

JOHN DIGHT & HIS SON, CHARLES HILTON DIGHT

John Dight was born on September 2, 1808 at Richmond, NSW. John Dight and his four brothers established themselves as pastoral pioneers, being involved in treks to the Hunter, Namoi and MacIntyre Rivers in Northern NSW. He became one of Albury district's pioneers - he and his brother Charles took up the Bungowannah Station in c1837 almost certainly on the advice of his brother-in-law, Hamilton Hume. Dight's elder sister Elizabeth had married Hamilton Hume soon after his 1824 expedition through this area to Port Phillip. It must be more than pure coincidence that the first settlers here, Charles Hotson Ebdon in 1835 and soon afterwards, the Huons, the Mitchells, the Dights, and even Robert Brown, were all linked by marriage and influenced by Hume's description of this area.



JOHN DIGHT

John Dight's holdings included Jindera, then known as Dight's Forest. Dight's Hill now bears his name. In 1839 John purchased land on the Yarra River and established Melbourne's first water-powered flour mill at Yarra Bend, where Dight's Falls still perpetuate the name. John returned to his local holdings and was the builder of the first flour mill in the Albury district, erecting it on a branch of the river at Bungowannah.

The *Border Post* recorded that John Dight died on April 23, 1867:

DEATH OF JOHN DIGHT, Esq., J.P.—Today it becomes our painful duty to announce the death of one of our oldest residents, Mr. John Dight, of Bungowannah. He died at 3 a.m. yesterday, aged fifty-nine. Mr. Dight was a native of Windsor, and for some years he was a mill owner at Campbelltown. In the year 1837 he arrived in Albury, and took up the Bungowannah station, which he held up to the period of his death. But it appears that the station did not afford sufficient scope for the enterprise and industry of Mr. Dight, for we find him some years afterwards erecting the well-known Dight's Mills in Melbourne. After residing some time in the Victorian metropolis, Mr. Dight returned to the station, leaving his Melbourne affairs in competent hands. By a life spent in perseverance, energy, and prudence, Mr. Dight amassed it large fortune; and if not exactly a colonial millionaire, he was able to count his possessions by several hundreds of thousands.

John Dight's wife Isabella belonged to one of the very oldest district families - she was the daughter of William and Elizabeth Mitchell and a sister of James Mitchell, of Tabletop. Charles Hilton Dight was born in Victoria on August 22, 1841. The Bungowannah Estate passed to Charles, but the Robertson Land Act of 1861 had made much of the original holding opened up for free selection - the Dight family retained 6000 acres with river frontage of the original 96000 acres that they originally claimed. Charles and his three brothers ran the property until it was sold to John Grieve in 1873. Charles then came to live privately at '*Genaren*,' Crisp Street, Albury.

Charles Dight died on December 17, 1913 leaving a widow and grown up family of one son and three daughters. His obituary in the *Border Morning Mail* of December 18, 1913 reported that Charles was a wealthy man,

generous in the extreme. He was probably the most philanthropic man in Albury. He made his gifts quietly, and there is no one, in the town who knows the extent of his charity. Although he never took any prominent part in public movements he always forwarded his cheque whenever it was wanted. A Liberal patron of sporting bodies, he always gave a helping hand when required. He also contributed largely to the church to which he belonged, St. Matthew's Church of England. By his

death is removed one of the most benevolent gentlemen in the town. Just a few days ago he gave a donation of £100 to the New Albury Hospital Fund, and later still sent his customary cheque toward the Xmas treat for the Albury patients. The late Mr. Dight was an enthusiastic cricketer and golfer in his day, and more recently took a great interest in bowls.

The *Albury Banner* reported that he was

a staunch and liberal supporter of the Anglican Church — he was a pillar of strength to St. Matthew's — he was also a regular contributor to charities organised by other Communion, and one of the largest and most frequent donors to the hospital. In his younger days an all-round athlete, Mr. Dight ever retained his old enthusiasm for every form of athletics.

Sources:

Border Post

Border Morning Mail

Albury Banner

150 Not Out (Joe Wooding)

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http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:204866/s00855804_1977_78_10_3_10.pdf