



Early Settlement



Key Inquiry Question



In which Maitland suburb
was Walka Water Works
built?



Oakhampton, New South Wales

Task: Google- 'Oakhampton, New South' Wales to see where Oakhampton is, in relation to Maitland and it's surrounding suburbs.

Insert image here.

Talk to a partner and describe where Oakhampton is.
e.g. Oakhampton is North of South Maitland. It's eastern border is along the Hunter River.

Go to Google images to insert an image of the compass points here to help, if needed!



Key Inquiry Question



How was the land used prior to Walka Water Works and by who?



"Oakhampton- 2320"

In 1822 William B. Wilkinson received one thousand acres, as a grant. He named the property Okehampton Park Estate. The name and spelling came from Devonshire, England. Later it was renamed "Oakhampton".



The Agriculture Phase

The text on the following slides has been taken from page 5 of a Maitland City Council publication titled "Walka Water Works: A Detailed Study".

It gives details of what was on the site before construction began and how the land was used by the early settlers of the immediate area.

Task: Read through the slides and fill in the table to give a summary of those who lived and worked at Oakhampton before Walka Water Works was built.



As the site resumed for the water works consisted of only 196 acres, much of it was covered by a lagoon and 108 acres of it had to be cleared by the contractors when construction began, very little of it had ever been **cultivated**. The land was probably too swampy for **crops** or **orchards** but it would have been used for **grazing**. As **pasture** land, it has no particular **heritage** value since tens of thousands of acres in the lower Hunter were used for this purpose in this period.

However, at least four of those who owned sections of the site played a significant role in the history of the Hunter Valley and their involvement with the site should be noted.



Houston Mitchell

Houston Mitchell, the grantee of a large portion of the site, was the brother of the explorer and surveyor general, Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, but he did not remain long in Australia and he is remembered only for his letters, now in the Mitchell Library, which contribute significantly to our understanding of the **social** and **economic** life of the region in its **pioneering** phase.

***It was Houston Mitchell who named Walka, saying " The Aboriginal name for the hilly part of my grant is Walka".**



John Eales

John Eales (1799-1871), the owner until his death in 1871 of another portion of the site, was one of the dominant figures in the economic history of New South Wales in the last century. Settling near Morpeth in 1823, Eales prospered as a farmer, became one of the most successful **squatters** in the **colony** and then moved into various industries, principally shipping and coal mining. However, as his Walka land formed an insignificant part of his vast estate, it gains little in heritage terms from this connection.



Eales' House

Copy and paste this link into a search engine to view a photo of the property and learn about the original house, as well as it's renovations.

<https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/duckenfield-park-house-tiles>

Insert image here.

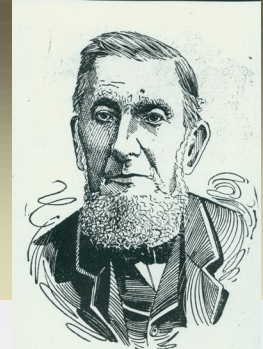


John Nixon Brunker

James Nixon Brunker (1832-1910), who also owned a portion of the site in 1881, was a leading citizen of Maitland and a very successful **stock and station agent**. Elected to the NSW Parliament in 1880, Brunker had a long **political** career holding ministerial office on several occasions and once acting as premier of the colony. His involvement with the Walka site should be noted.



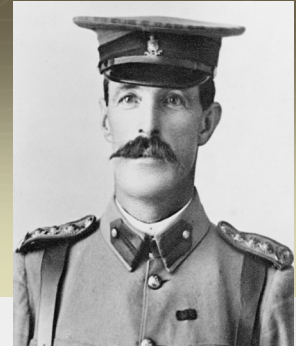
Michael Scobie



Michael Scobie (1802-1903), although he does not compare in political and social significance with Eales and Brunker, is also an interesting historical figure. **Migrating** from Scotland in 1839, he established a farm on forty acres, which included part of the Walka site, **leased** from John Eales. After being severely affected by the Hunter River floods in 1840 and by the economic **depression** that followed, Scobie, in partnership with his son, Robert, established a successful **orchard** and market garden. Growing a wide variety of fruits and planting a nine acre **vineyard** which produced table grapes for the Sydney market garden, the Scobies prospered and their produce won many prizes at agricultural shows. Known as "The Gardens", their farm became one of Maitland's attractions in the late **nineteenth century**. Michael had experimented with cotton growing in the 1850s...



Michael's son- Robert Scobie



and Robert became an authority on fruit culture and pest control.

Very active in the community, Robert was elected to the N.S.W. Parliament in 1889. The Scobies are representative of the large class of small scale farmers who did so much to develop the lower Hunter Valley and their ownership of the Walka site contributes to its historical interest.



Scobie's House





Scobie's Vineyard

