

Early Settlers Trades

Dairy farmer

Before Supermarkets and milk bars, it was the dairy farmers that supplied milk and other dairy products for the local people. It was common for even smaller households to own a cow to feed their family.



A dairy farm in Alphington

One of the first dairy farms in Darebin was on the land for what later became “Bundoora Park.” It was a dairy farm between 1847 and 1877.

Another early dairy farmer was Philip Gough. He was born in Ireland and arrived in Victoria in 1854. He found work as a farm hand. He prospered and was soon in the position to rent 100 acres of land in Heidelberg that he used for potato growing and dairy farming. Moving to Preston, he soon expanded his dairy farm, running 100 head of cattle on 480 acres.

Blacksmith

Blacksmiths used to make or repairs things out of metal. They would work with very hot fires to heat the metal, and mould it into shapes. The metal could be used to make things like buildings or carriages.

The Doolan brothers were blacksmiths in the early days. They arrived in Preston in 1848 and soon established a blacksmiths on the west side of Plenty Road just north of the Rose, Shamrock and Thistle Hotel. Blacksmiths and hotels were commonly located near each other and provided a good deal of crossover trade.



The Doolan brothers had a black smith's business in Plenty Road near the Rose Shamrock Thistle Hotel

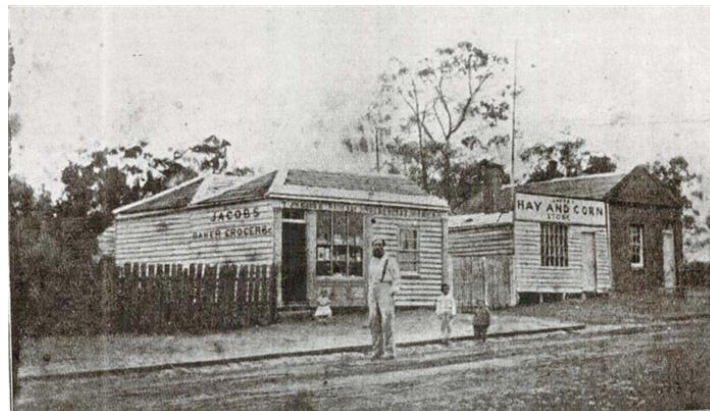
Early Settlers Trades

Another blacksmith was Francis Watson, who established his blacksmith's business on the corner of High Street and Robbs Parade in around 1855.

General Store Owner

In the early days, supermarkets did not exist and people relied on general stores. Most early records of Northcote no longer exist but the Argus newspaper in the early 1850s mentions several American and English pioneer stores in Northcote. Pioneer stores were the common name for general stores, selling a wide variety of products from groceries to hay and farming implements.

In 1855 John F. Jacobs operated one of the earliest stores in Preston. Two small, adjoining, weatherboard buildings offered a bakery and grocery and a hay and corn store. The shops were located on the corner of High and Regent Streets. Jacobs would be frequently seen carrying a keg of yeast on his back as he made his way back to his bakery from Melbourne. Jacobs travelled widely selling his wares, even selling his bread as far away as South Morang.



Although the quality of the picture is poor, this is photograph of Jacobs's store is the earliest photograph we have of Darebin.

The first known shop in Northcote was an ironmongers operating from a tent and started by William Shade in 1848. When William Shade arrived in Northcote in 1848 the town was little more than a few scattered huts with High Street (then known as Plenty Road) being a dirt track. He set up a tent under trees on the west side of High Street just below Arthurton Road.

Early Settlers Trades



Shade's shop in the 1850s. The shop is still standing today.

The 19 year old Shade established a second tent on the east side of High Street and began operating as an ironmonger. It was the first shop established in Darebin. As more shops began to appear, Shade purchased a block of land at 358 High Street and built a modest two storey brick building. The next year the Bastings brothers, Edwin, William and Horace built a substantial two storey bluestone general store in High Street.

By the 1860s a number of shops had begun to spring up. There was a boot maker, three carpenters, two butchers, a barbers shop, a chemist, a saddler and a blacksmith. These shops were scattered along High Street with a small concentration near the intersection of High Street and Bastings Street.

Like Northcote, Preston's earliest industries were primarily rural, and this is reflected in the earliest shops. Apart from the Pioneer, or General stores, Preston in the 1860s had the typical blacksmiths, shoemakers, bakers and publicans. It also had a strong market garden industry.

Horace and Edwin Bastings arrived in Victoria in 1849 and after a period on the goldfields, established themselves in Northcote. Between 1852 and 1854 they purchased a number of properties in Northcote and in 1854 they built a two storey general store just north of Westbourne Grove at 213 High Street. On the 1st of August 1854 the store became the first official post office for Northcote with Edwin Bastings serving as postmaster. The store established itself as the key social outlet for many of the early settlers.

Early Settlers Trades



Post Office Store, High Street, erected in 1854.

Basting's store remained a general store until the 1960s when it was demolished.

Edward Wood and his son, Edward Jnr., established a two storey bluestone building on the corner of High Street and what would later become Wood Street. The store sold the usual range of goods including feed for stock, chaff and grain, eggs, cheese, clothing, assorted tools and confectionary. The store quickly became a community focal point and also gained a useful advantage of any competing stores by becoming Preston's first post office.



Wood's general store in the 1870s. Like Bastings store it was demolished in the 1960s.

Brick maker

The discovery of high quality clay in Northcote and Preston in the 1860s led to a booming trade in clay pit mining and brick making. The earliest of these included the pit behind the Carters Arms Hotel in Northcote (the Northcote Brickworks), and Gottlieb Arndt's handmade bricks on the corner of Raglan and Hotham Streets.

Early Settlers Trades

Bacon factory

Some people worked in bacon factories. One of the earliest bacon factories was Watson and Paterson's Bacon Factory, built in 1862 on the corner of Dundas Street and Plenty Road, Preston.



Note all the gum trees behind the factory. Most of Preston was still bush when the factory was built.

Butcher

There were many butchers in the early days of Darebin. Catherine Oliver arrived in Northcote about 1850, establishing the townships first butchers shop. By the latter half of the 1800s she owned one of Northcote's premier butcheries. With her second husband, Robert, she operated a butcher's shop near the Commercial Hotel.

Manufacturing

Some people worked in mills to make flour. In 1856 Alfred Hurlston established the Preston Steam Flour Mill on the corner of Wood and High Street, opposite Woods General Store. Other jobs included stonemasons, wool merchants, leather manufacturing, soap making, glue making, and carriage making.

Thomas Mason was a well-known figure in the manufacturing trade between 1854 until his retirement in the late 1880s. Even Benjamin Johnson (The Mayor of Northcote 1912-1913 and 1928-1929) was a baker before joining his father's business in the plastering industry.