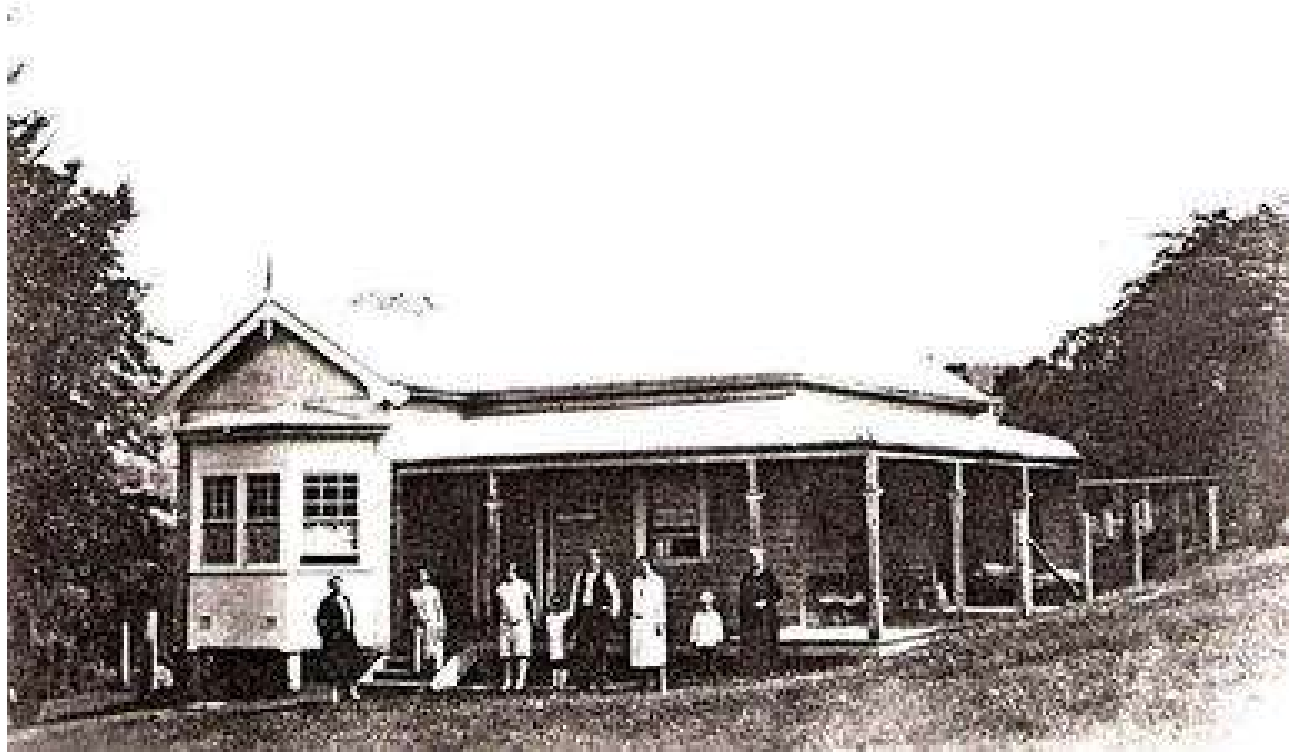


#52 Ancestors 2020 Week 18 Where There's a Will

52cousins.blogspot.com/2020/05/52-ancestors-2020-week-18-where-theres.html

#52 Ancestors 2020

Week 18 "Where There's a Will"



Some of the family at Lowestoft, 1914

The prompt for Week 18, "Where There's a Will", sent me looking among Mum's papers for details of the wills of her grandparents, Anthony and Charlotte Whitten. They are interesting not because they are controversial (as many wills are) or because they were rich (they weren't) but because of the detail contained of their possessions, all of which had to be assessed and valued in the days when Australians paid death duties.

Anthony died in 1914 and left everything to Charlotte. The Government decreed that the total net value of the Estates on which duty is payable is Twelve Thousand five hundred and twelve pounds eleven shillings and four pence. If it was calculated at the same rate as for Charlotte, 14 years later, then it was over 750 pounds.

This is what was valued. The total area of the land was 2595 acres – that's over 1050 hectares. It was all grazing country except for a small area around the homestead, which was described as a 4 room slab cottage with a kitchen and a skillion storeroom. There was an iron woolshed with yards and pens, an old 3 roomed slab hut with a bark roof, a horse paddock, a small calf paddock, yards and cow bails, a vegetable garden and another garden with old fruit trees, and miles of fencing.

The high mountainous country is described as “still uncleared, timbered with stringybark, gum and peppermint”

In 1914 there were 570 ewes, 370 lambs and 900 wethers. Amongst the 23 cattle are 4 working bullocks and 4 milk cows with calf. Anthony had 9 horses, which would have included sulky horses as there is a sulky and a “spring cart” amongst the plant. The value of the livestock was calculated at One thousand and six pounds, 10 shillings. The last wool clip had realised 621 pounds, 8 shillings and 3 pence.

It’s difficult to make any assessment of what that money represents today, but I think we can assume that Anthony was running a successful sheep farming operation.

Nevertheless, they lived simply. Here is a list of the dining room furniture as presented for valuation.

The Dining Room:

- 1 table
- 1 Sideboard
- 1 Daisy Cot (*I had to look this up – it’s a kind of camp stretcher*)
- 1 Cane chair
- 1 small deal table (home made)
- 1 small bamboo table
- 1 small clock
- 2 lamps (valued at 2/- and 2/6)
- 1 cruet stand
- 4 tumblers (3d ea)
- 1 stool.

Charlotte died in 1927. Two of her unmarried sons lived with her and worked on the property. The land holding had increased slightly to 2648 acres of grazing country with a total assessed valuation of 8485 pounds and 5 shillings. There were fewer sheep but more cattle – 1597 head of sheep, 90 head of cattle, 25 head of young calves and yearlings, 3 pigs, 2 horses (one old and one very old) and 28 fowls. There was one old Sulky and one very old Spring Cart in bad condition.

There was more Dining Room furniture:

Linoleum on the floor.

- Deal Table
- Rocking Chair
- 5 Pine Chairs
- 1 small deal table
- Victor Piano
- Clock
- Sewing machine
- Small couch
- Meat Safe

3 Kerosene lamps

1 Small Lamp.

The total value of the estate was calculated at 15,501 pounds and duty was 930 pounds 1 shilling and 2 pence.

It's highly likely that members of the family may have manipulated the amount payable for death duties by removing some possessions from the property. Payment of death duties was a huge imposition on families and many properties would have to be sold in order to pay them. (This was particularly the case in England when death taxes were blamed for the sale or demolition of large numbers of stately homes during the first half of the 20th century.)

Death duties were abolished entirely in Australia after Queensland took the lead in 1979.



Lowestoft 1914