

JOHN



COLLIER



**PIONEER
FAMILY
SERIES**

JOHN & ANNIE COLLER

CONTRIBUTORS

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Artworkz

Based on research by the © Coller Family

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HISTORY

Name: John & Annie Collier
John: 28 Mar. 1828 - 6 July 1877
Annie: 14 Jan. 1835 - 17 Feb. 1909
Known for: The first settlers of the area
later known as Eildon

John Collier was the first settler on the northern side of the Goulburn River, in the area currently known as the Eildon Township. His land was acquired by the Victorian Government for the construction of the first Eildon Dam (Sugarloaf Weir).

John Collier circa 1860

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier



Early Life

John Collier was born on 28 March 1828 at Chesterfield, Derbyshire, England, to parents John Collier and Elizabeth McIntosh, who had married at Dublin prior to 1800. John was educated at the Northleach Grammar School which was situated between Gloucester and Oxford and were around 30 miles apart. John's cousins, the Goodwins and Denhams, also attended the same Grammar School. John was the oldest of three sons and four surviving sisters.

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Migration to Australia

When he was still at Northleach Grammar School, and after an argument with his father about collection of tenants' rent, he paid his own fare to Australia, travelling aboard the 339 ton barque *Enterprise*, on its maiden voyage from Liverpool. The ship was under the control of Captain Harrison and it took 109 days to complete the journey from Liverpool, arriving at Melbourne on 12 October 1848. According to family history, soon after he arrived in Melbourne John was successful in securing a mail run from Melbourne to Albury. The run included a Stage Post at the Benalla Hotel at Benalla.



John's future Wife Annie Smith - Migrates to Australia

On 8 July 1851 Mary Anne (Marion), the mother of Anne (Annie) and Harriet Smith, left Ireland for Bristol in the United Kingdom (UK) with Annie and Harriet. They spent a number of weeks in Clifton, Bristol before travelling to Plymouth (via Exeter) by train, where they waited for their passage aboard the 525 ton barque *The Rattler*. It sailed on its maiden voyage on 15 September 1851 and arrived in Melbourne between the 2nd and 5th of January 1852. The ship appeared to have docked in Adelaide first, where they were met with the exciting news of the first gold discoveries in Victoria. As a result of the temptation of gold, some of the crew abandoned ship. Consequently, others were put in the brig (the ship's prison) to prevent them from abandoning the ship for the goldfields.

Annie had kept a series of notes of the trip which served as a record of their journey. In one entry, written just after the 1851 Black Thursday bushfires, she penned:

'Melbourne, very nice but the houses are scattered.
Depart soon afterwards through burnt country side to Kilmore'.

This entry did not state their destination and interestingly, amongst other things, her notes

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also listed a series of items purchased by Annie's mother Mary Anne before leaving Ireland. Her notes also record how when travelling up through the country, they had met a man named McIntosh sleeping at a lookout. He apparently told them that he had left Mansfield at 8 am on Monday and how the scenery was beautiful, misty (foggy), hilly and thickly wooded with trees. The township of Mansfield was first surveyed in 1851, and land sales were held in June 1854. By this time John Collier's address was the Delatite River, the same address as Samuel Daniel, a worker at *Charque Station*, Mansfield.

Marriage

In 1853 John met Annie Smith, daughter of Mary Anne Smith, and on 3 May 1853 they were married in the original St. Paul's Church, built in 1850-51. The church was then located in the Parish of St. Paul's, County of Bourke, in the Colony of Victoria, where the Cathedral is now located. Their union was witnessed by Samuel Daniel (grandfather of Mrs Mary Seymour of Alexandra) and Annie's mother (Mary Anne Smith) of the Parish of St. Paul's. Anne (Annie) Smith was born on 14 January 1835 in Dublin, Ireland, to parents William (Joseph) Smith and Mary Anne (Marion) McIntosh. Family history has William trained as an orthopaedic surgeon. Annie's parents had married around 1830, and Annie's younger sister (Harriet Elizabeth Salisbury) was also born in Dublin in 1839. It is believed that at some point after Harriet's birth, her father William left his wife and travelled to America with his mistress. Nothing more is known of their lives at this time.

During John and Annie's life-long union, they had 15 children, of which 13 children survived. The eldest, Charles, helped his mother Annie raise the children when his father died unexpectedly in 1877—aged just 49 years. Charles stayed at the farm until he married when he was 40 years of age.

Local History

On 6 June 1854 John purchased an allotment of land (Lot 34) at the land sale in Benalla. He also obtained 4 ¹/₂ acre lots in 'Old Longwood'. John and Annie also had a house and three acres in Benalla which they had purchased in 1854. (It is not known if they had lived there, but after John's death, Annie collected rent on the property until her own death).

Louisa Harriet Collier was born on 13 February 1854 at Mansfield, and Agnes Mary Collier was born on 3 August 1855 at Mansfield.

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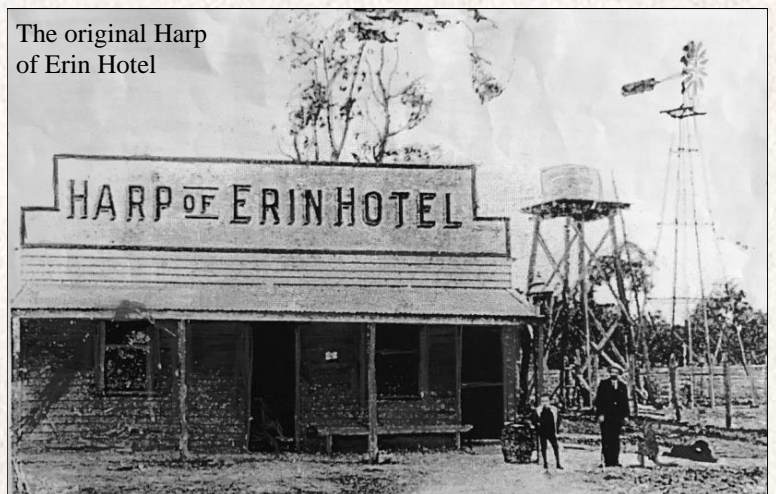
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In 1854/55 the first gold was discovered at Jamieson and Big River. Charlotte Emily Collier was born on 10 October 1856 at Longwood when John was then a butcher. Then in 1857/58 a new survey was performed by Surveyor Thomas Wilkinson Pinniger, showing the Big Hill Hotel on the Merton Creek (on Edward Sherman's land - over three quarters of a mile from the town survey).

In September 1857, John started a mail run from Longwood to Mansfield and return, for 150 pounds annually. The distance between the two towns was around 41 miles (65 km) as the crow flies. The following year the price for the run had risen to 190 pounds.

Annie Elizabeth Collier was born 25 March 1858 at Longwood. John Collier was known as a farmer at the time.

On 26 February 1859 Edward Sherman transferred his licence to John Collier for part of licence period. The Big Hill Hotel was moved to Merton township and renamed *Harp of Erin* Hotel. During 26 February 1859 - 10 May 1862, the licence for the *Merton Hotel* was transferred from Edward T Sherman to John Collier. This arrangement continued until a licence was granted to William Kemp on 10 May 1862.



Between 15 March 1859 and 14 February 1862 John was the Postmaster at Merton, with an annual salary of 20 pounds. He also had a large mail run, for which he received the sum of 290 pounds in both 1859 and 1860.

In April 1859 John was successful in receiving an annual licence renewal for his *Harp of Erin Hotel*, located in the township of Merton. Then two months later on 22 June 1859, his son Charles John Collier was born at Merton. It was also around this period that John decided to write his will. At the time of writing his will he was an innkeeper at the *Harp of Erin*, the Merton Postmaster and Deputy Registrar of Births and Deaths, as well as having a large mail run.

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In 1860 a further licence renewal was granted to John for the *Harp of Erin*, and later in the year a new licence was granted for the *Harp of Erin* (Merton Hotel) at Merton.

On 21 June 1860, (Annie's Mother) Mary Anne Smith died of Stomach and Liver Cancer at Glouster Cottage, Spring Street, Melbourne. She was aged 59 years at the time. and on her death certificate it read 'Husband William Smith gentleman deceased. Annie aged 25 years, Harriet aged 21 years'.

That same year, Harriet Elizabeth Salisbury Smith married Charles. H. Willison.

In November 1860 Charles Willison gained a Supreme Court release from Bankruptcy. At this time his occupation was listed as being a 'Painter and Plumber'. The story says John Collier lost money when he backed the bills (debts) of Charles Willison. The Willisons had two children, Cora (who married Carl Bartling and they had three children: Mena, Jima and Carl), and Ada (who married a Cooper).

Herbert George Collier was born on 10 September 1860 at Merton. In 1859, 1860 and 1861 gold rushes to Enochs Point, Jamieson, Gaffney's Creek and Woods Point occurred. It was during this time, in 1861, that a licence renewal for the Merton Harp of Erin Hotel was granted to John Collier.

A family story has it that a hard drinking blacksmith causing trouble with kitchen staff, stabbed John (who was 6'4" in height) when he went to throw him out. On 3 April 1861 the protagonist John Cullen was charged at the Beechworth Court with stabbing John Collier. The case was later heard on 30 April 1861, after John had recovered sufficiently from his injury to attend court. In 1862 John transferred his liquor licence and relinquished his hotel licence.

On 2 February 1862 Elizabeth Goodwin Francis Collier was born at Merton and later in February, a Mr Henry Moore laid a complaint against John Collier in relation to a debt of one pound five shillings. The case was later dismissed.

On 18 March 1862 John purchased Lot 5, 3 acres, 3 roods, 37 perches, section B1, Arundel Street East in Benalla. This was located between Arundel Street and a branch of the Broken River frontage. This lot was purchased from David Melville for 50 pounds.

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In June 1862 John Collier laid a complaint against John L. Lynch for illegally detaining two horses. The charge was dismissed as the allegation was not properly laid.

From Merton John and his family moved to Pentridge, however it is considered possible that they lived for a short period in Benalla before moving. At that time, Pentridge was the name given to the northern section of the suburb of Coburg, Melbourne. The name Pentridge changed to Coburg in 1869.

John and Annie had the *Wheat Sheaf Hotel* at Pentridge in North Coburg, and the Grain Store and a pack train to Woods Point. Cobb and Co Coaches proceeded from Longwood to Jamieson still unable to get coaches to Woods Point.

On 10 May 1862/1863, the licence of the Merton *Harp of Erin Hotel* was transferred and granted to William Kemp for both years.

Robyn Gilbert had the kitchen book from the *Wheat Sheaf Hotel* from 12 March 1863 onwards. In September 1863 John had a pocket watch stolen from the *Wheat Sheaf Hotel*, Pentridge.

On 7 February 1864 and June 1864 John registered a mortgage on land at Longwood and Benalla. Also in 1864, Edith Alica Collier was born at Campbellfield and her birth was registered as *Wheat Sheaf Hotel* Pentridge. Then in July 1864 John surrendered his lease of 105 acres of land as well as the *Wheat Sheaf Hotel*, to H.G. Marsh. Under the 1862 Land Act at that time, a selector had to either: (1) Cultivate one tenth; or (2) Fence it. (3) Build a house on it.

On 6 April 1865 Mary was stillborn at Northcote. John's occupation was listed as a Hawker. Also in 1865, Charles John was attending a school in Northcote and was also awarded a prize. Louisa, Agnes, Charlotte and Annie also would have attended the school as they were older than Charles.

Early settlers at Eildon

On 20 September 1865, while at Northcote, he declared himself on paperwork as a farmer when he applied for a lease of 76 acres at Eildon. This was granted on 20 December 1865. Under his probationary lease he had built a wattle and daub hut on

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the property. He was granted a selection 10 years later in July 1875. John then built a homestead on the property which he named *Woodlands*. He did this while still hawking from Northcote to Jamieson.



In 1866 John and his family made their way to their *Woodlands*' property at Eildon in two wagonettes. They travelled via Plenty Valley, Tommy's Hut, King Parrot Creek to Yea and they would have presumably used the Sloane's Punt over the Goulburn River at Molesworth. Then they travelled through *Cathkin Station* to the U.T. Creek where they forded the creek and climbed the small bank,

travelled through the Red Gate located near where the Alexandra Library stands today, then travelled through McKenzie's *Mount Pleasant Station*, before fording the Goulburn at Gilmore's and again at Thornton, to enter the Station of Archie Thom.

The trip to Eildon took six weeks, with the Thornton to Eildon section taking a week on its own as they had to make their own track as they went. John continued to hawk from Northcote to Jamieson after the move to Eildon.

On 2 November 1867 Arthur William was born at Eildon. Then in 1869 a Benalla Rates Assessment showed '137, a house with a three acres gross value, 24 pounds, owner John Collier, occupier Francis McDonald'.

On 29 April 1870 Alice Evelyn Collier was born at Eildon, on 29 March 1872 George Edward Collier born at Eildon, on 12 July 1874 Alfred Henry Collier born at Eildon and in 1875/76 Frances Collier born and buried at *Woodlands*. On 25 January 1877 Laura Maude Collier born at Eildon.

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Death of John Collier

On 6 July 1877 John Collier died aged 49. The cause of death on his death certificate was given as asthma, but the family story is that he was still running a coach to the Jamieson/Woods Point area, and was fording the flooded Upper Goulburn River, already suffering from the measles and a cold. It is believed that complications from his stabbing in 1861 also contributed to his illness. As a result, he became even sicker and was bed ridden for a period of time before passing away. He was buried in the Alexandra Cemetery. His estate was probated as a Yeoman of Eildon and everything was left to his wife Annie Collier.



On 24 August 1877, John's eldest son Charles applied for a 73 acre land selection licence near *Woodlands*. The lease was obtained on 1 December 1880 and a title was later granted on 25 May 1895. Louisa applied for licence of a selection of 20 acres and 12 acres adjacent to *Woodlands*.

In 1880, the postal address for Herbert and Arthur Collier was listed as Upper Thornton.

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On 5 May 1882 Annie Collier applied for 240 acres in two lot selections of lease north east of the Delatite River, in the Parish of Howqua West, upstream from Margaret Nichol and Robert Rennie. On 9 May 1882 Charlotte Collier applied for 100 acres in two lots, west side of Delatite River and around three miles from *Woodlands*.

In 1882 Thomas Popple Jnr bought *Eildon Station* and then objected to Charlotte's selection, relating to stock water and salt lick holes. Also in 1882, Elizabeth Collier applied for a title for a 99 acre selection which basically extended up the face of the Sugar Loaf Hill on the Goulburn River, near the northern end of the current day Eildon Dam Wall.

In February 1882, Louisa Harriet Collier wed Donald McKenzie Brown of The Delatite Station. By the time they married, she had already managed to pay out the remainder of the grant for her 20 acre lot and she had paid out the grant for her 12 acre lot by 1888. She then selected lots 21, 22 and 23. The three lots made up 120 acres and was located on the west side Delatite, adjacent to Charlotte's selection.

In 1877-88 Charles helped maintain the family and assisted the family's plan to further enlarge the homestead. Also in 1888 Herbert Collier became engaged to Eliza Jane (Jean) Nichol.

In August 1888 Eliza (Jean) Nichol died while trying to swim her horse across the flooded Goulburn River to get help for George Rennie, who was injured in a timber accident. Her horse had floundered in the river's current and Jean tragically drowned.

On 13 August 1890 Charlotte Collier transferred her lease of 100 acres to Herbert Collier and on 6 December 1890 Annie also transferred her 240 acre lease on the Delatite River in the Parish of Howqua to Herbert, who later lived there after his marriage to Tottie Forsyth.

On 14 December 1891 Arthur and Herbert took over all lots (24. B, 25 being 287 acres of J W Elliot), previously belonging to Gideon Nicholas. The Collier brothers' operation of the property started about this time and extra hands included Charles, Herbert, Arthur and Alfred Collier. Arthur applied for a grazing licence of 390 acres which was later called the *Boundary*.

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On 26 March 1894 Herbert George Collier wed Elizabeth Tottie Forsyth. On 19 September 1894 Agnes Mary Collier wed Sam Pinkston at Melbourne and around this time Charles Collier was Postmaster at Eildon and also held a mail run. On 11 May 1898, Charlotte Emily Collier wed Alexander Edward (Teddy) Thom at *Woodlands*.

On 3 August 1898 Arthur William Collier wed Eleanor Nell Popple at Alexandra and lived at *Boundary*. Then on 19 December 1898 George Edward Collier wed Eliza Grace (Queenie) Commons from Delegate, N.S.W. at Dargo and returned to *Woodlands*. On 2 February 1899 Charles John Collier wed Mabel Nina Butler in Melbourne.

The year 1904 saw a dissolution of Collier Bros. (Herbert, Arthur and Alfred). Arthur and Eleanor then bought land at Spring Creek and on 19 October 1904, Alfred (Alf) Henry Collier wed Elsie Grace Fry and they lived on Arthur's property called *Boundary*, of which Herbert and Alf were tenants-in-common.

On 8 July 1904, Charles Collier applied for a 247 acres selection lease and grant of title and on 23 November 1904 Laura Maude Hetherington Collier wed Arthur Doig Johnson at *Woodlands*.

In 1921, Lot 5, Arundel Street, East Benalla, a two and three quarter acre property valued at three pounds was in the ownership of Annie E. Collier of *Woodlands* Eildon. The property was occupied by dressmaker Dora McFarland. The adjacent Lot 4, property was also occupied by Dora, and the lot included a four room house, valued at 15 pounds.

Death of Annie Collier

On 17 February 1909 Annie Collier died aged 73, and was buried in the Alexandra Cemetery with her late husband John Collier.

At this time the *Woodlands*' property comprised around 80 acres. The property was left to her four



Annie Collier
(Senior)

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unmarried daughters. It was a condition that if any of these married and left, they would forfeit their right to part ownership. The two daughters Annie Junior and Elizabeth (Lilly) never married.

Elizabeth (Lilly) owned 99 acres of land to Sugarloaf, including a 54 acre hill. She sold 11 acres to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and this land was used for the tent township which accommodated workers when the first dam wall was built. She sold the rest of the land to Charles and Mabel and then moved to Point Hill and purchased a small piece of land and a house of Joe Randall. She also rented approximately one acre of Crown Land beside this. She had a productive garden and orchard, supplying many people with fruit and vegetables. She died some years later and when her property was sold, the money was divided equally amongst the family with each receiving 50 pounds. She did not have a will.

Annie Collier (Junior)



On 23 August 1910 Alice Evelyn Collier wed John Alexandra McIntosh in Melbourne.

When Annie Junior died in 1923, she left items to each of Charles and Mabel's children, including a trunk for Charlie. However the executors of the will never carried out her wishes, so the children never received anything.

In 1924 Edith Alicia Collier married Robert R. Corrie in Melbourne. In 1924 the owner and executors of Annie E. Collier's will, in relation to her property *Woodlands at Eildon* discovered the deed to Lot 5 in Benalla, valued at 6 pound, occupier Dora McFarland and Annie had not paid rates or collected any rent for 15 years. Obviously she ignored this property even though she, along with her sister Elizabeth, had ownership of the

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property at that time. As a result, Dora was able to claim 'Adverse Possession' on the property, making it her own.

In 1995 the Collier family commenced work on the family history of John Collier. Those involved included Ross and Nancy Collier, Norma Newman, Noel Collier, Ken Collier, Pam Hanson, Andrew Collier, Barry Collier, Robyn Gilbert, Penny Carter and Peter Becker. Then in 2015 Ross and Nancy commenced work on collating the information and then in mid 2018, Artworkz commenced work on this factsheet with Ross and Nancy.

To commemorate the first settlers, John and Annie Collier, there is a plaque set on a rock near the current Eildon Information Centre. The local oval is also named 'Collier Oval'.

Today the descendants of John and Annie Collier have grown into the thousands, have spread around the world and work in nearly all major areas of employment.



TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS



COLLER HISTORY

BASIC TIMELINE

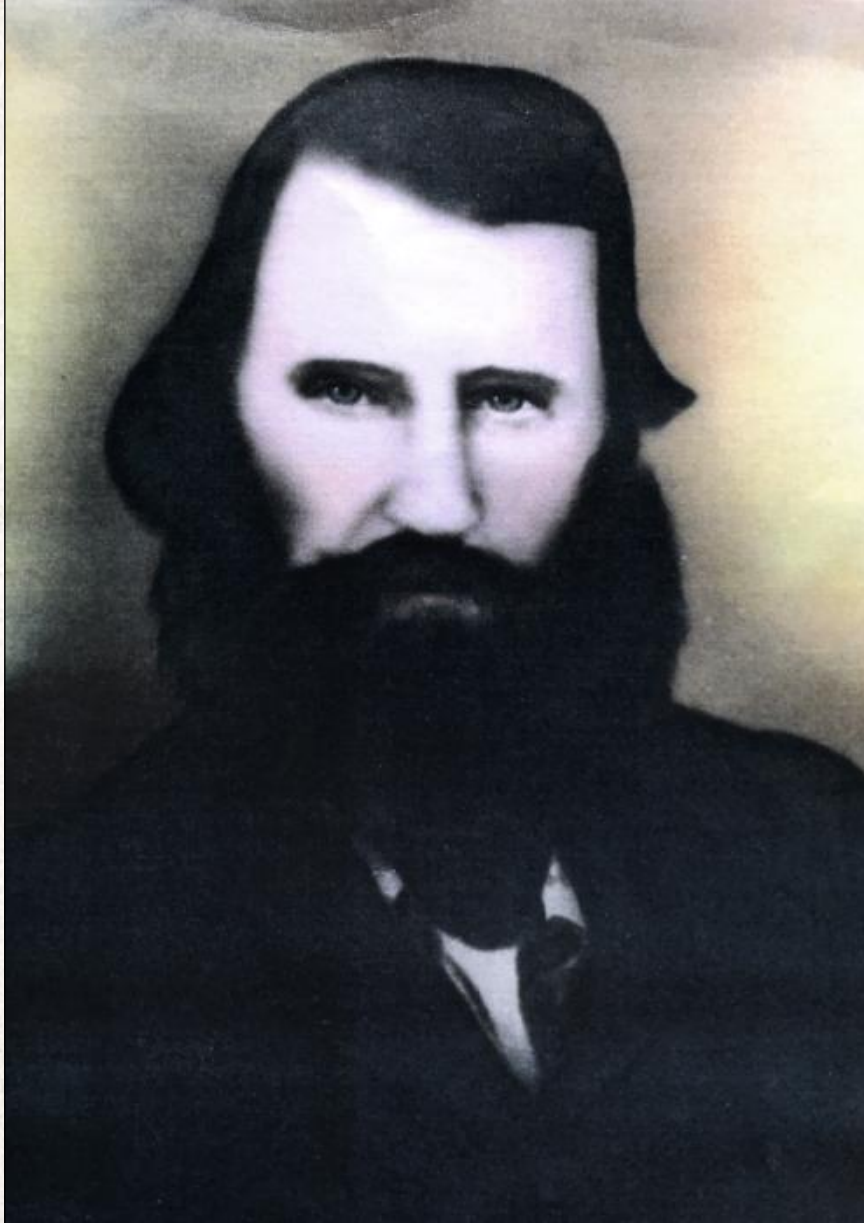
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|--------------------------|--|
| 28 March 1828 | John Collier was born at Chesterfield, Derbyshire, England, to parents John Collier and Elizabeth McIntosh. |
| 14 January 1835 | Anne (Annie) Smith was born in Dublin, Ireland, to parents William (Joseph) Smith and Mary Anne (Marion) McIntosh. |
| 3 May 1853 | John married Annie Smith, daughter of Mary Anne Smith, in the original bluestone <u>St. Paul's Church</u> , which was consecrated as the Anglican 'St. Paul's the Apostle' church the year before. |
| 15 March 1859 | John was Merton's Postmaster and Deputy Register of Births and Deaths. He also had a long mail run from Longwood to Mansfield at this time. |
| 1862 | John purchased land and a house at Arundel Street in Benalla. |
| 1863 | John moved to Pentridge to the <i>Wheat Sheaf Hotel</i> . |
| 20 September 1865 | John applied for a lease of 75 acres at what was then referred to as Eildon. He was the first person to legally obtain land in that area. The area was named by overlander Archibald Thom who was the first to occupy the area. He named it Eildon as it reminded him of Eildon Hills in Scotland. |
| 1866 | John and family made their way to Eildon from Coburg. |
| 6 July 1877 | John Collier died aged 49. His tombstone incorrectly gives the date of his death as 6 June 1876. |
| 17 February 1909 | Annie Collier died aged 73. |
| 1995 | Ross Collier commenced work on the family history of John Collier, along with family members Norma Newman, Noel Collier and Andrew Collier. |

GALLERY

RELATED IMAGERY

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



The earliest known photograph of John Coller taken circa 1850

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Coller

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Harp of Erin at Merton

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier

COLLER HISTORY

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**Gateway to *Woodlands*, which was once called ‘White Gate’
as it had been painted white.**

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Woodlands at Eildon in its earlier days

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier

COLLER HISTORY

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

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Woodlands at Eildon in the early 1900s

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Woodlands in the 1920s

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Woodlands in the 1920s

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

COLLER HISTORY

GALLERY



Annie Coller, wife of John Coller circa 1905

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Coller 2018

COLLER HISTORY

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

Annie Coller, wife of John Coller circa 1905

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Coller 2018

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**Tombstone of John & Annie Coller at Alexandra Cemetery taken after being restored by the family.
The tombstone incorrectly states the death of John Coller (actual date of death 6 July 1877).**

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Coller 2018

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The rose is believed to have been planted over 100 years ago by John & Annie's daughters

Courtesy Ross & Nancy Collier 2018

NEWSPAPERS

RELATED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES



COLLER HISTORY

NEWSPAPER

MARRIAGE

COLLER—FORSYTH.—On the 26th March, 1894, at the residence of the bride's parents, by the Rev. T. B. Swift, HERBERT GEORGE COLLIER, of Howqua West, second son of the late Mr. John Collier, of Eildon farmer, to ELIZABETH EDITH JANE, eldest daughter of James Forsyth, Esq., of Maintoengoon, grazier.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 30 March 1894
Courtesy National Library Australia

George Collier, son of John Collier, marries Elizabeth Edith Jane Forsyth on 26 March 1894.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 30 March 1894



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MARRIAGE

THOM—COLLER.—On the 11th May, 1898, at the residence of the bride's mother by the Rev. T. B. Swift, Alexander Edward, eldest son of the late Mr. Alexander Thom, grazier of Eilton, to Charlotte Emely, third daughter of the late Mr. John Collier, grazier and farmer, of Eilton.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 13 May 1898
Courtesy National Library Australia

Charlotte Emely Collier marries Alexandra Edward Thom on 11 May 1898.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 13 May 1898



Coller Family