1855 – Sarah Scarvell

What we see in this image

This right facing ¾ length oil portrait shows Sarah Scarvell, aged 18, posed in a verandah setting, seated on an upholstered [chair or sofa] with an out swept arm, a white [marble or plaster] classically-inspired column with a red curtain drapery behind on the right, and a non-specific landscape view stretching to the horizon on the left. This painting is one of a series of eight known portraits of the Scarvell family by the artist Richard Noble; it may have been painted as a pair to the left facing portrait of her sister, Elizabeth Mary Scarvell (1840-1907) (ML 1195), as both sitters wear very similar dresses – one red and one white.

Sarah's evening dress is made of a soft, light-weight, gauze-like white fabric arranged in loose pleats across the bodice, or corsage, fanning up from a narrow, pointed waistline into which the full skirt is tightly pleated. The moderately low neckline is cut wide across the shoulders and trimmed with a fine, van-dyke pointed bobbin lace edging, also used on the short, ruched sleeves. The gown is further embellished with wide picot-edged ribbons of pink and gold [shot silk] gauze wrapped around the waist, and tied in bows on each shoulder with floating ends. Sarah also carries a matching gauze scarf [perhaps imported from India] draped behind her waist and twisted around her right forearm. She holds a red rose in her left hand and wears a heavy chain-link bracelet of chased yellow gold on her left forearm, set with a large faceted [citrine] (perhaps a birthstone), and three fine-gauge gold chains around her neck, one suspending a locket.

Her centre parted dark hair is waved naturally, or artificially crimped with heated tongs, looped over her ears and somewhat puffed at the sides, and twisted into a knot at

the back of her neck.

The artist has posed the sitter in a very similar manner, and an almost identical setting, to his portrait of the Hon. Mary Caroline Stewart (Mrs Keith Stewart), nee Fitzroy (1823-1895), daughter of Governor Charles Fitzroy (OGH, National Trust, NSW). However, although both women wear remarkably similar gowns, Mrs Stewart's portrait exhibits a far more overt celebration of the female form better suited to the more worldly and married woman. Mrs Stewart was chatelaine of Government House, Sydney, following the death of her mother Lady Mary Fitzroy at Parramatta in 1847, and her portrait is believed to have been commissioned to mark the occasion of her return to England in 1855.

What we know about this image

Captain John Larking Scarvell (1791-1861) commissioned artist Richard Noble (1806-82) to paint individual portraits of his family in 1855. Noble's portraits almost invariably reveal a keen interest in the depiction of fabrics, laces and ribbons, as exemplified in this work; all his surviving works are oil paintings, most are signed 'Richard Noble' and inscribed with the date and, occasionally, with the place of execution.

Over the course of the year, while residing at Clare House at Pitt Town near Windsor, NSW, Noble completed portraits of Sarah Winefred Scarvell, nee Redmond (1809-1873) (ML 1251) and John Larking Scarvell (ML 1250), and the six eldest Scarvell children: John Redmond Barnes (1830-1855) (ML 1194); Sidney (1832-1875); George (1834-1877); Edward Augustus (1835-1883); Sarah Winefred Isabella Mary (1837-1929) (ML 1339); and Elizabeth Mary (1840-1907) (ML 1195). According to family tradition, Noble had formed a romantic attachment to Sarah Winifred Isabella Mary Scarvell (then aged eighteen); another family tale is that he had only one arm.

SCARVELL FAMILY:

Sarah Redmond had married John Scarvell at St James's Church, Sydney, in March 1828. It was the second marriage for Captain Scarvell; his first wife, Isabella (nee Campbell), had died at sea and was buried in St Philip's Church, Sydney, in January 1828. Scarvell retired from the East India Company shortly after his marriage to Sarah and extended Clare House (previously Killarney) for his family in the late 1820s and 1830s.

The Scarvell family were very close to the Cape family, with several members of each family marrying into the same generation of the other; both the younger Scarvell sisters married Cape brothers — Elizabeth Mary Scarvell to William Frederick Cape in 1863, and Sarah Winefred Isabella Mary Scarvell (1837-1929) to Alfred John Cape in 1871. This portrait later passed to Sarah Scarvell's daughter, Jessie Cape. At her death in 1963 it passed to Jessie's niece, from whom it was acquired by the Library in 2004.

ARTIST BIO:
The artist Richard Noble is thought to have arrived in NSW by 1847, though the first documented evidence of his colony career is found early in 1855, when he was commissioned to execute the Scarvell family portraits. He is first listed as an artist in Cox & Co.'s Sydney Post Office Directory for 1857, at 246 George Street. A painter who dealt mainly in portraiture, Noble is known to have exhibited his works in various exhibitions and painted portraits for many of Sydney's leading residents.

Tue 26 Aug 1856: pleasure of walking round the studio of Mr Noble in George Street, nearly opp. the Post Office…another artist of first-rate talent has taken up his abode among us…though not yet much known here is an artist of considerable European experience, having studied under some of the the most eminent men of is profession in Flanders and the Royal Academy

in London.

Following the death of his wife, Harriett, (nee de St Pierre, b. ca. 1835 — d. Nov. 1857), aged 42, of a painful and lingering illness at her residence, Devonshire St, Strawberry Hills, Noble lived in Sydney and Goulburn until 1868, when he returned (disconsolately) to England.

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1855 — Sarah Scarvell

Download Image

Creator
Noble, Richard. P. (fl.1828–1865)
Inscription
RHS: 'Rich.d Nobel 1855'
Medium
Oil Painting
Background
To follow
Reference
Open

1855 — George Coppin

What we see in this image

This left facing ½ length hand-coloured daguerreotype portrait shows George Coppin, aged 36, in a seated pose against a plain backdrop in the Pitt Street studio of Thomas Skelton Glaister's American and Australian Portrait Gallery. Recently

arrived from New York, Glaister brought the technical sophistication, size and style of American photography to his Australian daguerreotypes and collodion processes. In July 1855, Glaister's photographic studio was located next door to the Royal Victoria Theatre where Coppin, a colonial celebrity, was once again performing to packed houses (SMH, 12/7/1855); the impresario was also due to be married later that year.

Coppin wears an unmatched ensemble of garments comprising a double-breasted, loose-fitting 'sac'-type jacket of dark woollen cloth with wide notched lapels and long, fitted sleeves worn with grey trousers, a crisp white wing-collared shirt with a dark [silk] ribbon bow tie, and an unusual long-line waistcoat, or undershirt, of two-tone [grey] woollen cloth with a turn back collar and an eight button closure fastened at the waist with a gold fob chain threaded through the buttonhole and draped across his torso to the pocket on the left in which his [watch] is stored. He is clean shaven and wears his dark wavy hair curled over his ears and brushed back from a receding hairline.

A comic actor by profession, Coppin was described as 'a common man [who] possesses a certain rudeness of manner which is very unpleasant when things do not run smoothly…he dives both hands deep into his side pockets and looks both blank and black and gives short and curt answers … a well-bred man of the world has the art to hide such feelings'.

What we know about this image

Actor, theatre manager, politician, George Selth Coppin (1819-1906) was an enterprising speculator who grew up in the uncertain world of the itinerant theatre — solemn-faced and tubby, he was found to have a flair for comic acting. Credited as a father the Australian theatre, Coppin was key to the second phase of its development through the introduction of

his 'pernicious "starring tours" of visiting celebrities' (ADB).

In 1842 Coppin had decided to leave England for lands of greater promise — a toss of the coin decreed Australia over America, and he arrived in Sydney on 10 March 1843 with his de facto actress partner. Coppin subsequently acquired ownership of New Queen's Theatre, Adelaide in 1846, Theatre Royal, Melbourne in 1856 and the Haymarket, Melbourne in 1862. When the gold rushes struck, Coppin quickly realised a means of making a fortune by entertaining miners heading to town on the spree. In 1853 he went back to England where he ordered a prefabricated iron theatre to be built in Manchester, equipped with special scenery and a lavish wardrobe, for an Australian tour headed by tragedian, Gustavus Brooke.

Coppin married Harriet Hillsden, née Bray, sister-in-law of Gustavus Brooke, in August 1855; three children were born in quick succession before the death of Mrs Coppin (post-childbirth) at Richmond, Vic., in 1859. Her 18-year-old daughter Lucy Hillsden took charge of the household. Coppin married Lucy on 4 June 1861, and their first child was born on 5 January 1862.
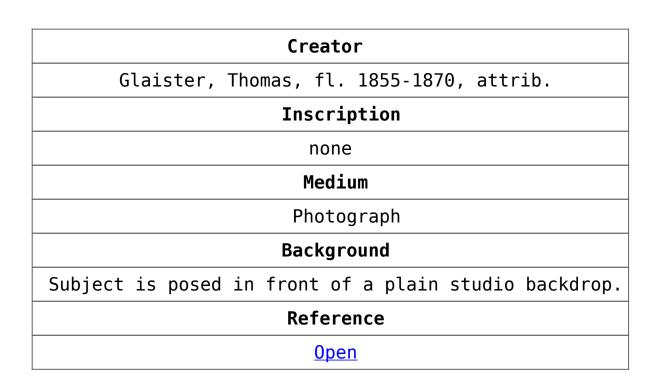
After touring Australia, New Zealand and America, Coppin entered politics and became a Member of the Legislative Council (1858-1863, 1889-1895), and a Member of the Legislative Assembly (1874-1877, 1883-1888) in Victoria. He died at his home in March 1906.

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Hover on image to zoom in

1855 — George Coppin

Download Image

⬇

Creator
Glaister, Thomas, fl. 1855-1870, attrib.
Inscription
none
Medium
Photograph
Background
Subject is posed in front of a plain studio backdrop.
Reference
[Open](#)

1854 — George Walker Johnson and his family

What we see in this image

This whole plate daguerreotype shows George Walker Johnson,

aged 43, his wife Ann, nee Ellison, aged 25, and three of their 13 children: from left to right, George William, aged 3, Elizabeth, aged 6, and John Simpson, about 12 months. The photograph appears to have been taken in summer — the short sleeves of both boys' dresses show distinct tan lines on their upper arms and all the children wear socks rather than stockings. It can be dated quite precisely, based on the ages of the children, between late 1854 and the death of little George Jnr on 30 January 1855 (South Australian Register, 31/1/ 1855, p.2).

To minimise movement through the long exposure time, the Johnson's have been carefully arranged by the photographer who has seated the parents (probably with posing clamps fitted to their necks) at either end of an ornately-carved rococo revival style sofa holding the younger children in their laps to keep them still.

George Jnr nestles into the crook of his father's arm and leans his head back against his shoulder, holding onto his skirt to keep his hands still. He wears a light-coloured [cotton] dress with dark piped trim at the neckline and edges of the narrow 'mancherons' and short sleeves, above a loose-fitting pleated bodice and striped/piped skirt. His short hair is brushed into a side parting signifying his gender, and he wears short white socks and square-toed, dark [leather] shoes with buttoned ankle straps.

George Snr wears an unmatched ensemble of business clothes comprising a [double-breasted] dark wool jacket with black waistcoat and lighter coloured trousers, over a crisp white shirt with a winged collar and loosely tied [silk] neck cloth. His face is deeply-tanned, his cheeks clean shaven above a fringe of beard, his dark hair with a side parting carefully combed back from his forehead and curling over his ears.

Elizabeth, in the centre of the image, wears a plain [cotton] full-skirted dress with a pleated bodice and a high, round

neckline edged with a narrow white-work frill above its dropped shoulder line and pagoda-shaped sleeves trimmed with dark piping and a broderie-anglaise edging. Her dark hair is centre-parted, pulled back smoothly behind her head. She wears [gold] sleeper earrings and short white socks with her squared-toed, dark leather, ankle-strapped shoes.

Ann Johnson's plain [cotton] dress also has a wide-spreading skirt and pleated bodice, fanning up and over the shoulders from a shirred, peaked panel at the waist. The front of the corsage probably fastens with hooks or buttons but has been left open, with the edges tucked in, over a white [cotton] 'chemisette', or undershirt, with a [false] button and placket opening below a pointed, turn-down collar with a pale ribbon tie and brooch. Her ¾ length 'pagoda' sleeves are trimmed with two rows of dark piping and worn with Vandyke-pointed white-work embroidered [cotton] undersleeves, left open at the wrist above a pair of [jet] bracelets. She wears her centre-parted dark hair with side loops wrapped high over her ears, fitted with gold earrings, forming a somewhat horned appearance.

Baby John wears a dark [cotton] short-sleeved dress with fitted bodice and full skirt trimmed with lighter [silk] ribbon trim and short white socks with dark [leather] button-fastening baby shoes.

Compared to the more formal attire usually recorded in the early photographic era, the Johnson family appear somewhat casually dressed — they actually look hot, sticky and even a little grubby — which could suggest that the image was the result of an opportunity seized rather than a carefully planned visit to the daguerreotypist's studio. The whole plate option would also have been an expensive choice at the time.

What we know about this image

This rare image does not record famous people but rather an

average nineteenth century family. Fortunately, it has survived with extensive family detail supplied by descendants.

George Walker Johnson (1811-1902) belonged to an old Lincolnshire family. A builder and contractor in Manchester, he immigrated with his first wife to Adelaide 1839 where he started a timber yard and Adelaide's first quarry and was also engaged in contracting and farming. Following his wife's death, he married 18 year old Ann Isobel Ellison (1829-1904) on 18 March 1847, at his residence in Mt. Barker, South Australia. Ellison, aged 11, had arrived in South Australia with her family in the early 1840s. The Johnson's had three children in Adelaide including Elizabeth (1848-1924) and George William (1851-1855) before the outbreak of the 1850s gold rushes in the eastern colonies.

In 1852, the Johnsons travelled overland to Kyneton, Vic., a major supply town for the diggings, where the family settled and John Simpson was born on 19 November 1853. Johnson worked as a contractor; he had carrying business in Melbourne, a grocery business in Kyneton and owned the Ellison estate on the Coliban River. A freemason, Johnson was also prominent in municipal affairs; a member of the Kyneton shire council, he was elected as Kyneton's first Member of Parliament in October 1856.

George W. Johnson Esq. M.L.A. lived with his wife and family at his residence Innisfree (1863-64) (later Gainsborough House), located at 66 Jennings Street, Kyneton, which remains architecturally and historically significant at local level, as one of the oldest houses in the town and its shire. Mr and Mrs Johnson celebrated their golden wedding on 18 March 1897, and died at Keyneton within two years of each other in 1902 and 1904.

TROVE REFERENCES:
— Family Notices, South Australian Register, Wed 31 Jan 1855, Page 2: Died on 30th January 1855, George William, eldest son

of Mr G. W. Johnson, aged three years.)

— JOHNSON-ELLISON (Golden wedding) The Australasian, Sat 29 May 1897

On the 18th Mar, 1847, at Parkside, South Australia, by the Rev. T. Q. Stowe, George Walker Johnson to Ann, eldest daughter of William Ellison, Glen Osmond, S.A.

— Ann Ellison Johnson, d. 16 July 1904, a colonist of 64 yrs. The Argus, Tue 19 Jul 1904.
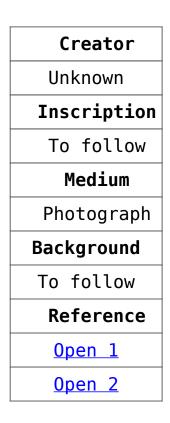
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1854 – George Walker Johnson and his family

Download Image

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Creator	
Unknown	
Inscription	
To follow	
Medium	
Photograph	
Background	
To follow	
Reference	
Open 1	
Open 2	

1854 – Eleanor Elizabeth Stephen

What we see in this image

This right facing ¾ seated portrait shows Eleanor Elizabeth Stephen, aged about 15, dressed to receive guests making social calls for an 'At Home' visit. The subject has been posed on a soft-buttoned drawing room chair set against a plain backdrop with a section of turned wooden balustrading, studio furnishings which confirm that this portrait was taken on the premises of society photographer Edwin Dalton, located at 243 George Street (opp. Bridge St). It may be that Eleanor's trip to the photographer coincided with an important rite of passage in her life; until the mid-20th century teenage girls wore their hair loose until formally entering society on reaching marriageable age, at which time they assumed fashions of greater sophistication including elaborate adult hairstyles. Eleanor's mother, Lady Stephen recorded this visit to the Dalton studio in her diary on 11 July 1854: 'We, that is, Jessy, Nelly [Eleanor] and I went to have likenesses taken by the Daguerreotype process.' Unhappy with the original result, however, Nelly returned for another sitting two days later. Ten days after that, Lady Stephen noted that the family's photographs were 'always done by Dalton who is the best and most expensive photographer'. (MLMSS 777/3) Nelly wears an afternoon dress of checked silk printed à disposition (ie. produced with co-ordinating border designs of differing widths intended for decorative use as flounces on skirts, sleeves, bodices). Her dress has a bell-shaped double skirt with a flounce at the knee — the edges are just visible at the base of the image on the left. The bodice is made separately in the 'basque' style, with a small peplum extending over the hips below the waist, and stomacher or 'plastron' (v-shaped) corsage trimmed with a pair of flat panels, tabbed and forming epaulettes at the shoulder, diminishing to a point at the waist either side of five horizontal rows of applied fringe arranged 'en eschelle' (in the form of a ladder) worn with a white-work collar, edged with [needle-lace] Vandyke points, over a brocade ribbon crossed at the throat and fastened with

a [cameo] brooch above loose streamers. Her ¾ length 'pagoda' sleeves are trimmed with two tiers of stepped flounces, finished in the same manner as the bodice, and worn with open undersleeves, or 'engageants', of white-work (broderie anglaise) embroidered cotton. Her mid-brown hair is centre-parted with smooth front sections drawn over her ears and pinned behind, a plaited section wrapped around the crown of her head, and the remainder arranged behind in a large, deep roll. She also wears a string of beads around her neck.

What we know about this image

Alfred Stephen, barrister, married Virginia Consett in 1824 and migrated to Van Diemen's Land from England the following year. Initially appointed as Solicitor-General and soon after Crown Solicitor by Governor Arthur, Stephen's career included his appointment as Attorney-General (1832), Chief Justice (1845), and member of the Legislative Assembly whilst still maintaining a private legal practice. After his first wife's death in 1837 (leaving two daughters and five sons), Stephen married Eleanor Martha Bedford, the only daughter of Reverend William Bedford in 1838. Eleanor and Alfred Stephen had five daughters and four sons of whom Eleanor Elizabeth (1839-1861) was the eldest. Five years after the making of this portrait, Eleanor died suddenly of suspected typhoid fever, aged 20, on 7 February 1861. (See: Riley, M, Pictures Wanting Life, forthcoming) PHOTOGRAPHER: Painter, photographer and lithographer, Edwin Dalton had spent some time in America before coming to Australia in the 1853, possibly in search of gold. Initially setting up as portraitist in Melbourne, by early 1854 he was living in Upper Hawthorn (Vic.). In July 1854, Dalton was in Sydney where he soon attracted commissions from the city's most prominent families. In March 1855 the Illustrated Sydney News favourably reviewed Dalton's life-size portraits of Sydney identities including J.S. Dowling ('so life-like that it is almost laughable'), Walter Lamb, Henry Parkes and numerous others. In August 1856 the Empire noted

his recently completed portrait of the prima donna Anna Bishop, claiming that 'for fidelity of portraiture, depth of tone and beauty of colouring, the picture ranks with any work, in its particular line of art, we have yet seen in the colony'. He advertised 'Dalton's Collodion Portraits' at 243 George Street (1855-57) and his studio, known as the Royal Photographic Portrait Establishment Gallery with William Bradley as proprietor, at 400 George Street (1858-59), followed by the Royal Photographic Gallery at 320 George (1863-65) and at 330 George Street (1866-67) which was later taken over by H. Hunt, as proprietor. ETIQUETTE: The making of social calls was an important ritual during the Victorian era. Specific times were allocated for different types of calls with Sundays always reserved for friends and family only. Visits were always quite short, lasting from ten to thirty minutes. A 'morning call' was paradoxically made in the early afternoon, with 'ceremonial calls' made between three and four o'clock, and 'semi-ceremonial calls' between four and five o'clock. Calls made between five and six o'clock were deemed 'intimate calls'. If another caller arrived during a visit, the first caller was expected to leave within a few minutes of the appearance of the second. Dress for calling: Ladies who were 'At Home' to callers were supposed to wear tasteful clothing 'with a certain amount of lace and jewellery' but no artificial flowers or glittering gems; callers should wear the sort of clothing they would wear to church or an afternoon reception; a gentleman wears a 'morning' suit until six o'clock (ie. grey, striped trousers, black vest and coat, bowler or top hat) and evening attire after six (ie. a black dress suit).
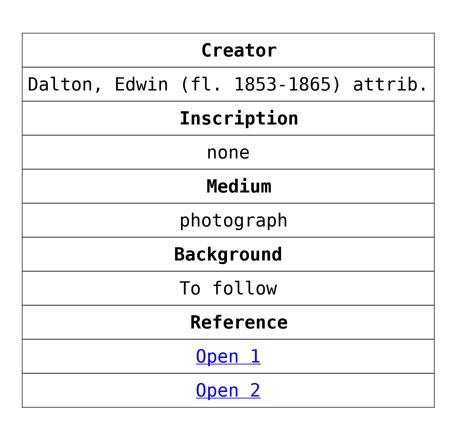
Print page or save as a PDF

Hover on image to zoom in

1854 — Eleanor Elizabeth Stephen

Creator
Dalton, Edwin (fl. 1853-1865) attrib.
Inscription
none
Medium
photograph
Background
To follow
Reference
[Open 1](#)
[Open 2](#)

1852 — Picnic at Mrs Macquarie's Chair

What we see in this image

This large genre painting records the Anniversary Day Regatta

on Sydney Harbour in about 1852, and also depicts the picturesque rock formation jutting into the sky known as Mrs Macquarie's Chair, with its rough-hewn seat, located at the extreme end of the Domain to the east of Farm Cove. The first Anniversary Day (or Foundation Day as it was originally known) Regatta was held on 26 January 1837, to mark the 49th anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet, and continues to this day. Before long the Anniversary holiday was being observed by government departments and private employers, freeing 'persons of all classes' to join the harbourside throng.

A familiar spot to almost everyone who has ever visited Sydney, Mrs Macquarie's Chair has always been a popular vantage point for crowds drawn from all levels of society, and this much-loved image captures the colourful scene. Boats and steamers ran between Garden Island, Battery Point, and Farm Cove throughout the day with masses of well-dressed, eager spectators gathered in the foreground set against a backdrop of the harbour covered by a fleet of boats of all sizes.

Men, women and children, some even with their pets, are seen enjoying a day picnicking and cavorting in groups on the foreshore, clustering around refreshments and entertainment tents where victuallers dispense food and drink from allocated booths – including that of the Royal Oak Hotel [perhaps the Royal Oak Family Hotel 305 Pitt Street] – while pie-men hawk their wares among the crowds, and fraudsters spruik their dubious games of chance to the unsuspecting.

This painting is of further significance for flags experts (vexillologists) as it shows the NSW Ensign (the unofficial flag for Australia from the mid-19th Century) being flown on land, rather than from a vessel.

What we know about this image

The artist of this important 1850s painting of Australians enjoying their national holiday is not known. The success of this image is, however, largely due to the artist's having paid attention to '…the proper drawing, disposition and grouping of figures…[being of] more consequence in communication of life and verisimilitude to a sketch of natural scenery than some landscape painters are willing to allow…' (SMH, 15/2/ 1850, p.2.)

The basis for the 1855 date on the original mount of this painting is also not known. Costume features such as tiered skirts suggest a date of c. 1852-1860. A separately issued lithograph based on this painting was produced in about 1870, by Sydney artist and surveyor John Black Henderson (1827-1918), and captioned 'Picnic held at Lady Macquarie's Chair Sydney N S Wales in 1852'.

This painting was further reproduced in the Sydney Mail (30/1/1897) – at which time the original oil was still in the hands of John C Lovell, 'furniture, warehousemen and fine art dealers' George Street, Sydney, before it was purchased by Sir William Dixson – and later republished in the Anchor (5/10/1911) possibly based on the 1870s lithograph with the caption: 'Anniversary Regatta 1850 – View by Mrs. Macquarie's Chair (from an old Engraving)'. https://www.daao.org.au/bio/alfred-clint/biography/
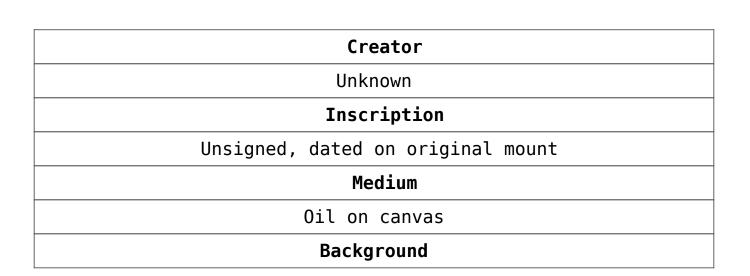
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1852 — Picnic at Mrs Macquarie's Chair

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

Download Image

Creator
Unknown
Inscription
Unsigned, dated on original mount
Medium
Oil on canvas
Background

1852 — Martha Hogg and her son Samuel Nisbet

What we see in this image

This front facing 3/4 standing portrait shows Martha Hogg, nee Crook, aged 37, with her arms around her infant son, Samuel Nisbet, aged about 3. Given their recent first-hand experience of nineteenth century infant mortality rates, it's not surprising that the Hogg's seized this opportunity to have a portrait made of the latest addition to the family; their 'eldest and only remaining son' Thomas William Pascoe Hogg (aged 4 and 2 months) had succumbed to malignant cholera in Madras nine years previously, and they would lose a ten months old daughter two years later.

Mrs Hogg wears a [2-piece] day dress in a plain pale blue fabric and comprising a matching jacket style 'basque' bodice with a pointed waist and full, gathered skirt held out with

numerous petticoats. The form-fitting bodice has wide, pagoda sleeves and a deep v-neckline opening worn over a sheer white chemisette, or undershirt and fastened with a small brooch to, the edges of the centre front opening and sleeve cuffs trimmed with white [ribbon] ruching. She wears her dark hair with a centre parting, arranged in loosely curled ringlets hanging over her ears

Samuel wears a knee length dress, customary attire at this time for all children during their toilet training years regardless of sex. His short-sleeved frock is made of a light-coloured cloth with self-fabric trims on the bodice and cuff, the full skirt has a wide hem or tuck at the knee, perhaps to allow it to be let down. He wears flat, square toed, black patent shoes with ankle strap fastenings, and his short, fair hair is combed in to a side-parting — a useful indicator of his gender in an era when all girls wore a centre parting.

What we know about this image

Martha Hogg (1815-1890) was Miss Martha Crook, a daughter of Revd William Pascoe Crook, chaplain to the colony during the Rum Rebellion. Born in Jamieson Street, Sydney, Martha married Thomas Alexander Hogg, a Surgeon in the East India Company's (EIC) service, in December 1837. The couple moved to India where at least two sons were born, including Samuel Nisbet Hogg (1849-1934).

Retiring from the EIC, Thomas Hogg brought his family back to Sydney in about 1850, where he continued to practise his profession as a medical-man in and about Sydney for many years. He died in his 86th year at Darlington Newtown Road Sydney. Samuel Hogg entered the service of the Bank of New South Wales, where he remained until his retirement. Honorary treasurer of the Balmain Hospital and the Balmain Benevolent Society, he was also a local historian and published author.

He died at Wahroonga aged 85.

William Nicholas (1807-1854) was known for his delicately rendered watercolour portraits and seems to have been the favoured portrait artist of prominent colonial families in Sydney like the Macarthurs, the Wentworths and the Kings.

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Hover on image to zoom in

1852 — Martha Hogg and her son Samuel Nisbet

Download Image

↓

Creator	
Nicholas, William (c.1807-1854)	
Inscription	
LRH: 'William Nicholas / 1852'	
Medium	
Pencil and watercolour drawing	
Background	
See also ML 254 & 255	
Reference	
Obituary, S.N. Hogg, SMH, Wed 18 Apr 1934, Page 10.	

1851 — E.H. Hargraves, the

gold discoverer of Australia, returning the salute of the gold miners

What we see in this image

This full length standing portrait shows Edward Hargraves, aged 35, posed on top of a mountain with a valley and open country stretching into the distance behind him, his right arm raised in salute holding a top hat in his right hand, with the reins of his horse in his left hand. An imposing figure, standing about 2 metres tall and weighing around 110kg, the so-called 'gold discoverer of Australia' is depicted as the conquering hero returning to the scene of his triumph, signalling to his fellow prospectors at the Summer Hill Creek (later known as Ophir) diggings, having made his discovery known to the Australian authorities and the general populace in Sydney.

Hargraves is shown wearing the colourful garb of a typical nineteenth century gold prospector, described by a reviewer in Sydney's Empire newspaper as 'the very picturesque style of habiliment affected by our gold-hunter'. His bright red, long-sleeved smock, or over shirt, is probably made of wool flannel. Layered over a white shirt with a black neck scarf, it is belted at the waist – the black leather belt fastened with an unusual gold hook and loop mechanism – and reaches mid-thigh above light khaki [moleskin] trousers and well-worn black shoes or boots.

Gold mining was demanding work and miners needed durable clothing to withstand exposure to harsh weather and rough conditions. Work shirts came in variety of materials including

linen, cotton, cotton flannel and wool. Popular in patterns and solid colours, dark blue and red (known as Garibaldi shirts after 1860), were often worn in layers especially during the cold months, with a large kerchief knotted around the neck to allow the miner to wipe his brow while working.

This portrait was said to have presented a good likeness of Hargraves, however his top hat seems an unsuitable choice of headgear for an expedition into the Australian interior. Such an inappropriate accessory may have been included to lend an air of authority to the subject and counteract his otherwise ungentlemanly appearance. Flat-crowned wide felt hats were the more common choice of miners, and often light-coloured to reflect the scorching summer sun away from their faces. At a time when untrimmed beards were unusual in fashionable society, Hargraves is shown with a lot of hair on his face and head in keeping with the practice of goldfields men who sported long beards of 'Samson-like vigour and moustaches of Turkish proportions' (Maynard, p.).

What we know about this image

Edward Hammond Hargraves (1816-1891), the so-called 'gold discoverer of Australia', was the subject of many triumphant portraits including, most notably this one by Thomas Tyrwhitt Balcombe (1810-1861).

Early in 1851 Hargraves had undertaken a prospecting trip in the Bathurst region of NSW, with the intention of discovering gold in the area. On the way, he persuaded local settler, John Lister to guide him to Lewis Ponds Creek with the promise that he would show Lister how to find gold. Arriving at Lewis Ponds and Summer Hill Creek on 12 February 1851, Hargraves instructed Lister in the techniques of gold panning and cradling he had learnt on the Californian gold fields, and returned to Sydney. Between 7 and 12 April 1851, Lister,

working with brothers William and James Tom, recovered about 4 oz of payable gold from the site valued at about £12, including one 2oz nugget.

Arriving back at Summer Hill Creek on 5 May, Hargraves purchased the men's gold finds, sending some by mail to the Colonial Secretary, Sir Edward Deas Thomson. Announcing himself as the discoverer of payable gold in the district, Hargraves began a publicity campaign and claimed the government's £10,000 reward, and an annual pension of £250 (after 1877). Soon after, thousands of gold seekers left Sydney and Melbourne to join the first gold rush.

In 1853-54 Hargraves visited England, lived in style, met the Queen and published Australia and its Gold Fields, which was probably ghost written, in 1855. He entertained lavishly on his return to Australia and was virtually penniless by the early 1860s. Although Hargraves claimed the credit, exaggerating and falsifying his role, it was soon clear that others had done the work. But, despite the fact that Lister and the Tom brothers were undoubtedly the first discoverers of gold obtained in Australia in payable quantity', the legend of Hargraves still persists.]

CRITIQUE:
On 11 and 14 August 1851 the Sydney Morning Herald advertised an oil painting for sale by the artist Thomas Tyrwhitt Balcombe (1810-1861) of 'Mr E.H. Hargraves, the Gold Discoverer of Australia Feby 12th 1851 Returning the Salute of the Gold Miners on the 5th of the ensuing May' at the George Street Rooms of Messrs. Woolcott and Clarke:

'…The Australian Gold Discoverer is the best of his production we have yet seen. Mr Hargraves is represented on the summit of a craggy eminence, holding the bridle of his horse…The face is very ably treated, but we cannot help thinking that in the management of the costume and the colouring of it, there is somewhat of failure; that the very picturesque style of

habiliment affected by our gold-hunter, is scarcely made as much of as it might have been….And it has all the depth of colour, the capacity to afford a bright contrast, in connection with what is in technical phrase termed 'breaking a picture up'… This matter of costume, so far as regards Mr. Balcombe's picture, can, from the nature of the subject – that of a portraits – little interfere with its general merits, and is perhaps in the main, more a question connected with individual taste for, the picturesque in effect, than anything else….[The] background is positively beautiful. It is a wild, craggy scene; bluish, hazy, with bluff mountainous shapes and loomings, in a cold, free atmosphere, full of poetry and vigour of touch…' The Empire, Mon 18 Aug 1851, Page 3

Several months earlier this image had been reproduced as a lithograph, being advertised for sale in the Sydney Morning Herald of 13 June 1851 with a companion print, 'Gold Diggings of Ophir'. The Mitchell Library holds all three versions of this image which has been described by Bernard Smith as 'one of the best drawings that has been preserved of this period'.

ARTIST:
Thomas Balcombe had come to Sydney aboard the Hibernia in April 1824 with his family, his father having been appointed Colonial Treasurer of NSW. He later joined the Surveyor-General's Department under Thomas Mitchell in September 1830 as a draughtsman. His position as a field surveyor allowed Balcombe to travel extensively, and provided him with many opportunities for landscape sketching. As his artistic talent blossomed, he enjoyed considerable success as an illustrator and made numerous genre works dealing with life in Sydney and beyond. On 2 June 1849, the Sydney Morning Herald critic declared that Balcombe had, 'long been known in the colony as a very spirited animal painter, but he has now taken a higher flight, and this picture affords an undoubted proof of his ability as a painter of the human figure. It is without exception the best attempt in this style and on this scale

that we remember to have seen from the hand of a colonial artist'. His last known works are dated 1857 and Balcombe's emotional instability intensified in the late 1850s and, on 13 October 1861, he shot himself in the head outside his home in Paddington.
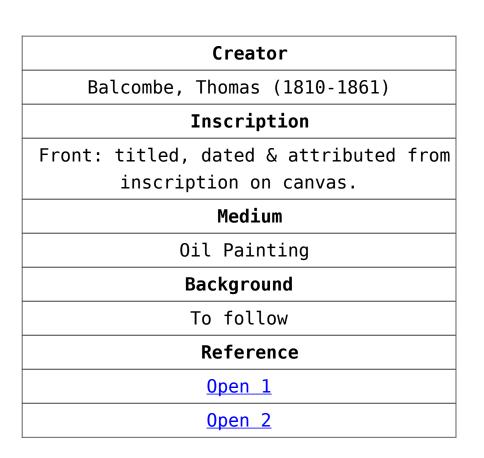
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**1851 — E.H. Hargraves, the gold discoverer of
Australia, returning the salute of the gold miners**

Open in State Library of NSW catalogue

Download Image

⬇

Creator
Balcombe, Thomas (1810-1861)
Inscription
Front: titled, dated & attributed from inscription on canvas.
Medium
Oil Painting
Background
To follow
Reference
Open 1
Open 2

1850 — Turning the first turf of the first railway in the

Australasian colonies at Redfern, Sydney, N.S.W.

What we see in this image

Taken from the outer periphery of the official proceedings, John Rae's ambitious history painting of this important contemporary colonial event offers a panoramic north-easterly perspective over the scene, recording wintery blue sky conditions despite heavy rain on the day. Rather than focusing on the ceremony, the artist's view looks from Redfern, on the western boundary of the Cleveland Paddock (now Prince Alfred Park), across the Sydney skyline with glimpses of Darling Harbour on the far left. Hyde Park Barracks sits solidly on the horizon to the right with the steeple of St James' Church rising at the centre. In the mid-ground, Cleveland House stands on the far right with cattle grazing nearby, while a yellow and black carriage, horse and driver move towards the centre of the paddock.

The artist has concentrated his attention on documenting the vast crowd of 10, 000 spectators reputed to have been in attendance. Thousands of tiny figures fill the distant view to the water, with the VIP area marked by red, white and blue bunting on the left. A wide cross-section of colonial society cluster in the foreground including:

a group of Indigenous people seated on the ground, the women draped in petticoats or blankets and the men in various combination of cast-offs garments – one standing figure, holding a spear, wears a hat and shirt, or smock, tied at the waist with a red sash.
men roam around on foot in groups and pairs or singly, or on horseback, and are mostly civilians with some red-coated

military personnel.

couples and families stand together or apart: the men in tall hats, unmatched jackets and trousers, one (perhaps a hawker) with a heavy basket, several with walking sticks or canes; the women in bonnets and domed-skirted dresses, with shawls wrapped around their shoulders, some carrying infants or baskets or tiny parasols. Hatted and bonneted children hold hands or stand close to adults, one boy carries a hoop, while dogs bark excitedly in the crowd.

What we know about this image

This watercolour painting of the Turning of the First sod for the First Railway in 1850 is perhaps his best-known work Public servant, author and painter John Rae (1813-1900). Symbolising the beginning of the age of industrial progress in the colony, thousands of Sydneysiders gathered in Cleveland Paddock, Redfern, on Wednesday 3 July 1850 to watch Mrs Keith Stewart, only daughter of Sir Charles Fitzroy (1796-1858) K.C.B. Governor of NSW (1846-1855), turn the first sod of earth for the construction of Australia's first railway.

Mary Caroline Stewart, née Fitzroy (1823—95) assumed the role of first Lady of NSW, and chatelaine at government house from arrival in Sydney in August 1849 — following the death in 1847 of her mother Lady Mary FitzRoy (1790—1847) in a carriage accident in the grounds of Government House, Parramatta — until her return to England in 1854.

On the day of the ceremony the governor and his daughter had arrived at Cleveland Paddock at one o'clock. Rain bucketed down as proceedings got underway. Mrs Stewart grasped the tulipwood handle of the handsome ceremonial spade, beautifully engraved with emu and kangaroo and, with 'a pretty foot pressed down on a dainty spade', dug into the damp earth, lifting from it the first piece of turf cut for the

construction of Australia's first steam-operated public railway.

ARTIST'S BIO:
John Rae (1813-1900) arrived in Sydney on 8 December 1839 and was appointed Sydney's first full-time town clerk in 1843, beginning a 50 year public service career; he became secretary to the railway commissioners on 25 July 1857, and was appointed under-secretary for public works and commissioner for railways on 15 January 1861. A talented amateur artist, Rae painted watercolours of Sydney streets and combined his technological and artistic interests by creating large panoramic watercolour sketches, made with the aid of a camera obscura which he constructed to ensure 'absolute fidelity' to nature. As early as 1883, Rae's panoramas were considered to be 'well worth preserving among the pictures in our Art Gallery, not only for their excellence, but as records of our colonial life and progress'.

BACKGROUND NOTES:
Proposals to build railways in New South Wales had first emerged in 1841. From the outset the primary aim of the colony's railways was to assist inland primary producers to transport their produce to the port of Sydney for export and to open the country up for closer settlement. The plan was to build the line to Parramatta in the first instance. Charles Cowper MLC, decided that the terminus should be in the 'government paddock, by Cleveland House', an area of undeveloped land on the periphery of the city boundary, situated between Devonshire and Cleveland streets, where teamsters who transported goods into and out of the city rested their horses and bullocks.

Until the mid-19th century, the coming of the railway and the subsequent use of the area as the showground for the Agricultural Society, Cleveland Paddocks (later Prince Alfred Park) was an Aboriginal camp site for Sydney's Indigenous people living west of the city centre.

Hover on image to zoom in

1850 – Turning the first turf of the first railway in the Australasian colonies at Redfern, Sydney, N.S.W.

[Open in State Library of NSW catalogue](#)

Download Image

Creator
Rae, John (1813-1900)

Inscription
LRHS: 'John Rae 1850'
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
A lithograph version (V1/RAI/3) is dated 1877 and titled: 'Ceremony of turning the first turf of the first railway in the Australia, by the Hon. Mrs Keith Stewart daughter of His Excellency Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, Governor-General, at Sydney, on 3rd July 1850. From an original sketch by John Rae, Esqre. Commissioner for Railways, Sydney.' Other copies are located at V1/RAI/4-6.
Reference
[Open](#)

1850 – Uncle George's likeness [Mr George Garling]

What we see in this image

This finely-rendered left facing, full-length watercolour portrait shows young George Australia Garling, aged about 5,

in a standing pose holding a telescope in his right hand. He wears a full-skirted, knee-length dress, typical attire for boys during their toilet training years, before they were breeched, ie. put into breeches or trousers, at about 5-6 years of age.

George's dress is made of a suitably jaunty red, blue and green striped fabric, worn with a white collar and black ribbon tie and a matching long-sleeved bolero, with ornamental gilt/brass bobble buttons and bands of dark braid or piping, the curved front edges and cuffs trimmed with self-fabric binding. His spreading skirts extend out over a white cotton petticoat and knickers with light-blue blanket-stitch embroidered trim, above short socks knitted in a red and white marled yarn and square-toed, black leather slippers with ankle straps. His short blonde hair has been brushed into a side parting, a useful indicator of gender in an era when all girls wore their hair with a centre parting.

What we know about this image

George Australia Garling (1846-1927) was the fifth son of Frederick Garling Jun. (1806-1873) and his wife Elizabeth nee Ward (1810-1880), in a family of eleven children (seven sons and four daughters).

Frederick Garling Jun. had arrived in Australia with his parents in the Francis and Eliza in 1815. Appointed a landing waiter in the Customs Office in Sydney in 1827, at £250 a year, Garling married Elizabeth Ward on 13 Oct 1829:

On Saturday last, the 10th instant, by Special Licence, at the Church of St Philip, Sydney, by the Rev. W. Cowper, Frederick Garling, jun. Esq. of the Customs to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late Lieutenant Ward of the 1st Regiment of Royals and niece to the late General Hawkshaw in the Hon. East India Company's Service.

Promoted to acting landing surveyor in 1847, Garling continued to work as a customs official for the rest of his career, based at Sydney's Customs House. An entirely self-taught as an artist, most of Garling's work was in watercolour and is generally unsigned. With only early mornings and weekends to spend on his painting and specializing, naturally enough, in marine subjects, he was regarded as one of Sydney's most prolific marine painters, said to have painted every ship that entered Port Jackson during his lifetime.

George Garling married Kate Elvina Wright at Murrurundi, NSW, on 27 Sep 1876. The couple is believed to have had a large family and newspaper reports stated that George worked as a station manager in New Zealand, where he lost a great deal of money. Returning to Australia, his last years were marred by a succession of larceny charges. He died at Waverley in 1927.

POVERTY AND CRIME. METROPOLITAN QUARTER SESSIONS. SMH, Wed 30 Nov 1904.
George Australia Garling, aged 53, and formerly a station manager, pleaded guilty to the theft, on October 6, of three watches, the property of H. R. Ward. Garling was employed by Ward, and pawned the watches for £5 13s for the sake, he said, of providing for his family, numbering 11. He had been unemployed for some months, and had had two operations performed on him in hospital recently. On his promising to make restitution, his Honour sentenced him to one month's imprisonment, the sentence to be suspended on his own recognisance to be of good behaviour for 12 months.

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1850 – Uncle George's likeness [Mr George Garling]

Download Image

Creator	
Unknown	
Inscription	
On back in pencil: 'Uncle George's likeness [Mr George Garling]'	
Medium	
Watercolour and pencil drawing	
Background	
See also: P2 / 432: similar portrait of George's eldest brother, Frederick Augustus (1833-1910) inscribed in the reverse: 'Frederick Garling Drawn by his Ma'.	
Reference	
Open	

1848 — Saidee and Alice Stephen, Twins

What we see in this image

This rare full-length double portrait records the Stephen twins at about four years of age. The girls are shown standing side by side, their bodies turned toward each other in a front facing pose, each holding a flower in one hand [perhaps a red and a white rose] with another bloom lying on the floor between them.

The girls wear identical outfits comprising knee-length pale pink dresses, the ruffled edges of their white chemises visible around low necklines set wide on the shoulders above tight-fitting elbow length sleeves, with bands of ruched trim at the edge, and form-fitting bodices with v-shaped, ruched centre front panels, and round waistlines above wide, pleated full skirts worn with black low cut, square-toed, flat slippers without stockings — perhaps as a concession to the heat of an Australian summer. They wear their shoulder length blonde hair centre parted and gently curled over their ears.

Throughout the Victorian era, girls' clothing closely followed that of their mothers. From early childhood this meant dressing in form-fitting garments, often worn over tightly-laced underbodices cinching the torso and waist, in training for adulthood. In the 1840s, small boys and girls of all ages wore dresses with elaborately shaped low cut bodices, revealing bare necks, shoulders and arms, tight-fitting sleeves and full skirts held out by four or five petticoats. Pantaloons were often visible below mid-calf length skirts, usually worn with stocking or socks and flat slippers or boots.

What we know about this image

Born on 18 Feb 1844, Alice Mary Stephen (1844-1902) and Sarah (aka Saidee) Consett Stephen (1844-1932) were the twin daughters of Sir Alfred Stephen (1802-1894) and his second wife, Lady Eleanor, nee Bedford (1810—1886); the eleventh and twelfth of Sir Alfred's eighteen children, and the fourth and fifth of nine children born to Eleanor, his second wife. The arrival of Alice and Saidee was followed by the birth of twin boys in 1847, one of whom did not survive. Although the girls are not dressed for mourning, it is possible that commissioning of this unusual portrait was occasioned by this recent bereavement, with the single fallen flower between them indicative of an innocent life lost.

NB: The female fertility rate at the middle of the nineteenth century was equivalent to six babies for every woman, with the infant mortality rate at 125 deaths/1000 births — 27 times higher than the rate of 4.63 deaths/1000 births today.

In 1842 the Stephen family moved to Lyon Terrace (demolished in 1900) in Liverpool St, near Hyde Park and close to St James Church. The twins were born the same year their father became the colony's third Chief Justice; he was knighted in 1846. While the Stephen boys were sent to boarding school, their mother oversaw the girls' education at home, employing the services of a superior governess and following a strict curriculum. In this busy and crowded household, Lady Stephen supervised the girls music practice before breakfast, and escorted them to dancing lessons and extra language lessons several mornings a week. In 1866, the Stephens moved to 'Orielton', a large, elegant and comfortable house in Ocean St, Woollahra, with harbour views.

As the 'home daughters' of their father, Sir Alfred Stephen, the twin sisters, who were almost indistinguishable, were inseparable companions doing most things in common, especially following the death of their mother in 1866. Both were

enthusiastic musicians. Saidee was also a gifted linguist, able to speak five languages fluently. For many years in the earlier part of her life, she had acted as confidential secretary to her father, handling all his correspondence and assisting him in his legal work. She died at the age of 90 years at her home in Woollahra. Alice had died 30 years previously.

MIN 200; MIN 201: 1/6th plate ambrotypes: The sisters are similarly attired in off-the-shoulder dinner dresses with pointed waists, pleated skirts, and white chemises visible at the edges of their short sleeves and neckline. Their hair is tied back and both girls wear identical cross pendants, and jet brooches pinned to the centre front of their corsages.

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1848 — Saidee and Alice Stephen, Twins

Download Image

↓

Creator	
Nicholas, William (c.1807-1854)	
Inscription	
LRHS: Front: 'Nicholas / 1848' Verso: 'Saidee and Alice Stephen'	
Medium	
Watercolour on card	
Background	
To follow	
Reference	
To follow	

1846 — New Post Office, George Street, Sydney

What we see in this image

This lively streetscape depicts the mid-morning bustle along George Street, the city of Sydney's main thoroughfare, in 1846. The view is taken from the western side of the road, looking onto the brand new facade of the General Post Office with it is classical portico, supported by a series of six elegant Doric columns, bearing a crested pediment and the all-important town clock prominently displaying a time of 11.25am.

In the foreground, from left to right, nine pedestrians are portrayed:

a delivery boy, brandishing a parcel, in dark blue trousers and shirt with a boater-style straw hat;
a young woman with a spaniel dog carrying a pagoda-shaped parasol and wearing a fitted, knee-length black jacket over a pale pink dome-skirted dress with a matching deep-brimmed, flower-trimmed, silk-covered bonnet;
a family group comprising a child in matching bonnet and red coat/dress with light-coloured pantaloons visible below the hem, an older woman wearing a 'coal-scuttle' straw bonnet with black ribbon ties and a knee-length black cape over a light-coloured dress, a bearded man in a black top hat and a long-line pale blue cloth coat, with black lapels, over checked trousers, and a second (perhaps younger) woman with red ribbon ties on her straw bonnet, and wearing a red and white diagonally-striped fringed shawl over a light-coloured dome-skirted gown;
an indigenous man, identified as Bungaree in his characteristic garb of cast-off military dress jacket,

battered hat and ragged trousers;

a bearded soldier in regimental dress with a blue cap, a short fitted jacket of bright blue wool, with gilt epaulettes and red collar, cuffs and facings, worn over red and black panelled trousers with white side stripes, a regimental [pouch] and a sword/sabre slung from one hip;

a food vendor, identified as Sydney character William Francis King, aka 'The Flying Pieman', carrying a portable stand, or podium, and a cloth-lined wicker basket wearing his customary a jockey-style ensemble of white breeches, stockings and leather running shoes, a long-sleeved brown and white striped shirt, and matching striped jockey cap;

Three horse-driven vehicles also travel along the street including:

an official mail coach designated by the government crest on the door carrying one female (inside) and two male passengers (outside);

a gig [or box curricle] driven by a smartly attired young man wearing a colourful suit of matching frock coat and trousers with blue flap pocket and a black top hat;

a transportation cart (labelled 'Sydney to Campbelltown') with one female occupant;

Promenading along the pavement and standing on the steps outside the post office are a strolling

couple, a man in a brown coat, a soldier, a woman standing in profile, two business men in conversation, with a sailor or workman leaning against one of the columns;

What we know about this image

The publication of this lithograph, showing the intended new facade to the General Post Office, was noted under 'Local Intelligence' in Sydney newspaper paper, The Sentinel, on Thursday 7 May 1846:

The Fine Arts – We have been presented with a new lithographic

design, representing the proposed new front of the old Post Office, George Street. It consists of a handsome pediment of the Roman Doric order ornamented with the Royal Arms and supported by pilasters (sic) – the foreground is enlivened by several spirited characteristic sketches, mail coaches and etc. Altogether the design and execution are credible to Colonial talent … (p.3)

The architectural detail in this lithograph was drawn by Frederick George Lewis (1822-1853), second son of Mortimer Lewis, the NSW Colonial Architect (1835-1849) who was the designer of the building, F.G. Lewis died on 1/12/1853: 'leaving a wife and three children and a large circle of friends to deplore their loss.'

The figures and horses in the foreground of this image were drawn by Edward Winstanley (1820-1849) who was proably taught to paint by his father William. Winstanley had come to Sydney with his family in the Adventure, arriving on 2 May 1833. In October 1834, he joined his father in the partnership of 'Mr. Winstanley & Son' as scene-painters at Sydney's Theatre Royal. By the age of 23, Edward had established a new reputation as a sporting artist. He is best known for his images of racehorses and sporting scenes and was an artistic contributor to the New South Wales Sporting Magazine during the late 1840s.

GENERAL POST OFFICE:
J. Fowles, Sydney in 1848, (July 14, 1848)

We now arrive before one of the most important buildings of the colony, not merely as regards the structure, but as being the centre and focus, the heart, as it may be termed, from which the pulse of civilization throbs to the remotest extremity of the land. We mean the Post Office….works have not yet progressed beyond the erection of a handsome portico. Six Doric columns support an appropriate entablature and pediment, with the royal arms (executed by Mr. Abraham, an able sculptor resident in the colony,) in the centre of the tympanum. The

whole effect is chaste and severe, and much more befitting the aspect of a place of business than a more ornamental and gaudy design would be…

Despite several alterations to the Post Office on George Street, by 1851 the colonial government had established a special Board of Enquiry which concluded that 'the building [is] very ill-adapted for the business required to be carried out in it…'. By 1863 the situation had worsened such that Mortimer Lewis's Doric building had been entirely abandoned and a larger temporary wooden structure erected to serve as a temporary post office in Wynyard Square. James Barnet, recently appointed as NSW Colonial Architect, was instructed to prepare plans for a new General Post Office on the Martin Place segment of the present George Street site.
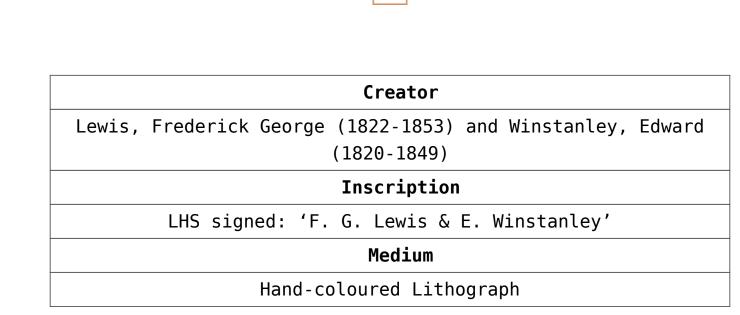
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1846 — New Post Office, George Street, Sydney

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Download Image

Creator
Lewis, Frederick George (1822-1853) and Winstanley, Edward (1820-1849)
Inscription
LHS signed: 'F. G. Lewis & E. Winstanley'
Medium
Hand-coloured Lithograph

1845 — Caroline Lawson and son Thomas James

What we see in this image

This ¾ length daguerreotype portrait shows Caroline Lawson, aged 43, smiling somewhat uncertainly into the camera as she stands with her right arm wrapped around the shoulders of her youngest son, Thomas James, aged 3½, holding him close by her side to minimise movement and subsequent blurring of the image during its lengthy exposure.

Mrs Lawson wears a dark-coloured [woollen] dress with a moderately high, shallow neckline cut wide across the shoulders, draped in a black lace shawl above long narrow-fitting sleeves trimmed below the elbow with small, bell-shaped oversleeves and worn with wrist-length black gloves.

The tightly-fitted bodice is pinned with a gold and black enamel mourning brooch, probably housing a sample of woven hair, above a central braid-trimmed 'plastron' (v-shaped) panel with a ruffled flounce extending over the shoulders, and a full skirt pleated into a pointed waistline. Caroline wears her long, greying blonde hair centre-parted, arranged in a pair of lobed rolls set high over her ears, fitted with black-enamelled earrings, the remainder of her hair pinned up in a plaited and coiled bun on the crown of her head.

Thomas wears a full-skirted, short-sleeved, dark-coloured dress. Typical attire for children of both sexes during toilet training years, before boys were breeched at the age of 5-6 years, it is cut wide across the shoulders, leaving his white undergarment visible at the neckline. His short blonde hair has been brushed into a side parting, a useful indicator of his gender, in this era when all girls wore their hair with a centre parting.

What we know about this image

The Lawson's had recently borne the loss of two infant children – a 16-month-old daughter Frances, known as 'Fanny' (April 1843- Aug 1844), and Charles Samuel (1844-Dec 1844) – which may explain the dark, sombre appearance of this portrait commissioned by grieving parents anxious for an image with their youngest surviving child.

Born on 23d September, Thomas James (1841-1877) was the second son of William Lawson, the younger (1804-1861) and his wife Caroline Icely Lawson (1802-1875) who had married in 1832. The couple had 10 children (5 daughters and 5 sons).

In April and May of 1845, at the request of 100 subscribers, photographer George Goodman had travelled to Bathurst, NSW, where he spent three weeks at the Victoria Hotel taking daguerreotypes.

On the way back to Sydney, in May 1845, Goodman took a series of photographs of the William Lawson family, probably made at their property 'Veteran Hall' in Prospect, NSW, producing a suite of exquisite daguerreotype portraits, six of which survive in the Mitchell Library.

Advertisement, 'Photographic Portraits, Taken by the Reflection of Light', *The Australian*, 9 December 1842:

> The Proprietor of the Reflecting Apparatus by which faithful likenesses of the human countenance and person are won from the hands of nature in the short space of a few seconds respectfully announces to the inhabitants of Sydney that this extraordinary process will be open to the public at the Royal Hotel in which the Photographic apparatus will be in daily operation from ten till five. The price of each portrait is ONE Guinea exclusive of the frame. (p.1)

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1845 — Caroline Lawson and son Thomas James

Download Image

Creator
Goodman, George Baron (d. 1851)
Inscription
Accompanying note in contemporary hand: 'Mama and / Thomas James Lawson / 3d May 1845 / Born 23d September 1841'
Medium
Photograph
Background
Subject is posed seated in a chair surrounded by scholarly props (ie. anatomy textbook, a sculpture, writing materials) with a lavish curtain drapery behind.
Reference
Open

1845 – Dr William Bland

What we see in this image

This front facing, 3/4 length portrait shows emancipist convict Dr William Bland, at 49 years of age. He is posed in a room setting seated in a high-backed [cedar] arm chair with buttoned brown [leather] upholstery and scrolling foliate carved [uprights], a white [plaster] statue of a classical male figure on the left behind him, and the carved [cedar] architrave of a door or window on the right covered by an elaborately tasselled cascading curtain drapery. Perhaps commissioned as an occupational study or professional portrait, the doctor appears to be caught in act of research and writing. He holds a sharpened quill pen in his right hand, his arm resting next to a sheaf of notes on a square table with rounded corners covered in a light brown cloth with a scrolling foliate pattern, on which is set a small decorative [bronze] inkstand with an unlit candle and a pile of leather bound books — one large volume is propped upright and open to reveal an anatomical drawing of a [human] skull and the spine at the base of the neck.

Dr Bland wears an eminently professional two-piece suit of plain black cloth, comprising a knee-length, double-breasted frock coat fastened to the waist with five pairs of covered domed buttons, the narrow, fitted sleeves with slit cuffs buttoning above the wrist, worn with matching trousers and a high-collared white shirt with a white neck cloth. He is clean shaven, his white hair left naturally curly, and wears no jewellery.

What we know about this image

This unsigned watercolour of emancipist convict and surgeon Dr William Bland (1789-1868) has been attributed to Richard Read Jnr (1796-1862) after comparison with others of his drawings. It has been dated between the year in which the daguerreotype portrait of Dr Bland (MIN 350) — on which this image was based

– was mentioned as having been taken by George Baron Goodman (SMH 14/1/1845) and the year of its possible exhibition in Sydney in 1849 by the Society for the Promotion of Fine Arts.

William Bland was a transported convict, medical practitioner and surgeon, politician, farmer and inventor in colonial New South Wales, Australia. Convicted of murder (as manslaughter) as a result of a duel in 1813, Bland was transported to Van Diemen's Land for seven years. Later transferred to Sydney, aboard the Frederick on 14 July 1814, he was pardoned on 27 January 1815 and became the first doctor to establish a private practice in Australia. Admired 'as much for his benevolence as for his skill', in 1832 Bland was the first Australian surgeon to ligate the innominate artery to treat an aneurysm; his report of the procedure was only the seventh in the world.

Bland was an elected as the member of the NSW Legislative Council twice (1843-1848, 1849-1850) for the City of Sydney, and appointed to the NSW Legislative Council (1858–1861) after the introduction of responsible government. In February 1846, by then a widower, Bland married his second wife Eliza Smeathman. Declared a bankrupt in 1861, Bland continued in active medical practice until his death in 1868.
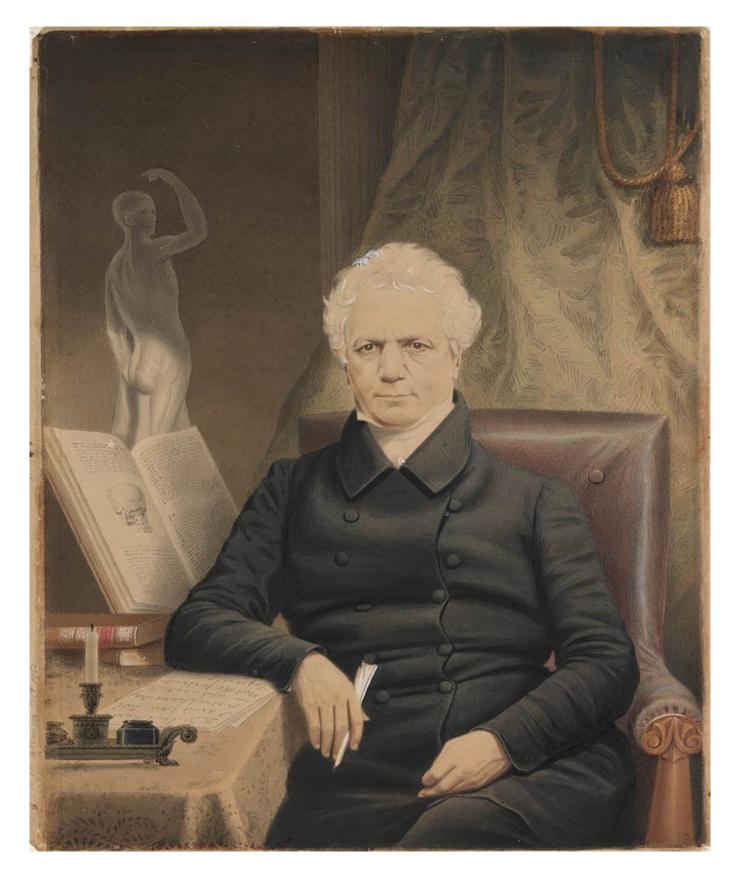
A philanthropist, whose genius, whose time, whose fortune were for 50 years the property of every wretch who had a bodily ailment, a mental sorrow, or an empty belly — a patriot who was fearless when all or nearly all were cowards, who was loud in speech for the right when the timid were dumb, who spoke and wrote, and acted, as no man in the country dared to speak, write, and act…

William Bede Dalley, 1868.

Another version of the Goodman daguerreotype, a lithographic drawing by William Nicholas, was published as 'Portrait of Dr. William Bland, the philanthropist' on 18 December 1847, in William Baker's Heads of the people (Vol. 2, no. 10, plate facing p. 67, Q059/H). Probably produced between November 1844

and early January 1845, Dr Bland's daguerreotype would appear to be a product of Goodman's new studio at 49 Hunter Street, Sydney (SMH, 5/8/1844), created before the introduction of hand colouring (SMH, 9/1/1845) and before the introduction of decorative backgrounds (SMH, 25/4/1846). Stylistically, it also matches the Lawson family daguerreotypes, two of which are dated in a contemporary hand at 3/5/1845.

Read and Nicholas both exhibited their portraits of Dr Bland at the 1849 Society for the Promotion of Fine Arts Exhibition in Sydney, which were described as 'staring likenesses, evidently daguerreotypish' by the Sydney Morning Herald reviewer of 2 June 1849.

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1845 — Dr William Bland

Creator
Read, Richard Jnr (1796-1862) attrib.
Inscription
LRH:
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
Subject is posed seated in a chair surrounded by scholarly props (ie. anatomy textbook, a sculpture, writing materials) with a lavish curtain drapery behind.
Reference
Open

1843 — Anna Maria Macarthur (nee King)

What we see in this image

This front facing 3/4 length portrait shows Anna Maria Macarthur, aged 50, posed in a domestic setting, seated in a high-backed upholstered arm chair draped with a checked shawl. Mrs Macarthur is known to have been of delicate health which is certainly portrayed in this sensitive portrait.

Anna Maria wears a full-skirted, light-coloured [silk] day dress with long sleeves, fitted through the upper arm to the elbow, marked with small puffs, or 'bouffants', full over the forearms and gathered into narrow cuffs at the wrist. The bodice of the dress is shrouded by a sheer, white-work embroidered 'pelerine', or capelet, topped by a small white collar with ruffled edging fastened at the neck with a small rectangular brooch, over which is laid a large blue and white [printed] scarf pinned with a large [enamelled or micro-mosaic] brooch. She wears a wedding ring on her left hand which rests in her lap over a piece of [fabric/sewing], her smoothly centre-parted brown hair dressed in rows of sausage curls over her ears, and covered with a ruffled and beribboned indoor cap of fine white fabric trimmed with artificial flowers and [stalks of wheat].

What we know about this image

This image shows Mrs Macarthur at the height of her social position, just before financial troubles overwhelmed her husband. It was painted in the same year as the artist's somewhat grander portrait of her mother, Anna Josepha King (ML 1192), then in residence with her daughter and son-in-law. William Nicholas (1807-1854) seems to have been the favoured portrait artist of prominent colonial families in Sydney like the Macarthurs, the Wentworths and the Kings.

Anna Maria Macarthur, nee King (1793-1852) was the eldest daughter of Governor Philip Gidley King. She married

pastoralist, politician and businessman Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur (1788-1861) in 1812. The couple settled at The Vineyard, near Parramatta, NSW, which became one of the leading houses of the colony, and raised a family of eleven children (5 sons and 6 daughters); James Campbell Macarthur (1813-1862), Elizabeth Macarthur (1815-1889), Anna Macarthur (1816-1852), Catherine Macarthur (1818-1894), Charles Macarthur (1820-1871), Mary King Macarthur (1822-1898), George Fairfowl Macarthur (1825-1890), John Alexander Macarthur (1827-1904), Emmeline Maria Macarthur (1828-1911), Arthur Hannibal Macarthur (1830-1871) and Emma Jane Macarthur (1832-1866). After her husband's financial collapse during the late 1840s depression, the Macarthurs moved to Ipswich, Qld, where Anna died in 1852.

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1843 — Anna Maria Macarthur (nee King)

Download Image

⬇

Creator
Nicholas, William (1807-1854)
Inscription
LRHS: 'W. Nicholas / 1843'
Medium
Watercolour Drawing
Background
Subject is posed in an easy chair, with a checked shawl draped over one arm suggestive of a domestic setting.
Reference
[Open 1](#)
[Open 2](#)

1842 – Portrait of an unidentified man, on board

ship

What we see in this image

This left facing, 3/4 length standing portrait depicts an unknown young man, aged in his late 20s or early 30s, posed on the deck of ship docked in Sydney Harbour.

He wears a long-skirted, double-breasted frock coat in dark grey cloth with a black velvet collar, wide notched lapels and narrow-fitting sleeves, slightly gathered at the shoulder and ending in split cuffs at the wrist, worn over dark cream trousers, a cream waistcoat with roll collar, and a snowy white linen shirt with a high collar and a sky blue ribbed-silk bow necktie above gold stud buttons, with two long, fine gold chains crossed over his chest (perhaps suspending spectacles).The subject's long dark brown curly hair is parted on the left, his reddish brown whiskers carefully trimmed into a narrow beard with no moustache. His left arm rests on a wood and brass [table] displaying his gold 'pinkie' ring while his right hand, positioned somewhat awkwardly below the hip, holds back the lower front edge of his coat to reveal a light grey [silk] lining.

What we know about this image

Edmund Edgar, or Eagar (1804 – 1854), also known by the aliases Edgar Edmund Bults and Edgar Bult, worked as a house painter, engraver, and lithographer in London, and also as a miniature painter, before being convicted of robbery in 1825 for which he was sentenced to transportation for life. Edgar reached Sydney on 13 September 1826, aboard the convict ship Marquis of Huntly. By special request, he was assigned to the visiting artist Augustus Earle who had recently acquired a

lithographic press and sought Edgar's assistance in the production of his Views in Australia and other lithographs. Edgar also taught painting in Sydney, at Mr Gilchrist's school in the late 1820s.

Receiving his ticket of leave in 1838, Edgar was conditionally pardoned in 1844. From then on he seems to have concentrated on portraiture. In 1847 he was listed in Low's Directory as an artist at Argyle Street, west of Trinity Church, in Sydney's Rocks area. Other details about Edgar's life remain uncertain — he may later have moved to Parramatta though another unconfirmed reference suggests he became a fruit and vegetable vendor in Sydney. He died a pauper at the Sydney Benevolent Asylum in June 1854.

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1842 — Portrait of an unidentified man, on board ship

Download Image

Creator	
Edgar, Edmund (1804 -1854)	
Inscription	
On back in pencil: 'Drawn by Edmund Edgar / Sydney New South Wales / April 1842'	
Medium	
Watercolour on Card	
Background	
Subject is posed on the deck of a ship.	
Reference	
[Open](#)	