

Tyquin Street

In the northeast corner of the suburb of Laverton, east of Bladin Street and north of Jennings Street, is a residential area where the street names reflect on a time long ago. A time well before Laverton became an official suburb within the western region of Melbourne. If you were to look at the plans of the Parish of Truganina, specifically from the second half of the 1800s, the names of many landholders and graziers are honoured here. So, who were these people, and what was their connection to Laverton to have their names preserved in history?

One of these streets is Tyquin Street. Originally named in 1972, it runs from Old Geelong Road, alongside the western boundary of the Princes Freeway, to Jennings Street, acknowledging the multi-generational impact of the Tyquin family on the Laverton area.

Our story of the Tyquin family begins in the small, Victorian gold mining town of Taradale in 1862. Located between rural towns Malmsbury and Elphinstone, roughly 100 kilometres northwest of Melbourne and 50 kilometres from Bendigo, Taradale was first established in 1851 following the discovery of gold in central Victoria. Several gold mining activities were carried out in and around the town including searching for alluvial gold in the Back Creek.

Here in Taradale, Thomas Tyquin was born on 19 August 1862, to parents James Thomas Tyquin and Mary Tyquin (nee Croake). Thomas was the fourth of eleven children born to James and Mary. James Tyquin was a gold miner, but unfortunately not a very successful one, and on occasions struggled to provide for his large family. After attending to his basic education, Thomas joined his father working the mines. However, in 1887, it is believed that Thomas, aged 25, was injured in a mining accident at a nearby gold mine in Castlemaine gold mine. Following this, he remained living in Taradale with his parents, but it is not known whether he returned to work in the gold mines.

On 1 September 1892, Thomas's mother, Mary, passed away. His father, James, passed away a year later on 20 September 1893, and both were interred within the Malmsbury cemetery. Before his passing though, James was fortunate to have attended Thomas's wedding on 8 February 1893 where he married Ellen Mary O'Sullivan in Kyneton. Ellen was born in Malmsbury on 19 May 1865 to parents James O'Sullivan and Mary O'Sullivan (nee Condren).



Thomas Tyquin

Shortly after their marriage, and following the death of his father, Thomas and Ellen Tyquin moved to the Werribee area. Werribee at this time comprised of a portion of the Chirside estate and the adjoining plain lands that were being used as a sheep run. Only a few commercial and residential buildings marked the site of the actual township. There was no baker or butcher in business. Townsfolk who did not slaughter their own meat or bake for themselves depended on support from the nearest suburbs, being Williamstown and Footscray.

Thomas and Ellen reached Werribee around the time that the Chirside estate was being sub-divided into smaller farm holdings. These were then rented to perspective tenants, with a comfortable dwelling and outbuildings having been erected on each allotment by George Chirside. Meanwhile, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) had acquired land extending to Port Phillip Bay foreshore.

Thomas and Ellen secured a property of several hundred acres on the south-western portion of the Chirnside estate, being near the outskirts of the sewage treatment farm. Thomas initially engaged in hay-growing and general sustenance farming. His work proved successful and about nine years later he was able to purchase a property adjoining his, enabling him to expand his crops. During this period, Thomas and Ellen had seven children, three daughters and four sons. These were Mary (1893-1979), Eileen Veronica (1896-1960), Thomas James (1897-1971), Lawrence Patrick (1899-1967), Ellen Frances 'Daisy' (1902-1991), James Edward (1905-1971) and John 'Jack' (1911-1966).

Over the years, Thomas proved to be one of the leading farmers of the district, allowing the family to acquire more land in neighbouring suburbs. In the 1920s, he and Ellen purchased six blocks of land in Talbot Street, Laverton, and a further two blocks on the corner of Shirley Street and South Avenue¹. With their middle child, Lawrence, they also purchased a large parcel of land in what is now known as Altona Meadows. The land was purchased from the Cheetham Salt Works company and stretched from the shores of Port Phillip Bay in the east, north to the lower end of Merton Street, and then west to Aviation Road. Ellen also purchased two blocks of land in Synott Street, Werribee, and land with a dwelling in Wedge Street, to which they retired around 1933, but more on this later.



Ellen Tyquin (nee O'Sullivan)

In addition to their continued financial success, Thomas and Ellen also had lots to celebrate as many of their children got married. Mary married Richard Thomas Power and moved to New South Wales, Lawrence married Ellen Leyden and moved to Diggers Rest, as did James who married Irene Margaret 'Rene' Reidy. Ellen Frances Tyquin married Vincent Plunkett Hayes and moved to Kyneton. Eileen married Maurice Rushford and remained in Werribee as did John who married Irene 'Rene' Gibbons. Thomas James Tyquin married Honora Cecilia (Nonie) Greene² and moved to Laverton.

Thomas and Ellen ultimately remained on their Werribee farming properties until about 1928. He eventually relinquished possession of his farm, selling it to the MMBW in order for them to extend their operations in the direction of Little River. Upon selling out to the MMBW, Thomas and Ellen acquired an irrigation holding on K Road in Werribee South, and there they started improving the land and growing crops for the next five years. In 1933, they retired and moved to a dwelling in Wedge Street, Werribee, which Ellen had purchased a few years prior. At this time, the newly developed farmland in Werribee South was taken over by the youngest member of the family, John, who had been residing with and supporting his parents on the property.

On 7 June 1934, Thomas Tyquin passed away at his home in Werribee. It was said that he suffered from heart troubles during the last few years of his life, and so, his demise was not unexpected, but certainly lamented by family and the residents of the Werribee district. Thomas was described, within the local newspaper as 'big in character as well as in person, he was one of the best known and most highly respected of Werribee residents. His connection with the district extended from early manhood. Never afterwards was he away from Werribee, he acquired a vast circle of friends who for him had the greatest esteem.'

¹ We believe South Avenue was renamed Alma Avenue.

Thomas led a somewhat private life, preferring not to take an active part in public affairs. However, this did not deter him from associating himself with people, movements and organisations that had the advancement of the district as their object. His funeral took place at the Werribee cemetery, where testimonies were of the highest regard, This was evident by the exceptional length of the cortege, consisting of relatives and friends desiring to pay tribute and their last respects to Thomas Tyquin.

Six years later, on 20 January 1940, Ellen Tyquin passed away and was buried alongside Thomas within the Werribee cemetery. The local newspaper reported that she was a very energetic worker in local church circles and for the cause of charity, and that her charming disposition and willingness to aid the needy won her a very large circle of friends. Up to three months before her passing, Ellen would still get about the town to enjoy the company of her friends. In her last years though, her youngest daughter Ellen Frances had come to reside with her for assistance.



Grave of Thomas and Ellen Tyquin at Werribee cemetery

As one generation ended, there was already another establishing itself to carry on the family mantle. In the case of the Tyquin family, this responsibility was handed to Thomas James Tyquin.

Thomas James Tyquin was born in Werribee on 14 August 1897 and appears to have born into farming, thanks to his father. He was the eldest boy of his parents' seven children. It appears that his early education, like his siblings, was undertaken at the Cocoroc West State school, which was situated close to the Point Wilson Road. Following this, he would have been on the farm working with his father, learning his trade from one of the best in the district. The township of Corococ was founded in 1894 to accommodate the workers of the Werribee sewage works/farms, and their families. A local school was established in 1901 to educate the children of these workers, as well as children from neighbouring farms.



Cocoroc West State School No 3411

The school opened in 1901 near the Point Wilson Rd, was later shifted to a more central location, and closed in 1948 with eight pupils.

Standing: L-R Leo Mahoney, Joe Palmer, Vin Palmer, Tom Tyquin, Frances Palmer, Annie O'Donnell, Eileen Tyquin, Helen Toohey, Nellie West, Mary Tyquin, Charlie West, Dave West, Jack Toohey

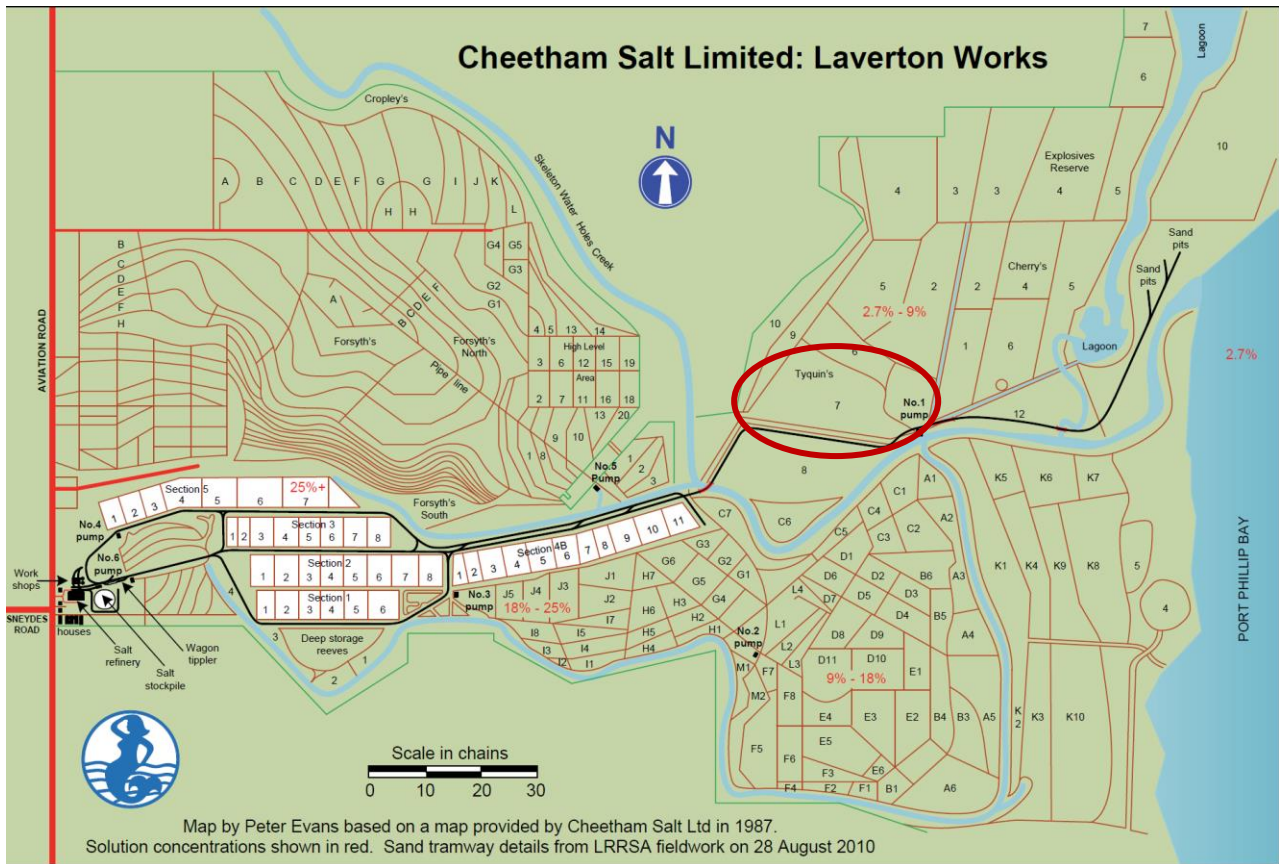
Seated: L-R Charlie Mahoney, Joe Mahoney, Winnie Mobray, Daisy Tyquin, Miss Drummond, Gladys McMurray, Kit Mahoney, Aub McMurray, Colin West

On 23 August 1922, Thomas James Tyquin married Honora Cecilla Greene, the daughter of Thomas William Greene and Johanna Maria Greene (nee Lodge). Honora was born in Whittlesea in 1898, but the family moved across to Werribee where they too farmed within the district. Their wedding was conducted at St Andrew's Roman Catholic church in Werribee, and from the report within the local press, their ceremony and wedding breakfast the morning after were quite an elaborate affair³.

Of the four Tyquin boys, only Thomas James and John 'Jack' remained in the Werribee district, with both taking up farming. Their parents, Thomas Snr and Ellen Tyquin, had accumulated quite a few properties across Werribee, Werribee South, and Laverton. Within Werribee alone, some of these properties were for farming, while others were residential in nature, as well as a couple for commercial use. We know that John Tyquin took over the farm property on K Road and that Thomas James Tyquin had taken over the farm north of the Cheetham Saltworks and south of the Truganina Explosive

³ Werribee Shire Banner, 24 August 1922

Reserve. It was here that Thomas James also had a Grazing Licence for use of the 209 acres that made up the Truganina Explosive Reserve buffer zone. This land was west of the line of Sugar Gums that marked the western boundary of the explosive reserve. The land bordered on Queen Street and ran in a southerly direction. If you looked at Altona Meadows today, this is the residential estate in Queen of Peace parish near Everingham Road, almost west to Victoria Street, and south to Altona Green Primary School. Like his father, Thomas James used the farm and additional land for growing hay and raising sheep.



Tyquin's farm north of the Cheetham Salts Works and near the Truganina Explosive Reserve

Thomas and his wife, Honora, were a hardworking couple, but they also enjoyed entertaining in their home. In 1931, an amusing article was published within the Werribee Shire Banner, which was titled:

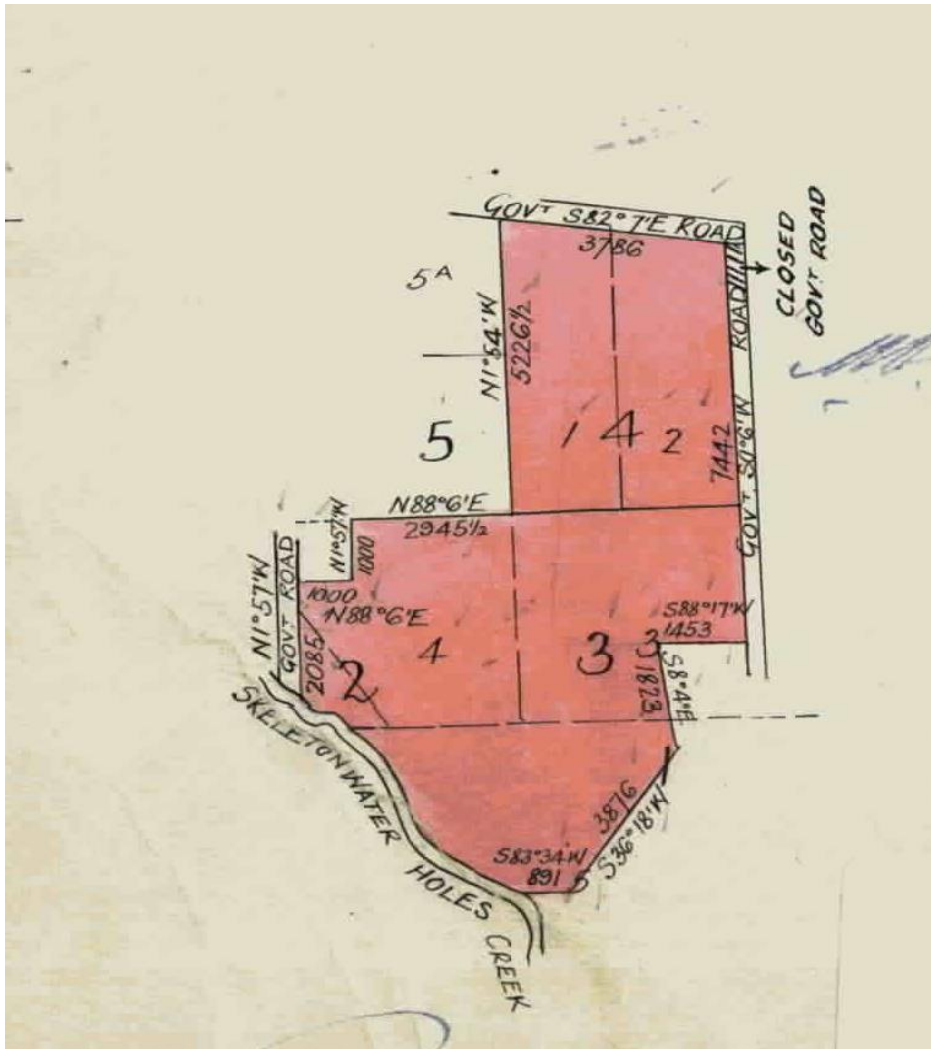
LOST ON LAVERTON PLAINS⁴,

Strange as it may seem, nevertheless true, a party from Altona, who had been to the dance at Tyquin's farm, were hopelessly lost on the flats, south of the railway line. Leaving Mr Tyquin's about 12 o'clock they made for the Geelong Road, but meeting with boulders, bog holes etc, they apparently turned in all directions. Often, they were bogged and then all, ladies included, had to get out and push the vehicle. They crossed a creek, at least one man did by hanging to the wires. The railway line was crossed on one occasion, but they retraced their tracks as the road was so bad. Lights were seen in the distance; one man said they were the lights at Galvin Station. The "old head" said they were Portarlington lights, so it was about turn, as they had no home in that

⁴ Werribee Shire Banner 26 Nov 1931, p 4

town. With the breaking of dawn, they finally got their bearings and arrived home at half past. It was an unenviable experience but not one is any the worse for it.

A long-time resident of the area, Glen Hyde, recalls that his mother, Doreen, was a housemaid at Tyquin's Farm in Laverton which was next to the Explosive's Reserve. It was known as Tyquin's paddocks, and it was an early established sheep farm within the district. It ran from Queen Street almost right down to the beach. He also recalls his mother talking of the parties at the property.



Property in Laverton (Altona Meadows) which was owned and farmed by Thomas James and Honora Cecilla Tyquin

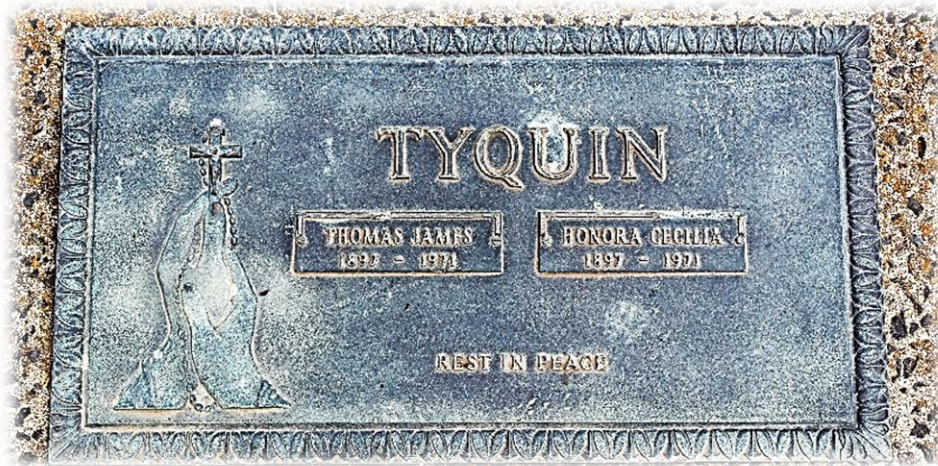
We believe that Thomas James and Honora Cecilla Tyquin had three children: a son, Bernard Thomas, and two daughters, Noanee 'Ellen' and Mary. Bernard Thomas Tyquin married Patricia O'Keefe on 19 November 1949, and after their honeymoon, settled back in Laverton. On 13 September 1952, Noanee Tyquin married Leonard Francis Bainbridge at St Mary's church in Altona.

Like his parents before him, Thomas James Tyquin also led a private life, preferring not to take an active part in public affairs, but certainly would have been influential on those making decisions within the district. Thomas James and Honora also put together quite a portfolio of land holdings over their

lifetime. Apart from the large grazing farm at the lower end of the explosives reserve, where they grew feed crops and grazed sheep, they had also purchased three adjoining residential blocks of land in North Avenue, commencing at the intersection of Kiara Street. Today, these properties look onto the Princes Freeway, but back between 1945 and 1947 when they were purchased, they would have been in walking distance to the main centre of Laverton.

In their later years, after having retired to North Avenue, the operations of the farming property were now in the hands of their son, Bernard Thomas Tyquin. However, at some point, parts of it had been sold off to developers, reducing the size of the property to five acres. Even though Thomas James and Honora had 'retired', he seems to have taken an interest in horse breeding. At the time of his passing, he owned a brood mare by the name of Tyora⁵, which was housed on the farming property.

On 23 September 1971, Thomas James Tyquin passed away at the age of 74 and was interred at the Altona Memorial Park. Within two weeks, his beloved wife Honora Cecillia Tyquin, also passed away on 4 October 1971. Honora was interred alongside her husband at the Altona Memorial Park.



The Tyquin legacy across both Laverton and Werribee did not cease with Thomas James Tyquin's passing. It was carried on through their son Bernard Thomas Tyquin and in the naming of Tyquin Street, Laverton. It also extends far back to rural Victoria, within the township of Taradale, where the family's old cottage still stands.

The naming of Tyquin Street, in Laverton, is a fitting acknowledgement to the family's long associations with the Werribee and Laverton areas and their contribution to the development of both suburbs.

⁵ Tyora is a combination of Tyquin and Honora.

References

- Advocate (Melbourne) 11 December 1924 p 19.
- Age (Melbourne) 24 September 1971 p 22.
- Argus (Melbourne) 8 June 1934 p 1, 22 January 1940 p 4.
- Bacchus Marsh Express 4 March 1911 p 3.
- Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria records accessed 27 September 2023.
- Campbell, Margaret, From There to Here, Werribee Community Centre, Victoria 2005
- Catholic Press (Sydney) 12 March 1925 p 29.
- Electoral Rolls: 1903 to 1980.
- Greater Metropolitan Cemetery Trust data accessed 16 September 2023
- James, Ken, Pritchard, Lance, Werribee the first 100 years, 2008, Werribee and District Historical Society.
- Live Wire (Yallourn) 30 November 1949 p 7.
- Public Records Office Victoria – Wills and Probate Thomas Tyquin, Thomas James Tyquin, Honora Cecillia Tyquin, Land Data, Land Selection and Correspondence Files (VPRS 5357/P0000-1383/121).
- Table Talk (Melbourne) 16 September 1915 p 8.
- Werribee Shire Banner 16 September 1915 p 3, 24 August 1922 p 2, 4 December 1924 p 5, 26 November 1931 p 4, 7 June 1934 p 3, 14 June 1934 p 3, 15 January 1940 p 2, 18 September 1952 p 2.