

## John and Mary Bray

Private John Bray and his wife Mary reached Sydney in June 1790 on board the Neptune with the first detachment of the New South Wales Corps. Within three years John Bray had been promoted to the rank of sergeant and on 11th November 1794 he was granted thirty acres of land at the “Entrance of the Flats, on the South side of the Harbour of Port Jackson”, in the area later to be called Rhodes. It seem that he and his wife Mary (nee Downs, of County Galway, Ireland) settled on the land immediately, for the first stage of their home, Braygrove, had been built by the turn of the century.

John Bray died in 1797 but his wife Mary remained on the land at Concord and struggled to bring up her family of four children there. A fifth child, James, had been born at sea on board the Neptune but had died in infancy. In January 1800 Mary Bray received an additional grant of twenty-five acres adjacent to John Bray’s original grant. By then the Bray estate stretched from the present Mary Street (named in honour of Mary Bray) south to Alfred Street (named in honour of her grandson).



*Alfred L. Bray*

Mary Bray later married Edward Llewellyn, after whom Llewellyn Street was named. Her younger son, John Bray junior, inherited a Llewellyn family block on the Hawkesbury. Thomas, the elder son, bought up his family land at Braygrove and also acquired property at Binda near Crookwell. Thomas expanded the Bray estate in Concord and by 1828 owned thirty-four hectares. The whole estate was cleared and eight hectares of it were cultivated.

Thomas Bray married twice. His second wife, Ann Bloodsworth, bore him eight children, two of whom, Alfred Bray and Henry Bray, were to become mayors of Concord.

The eldest son, Alfred Llewellyn Bray, inherited Braygrove and became a prominent landowner and businessman in the Concord-Burwood District. Between 1883 and 1886 he served as the first mayor of the newly proclaimed Municipality of Concord. He died on 20th November, 1905.

The Bray property was purchased by R. Tulloch & Company in 1915 and Tulloch’s Phoenix Iron Works Ltd. was transferred to the property.

Henry David Bray, Alfred’s younger brother, was granted twenty-two acres of land at what is now North Strathfield on 10th January 1859. Concord Road formed the western boundary of the grant, which has the distinction of being the second land registered in New South Wales under the Real Property, or Torrens Title, Act and the first to be mortgaged under the provisions of that Act.

Henry Bray’s original home was built on the land in 1859; it was later used as a laundry. In about 1861 Clermont House was erected on the site. Henry Bray was the third mayor of Concord - between 1890 and 1891. He died at Clermont on 12th August, 1896 when, according to an obituary, ‘the business places



*“Bray Grove”, home of Alfred Bray  
(was used as offices of Tulloch’s Ltd. until demolished)*

of Burwood were draped with black’.

The estate was sold and subdivided in 1917. In 1918 the house and surrounding half hectare of land were bought by F.K. Olliver who, in the same year, donated both house and land to the Society for Providing Homes for Neglected Children. At this time the house’s name was changed from Clermont to Ardill House to honour the founder of the society, George Edward Ardill (1857-1944), who established the charity in 1887 to provide refuge for neglected, homeless and threatened children.

The property now houses several child-minding centres.



*Henry D. Bray*



*Ardill House.*

(Originally the residence of Mr. Henry Bray,  
3rd Mayor of Concord)