

The Echuca Braunds

Branch 1

Pam and Brian Hall

This story is principally about two brothers, Isaac and Lewis Braund (Branch 1), their emigration to Australia and their descendants. The family were originally from Black Torrington, Devon. Isaac and Lewis were the last of their siblings to leave their ancestral town. Philip Braund (1794-1821) and his wife Maria Braund née Strout (1797-1884) had twelve children. The eldest son, John, emigrated to Canada and five of his brothers to Australia; although one, James, later returned to England. Isaac arrived in Geelong in February 1858 on the Red Jacket, which had departed from Liverpool on 20th November 1857. He was aged 21 and recorded as occupation: Discounter. Lewis arrived in Port Philip (Melbourne) in October 1860 on the Monarch, which departed Plymouth on 11th July 1860. He was aged 18 and recorded as occupation: Farm Labourer.¹



Lewis and Isaac Braund

It is unknown what they did with themselves on arrival in Australia. They eventually settled in the Riddles Creek area north of Melbourne. Their original land consisted of Crown Allotments 45A and 46A Section A, Parish of Kerrie, which was granted on 6th January 1864. The adjoining lots CA 45B and 46B were granted on 4th April 1870. This gave them a total holding of just over 240 acres. Lewis' Lot 45A contains a named mountain, Mt. Eliza, although in real terms, this is merely a distinct hill. Their holding was only a few kilometers east of the infamous Hanging Rock, location of the well known story and movie "Picnic at Hanging Rock". They spent their early years clearing the land, felling heavy timber. As the Colony of Victoria developed, they heard stories of new areas of land opening to the north. When they traveled to the Echuca area and discovered the open grass plains, they decided to sell up and move. Echuca is situated 200km directly north of Melbourne on the border of Victoria and New South Wales. This border is the Murray River. It developed as a bustling township as it was the closest town to Melbourne on the Murray River and became a very busy inland port. Produce of wool and grain from Southern Queensland, Central New South Wales and Northern Victoria was shipped by paddle steamer and barge along the Darling and Murray River System. The produce was then railed to Melbourne for distribution. The port area in Echuca was over a mile long at its peak.

In 1878, Isaac and Lewis took up adjoining selections on the Murray River, in the Wharparilla Run, 5 miles west of Echuca. This area had originally been surveyed for a township, to be known as Jaenganya – a town that never was. Together they worked an area of 600 acres. The family property may be found by traveling west along the Murray Valley Highway where you will see a sign post with Braund's Road on the north of the highway pointing to your right. The property ran both sides of the highway from this road to the next cross road. It had a highway frontage as well as a river frontage. Braund's Road leads to Braund's sandbank, which is a very popular spot for swimming and skiing in summer. Their move to Echuca from Riddles Creek was decided by the open grasslands – no more trees to clear. The soil however, was not very fertile and they needed to work hard to make a living.

Lewis met and married a local girl, Sarah Ann Scriven on 23rd June 1874. They had one son, James Robert in 1879. Very little is known of Isaac. He never married, but lived and worked with Lewis and Sarah Ann. An earlier Parish plan shows Sarah Ann Scriven as the owner of a

triangular block south of the highway. As the Parish Plans show only the names of the first land holder, it is assumed that upon their marriage, the land grant was placed in Lewis' name and details changed. Lewis became a councillor for the Shire of Rochester and drove his horse and cart 21 miles to Rochester for regular Council Meetings. He was an original director of the Echuca Butter factory.

Lewis and Isaac raised beef and dairy cattle and won many prizes for their produce, both locally and nationally. The family has a silver tea service engraved: *Grand National Show To Mess. Braund For Powdered Butter Echuca Sept 1 1884*. A year later they won a silver and crystal decanter, engraved: *Echuca Agriculture & Pastoral Society Annual Show 1885 Awarded to Mess. Braund Bros. Wharparilla For Short Horned Bull*. They won many prizes at the local and Melbourne Shows. They would walk their cattle into Echuca, load them on the train and head to Melbourne for the Show and stay with the cattle in the sheds at the show grounds.

Lewis and Sarah's son James married Edith Ellen Morris in Echuca on 30th Dec 1908. They had three sons, James Eric, Frederick Lewis and Robert Morris. They lived on the family farm, inherited from Lewis, until James retired and moved into Echuca Township. James ran shorthorn cattle and wheat. He also became a director of the Echuca Butter Factory for 28 years, on the Board of Directors for the Echuca High School and was instrumental in its formation. He was also a Director of the Echuca Hospital and was highly involved in community life. James, Fred and Robert grew up on the family farm. All attended Wharparilla West State School, walking 5 miles through the paddocks morning and night. They each completed their education at Echuca Technical School. They were all keen sportsman and played cricket and tennis for Wharparilla.

1. Immigration Index, Victoria, Unassisted Passenger Lists – British Ports 1852 – 1879