



A Tribute to a Grand Old Home

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The story of *Kurrajong* begins in New South Wales where, as a teenager in the 1870s, JJ Miller helped his parents on their 3,000-acre sheep station (ranch) called *Littledale*.



Littledale (c 1890)

A constant concern of the Millers, and the bane of every rancher and farmer in the Southern District, was the devastating droughts that could mercilessly destroy a season's stock or crop.

THE KURRAJONG TREE

Offering some relief from the relentless summer sun were the drought-resistant



Kurrajong tree (Kelsey Sinclair photo)

Kurrajong trees. As a teenager, JJ planted Kurrajong trees around the family home to provide a small measure of comfort.

Through the 1880s and 1890s, JJ Miller became a successful and popular businessman. Upon entering politics he almost, but for 80 votes, became a Father of Confederation in 1898 when the five British colonies united to form the nation of Australia.

Dashed political aspirations and successive droughts helped JJ decide to emigrate to Canada in 1903 with his wife, Susannah, and daughters, Florence and Frida.

CANADA

Arriving in the frontier town of Vancouver during its boom years, JJ quickly became a successful realtor/auctioneer and, in 1908, built an impressive family mansion in the Queen Anne style.

Thinking of the measure of comfort provided by his native Australian tree, he named his new home *Kurrajong*.



Kurrajong - restored to its former glory and elegance in 1999

KURRAJONG

Kurrajong cost \$30,000 to build in 1908 — more than many homes in the elite Shaughnessy area across town — and boasted six bedrooms, five fireplaces,



An early photo of "Kurrajong" before the inside wall and split stairway were built at the entrance. Also notice the low stone wall.

a kitchen (utilizing a hot water furnace with a copper boiler), dining room, drawing room, library, conservatory, lobby, and even a darkroom!

The header caps on both front entrance posts proudly bore brass "KURRAJONG" nameplates.

JJ AND THE PNE

Beyond his varied business interests, JJ Miller devoted much of his time to civic causes. He was the guiding force in the development of the Pacific National Exhibition



JJ, left, and Mrs. Miller escort Canada's Prime Minister, Sir Wilfred Laurier, at the official opening of the PNE in 1910.

and became its first president, a position he held for 13 years. Miller Drive, on the PNE grounds, is named after JJ Miller.

THE ORIGINAL ADDRESS

Having one of the first homes in the new "Grand

View" area, the Millers were invited to choose their own address. JJ and Susannah chose "1015" after the ages of their daughters, Florence (10) and Frida (15). This address remained in use for several years before it was modified to 1036 Salsbury Drive.

LIFE AT KURRAJONG

Kurrajong was a loving, family home in every sense of the word. It not only housed JJ's immediate family, but his extended family during difficult times. *Kurrajong* was also a home away from home for visiting Australian sailors.

Before the days of radio and television, families made their own fun. After dinner, the dining room table was often cleared for a game of "table" tennis.



Table tennis provides an evening of entertainment. (c 1912)

Parlour plays, poetry and cardplaying were popular pastimes at *Kurrajong*.

Kurrajong's grounds offered many attractions and amusements, including the flower gardens, orchard, large aviary and fish pond.

The good times came



JJ's grand daughter, Olga, at the fish pond (c 1919)

to an abrupt end when the Depression hit and the Miller family lost their beloved *Kurrajong*.

THE GLEN HOSPITAL

Kurrajong took on new life as the Glen Hospital,



Glen Hospital (Roy Wilcox photo)

and served in this capacity for the next seven decades until the property was sold in 1997.

THE X-FILES AT KURRAJONG

Kurrajong sat vacant for a period, and during this time was used as a feature set on the *X-Files* when



Agent Mulder at "Kurrajong"

shooting episode #104, entitled *Emily*, where Agent Scully discovered she was the genetic mother of a 4-year-old girl.

RE-DEVELOPMENT

Kurrajong's listing as a Heritage Class A Building



"Kurrajong" was moved 12 feet and placed on a new foundation.

saved it from the wrecking ball and attracted the attention of VHL Homes.

SALSBURY HEIGHTS

Under the stewardship of an award-winning Builder and Master Architect, *Kurrajong* has never looked better, and now proudly stands as the centre-piece of VHL Homes' prized *Salsbury Heights* development.