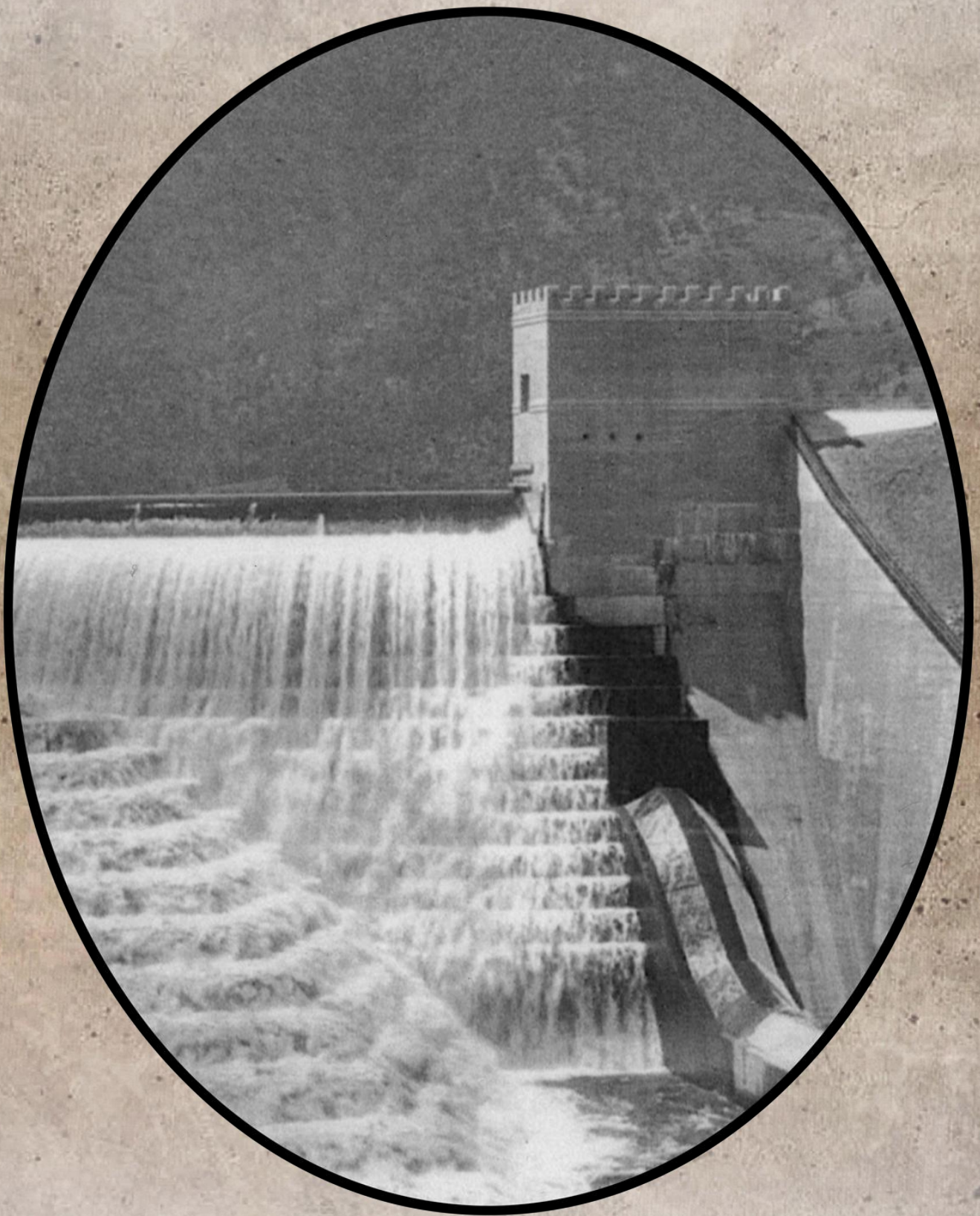


EARLY DAYS



OF EILDON



**HERITAGE
SERIES**

COLLERS AT EILDON

CONTRIBUTORS

Ross & Nancy Coller
Ken Coller

Allan Layton
Kathie Maynes
David & Debbie Hibbert

CONTENTS

HISTORY

TIMELINE

GALLERY

OTHER

COLLER HISTORY

HISTORY

Name: Early days of Eildon
Location: Current location of Eildon
Family: Collier family
Selected: 1865 by John Collier
Acquired: 1950 by the Government

In the earliest days of white settlement at Eildon there were just a small number of settlers in the area. One of these was John Collier, and it was on his land that the modern day township of Eildon was built.



A scene at *Woodlands* on the day Laura Maude Collier
wed Arthur Doig Johnston in 1904

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier



Family History

John Collier had thirteen surviving children of fifteen, and this history is from the direct line of his son Charles John Collier.

COLLER HISTORY

HISTORY

Eildon before the construction of the first dam

Very little has been documented about the land that was owned by the earlier settlers on and especially north of the Goulburn River, along the Devils River (Delatite) in the Eildon area.

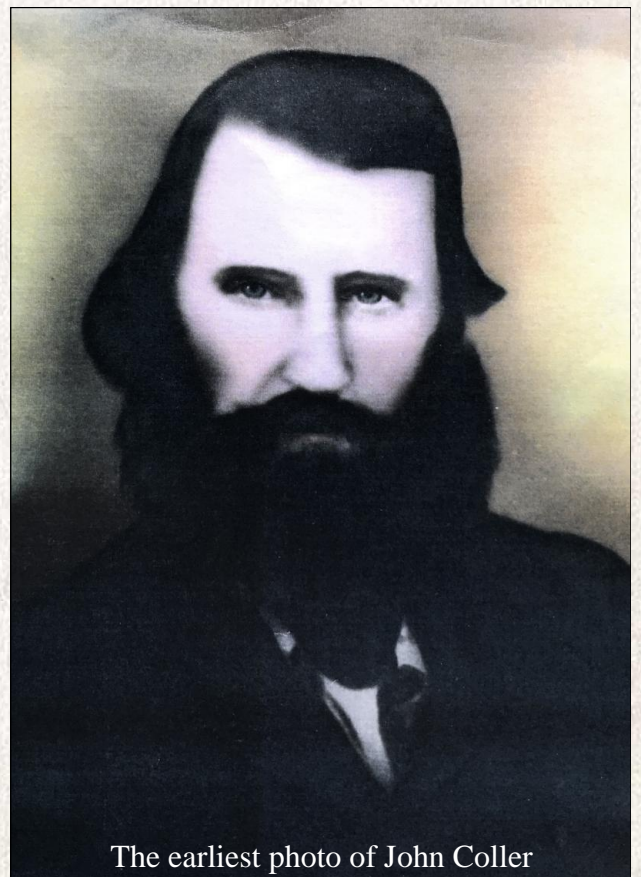
Archibald Thom (c1848)

Around 1848 Archie Thom took over the 'Eildon Run', which covered a large area of land north of the river from the site of the present day Gilmores Bridge to the present township of Eildon. The homestead was in the vicinity of what is today called Point Hill (though on early maps it was referred to as Eildon Point). It was from this property that Eugene von Guérard sketched in his sketchbook on 28 January 1862. When Archie died later that same year, his run was thrown open to selection. His wife stayed on and retained some land and the homestead. She was reportedly a favourite of the local Aborigines and helped them whenever she could.

John & Annie Collier (1865)

John Collier was delivering goods to Darlingford and Woods Point from Northcote and from the track on the south side noticed the country on the north side, he liked the outlook and applied for a selection of 75 acres in 1865. This land was called *Woodlands* and on his trips he used it as a stopping place and built himself a wattle and daub hut. Other selections followed, but were later on. Selectors were: Elliot, Moore, Taylor and Nicholas. These selections were further south towards Thornton.

John and his wife Annie moved to Eildon from Melbourne in two wagonettes and with their then seven children it took six weeks. From Thornton to Eildon they had to make their own track and it took them one week. As time went on six more children were born and John



The earliest photo of John Collier



COLLER HISTORY

HISTORY

selected more land mostly in the children's names. They farmed here and John continued to hawk goods (carry and offer goods for sale) to Darlingford, from Coburg and in 1876 he was crossing the Goulburn when he fell in and at the time had measles. He took sick and became bedridden and died on 6 July 1877. He was only 49 years of age.

Farming after the death of John Collier

John left Annie a widow with 13 surviving children. Their eldest son Charles, who was only 18 years old when John died, helped his mother bring up the rest of the children. Charles didn't leave the farm until after he was married, which he did when he was 40 years of age.

As time went on the family took up land around Eildon and Devils River (Delatite) and moved on to develop these areas. Charles stayed in Eildon to farm at *Lyndhurst*, *Woodlands* and then he took on the Guesthouse near the wall until his daughters were old enough to take over. All the children married except two girls who farmed their own land.

The position of the original Collier homestead (not Fraser Park) called *Woodlands* is now under the Pondage. Part of the entrance to the drive way is still visible and it was called The White Gates Hill as the gates were painted white. It is opposite the hospital that was built after 1950. The driveway ran down to the right then went straight down to the homestead which was close to the Goulburn River. The line of the road down is at the back of the cricket shed and under the Pondage to the old river bed which is near the bank down from the Cemetery and Jerusalem Creek Road. The home was around 100 metres from the north side of the river. If the Pondage was to drop down to the old river bed, you can see the stumps of the many Poplar trees that were planted at the homestead.

Charles John married Mabel Butler in 1897, he was 40 and she was 24 years old, they went to live at the property her parents bought off Elliots for them; it was called *Lyndhurst*. They had seven children, one girl died at five years old. These children stayed on around the Eildon Alexandra area for many years until only four remained at Eildon on the Collier property and when in 1950 the State Rivers compulsorily acquired their properties, and they had to move out. Brent Collier who owned where most of the township is today moved to Alexandra.

COLLER HISTORY

HISTORY

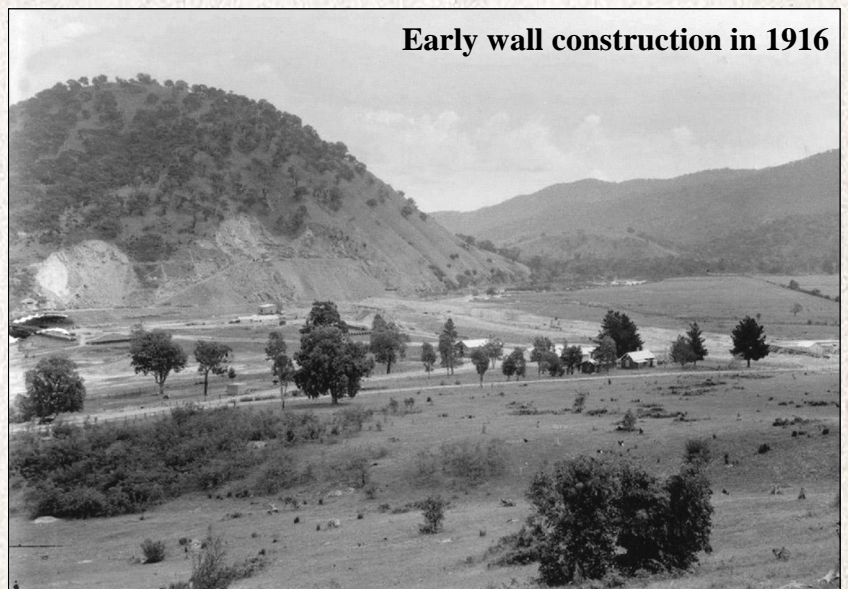
Charles Royland Collier (Charlie) owned from where the Darlingford Nursing Home is today to the Lake edge, including a lot of the pondage area and Caravan Park that is there today. He owned out to the Boat Club that is there today. There was a small paddock that was owned by his sister Mavis out from the Guesthouse, which was opposite the switch yard today. The Guesthouse was closer to the Wall almost opposite the Power Station today. Charles Royland Collier's house was in the switch yard area, this house was shifted to the new township in Shaw Avenue.

Charlie moved to a farm at Taggerty where he later ran the farm with his son Ross, they milked cows and ran sheep and cattle. He eventually moved back to Eildon with his wife Lorna to a home built by his son Barry to retire on land he once owned. He died in 1999 aged 90. Their eldest son Ross stayed on at Taggerty on his own farm, then retired in 2000 to Snobs Creek, and now lives in Alexandra. The other sons Barry and Ken live in Eildon in retirement.

Mavis married Bill Austin and ran the Guesthouse, then they moved to Grannys Lane out of Alexandra. Yutha stayed at *Woodlands* then moved to the new town and Jim Broderick whom she married worked on the construction of the Eildon Dam.

A small township opened up on the south side of the Goulburn during the 1850s which was named Upper Thornton, but later changed to Eildon Weir. A track developed through this town that then went to Darlingford and onto Jamieson, Woods Point, Enoch's Point etc, as the discovery of gold had brought large numbers of miners to the area.

Later on when constant flooding of Thornton and the Alexandra Flats downstream became a problem (due to water from four rivers running into one), the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission decided to build a wall to dam the Goulburn River. This ensured they could control and regulate the flow of water downstream for irrigators, including supplying water to the Waranga Basin.



Early wall construction in 1916

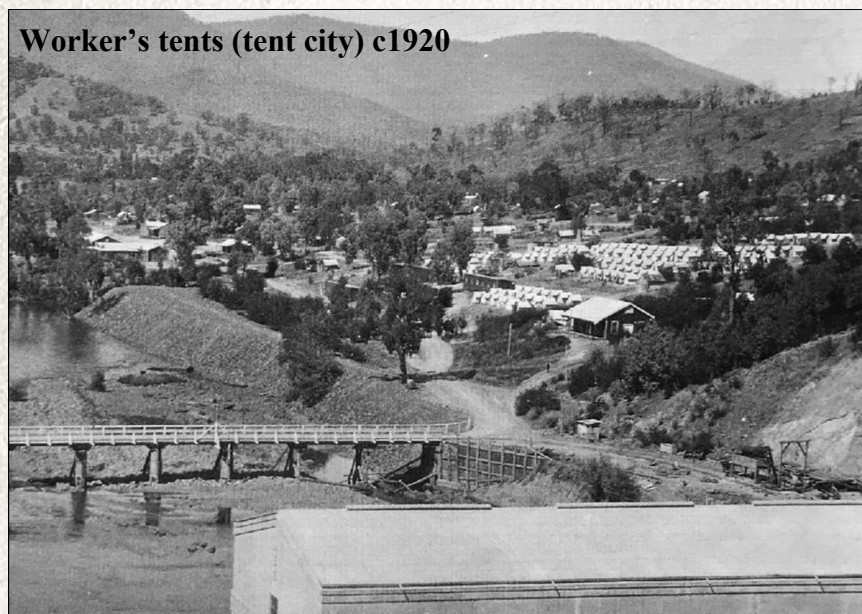
COLLER HISTORY

HISTORY

Building of the Sugarloaf Weir (Dam)

In 1914, preliminary work began on the Dam Wall, though progress was initially slow due to the commencement of World War I. In 1916, work finally got fully underway. The Dam was to be built between the two closest Mountains which was Sugarloaf and Pinniger. They were to use rock for foundations from the Sugarloaf Mountain and sand for cementing from along the Delatite River.

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission acquired part of Collier land for housing of the workers on the Dam. The workers erected tents and small huts on this area which was marked out as streets. This happened on the other side of the Goulburn as well, as there was a large workforce involved in the construction of the weir.



Worker's tents (tent city) c1920

The area on Collier's side was called the 'ruins' but most locals called it 'tent city'. A hall was built for recreation, meetings and dancing, but as the families grew they needed the hall for a school. A builder by the name of O'Brien built a shop/home and another hall on Collier's property—the Collers took it over and provided films, dancing etc and turned the home into a Guesthouse. They also made a tennis court beside the Guesthouse for the locals.

The same builder constructed a grocery shop and a billiard room. These were built around 1916. This store was called 'The Uneeda' store which was popular. Later on when Charles Royland Collier and Lorna Burness married in 1937 they took it over and altered it for their home. Charles' mother purchased it for them.

When the Dam was completed and it filled in 1927 a lot of settlers in the valley from the Delatite region to the Darlingford to Big River area had to be compensated and they moved out. Part of Collier, Merlo, Sir John Barnewall who owned the land where the wall was built, Nichol, Rennies, Newmans, Nicholas, Sawers, Allens and others moved into the Upper Thornton and Acheron area.

COLLER HISTORY

HISTORY

There was a slip on the Wall in 1929 which wasn't fixed until 1932. Some older workers who worked on the Wall and slip repair, stayed on the Collier land and paid rent on some buildings which the Collers had removed from the Darlingford town on skids before the water rose. Some built their own houses and paid rent as there were no titles in those times—you were allowed to build with permission from owners on a property, but not own the land.

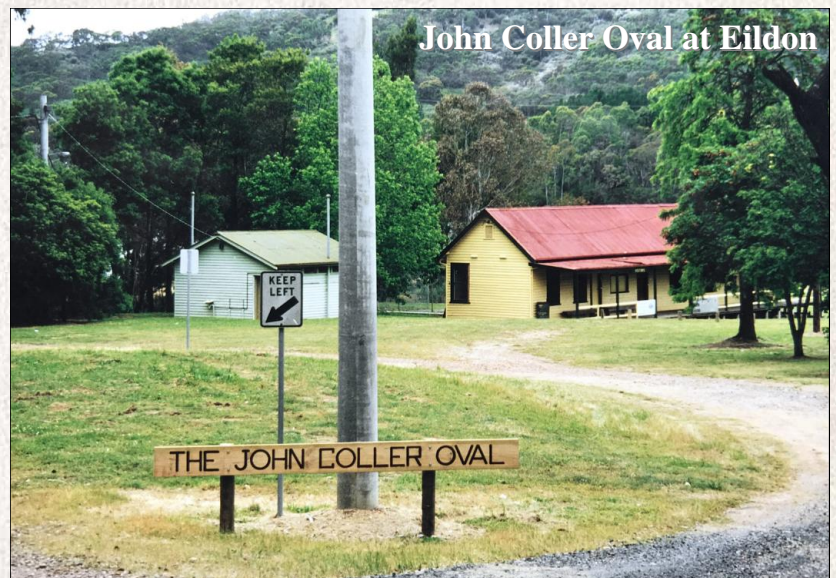
On the north side Brent and brother Charlie owned most of the land around Eildon and in 1950 were given notice to move out. This had been Collier land for 85 years and The SR&WSC wanted it for the building of the new Dam. The compensation was very poor and made it difficult to purchase other farms.

In 1950 the Utah Construction commenced building the Dam and in 1956 it was finished and due to a wet year it filled the first year.

Township of Eildon

At the completion of construction, the new township which had emerged was renamed Eildon. This town was on land previously owned and farmed by the Collier family. In reflection, Ross Collier stated how it was unbelievable how the Utah Construction Company changed the whole environment and layout of the area, especially where the Pondage is today, as some of these flats were previously Collier flats. He also said how it was hard to believe that the Collier families were not better recognised for the ownership of the land where the Eildon township is situated today.

It was not until 1998 when the Collers had a reunion that Council Member Cr. Mike Dalmau was successful in having Council name the local oval after first settlers John and Annie Collier (John Collier Oval). A plaque was also placed on this day on a large rock near the



COLLER HISTORY

HISTORY

front entrance of the Eildon Information Centre to commemorate them as the first settlers on the north side of the Goulburn River in 1866. There is also a Collier Bay at what was previously known as Fraser National Park, which was named after the Collier family who lived there until the area was flooded in 1956.



**This plaque is to commemorate
the first settlers
JOHN and ANNIE COLLER
on the north side of the
Goulburn River
at Eildon in 1866**

TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS



COLLER HISTORY

TIMELINE

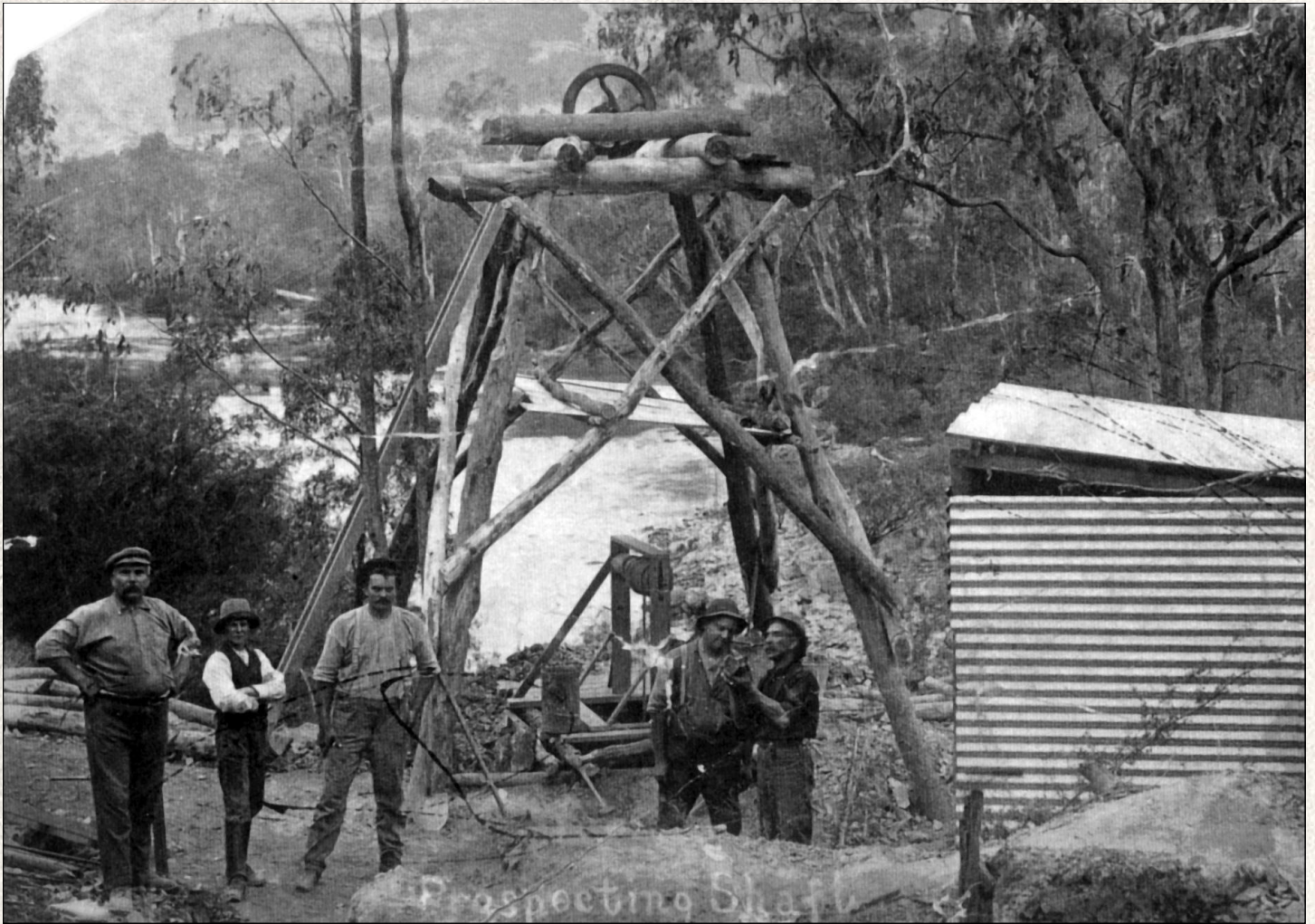
- 1914** Initial preliminary works began on the construction of the Sugarloaf Dam Wall (Sugarloaf Weir). Work was initially slow due to the commencement of World War I.
- 1916** Work fully commenced on the Sugarloaf Dam Wall.
- 1927** The Sugarloaf Weir project was completed and it filled to maximum capacity that same year.
- 1929** The Sugarloaf Weir wall suffered a major subsidence. Many of the previous workers were recalled to work on the repairs which was completed in 1932.
- 1932** Sugarloaf Weir wall repairs were completed.
- 1950** End of the Collier era arrived after their property interests in the Eildon area were claimed by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for the building of a second and much larger dam wall.
- 10 October 1998** The Eildon Oval was renamed John Collier Oval. A plaque commemorating John and Annie Collier as first settlers on the north side of the Goulburn River in 1866, was also placed at the entrance to the Eildon Information Centre.

GALLERY

RELATED IMAGERY

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



The Diorite Mine on the Goulburn River on Coller's property at Eildon in 1916, not long after the start of WWI.

Young Ormond Coller can be seen on the left and worked with other workers such as Jack Burness, Bob Sargent and Mr Bagley.

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Coller 2018



COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



**Site of the proposed location for the construction of the Sugarloaf Weir dam wall.
This scene is looking downstream past Mount Sugarloaf which is directly on the right.
The wall was built near where the land juts into the river on the right.**

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



A circa 1914 view from Mount Sugarloaf looking north east, showing a Collier farm (top centre) which was located on the Devils River.

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



A photograph taken in 1914 showing the early stages of construction of the Sugarloaf Weir dam wall.

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

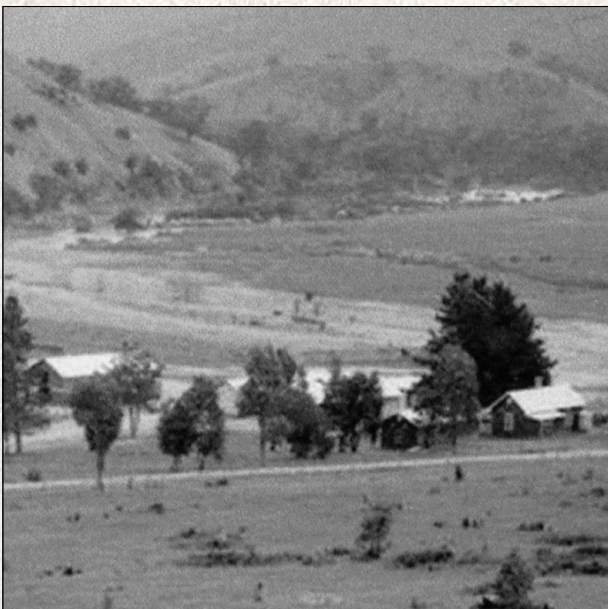
COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Commencement of the building of the first dam wall (Sugarloaf Weir) in 1916, with Sir John Barnewall's property in the foreground (and left).

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018



COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



A view of the Goulburn River flats looking east from the location where the Sugarloaf Weir dam wall was later contracted. The photo also includes a view of the road to Darlingford, which passed by the Nichol property (left).

The ridge on the right is the lower part of Mount Pinniger. Today the ridge leads to Foggs Lookout, found on the northern end of Mount Pinniger.

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018



COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Workers on the first Eildon dam site in 1920.

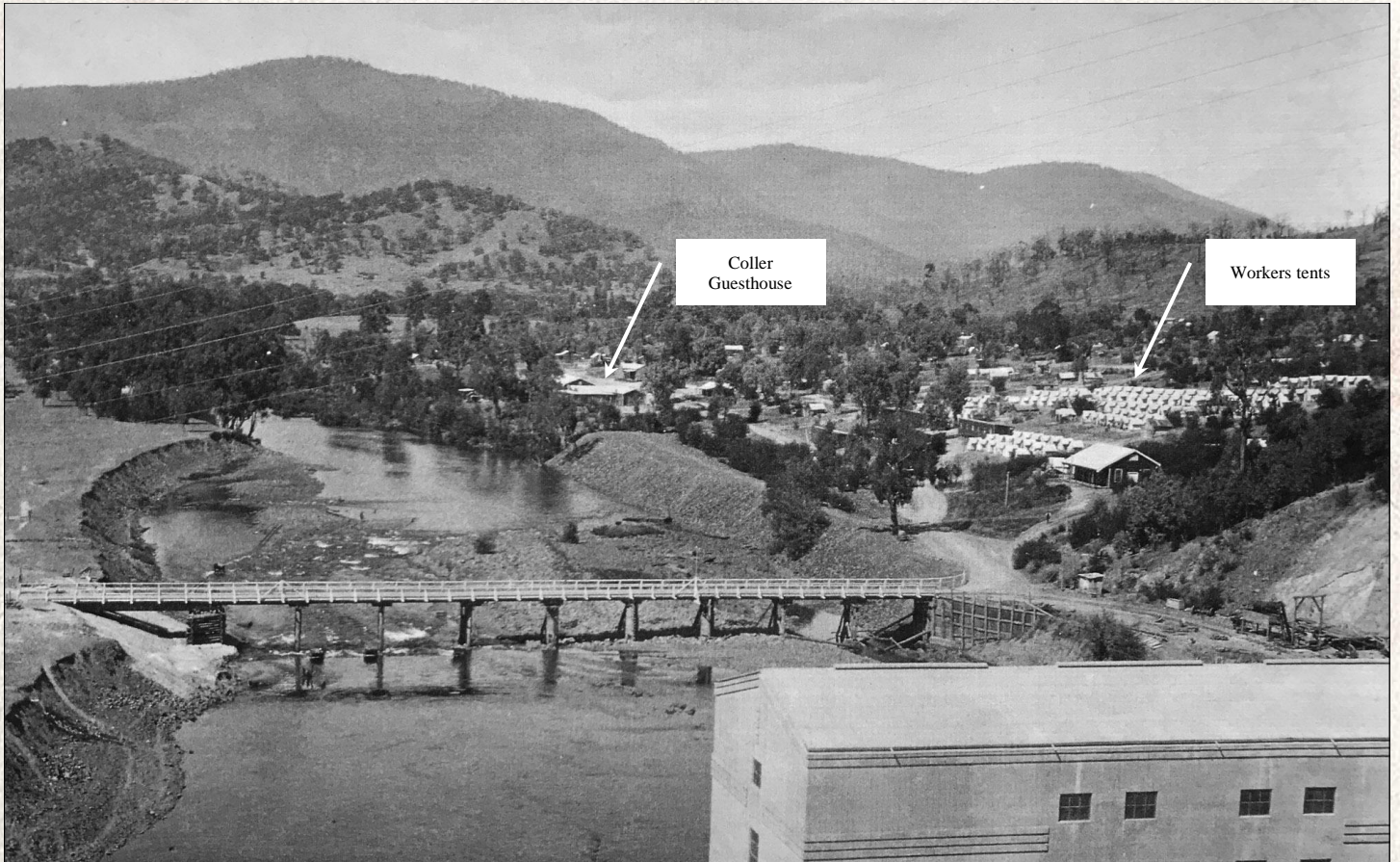
Jim Chanter can be seen on the left. Jim was the father of Ron Chanter of Alexandra, who married Kath Chanter.

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2019



COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY

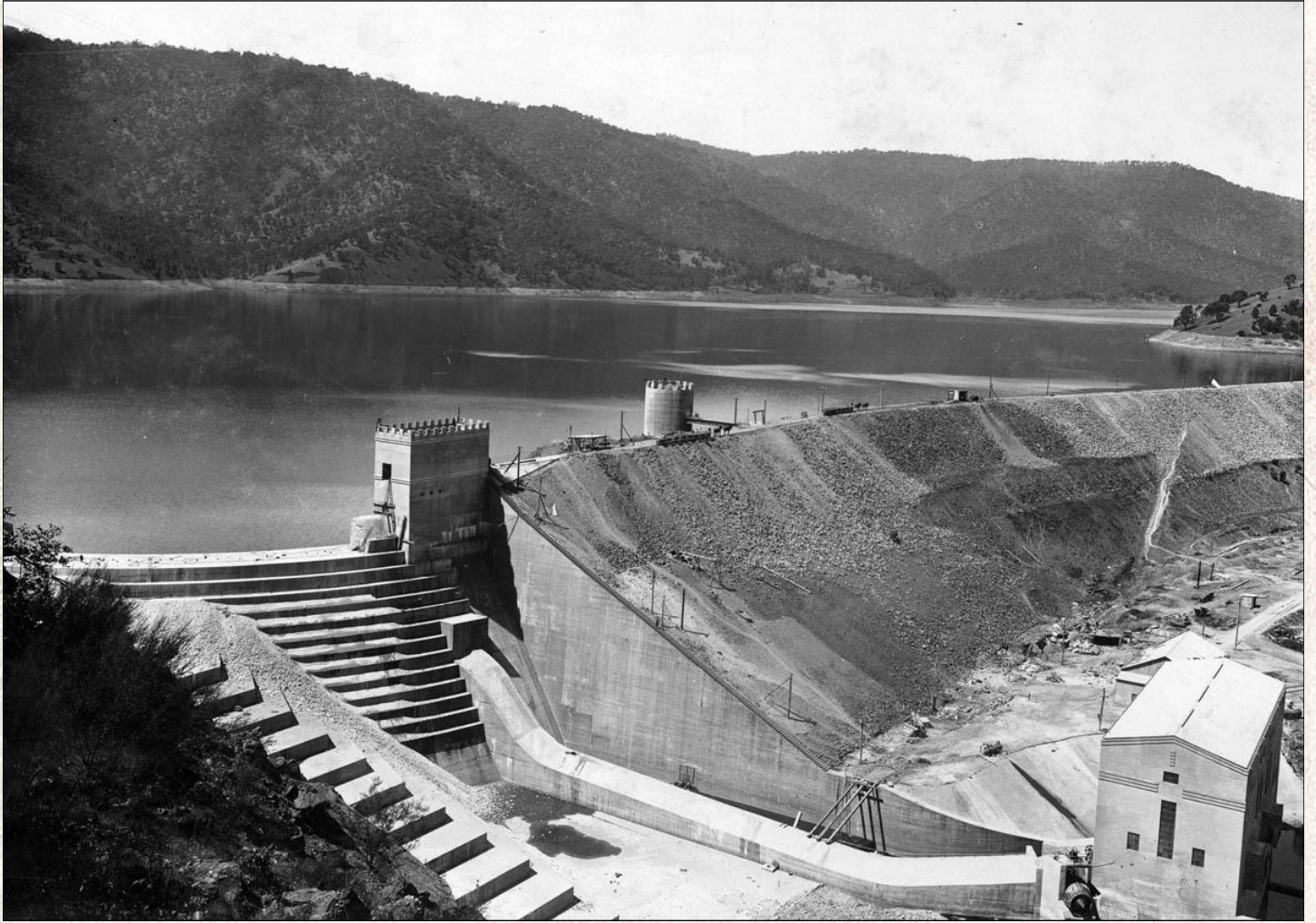


A view of the workers tents located on the Collier property during the construction of the first dam wall (Sugarloaf Weir) circa 1920.

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY

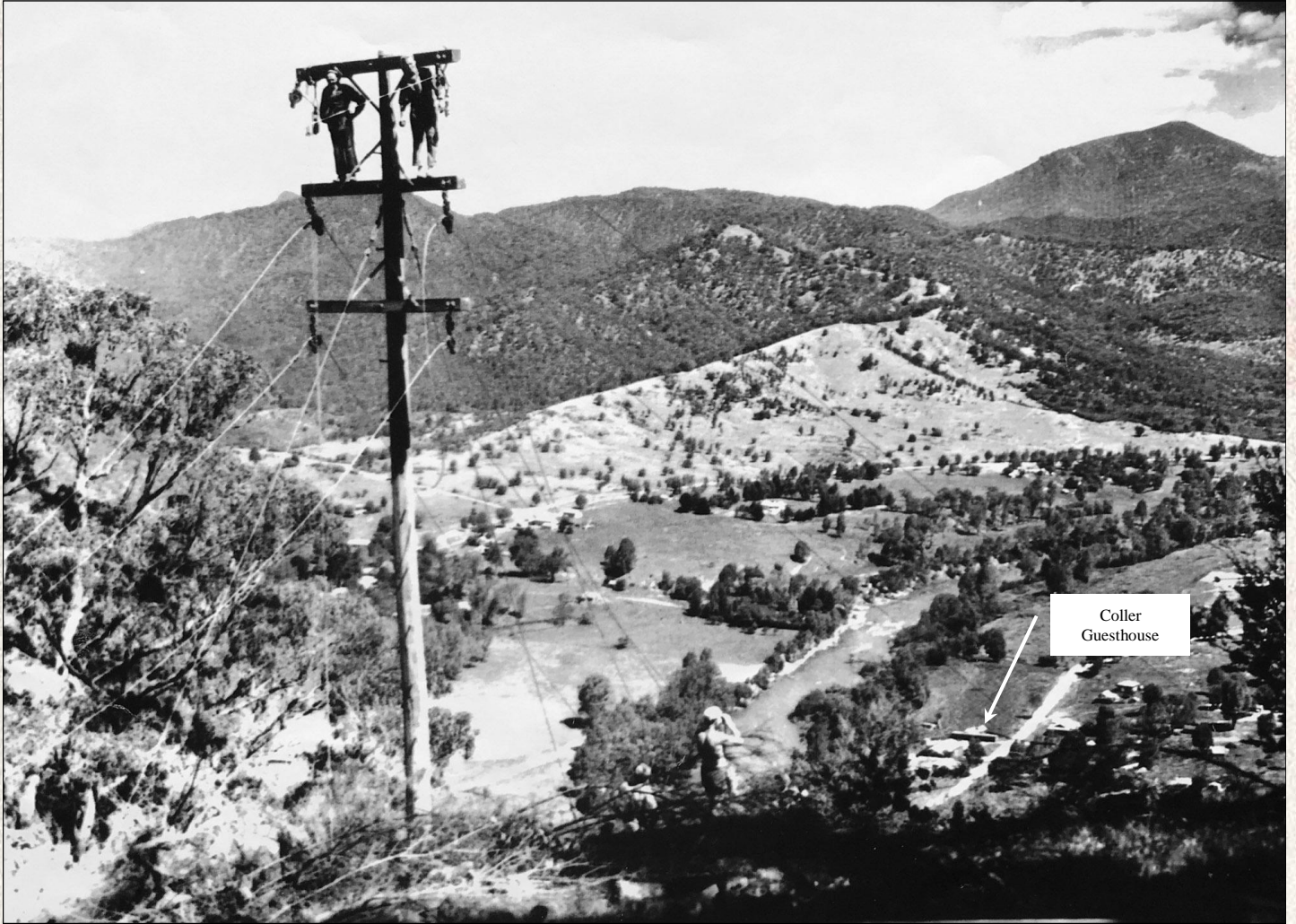


Construction of the Sugarloaf Dam Wall circa 1925

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY

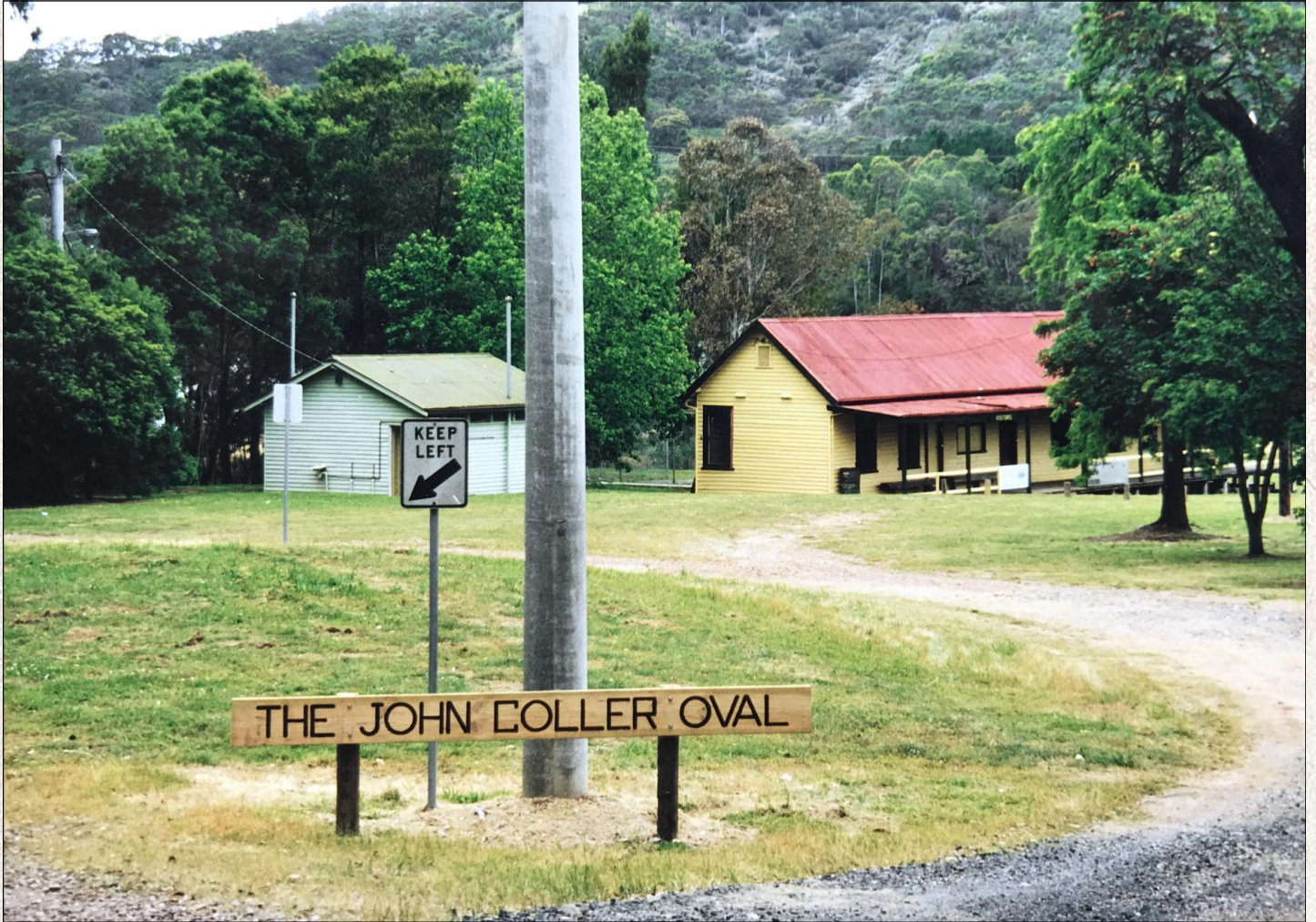


A view from Sugarloaf Lookout in the early 1950s, showing workers connecting power for the construction of the mess halls and workers huts for the construction of the second dam wall.

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Coller 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Collier Oval at Eildon in 2000

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



**This plaque is to commemorate
the first settlers
JOHN and ANNIE COLLER
on the north side of the
Goulburn River
at Eildon in 1866**

Plaque commemorating John and Annie Collier at the entrance to the Eildon Information Centre in 1998

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Artefacts including an early plough and stock saddle, photographed in 1998.

Photograph courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier
2018

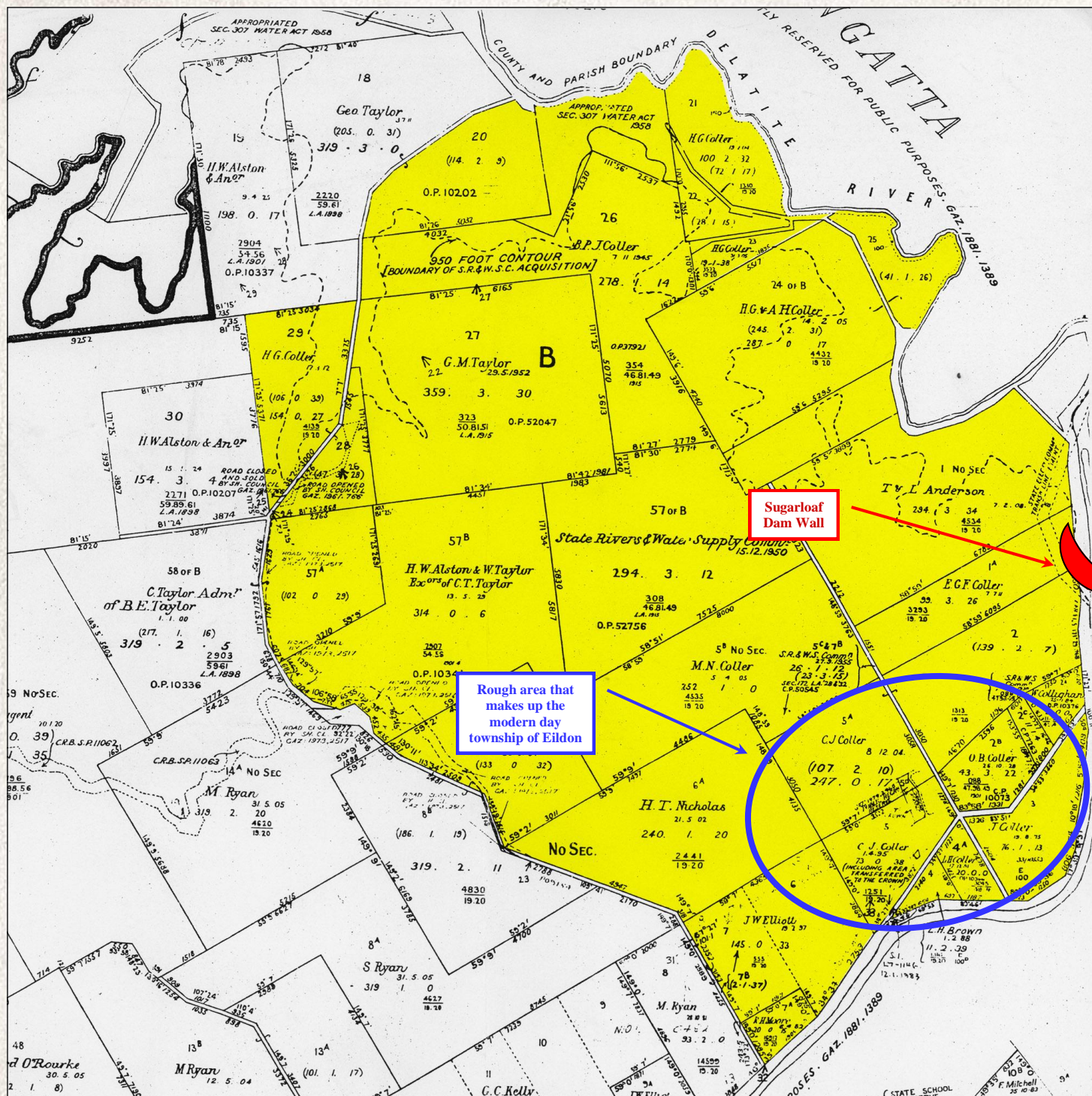
OTHER

OTHER RELATED ITEMS



COLLER HISTORY

MAP

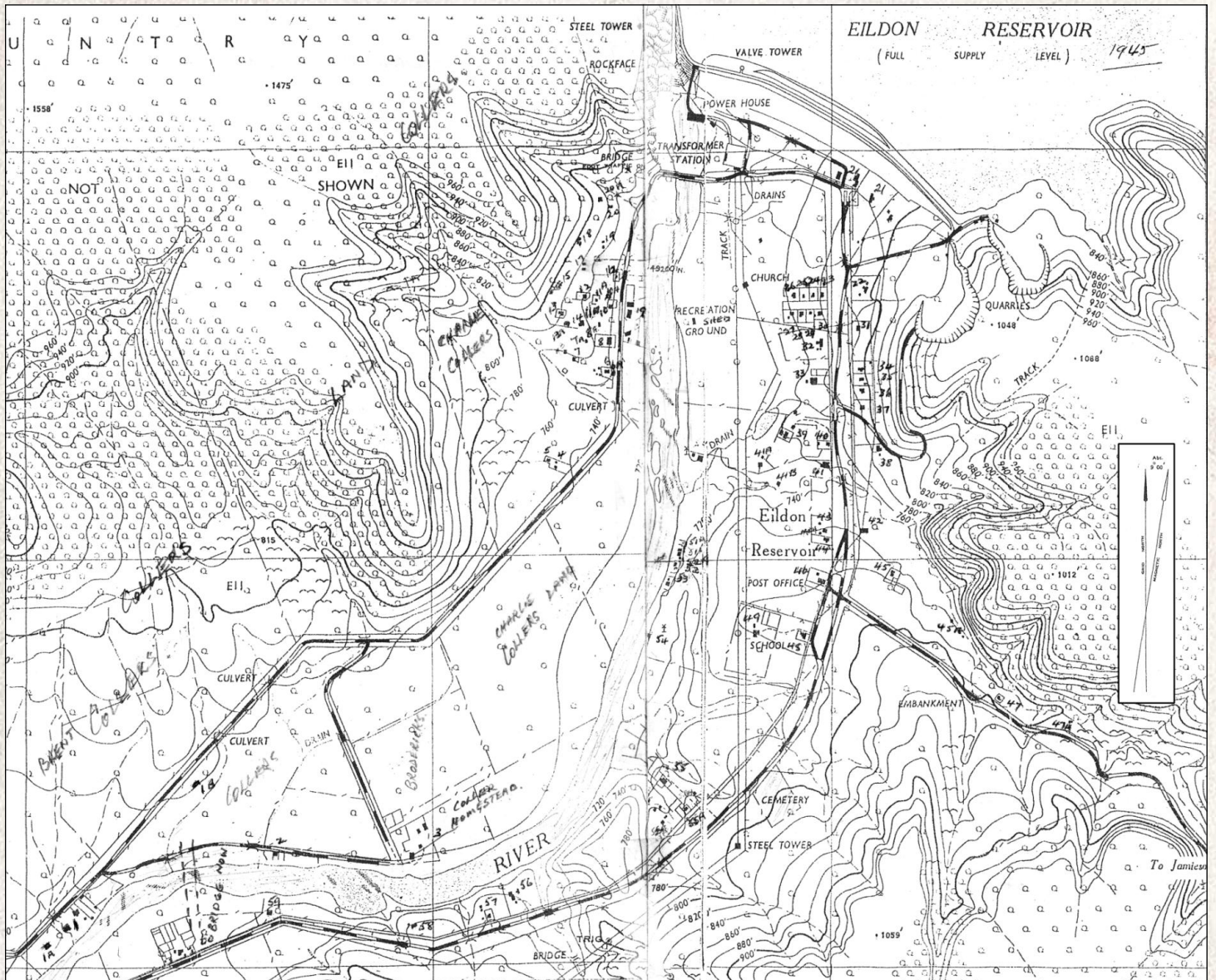


A 1945 map showing the Sugarloaf Weir in red, Collier properties in yellow and the current day township of Eildon as a blue oval.

Map courtesy Ross Collier 2019

COLLER HISTORY

EILDON MAP



Houses and huts in the Eildon Weir area pre 1950 and 1950

The map index follows with the map reprinted in full page halves over the following two pages

Map courtesy Ross Coller 2019



COLLER HISTORY

MAP INDEX

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Mat Allen---Richardson | 35 Chanter --Pearsons |
| 1a Joe Kirkham | 36 Grimes --Blamey-- Bill Albers. |
| 1b. G Coller | 37 Grix -(S Williams owned it). |
| 2. C & M Coller---Brodericks---C & M Hyne. | 38 School House--Broad--Jobling--R Cooper. |
| 3. "Woodlands"--J & A Coller---O & D Coller---E & A Coller---J & U Broderick. | 39 Mary Savage |
| 4. H Herbert (cock) | 40 George Bonello (Shop) |
| 5 George Anstee (R Williams owned it) | 41 General Store---Fraser--Cooper---Rogers---W Moore |
| 6.F Slade | 42 Eildon Weir Hall |
| 6a F Fisher | 43Shoesmiths |
| 7.C Collers Dairy | 43a Roger Macintosh |
| 7a Hut --Jockey Jack Hamilton | 44 Summers |
| 7b C Collers horse equipment shed | 45Charlie Burness |
| 8. McVeigh ---Fraser ---CR & LM Collers house | 45a Bill Bretttoner---Cartwrights |
| 8a Collers Hay Shed. | PRE-----AND 1950 HOUSES AND HUTS EILDON WEIR AREA. |
| 9. Guest House & Cottages---O'Brien--C & M Collers--Austin | 46 Post Office Shop & Garage --Allens---Sid Savage. |
| 10. Fred Anstee---Grays---Prior---Searles. | 47 Bill Woods |
| 10a McCormack--Kilpatrick. | 47a Dents |
| 11 Fred Peterson | 48 Dan Barry---Jack Rahley. |
| 11a Ted McCreedy | 49 School 3931 |
| 12 John McKay | 50 Farnbanks---O'Shea---Myers. |
| 13 Eric Anstee | 51 O'Toole |
| 13a Gordon McKay | 51a Davey Wilson---R McIntosh. |
| 14 Vickory | 52 Jack Burness. |
| 15 Schneider | 52a Boyles |
| 16 Jack Johnson | 53 Snowy Shaw---Donalds. |
| 17 Andy & Tom Brown---Les Mosquetie (Buttons) | 54 Bolts---Bulmer. |
| 18 McLeod | 55 W Newman & Mrs Cartwright lived there. |
| 19 J Murphy--Prosser. | 55a M Fraser |
| 20 Sweeney. | 56 Tom Newman---A Redic |
| 20a McGuinty | 57 Bretttoners |
| 21 State Rivers Offices & Stables. | 58 Johanson |
| 22 Lake House-Hospital--Lawsons | 59 Bob Corrie--De La Pierre |
| 23 Barnwalls | 60 Saults Guest House. |
| 24 Unknown -(weekender) | |
| 25 Clarrie Morris | |
| 26 Bremners | |
| 27Chuckwick | |
| 28 Willouby | |
| 29 Jack Savage | |
| 30Hoskins | |
| 31 Forresters (Guest House) | |
| 32 State Rivers house -Nat Gould---R Knight. | |
| 33 Guest House--Fraser --Harrisons | |
| 34 Logan--McManus---Chant--Trickey. | |

Map Index - Houses and huts in the Eildon Weir area pre 1950 and 1950

Map courtesy Ross Coller 2019

MAP INDEX

Reg Robb
Harry Beaver—Upper Thornton P.O.
Old Bridge
M and A Forrester
Leo Beaver
G V Sawers (Pike)
Church
R O Sawers—Vic Newman
Guest House—Andrews—Mitchells—Pyke
Bill Albers
Stan Sawers
Jack Doolan
Vick Newman—D Faulkner
Hatchery
Snobs Creek Mill Houses (Anderson)
Reg Barnwall
Jim Fry—in Barnwalls cottage
Jack Burness
Jack Hyett
Ernie Parker snr.—Ernie Parker jnr.
Fred Fitzallen—Joe Carstein
Henry Robb—Reg Robb
Don Christie
Eric & Elsie Taylor
Bill Tayler
Gertie Taylor
Joe Taylor
Sparkes—Dick Tossol
Jim & Jack O'Rourke
Bill Mcmartin
Thornton Hall
Les Phillips
Leo Robb
George Deas
Vin Longton
George Kent
Dick Peters
Mcmartins
Dick Tossol
Bob Sullivan
Hotel—Allens—Barnwalls—Ballinger—Sparks and Tossol

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HOMESTEAD

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EILDON

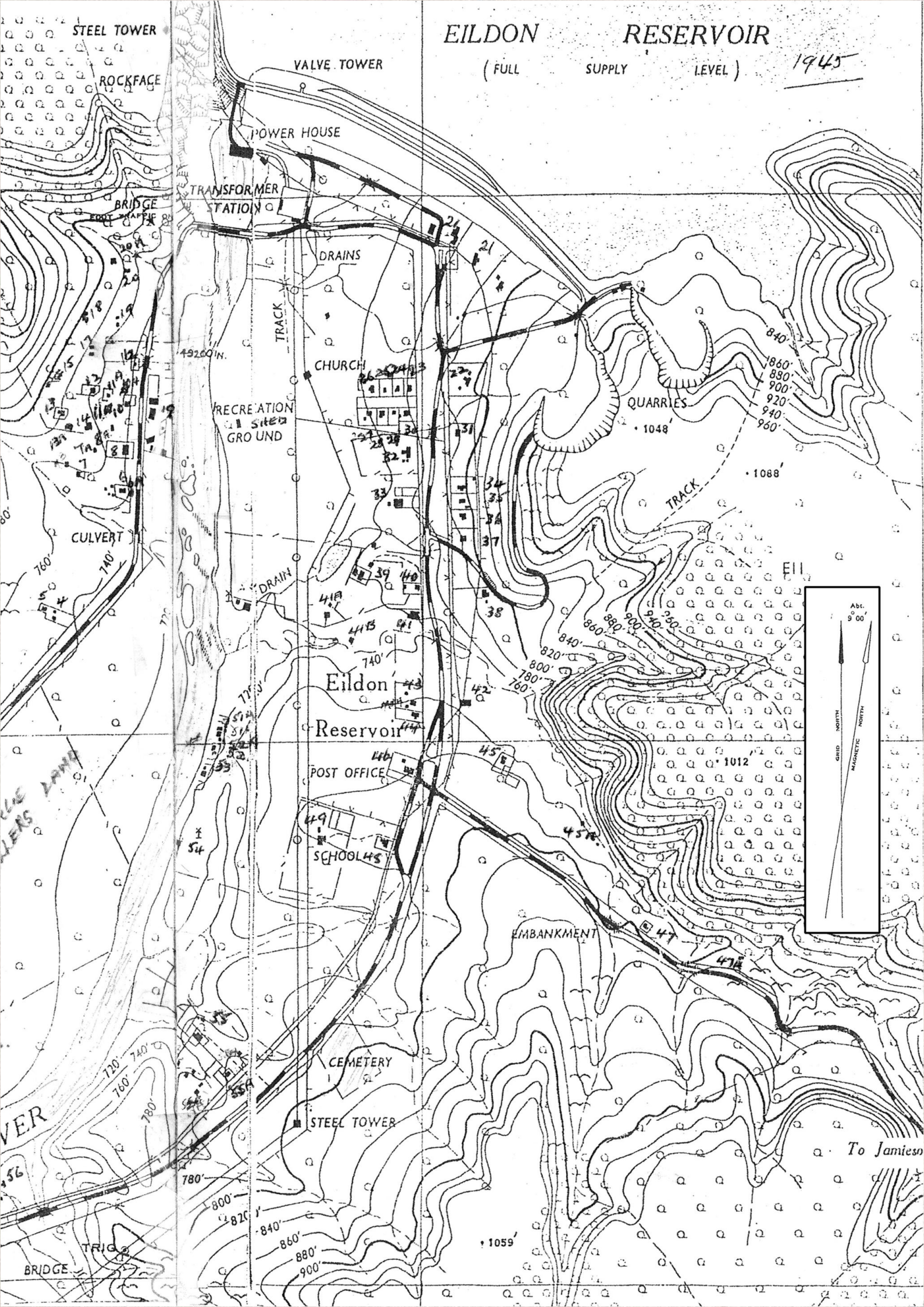
RESERVOIR

(FULL

SUPPLY

LEVEL)

1945



Coller Family