

### Bendigo Cemetery



Notes for William Beebe and his young son James, in Grave #2459 in section K4  
William died in 26/09/1891, aged 60, and was buried in 28/09/1891.

Also a reference and link is made to William's brother Jacob, who died in 22/08/1867 when aged 30.

Link to Jacob's [notes](#) which details his accidental death in 1867.

William Beebe was married to Mary (nee: Levick). William and Mary had 9 children, two of whom are buried in this section (K4), the same as William.

These sons were Samuel who died in Jan 1861 aged 14 months (this grave location not recorded on the section map), and James who drowned in Sept 1866 when aged 2 years. It is interesting to note that Mary, who died after William in 1903, was buried in a different section (G1) to William.

William was firm in his views in not wanting to be buried in consecrated ground.

Link to Mary's [notes](#).

Images:  
BEEBE\_K4\_060.JPG  
to  
BEEBE\_K4\_060A.JPG

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In memoriam  
WILLIAM BEEBE  
died September 26th 1891  
Aged 60 years

For many years staunch advocate of secularism



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William is buried with this son James, who drowned in 14/09/1866.  
James is not named on the headstone.

The following people were buried in this grave #2459 Sect K4 as per cemetery records.

2459 BEEBE James 14/09/1866 16/09/1866 2 yrs  
11940 BEEBE William 26/09/1891 28/09/1891 60 yrs

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*James Beebe aged 2 years*

**Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Mon 17 Sep 1866 Page 2**

INQUESTS.

DROWNED IN A WATERHOLE.

The District Coroner held an inquest on Saturday, at the Union Hotel, Long Gully, on the body of James Beebe, aged two years, son of a dairyman residing at Home Vale, Myers Flat.

The evidence of the child's mother was to the effect that on Friday afternoon, about five o'clock, she went to the paddock to cut grass for the cows, leaving the deceased and his sister Emma, a child five years of age, in the garden. In half an hour she returned, and not seeing the child, went out to look for him. Not finding him in the garden, she went round by the stockyard, near to which there was a waterhole about forty yards from the house, and not fenced in, and there, in the middle of the hole, floating on his back, she found deceased quite dead.

The hole was about three feet deep in one end, and got shallower at the other, as it was the commencement of a dam, and carts could easily back into it. From what she saw, she believed deceased, who was a stirring boy, had fallen in accidentally at the deep end. A post-mortem examination was made by Dr H L Atkinson, the result of which was an opinion that death was caused by drowning. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

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*William Beebe*

**Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Mon 28 Sep 1891 Page 2**

Family Notices

BEEBE.

On the 26th September, at Rocky Vale Villa, W Beebe, senr, aged 60 years.

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**THE DEATH OF WILLIAM BEEBE SENIOR.**

On Saturday afternoon about 2.30 o'clock Mr Wm Beebe, senior, the well known stone and monumental mason of Mitchell Street, Bendigo, breathed his last at his residence on the Marong road. He had been ailing for some time from a bronchial affection and latterly was unable to lie down or sleep, but up to the last moment he retained his faculties and was very precise in giving instructions regarding his funeral and interment. He died very peaceably. Deceased was a native of Rutlandshire, England. He had several brothers, one of whom was killed in the Crimean war; another was killed at Charing Cross, Bendigo, by a lorry running over him, and a third is a stationmaster with the railway company with which Mr Speight was associated in England.

Some 37 years ago deceased emigrated to Victoria, and after a voyage of 100 days was landed at Port Fairy. He proceeded inland to Dunkell, where he remained for some time. From there he shifted to Melbourne, but after a brief stay went on to Bendigo, and pitched his tent where the old pound stands on the M'Ivor Road. The life of a gold digger had no attractions for him; and he at once commenced work at his trade - that of a stonemason on the site of the present Bank of Australasia. This was some thirty five years ago. Having a strong liking for a country life he took up a selection on the Marong road opposite the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel, and, with the able assistance of his wife, followed the dairying business for about eight years. Then leaving her to superintend the farm he devoted himself to contracting, in Eaglehawk chiefly, for a few years until he removed to Bendigo, and started the stone and monumental business in Mitchell Street, a business which, with the assistance of Mr Wm Beebe jun, has steadily progressed, and now occupies a very prominent position in Victoria. He was a man of great persistence of character, and a hard worker.

After his day's labors in the stoneyard he would labor on his farm with untiring energy, building dams, barns, stables and planting an orchard, and of late years he commenced the erection of a fine stone mansion, which has just been finished, the stone being obtained,

except the granite facings, from an adjacent ridge of rocks. A large portion of all this work was executed by himself, through working late into the night, and there is not the slightest doubt, but the bodily strain told on him as he grew in years.

Deceased took a great interest in political and social movements, and had very pronounced opinions. He was associated with Messrs Don, Lumsden and Galloway in Melbourne in the early fifties in opposing the sale of public lands; and on Bendigo he has always been a warm upholder of the principle of leasing the lands, and only quite recently he issued a pamphlet on the nationalisation of land. He was the first to quarry stone from the Grampians, and he convened the first meeting on Bendigo in connection with the masons' trade to establish the eight hours' system, and the masons were the first trade in the colony to adopt the system. Deceased, who was 64 years of age, leaves a wife and four sons and three daughters, grown up, to mourn their loss. He will be interred in the Back Creek Cemetery, and the funeral takes place this forenoon.

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**Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Tue 29 Sep 1891 Page 2**

Funeral of Mr W Beebe Senr.

The funeral of the late Mr William Beebe senr, took place yesterday forenoon, the remains being conveyed from his residence, Marong Road to the Back Creek Cemetery. Considering the hour, and that the funeral was strictly private, there was a large attendance of the old friends of the deceased gentleman.

The three oldest sons occupied the first mourning coach with Mr W D C Denovan (town clerk), an old friend of the deceased. The second mourning coach was filled with friends. The Rev J Hunter Potter attended at the house as a friend, but took no other part. The cortege reached the cemetery about 12 o'clock the mortal remains of the departed gentleman being, in accordance with his express desire, interred in the open ground beside the remains of his two children buried there some years ago.

At the request of the family, Mr Denovan made a few remarks at the grave. He commenced by stating that standing round the bier of the departed one brought forcibly to their minds the circumstances of life and reminded them that here they had no continued abode. The lesson was a solemn one to them all to be ready - as the deceased was - when the hour came for them to yield up their mortal lives. He did not think that when the last hour came it was so much the views held by them on important things; it was their lives, and he felt assured that when the great roll was opened that the deceased would have a good record, and that the balance would be on the right side of the ledger.

The deceased had been a kind affectionate father, an energetic and useful citizen, and one who was esteemed by all who knew him. They could but express sympathy for the bereaved widow and family, and it was gratifying for all to know that the family was a credit to their departed friend. In consigning the remains to their last resting place, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," he (Mr Denovan) could only exclaim "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into thy rest."

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"Rocky Vale Villa 1891.  
Built in Golden Square near Kronk St by  
stonemason William Beebe Senior using  
sandstone and granite quarried at the property."



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### Rocky Vale Villa

The villa was designed and built by stonemason William Beebe Senior (c 1827-1891), and two of whose sons, John and William, followed their father to become stonemasons, later practising as architects. The house took almost 20 years to construct, and was finally completed in 1891, the same year that William Beebe Senior died. It was built of sandstone and granite quarried at the property, with Harcourt granite used for the **lintels and quoins**.

*Compiler note:*

*The corner stones of a building are called quoins and a lintel is a structural horizontal block that spans the space or opening between two vertical supports.*

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### *FAMILY HISTORY*

**John Beebe (1866-1936)**

**Published: 7 July 2019**

**(National Trust of Australia)**

The name 'Beebe' and its variations are interesting. It comes from the Old English 'beo' meaning 'bee' and 'byr' or settlement. Combining the two, it is a place where bees are kept. The Beebe family came from Cottesmore in the county of Rutland, England. The family name is very old. This name or a variant, dates back to the 14th or even late 13th century.

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### *John Beebe's early life*

John Beebe was born in Sandhurst, near Melbourne, Victoria in 1866. He started off as a stonemason with his father William who carried on his business in Bendigo, Victoria. A newspaper report dated 28th Sep 1891, informs of the death of his father, aged 60, on 26th

September. He had just completed a substantial stone mansion Rocky Vale Villa.

It appears that John who was a member of his father's firm from about 1890 (William Beebe and Son). He turned solely to architecture from 1892 after his father's death. John's brother William and his son Wilfred John Beebe

John's brother was called William, after his father. Like John, William was also in business with his father and turned exclusively to architecture after his father's death. Wilfred John Beebe is William's son and in 1914, he was apprenticed to his father. He was a draftsman.

He saw meritorious service in the AIF in World War I, being wounded at least once. He served in Egypt, Gallipoli and the Western front. He rose from the rank of Corporal at joining, to Sergeant. Wilfred appears to have spent several years post-war in Brisbane (around 1925 in the Oxley electorate, namely the South Brisbane area as this electorate then was) and though living in a different electorate from John, may well have had contact with his uncle.

They were of the same general profession and John was then in private practice. Wilfred returned to Victoria, possibly as the great depression took hold and in 1931 is recorded at Kooyong City, Melbourne. Wilfred came back to Queensland, because he died in Brisbane on 25th August 1937, aged 51, and was buried in Nundah cemetery.

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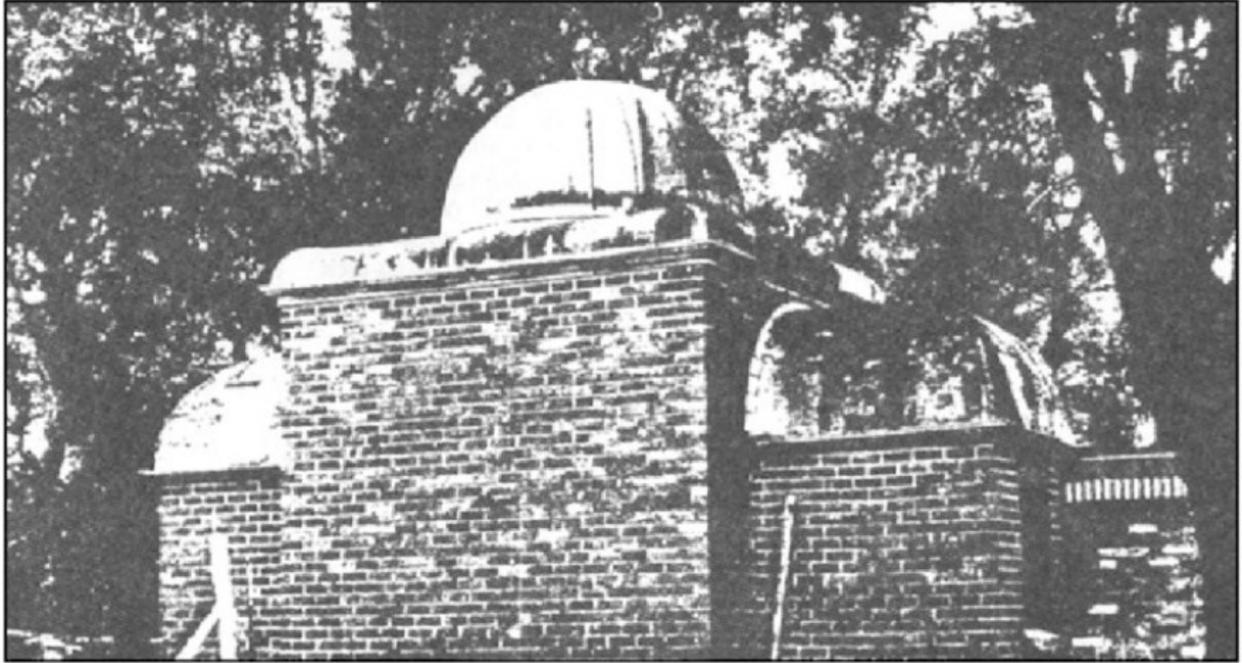
#### *John's career in Bendigo*

John married in 1887. In Bendigo in 1901, John entered a partnership with Henry Vahland, then William Vahland until 1912 when he became the sole proprietor of the business.

Astronomy in Bendigo

John Beebe's East Bendigo Observatory (Martin & Orchiston 1987)

John's solid brick East Bendigo observatory dates from the 1890's and also served as a defacto public observatory. There are no major instruments recorded, the largest being 12cm aperture. It is conjectured that his instruments were sold when he left, and the building abandoned. Still standing, by the 1980's it was derelict.



11 John Beebe 's East Bendigo Observatory served as a de facto public observatory for the citizens of Bendigo, Victoria (after Martin and Orchiston 1987 : 5)

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Compiled by Pat & Ian Belmont  
in June 2018  
for the Bendigo Cemetery Obituaries & Notes