

The Family Gazette™

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SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

John James (JJ) Miller was born on November 9, 1860 of pioneer parents, Reverend John Miller and his wife Rebecca, in Berrima, in the British colony New South Wales, Australia.

In 1874, when JJ was fourteen, Rev. Miller moved the family to the outlying Cootamundra Parish where he became the first clergyman in this rural area.

The Parish was immense, one hundred miles across, and JJ would often accompany his father on horseback when visiting settlers scattered across the land.

They were all pioneers in a land not friendly to homesteaders. The area was subject to severe drought and the countryside was rampant with wild horses and kangaroos.

Littledale, the Miller estate, began as open scrub-



"Littledale"

land on the Cootamundra Creek. JJ once recalled the sport involved in clearing the land:

As boys we had great fun trapping the wild horses and kangaroos.

Clearing, fencing and preparing the land for crop was hard work, but they



Wheat Field

toiled relentlessly until there were 500 acres under wheat.

For livestock, at first they

tried raising cattle, but the cattle couldn't endure the droughts, so they tried sheep. Raising sheep proved profitable, so *Littledale* developed into a 3,000 acre sheep station.



"Littledale" studs

Through his teen years JJ assisted his parents in the running of *Littledale*. Around the perimeter of the house he planted some drought-resistant Kurrajong trees.

Littledale became an exemplary operation, and earned a Government award for being the best farm in the Southern District. It was later referred to as

the snug pastoral, agricultural and dairy property on the Cootamundra Creek

On February 8, 1881, when JJ was but 20, Rev. Miller died, leaving JJ, the eldest son, suddenly responsible for his mother, five sisters, four younger brothers, and *Littledale*.

While JJ attended the business side of *Littledale*, younger brother William, 18, found employment at the Bank of N.S.W.

Shortly after his 21st birthday JJ assumed the additional responsibilities of being a J.P., serving as Magistrate for the area. In 1885, at 25, he was initiated into Freemasonry, a



John James (JJ) Miller
1860 - 1950

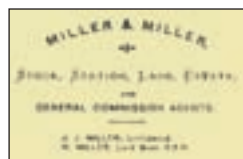
commitment that would develop into a passion in later years.

As JJ's business acumen developed, so too did his enterprise.

He could see

that there was more future in tending the flocks of others than in just tending one's own. So, in 1886, he went into partnership with brother William to form the company Miller & Miller.

JJ and Willie became general commission agents and now earned their livings from commissions earned selling the property of



"Miller & Miller" letterhead

others — stock (mainly sheep, but also cattle and horses), station (ranches), land and estate.

JJ and William soon added to the services they offered to a pioneering rural community — auctioneers, grain and insurance brokers, and land assessors. Miller and Miller prospered, and was often mentioned in the *Cootamundra Herald*.

Politics beckoned next. In 1889 JJ sat on the District



Mayor JJ Miller
and the Cootamundra District Council
1889

Council and served as Mayor of Cootamundra.

Through the 1890s JJ devoted much of his time to civic causes. He served as President of the District Hospital and President of the Agricultural Association.

On a more historic note, JJ founded the Farmers and Settlers Association to make the first export shipment of wheat to England through a



Farmers and Settlers Association

Co-op system. (Australia has since become one of the biggest wheat-exporting countries in the world.)

In the late 1890s there was a political movement to unite the 5 British colonies into the Federation of Australia. An election was called in 1898 and JJ, an ardent Federalist, was asked to champion the cause in the Gundagai riding and, if elected, become a Father of Australian Confederation.

JJ gladly accepted the nomination and, in the cause of Australian nationalism, devoted much of his time and personal resources.

He lost the election by 80 votes.

The closing years of the century were not good years for JJ. His political aspirations were dashed, his personal resources drained and Miller and Miller, once the largest Stock and Station agency in the Southern District, succumbed to successive droughts.

In 1899 he bade a fond farewell to Cootamundra and headed for greener pastures in the city of Sydney.