

( 18 )

MINTO

# Sarah Redfern

## 1796 - 1875



## *Sarah Redfern (nee Wills)*

- Born 23 April 1796 Middlesex England. Came to Australia with her mother as a free settler
- Married Dr William Redfern on 4 April 1811 (she was aged 14, he was 33/34)
- They went to England 1821 and returned 1824. They moved to Minto to live fulltime in 1825
- They had 2 children; William Lachlan Macquarie Redfern & Joseph Foveaux Redfern
- Dr Redfern died in Edinburgh in 1833
- Sarah Redfern went to England in 1834 a 'considerably wealthy woman' and never returned
- Died 10 January 1875 Roke Manor, Hampshire England

## *Minto*

The name Minto originally applied to an extensive district south-west of Parramatta, west of the Georges River and north of Appin.. It was there that military officers, who had deposed Governor Bligh in 1808, began making land grants to increase the agricultural productivity of the struggling colony. (They apparently chose the name as a compliment to Lord Minto, then Governor-General of India.) When Governor Macquarie took over in 1810, he continued the practice and one of the grateful grantees was William Redfern, the ex-convict surgeon. Redfern got 800 acres (320 hectares) and called his country estate Campbellfield as a compliment to Mrs Macquarie, who was born a Campbell. His land covered much of the future Campbelltown suburb of Minto.

## *From Campbellfield to Minto*

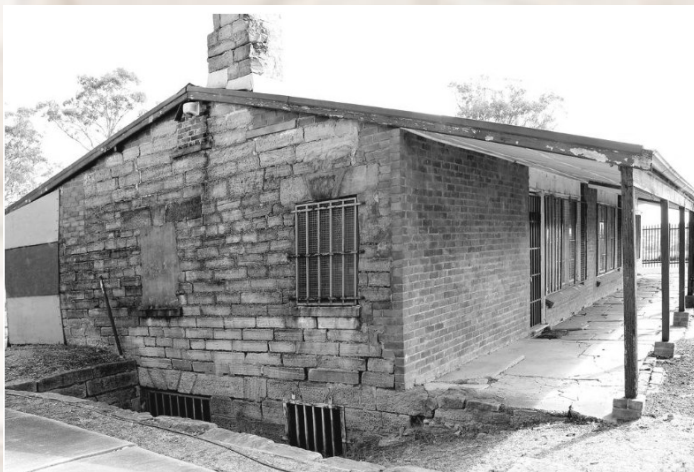
Under Redfern and his wife Sarah, vineyards and sheep farms prospered on the Campbellfield estate. But when Redfern died in 1833, Campbellfield began to stagnate and, after an unsuccessful attempt to sell off allotments in 1843, the estate trustees simply leased it out for rough grazing. In the 1870's Campbellfields railway station opened, connecting local primary producers with their markets. But it was not until the land boom of the 1880s that the area attracted real attention. In 1882, the station was renamed Minto and land nearest to it was soon subdivided and became the nucleus of Minto village. It lay to the northwest of the township of Campbelltown, separated by bush and farmland. For decades Minto remained a village, home to dairy farmers, orchardists, vignerons, local tradespeople—and a few intrepid city commuters. Like many other rural communities, Minto was relatively resilient during the 1930s Depression: although produce prices fell, Minto families at least had access to food, fuel and shelter. And, thanks to unemployed relief works, the village was connected to the water supply in 1935. Electricity arrived two years later.

## *Postwar development*

In the 1950s Minto had a population of just over 500, but was overtaken by postwar plans to move industry and population to Sydney's west. Successive schemes designated Campbelltown as a growth centre, which would swallow surrounding villages like Minto. From 1970, sewerage works, rail electrification and the construction of the Liverpool-Minto freeway opened up the district. There was an influx of young families into Campbelltown suburbs, requiring homes, schools and shopping centres. Local employment was encouraged with the development of an industrial estate at Minto, where Lever and Kitchen opened a giant detergent factory in 1979. By then, the state Housing commission had built over 1,000 homes in Minto.

The suburb of the 1980's held memories of the old village: remnants of Redfern's Campbellfield House survived behind Minto Mall, while the new primary and high schools were both named after Sarah Redfern. Other local landmarks remained: when Minto Hardware closed in 2006, it had been run by the same family for over 50 years. Despite these village survivals, the size and density of the public housing scheme was transforming Minto.

The suburb was hit by recession in the 1990s when Lever and Kitchen closed their factory. Minto has become part of a wide-ranging debate about postwar attempts to grow such new communities so quickly. Suburbs full of young families lacked social as well as material infrastructure, and it is now generally accepted that concentrating public housing has created a 'monoculture' of disadvantage. State and local authorities have, however rejected radical proposals to sell off Minto's public housing. Instead they are beginning the Minto Renewal Project, redesigning the existing estate with new roads and open space to achieve a more sustainable mix of public and private housing in the suburb.



Campbellfield House



Eagleview Road, Minto 1951

