

MEETING MR. BLAXLAND:

When we settled near the Fig Tree¹ Colonel Britton had an estate adjoining my father's land. He had purchased the property a short time before we arrived in Sydney, from John Hubert Plunkett, the Attorney-General,² and my father had a letter of introduction from Plunkett to the Colonel, which was delivered soon after we reached our land. Colonel Britton's residence and our new home were only about half a mile apart, so that intercourse between the Colonel and our family was frequent, and Colonel Britton and my father became close friends.

I mention this circumstance, as it was the means of myself seeing Gregory Blaxland, one of the three men who had first crossed the Blue Mountains in 1813. Colonel Britton was married to one of the Blaxland family, and a party of those people were on a visit to Britton's soon after we reached Illawarra. I heard Blaxland relate incidents of that memorable expedition, which led to such beneficial results for Australia . . .

Sometimes when I have a spare afternoon when in Sydney I go to Parramatta, and spend some hours in reading the inscriptions on the headstones in the old cemetery, which has long ceased to be used. And I have derived much information about old colonists from what I have seen there. There is one vault on which the names of several of the pioneer Blaxlands appear, and on one stone the name of General Britton, the man whom I had known in 1840.

—James Gormly, "Exploration and Settlement in Australia" (1921).

¹—At Hell Hole (see August 1975 Bulletin).

²—Plunkett's estate, "Keelagues," lay to the west of "Paulsgrove," and comprised Portions 5 and 34, Parish of Wollongong, totalling nearly 1300 acres. It touched Mount Keira Road (near the school) and extended beyond American Creek on the south, including Mount Nebo and much of Figtree Heights.