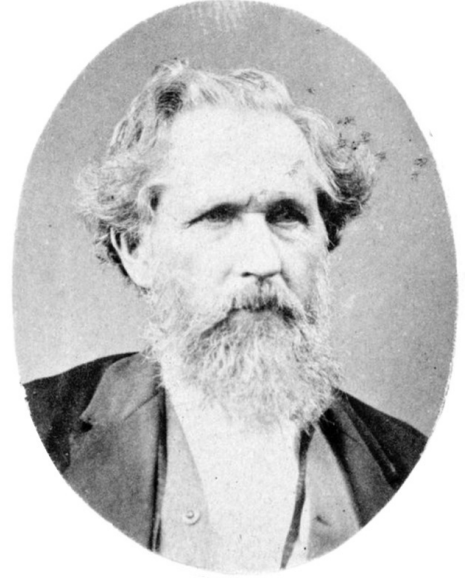


## Nehemiah Guthridge – early Northcote Settler.

P Michell, 2019

Nehemiah Guthridge (1808 - 1878) was an Irish-born early Melbourne Pioneer and councillor. Parliamentarian in the Legislative Council, railway promoter, active Wesleyan and the first mayor of Sale in 1863. A busy man with many children.

With his nephew, Richard Guthridge, they arrived in Melbourne in 1841 having been successful business men in Sydney. They eventually settled in Northcote, building substantial residences on large estates, in the 1850s, reflecting their status and wealth. Nehemiah built **Turret House** (picture), Richard built what would later be known as **Wardrop House** in Bastings St. Unfortunately both have long been demolished.



Nehemiah had been actively purchasing (and selling?) land around Melbourne since the late 1840s. He settled on the eastern side of Northcote Hill where he constructed a 'mini mansion' on the north side of Park St to the railway. The house and its extensive grounds pre-date the railway cutting by three decades. With a lookout turret, the stone built house was located just beneath James St and commanded western views across the Merri Creek plain.



When sold in 1860s the house and grounds were described as

*Beautifully situated miniature mansion. Contains on ground floor – entrance hall, dining room], drawing room, library, and ample domestic arrangements. Bedroom floor contains six large and commodious bedrooms, leading into the balcony. The turret has two rooms, overlooking extensive green pasturage.*

*Conservatory plus a kitchen garden of three acres planted with 250 choice fruit trees and grape vines. Three-stall stable, coach house, loft and men's room ... beautiful pleasure grounds, lakes, grottoes and bridges.. Total of 9 acres extending to the Pipe Track (St Georges Rd) and back to Clarke Street. A sweeping drive led to the house; an artificial lake, with willows surrounding, on the flat at the foot of the hill.*

Later occupants of Turret House included the Robinson and Angus families. The latter managing Angus & Co manufacturing company in Arthurton Rd. (Ink, poster paints and the famous clag paste all made at Angus & Co.)



By the mid 1850s Nehemiah Guthridge was a director of Colonial Insurance Company. Richard, of course, was the chairman. They jointly ran the very successful *R & N Guthridge & Co - Saddlers, Ironmongers & Importers* in Flinders Lane. He is credited for building Temple Court, soon to be the centre of legal practice in Melbourne. A satirical cartoon portrays him as the ‘Peer’ of Temple Court. (Temple Court apartments at 422 Collins St is a 1924 building on the same site. Famous for a Napier Waller Aboriginal mural.)

Nehemiah interest in Northcote seems limited to the then newly built Wesleyan church and schoolroom (1854) on the east side of High St. Was school superintendent for six years. Now the Wesley Anne café at 250 High St.

One of his ‘side interests’ was the ‘new fangled invention’ – the railway. He actively promoted two future lines. With Nicholson was an early instigator of Hobson’s Bay Railway Co. Heavily backed the Ballarat & Geelong Railway. With the latter he lost a considerable sum of money. Possibly requiring his departure to Sale.

The Hobson’s Bay railway ran from Melbourne to Sandridge (Port Melbourne) and was the first public railway in Australia, Operating from 1854. Amazingly, for the time, the first steam locomotive was built in Australia in ten weeks for £2700.

In 1861 Nehemiah leaves Northcote and begins a new life in Sale, Gippsland. Taking over a local ironmongery business. Never one to take life easy, he campaigned actively for businesses in the area and self governance. Becomes first Mayor of Sale and re-elected three times. Established the first regular shipping service between Gippsland and Melbourne. (He owned the ships.) His many contributions to the development of Sale and its surrounds is reflected in the number of landmarks named after him including Guthridge Lake, which he established. A bronze plaque was installed in the Esso / BHP building in Sale. A reflection on the Guthridge importance there.

In poor health he returned to Melbourne and died in 1878 at his nephew’s house.

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