

ANASTASIA BEAMISH (1839-1930)

Pioneering Werribee resident

Anastasia Beamish (1839-1930) was a pioneering Werribee resident. Today, there are around 40 members of the Beamish family buried at Werribee Cemetery.

Anastasia Beamish arrived in Australia in 1852 aboard the sailing ship *The Fanny*. One of eight children, she was born in Ireland in 1839 to parents Abraham Beamish and Margaret nee Kingston.

When she was 19, Anastasia married distant cousin Abraham Beamish, also from Ireland, in St James Church in Melbourne. She had her first son William in Kilmore but he died soon after birth. She went on to have seven more children.

This strong, pioneering woman lived until she was 91 and in so doing lived longer than many of her children and her husband.

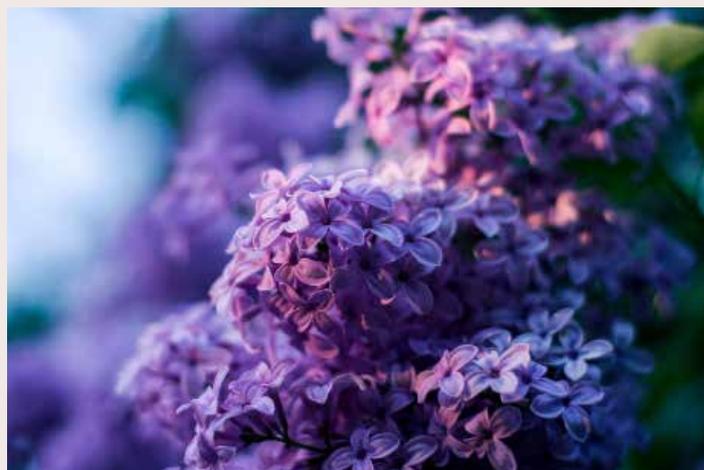
Anastasia and Abraham did well on the land around Werribee, as did several of their sons. Anastasia loaned money to her sons John and Francis to purchase land once they were adults. In return they built a house for her to live in after she was widowed.

John was a skilled farmer and used innovative farming methods such as irrigation on his crops while Francis was a leading grazier and also bred well regarded trotting horses. Anastasia herself was an astute businesswoman and applied for land in her own name in 1894 after she was widowed.

The Beamish family house, 'Hazeldene' at 23 Duncans Road, Werribee was a large and graceful villa. It featured a dining room and music room and was beautifully furnished for the period, with ornate woodwork and multi-paned windows.

Anastasia lived here for many years entertaining her family and many friends. Later, she moved to North Williamstown.

After suffering ill health for some months, Anastasia died in her home in Alma Terrace, North Williamstown on Wednesday 6 August 1930 and was buried at Werribee Cemetery with her family members.



Find out more

Hocking, G. *Wyndham Our Story*, (2013)

Lack, J. *Melbourne's Western Region : an introductory history*, (1986)

Vines, G. *Pastoral properties : grazing on the Keilor-Werribee Plains* (1993)



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Jan is a professional historian who has worked across the fields of heritage, education and tourism. She has taught at several universities, including Monash University where she delivered the master of public history course. She is also a former Chair of the Heritage Council of Victoria. Jan was appointed to The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust in 2010.



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