



Unknown artist, *Wattle House, residence of Samuel Jackson*, oil on canvas, c. 1860.
Pictures Collection, H2013.382

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Acquired 2013

This painting (c. 1860) shows 'Wattle House', designed and built by Samuel Jackson (1807–76), in a street that bears his family name in the Melbourne suburb of St Kilda. It depicts a substantial two-storey house and a formal garden with paths and European plantings. On the front verandah Samuel Jackson himself sits reading, while his wife stands in attendance beside him. Their daughter Mary Ann, accompanied by the family dog, can be seen in the garden.

Samuel Jackson, with his brother William, arrived in the colony of Port Phillip from Tasmania in 1835. At first they grazed sheep near Sunbury, an area now known as Jackson's Creek. By 1839 Samuel had moved to Melbourne and returned to his previous occupation of builder, which he had practised in Tasmania. He also advertised himself as an architect.¹ However, it was land dealings that enabled both the Jackson brothers to retire 'home' to England as wealthy men.

In 1843 Jackson bought blocks in the first Crown land sales at St Kilda, and subsequently bought and sold others in the vicinity. At one time his landholdings were more than 200 acres (87 hectares), where Fitzroy and Grey streets are now situated.² Part of his holdings was known as Wattle Paddock, from which the house took its name. Exactly when Jackson built 'Wattle House' is unknown, but it seems clear the family lived at this location for about 20 years.

The Jacksons returned to England in 1862, and it is presumed took the painting with them. It belonged to his daughter before being passed to other descendants, until it was offered for sale by a London auction house in 2004. It was purchased by the State Library with assistance from the Library Foundation.

There is no evidence at present that Jackson painted the work himself, but he was a competent draftsman. A panorama of Melbourne he completed in 1841, during the building of Scots' Church on the corner of Russell and Collins streets, is in the Library's collection. The drawing is composed of nine sheets of paper 43 centimetres high, joined together to form a continuous view 555 centimetres long (LT 1043). But regardless of authorship, the painting is a valuable record of life in the Port Phillip colony. 'Wattle House' still stands, one of the few pre-gold-rush-era buildings to do so.³ Admittedly it has been greatly altered, but it remains a remarkable survivor in a now highly urban landscape.