



## THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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### **Bro. ROBERT MUIR (1815-1851)**

Pioneer New England Cattleman and Grazier

Robert Muir was born on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1815 into the Glasgow, Scotland, family of merchant John Muir who had married Elizabeth Sibbald. The family contained 16 children. His story begins with the arrival in Australia of the Lang family of Largs, Scotland.

The Lang family consisted of William Lang, his wife Mary Dunmore and their children John Dunmore b.1799, George Dunmore b.1802, Andrew b.1804, Isabella Ninian b.1806.

George was studying to be a doctor, which apparently he didn't like and quickly abandoned when a friend offered him a position on a sugar plantation in the West Indies. However, before he left to go to his new job the plantation owner was killed in a driving accident and George was left without a job. Because of a connection in New South Wales George decided to come here which he did in 1821.

On arrival, he received a grant of 1000 acres from Governor Macquarie, in the Hunter region. i.e. near the present township of Largs, N S W.

George had been working for the Commissariat at Parramatta and Windsor and in 1824 resigned with the intention of moving to his Hunter grant of land. On the way, in Sydney he was overtaken by inflammatory fever and died in 1825 aged 22 years, unmarried.

In 1823 his father and mother, William and Mary, and siblings Andrew and Isabella came to N S W.

In 1824 father William and brother Andrew had contracted to build the first Scots Church, in Sydney, near the present York and Margaret Streets junction. When the Sydney Harbour Bridge opened in 1927, York Street was widened and the Church had to be demolished.

When George died in 1825, Andrew with his father William and mother and sister Isabella, moved onto George's property to work the land and build a home.

In 1830 his father William, was making a trip to Sydney by boat overnight. A storm blew up and the boat, a small one, was wrecked and William drowned at sea.

In 1849 Andrew married Emily Caswell a daughter of a retired military officer, from nearby "Balikera". They had one child who died in infancy.

While George worked in Sydney he wrote home that there was potential here for a Presbyterian Minister, which Governor Brisbane had indicated he would support.

John Dunmore Lang, who in 1811 at the age of twelve had enrolled at the University of Glasgow, was licensed to preach by the Church of Scotland at the age of 21, and was persuaded by this and arrived here in 1823.

In 1831 John Dunmore returned from one of his numerous trips to England bringing with him his future bride, Wilhelmina Mackie, a daughter of the sister of William Lang.

