

Jacob Brann – a forgotten Albury pioneer

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Jacob Brann was born in 1868 at Chiltern to Polish-born parents. Jacob came to Albury in 1886, and in April 1891 he established a drapery business in Olive Street. In 1909 premises and business were sold to Alfred Perl.

Brann married Minnie Wilson, the headmistress of Albury (Girls') Public School. In the early 1900s, Jacob bought 88 acres in Fallon Street, where he established *Sylvania*. In 1911, Ernest Sharp built the Branns a home facing south along Frauenfelder Street. In addition to running a cattle stud, Jacob had a reputation as a gardener with an extensive rose garden, vineyards and orchards.



Sylvania, built for Jacob Brann in Fallon St North Albury.

The site is now occupied by the Assembly Hall of James Fallon High School.

Famous Polish pianist, Ignaz Paderewski was guest of the Branns in 1913 at *Sylvania*. War broke out when Paderewski returned to Poland and subsequently he became Prime Minister of Poland in 1919.

Brann was actively involved in his community – President of North Albury Progress Association, instrumental in setting up Albury Horticultural, Poultry and Dog Society, chairman of Albury Butter Factory and chairman of Albury District Rural Co-operative Society.

As President of North Albury Parents & Citizens Association, Brann became the inaugural President of the District Council of P&C Associations and organised a central circulating library for district schools.

A keen sportsman, he played in a premiership side for Albury Football Club in 1894, and was founding President of Glenly Tennis Club.

Jacob was President of Lavington Agricultural Bureau and described as the “pioneer of agricultural education in this district.” As president of the district conference, he was a member and treasurer of the State Advisory Council. He was also an original shareholder in Riverina Steam Laundry and Chairman of Directors.

Appointed a magistrate in 1902, Brann also served three terms on Albury Municipal Council. He was Deputy Mayor when the Duke of Gloucester visited Albury in 1934 and the royal party stayed at *Sylvania*.

In 1941 the remaining 20 acres of the property (with house) were sold. *Sylvania* was later sold to the NSW Department of Education and demolished in the late sixties as Albury North High School expanded. The family had asked that the school be named *Sylvania* but the request was denied. The family felt that Jacob Brann High School would have been a much more appropriate name than James Fallon High School, given the site and the contribution by Brann to the North Albury community.

Jacob Brann died in Sydney on August 9, 1943.

For more information, refer to Albury & District Historical Society Paper Number 5, *Albury's Forgotten Pioneer – Jacob Brann, 'Sylvania' North Albury* in the Albury Library Museum.