



R Y M I L L

COONAWARRA

CHRONOLOGY OF COONAWARRA

20 April 1845

Duncan Cameron applied for an occupation license and was the first European settler to occupy the majority of the Coonawarra Ridge. He later observed *'As I am the first settler who took out a license in the District I picked out the driest spot I could find.'*

19 December 1845

Duncan's nephew, Alexander Cameron, applied for an occupation license for the contiguous run to the south, which became known as Limestone Ridge.

4 April 1850

Alexander Cameron purchased 80 acres (32ha) of freehold land on which he founded the township of Penola.

October 1861

John Riddoch purchased Yallum, located on Section 93, Hundred of Monbullia, 7km west of Penola. He soon planted vines, began making wine, and attempted to establish a fruit colony in the Hundred of Penola, which failed mainly due to the isolation of the district.

October 1866

Local priest and scientist, the Reverend Julian Edmund Tenison Woods, published the first geological map to define the Penola-Coonawarra dune ridge in his *Report on the Geology and Mineralogy of the South-Eastern District of the Colony of South Australia*. Government Printer. Adelaide. 1866.

18 November 1885

John Riddoch turned the first sod for the Mount Gambier to Naracoorte railway.

June 1887

The opening of the Mount Gambier to Naracoorte railway ended Penola's isolation. Naracoorte was already connected by rail to Adelaide.

14 April 1890

John Riddoch delivered a speech to the Penola Agricultural Bureau titled 'Vine and Fruit Growing' in which he advocated the sub-division of the large estates in the district, to promote employment, economic activity and immigration.

24 May 1890

Advertisements for 1,000 acres (405ha) of blocks appeared in The Border Watch. A manager and consultants, including William Wilson of Petticoat Lane, Penola, were appointed.

31 July 1890

The drawing for choice of the Penola Fruit Colony blocks took place at The Royal Oak Hotel, Penola.

Winter 1890

During the winter Riddoch established The Nursery (Section 455, Hundred of Comaum), and planted two acres of pinot noir vines at Katnook (Section 214, Hundred of Penola).

Winter 1891

During the winter the first major planting, of over 90,000 vines and 10,000 fruit trees, was made by the original colonists.

March 1895

First vintage: 1,800 gallons of wine were made in a shed at The Nursery, under the supervision of the nurseryman, Frederick Wood. (132ha had been planted to vines.)

March 1896

Second vintage: 6,000 gallons of wine were made in the Katnook Woolshed, by the first winemaker, William Salter.

March 1897

Third vintage: 20,000 gallons of wine were made in the New Cellars, designed by William Salter.

July 1897

The Penola Fruit Colony School (now restaurant) opened, with Estelle Senior as the first teacher.

August 1897

The Penola Fruit Colonists Association changed its name to the Coonawarra Fruit and Vine Growers Association, taking the name from the label of Riddoch's first vintage. They also adopted the name Coonawarra for the new township and settlement.

15 July 1901

John Riddoch (born 27 October 1827) died at Yallum, aged 73.

1908

Bill Redman bought a 16 ha block from the Estate of John Riddoch.

1914

Drain C was dug, which altered the hydrology of the district.

25 November 1910

Chateau Tanunda Ltd bought the old Riddoch Winery.

4 January 1917

The Milne family bought the old Riddoch winery, installed a twin column still and began brandy production in 1921.

1921 to 1950

Only 19ha of vineyards (Redman's) continued to produce grapes for table wine.

2 October 1951

Coonawarra Estate Ltd (David & Samuel Wynn) bought the old Riddoch Winery.

31 December 1995

Foundation stone of Rymill Coonawarra Winery laid by Judith Rymill.

6 January 2003

Coonawarra Geographic Indication entered into the Register of Protected Names.