

FORT FRANKLIN - PORTSEA  
(LORD MAYOR'S CHILDREN'S CAMP)

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Two sons of James Watson, a fisherman of Banffshire, Scotland, migrated to Australia in 1856, and were soon followed by other brothers. One of these, Henry, erected a hut on the beach under Point Franklin, but its remains have long since disappeared. Another brother, John, after first erecting a hut under Policeman's Point at the Quarantine Station end of Weeroona Bay, moved to Point Franklin. His land is now part of the Lord Mayor's Children's Camp. His next door neighbour was John Darbyshire who arrived at Portsea in 1845. He eventually held three acres under license on the west side of Point Franklin, and lived in a small hut facing Weeroona Bay.

Earlier, two other men and their families had settled in the Portsea area. One of these, James Ford, the first permanent settler, possessed four acres behind the Point. Another, Edward Skelton, who arrived with his wife Harriet in 1842, established himself on the east side of Point Franklin at Shelly Beach, also known as Skelton's Flat.

In 1862, a further brother of the Watsons', Alex, arrived at Point Franklin. According to the family history, apart from the buildings his brothers had erected, there was only one other cottage on the Point at this time. It had been built and occupied by Dennis McGrath.

The Watson brothers were frequently away from the Point fishing, and many attempts were made by owners of freehold property at its rear to gain possession of the beach frontage. Objection was also taken to a fish lookout tower they erected on the cliff. One of these freeholders, in an attempt to move the Watsons from Portsea Beach during one of their absences fishing, actually squatted in a cottage built by Henry.

John Watson was a controversial figure. In 1886 he was prosecuted by the Lands Department. It was alleged that he had illegally entered a public reserve near the Sorrento public swimming baths. Although warned that he was trespassing, Watson commenced to erect a wooden building on the land. Legal proceedings were thereupon taken against him, and the local magis-

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