-acre grant in Parramatta. In 1793, he was promoted to Sergeant and the following year leased 0.5 acres on Norfolk Island. He was under detachment to Townson in 1798/99² and was granted the 150 acres in the District of Mulgrave Place on November 12, 1799 for a rental of two shillings per year commencing after five years. The 150 acres were in six allotments of 25 acres each granted by Col. Patterson to six Privates in the New South Wales Corps and purchased by the person in whose name the grant was made out.³ In 1800 he was under detachment to McArthur, he was discharged in 1801. In April, 1803 the 150 acre property was sold to Samuel Marsden.⁴

In 1817, William and Mary McPhillamy arrived in New South Wales. They had married in Scotland and were tried and sentenced at Ayr in 1816 for the illegal use of spirit stills. They each received seven years transportation. Mary gave birth to their first born on board ship. Subsequently three children were born at South Creek, possibly at Tumbledown Barn, a fourth child is recorded as having been born in Windsor in 1825. The 1825 muster records William and Mary at Windsor free by servitude.⁵

George Reeve writes in a newspaper article in 1928 that the McPhillamys were the occupiers of Tumbledown Barn prior to the parents of the late J T Ryan.⁶ This would tie in with the information written by Ryan when he states that the Rope family, (his grandparents), went to reside at Tumbledown Barn after 1818.⁷

The Reverend James Hassall writes he was at school in Mulgoa between 1836 and 1839. He states that his Uncle, (Charles Simeon Marsden), *had a dairy farm near Windsor called the Tumbledown Barn.*⁸ Charles Marsden was born in 1803 the son of Reverend Samuel Marsden and Elizabeth Marsden. He married Elizabeth Howard Brabyn in June 1828. In 1838 Samuel Marsden died, leaving property to Charles, however there is no evidence that Charles ever owned Tumbledown Barn.

Research at the Land Titles Office reveals a conveyance between the widowed Elizabeth Bobart, (daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Marsden), on the one part and James Mountford on the other part, on October 9, 1854. The document refers to the death of Samuel Marsden and his last will and testament dated October 18, 1836. In the will he left a parcel of land to Elizabeth Bobart then Elizabeth Marsden.⁹ This parcel contained 150 acres in the District of Mulgrave Place, situated on the south side of Farrell Farm and known as Tumbledown Barn. It was granted by the crown to William Sherwin on November 12, 1799. The same day a mortgage was drawn up between the same parties James Mountford being the mortgagor.¹⁰ There can be no doubt from this documentation that Tumbledown Barn is located on the 150 acre grant to Sherwin and not on the 55 acre grant to Farrell.

James Mountford of South Creek died in September 1863 and his last will is dated September 6, 1863. In the will he devised that all his farmland and premises situated between the South Creek and Eastern Creek should be divided equally between his daughters Elvina Mountford and Emma Ann Mountford. The real estate described is all that parcel of land containing one hundred and fifty acres lying at South Creek in the District of Mulgrave Place situated on the south side of Farrell Farm and known as Tumbledown Barn. The land was granted from the Crown to William Sherwin on November 12, 1799. Also all that parcel of land situate at South Creek containing about 55 acres bounded by South Creek, Eastern Creek and the lastly described parcel of land.¹¹

On a map showing part of the Windsor district drawn circa 1842, T Musgrave, Surveyor, records Tumbledown Barn clearly within the boundaries of the 150 acre grant made originally to William Sherwin.¹² This is further confirmation of the correct location of Tumbledown Barn.

References:

¹ Sydney Land Titles Office, Land Titles Grants Register 2, p. 417.

² P.Statham, op. Cit., p. 341.

³ Sydney Land Titles Office, Land Titles Grants Register 2. P. 407.

⁴ Sydney Land Titles Office, unregistered conveyance endorsed on original crown grant.

⁵ L. Halloran, *The McPhillamy's of Bathurst*, (unpublished. 1986)

⁶ *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* 17.7.1928.

⁷ James T. Ryan, *Reminiscences of Australia* Facsimile copy {Parramatta, 1982}, p. 3.

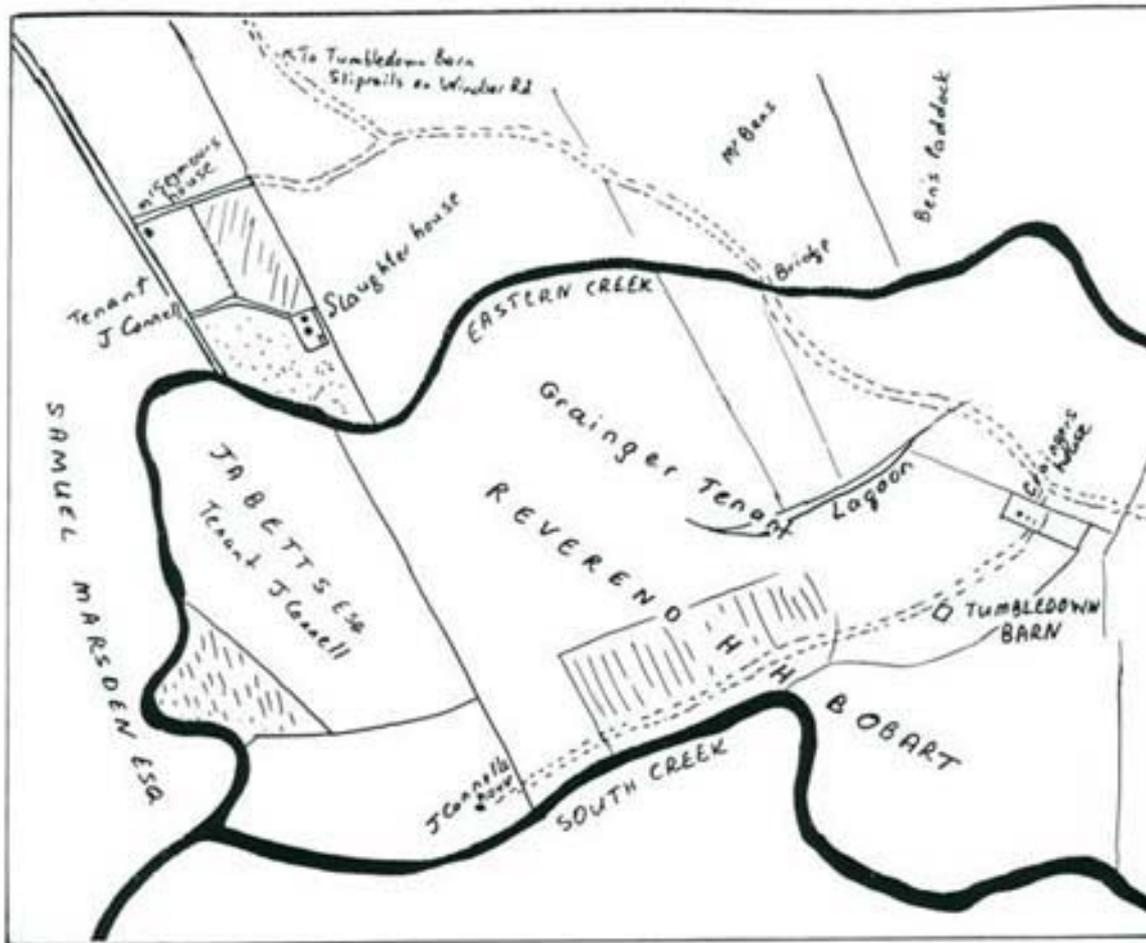
⁸ Rev James Hassall, *In Old Australia* {Brisbane, 1902}, p. 32,33.

⁹ Sydney Land Titles Office, Book 34. No. 348

¹⁰ *Ibid*, Book 34. No. 349.

¹¹ *Ibid*, Book 112. No. 587.

¹² Map, ZM4811.1122/1842/1 Mitchell Library.



Map 3.
 Sketched from a portion of an 1842 map drawn by
 T. Musgrave, Surveyor.
 The map shows the location of the Tumbledown Barn
 and other properties which were connected by tracks.