



BENNETT Richard

Parents: Richard Bennett and Ann Isabella Kirk

Siblings:

1. Isabella
2. Matilda
3. Oswald Price
4. Alfred Ryder
5. Frederick
6. Arthur

Birth: 1 March 1828, baptised at St John's Church, Hackney, 18 June 1828. The family were living in Homerton. According to the Family Bible, Richard was born at 10 Spital Square, London, England

Marriage: Elizabeth Nicholson Watson daughter of Robert Watson and Dorothy Curry, in the Church of England, Belfast, Victoria in 1853

Immigration: Richard arrived in Sydney on 21 January 1834, as a young boy, with his family on the *Florentia*. The family departed London 22 August 1833 and came via the Cape of Good Hope. The family left Australia on 11 March 1837, again on the *Florentia*, returning to London. Richard returned to Sydney alone in 1843

Children:

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| 1. Isabella | b 1854 Campaspe |
| 2. Arthur Robert | b 1856 Mt Alexander |
| 3. Annie | b 1858 Barkers Creek |
| 4. Matilda | b 1860 Balranald, NSW |
| 5. George Frederick | b 1861 Balranald, NSW |
| 6. Richard Alfred | b 1864 Hay, NSW |
| 7. Martha | b 1867 Dubbo, NSW |
| 8. Edward Oswald | b 1869 Dubbo, NSW |
| 9. Laura Ada | b 1872 Belfast |
| 10. Frank | b 1874 Belfast |
| 11. Percy Rupert | b 1878 Belfast d 1879 Yambuk |

Place of Residence: 'Uningra', 281 Lava Street, West Warrnambool.

Death: 11th September 1904, at his residence, 'Uningra', Lava-street West, Warrnambool, Richard Bennett, beloved husband of Elizabeth N. Bennett, aged 76 Years

Burial: in the Episcopalian Section of the Warrnambool Cemetery Row 32, Grave 37, together with his wife, Elizabeth, 20 January 1911, and daughter Matilda 9 December 1911

Obituary:

The *Warrnambool Standard*, Monday 12 September 1904

Mr Richard Bennett, a very old identity of this district, died at his residence in Lava-street west at 10 a.m. yesterday. Mr Bennett was born in London in 1827, and was, therefore, 76 years of age. He came to Sydney with his parents when six years old, and, after a few years, returned to the old country with them. When sixteen he again came out to Sydney, and, after passing through a course of training in connection with sheep, he became manager of the *Canally* station at Balranald. While in this position the exploring expedition of Burke and Wills passed through, and Mr Bennett, who had

always taken a keen interest in exploring matters, was anxious to join them, but was dissuaded by his friends. He, however, travelled with them for some distance, and showed them a short cut across some of the adjoining stations. He was very friendly with Leichardt, the ill-fated Queensland explorer, and was on the list to accompany him on that last journey from which Leichardt never returned. He was again persuaded to give up the idea, but he saw the expedition off, and presented Leichardt with a pair of pistols and a compass when parting with him. In 1871, Mr Bennett started from Macquarie (in New South Wales) and drove, with his wife and five children, right through to Port Fairy. During the journey heavy rains prevailed, and before reaching the Murray, the wagon containing the party was axle deep in water for a stretch of 14 miles. They halted at *Perricoota Station*, belonging to Robertson and Wagner, for three weeks, and, the shearing season having commenced, Mr Bennett superintended operations, his experience with sheep having been very extensive. The long drive through to Port Fairy was safely completed and Mr Bennett settled down there for some years and conducted business as a wool-buyer. In 1879 he moved to Dennington, where he carried on business for eight years in wool-washing. In 1887 he came to reside in Warrnambool, where he remained up to the time of his death. Mr Bennett took an active part in trying to sink an artesian well in Albert Park, to provide water for the town supply, but the attempt was unsuccessful, and had to be abandoned. The work and worry connected with this brought on a paralytic seizure, which after a very long illness, terminated fatally. Mr Bennett leaves a widow and a grown-up family of five daughters and three sons, all well-known and esteemed. His funeral takes place at three p.m. tomorrow.

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill), Tuesday 13 September 1904.

Richard Bennett died at Warrnambool on Sunday at the age of 76 years. Deceased guided the explorers, Burke and Wills, through Balranald

The Advertiser (Adelaide), Tuesday 13 September 1904

Mr Richard Bennett, an old resident of Warrnambool, died yesterday, at the age of 76 years. When manager of the *Canally* station, at Balranald, New South Wales, he had the honor of guiding the Burke and Wills expedition through that part of the country. He was also very friendly with Leichardt. In 1871 he drove from Macquarie, New South Wales, to Port Fairy, Victoria, in a wagon with his wife, and five children, 14 miles of the Journey being undertaken through an unbroken stretch of floodwaters.

Life:

He undertook a training course on the care of sheep. After gaining experience, on several stations in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, he became manager of several stations. Whilst in New South Wales he rode some hundreds of miles collecting signatures to a petition for separation of the Murrumbidgee region (Southern Riverina) for annexation to Victoria, as it was felt there was apathy and neglect toward the area, in the Sydney Government. This did not succeed.

In 1846 Richard came to Melbourne and visited Port Fairy.

He was at the Goldfields in Forest Creek and Bendigo around 1851-52.

Richard was a strong campaigner and letter writer. He recommended the South West of Victoria for exploratory drills for coal and water.

He wrote letters to the newspapers; 'How to Conserve Water', 'The Argus and Early Melbourne' 'Cape Otway Forest and its Mineral Resources'. 'A Beet Sugar Factory. 'Our Mineral Wealth'

He was very active in his local community, he attempted to start a Sheep Farmers Association for the smaller farmers.

Richard set up a Wool-scouring and Fellmongering business on the banks of the Merri. For smaller holders he offered to class the wool as it came from the sheep. Richard has a colourful life story, he was a pastoralist, auctioneer, wool-scourer, fellmonger, writer and campaigner and claimed to know many of the early explorers. He lived in the Warrnambool District between 1879 and 1904.