

## Lost Houses Mysteries: Part 4

### Wissahickon/Seiano



*Wissahickon, 683 Ipswich Rd, Annerley, Queenslander, 13 August 1921, p. 22.*

This Californian Bungalow was for many years a landmark on Ipswich Road, opposite Chardon's Corner hotel. It was famously known as the Cilento family home: but where did it go to? And does it still exist?

Firstly, the home had a life before it became known as *Seiano*. This home was most probably built for Matilda Aulsebrook during the First World War years, around 1916. Matilda, who was the owner of the property, had been born in Philadelphia in the United States in 1849, came to Australia, and married Alexander Aulsebrook (a cardboard box manufacturer). They moved to their first *Wissahickon* (being the name of a neighbourhood in Lower Northwest Philadelphia and presumably having significance to Matilda) which was also in Annerley on Ipswich Road.

Alexander had died in 1915 and by 1919, Matilda and her son Charles, who appears to have taken over the box manufacturing business, were well-established on the corner of Villa St and Ipswich Rd, and a photo appeared of their spacious house in the *Queenslander* of 13

August 1921.<sup>1</sup> However, a return to the US was on the cards for Matilda. It was up for sale in 1923, complete with the famous red path that many people still remember.<sup>2</sup>

**FOR PRIVATE SALE.**

**“WISSAHICKON,” IPSWICH-ROAD.**

That beautiful and attractive tile roof Bungalow right at the Ipswich-road tram terminus, and backing on to Yeronga Park. An ideal position, with two street frontages.

This is without doubt one of the prettiest and one of the most modern Californian Bungalow Homes in Brisbane. It stands well back from the road, on five allotments of land, artistically laid out with gardens and well-kept paths, including a wide red cement path from the main entrance to the front steps.

The house has been carefully planned, with all the bedrooms (4 in all) on the north-eastern side of the house, opening on to a mosquito proof veranda. The southern side of the house comprises large sitting and dining rooms, with smaller office and breakfast room. The kitchen is conveniently placed, with steps leading down under the house under the main roof. Every detail of modern convenience has been studied in the house. Electric light, gas stove, telephone, septic tank, and special attention has been paid to the bathroom and fittings. The extended gable over the front veranda gives a large sitting-out space, and the view from the side veranda is over the park.

There is a pretty and quaint garage, with concrete floor and pit, with concrete wash outside.

This house was built about 1916, and no money was spared in detail, and special care has been given to the whole property from the day it was built.

Photographs may be inspected at our office. Inspection by appointment only.

Full particulars of price, &c., on application to the sole agents.

**THORPE & SHARP,**  
ADELAIDE-STREET.

*'For Private Sale - "Wissahickon", [683] Ipswich Rd, Annerley, Brisbane Courier, 23 May 1923, p. 16.*

The home passed through a few more families (including the Bolderys, Mrs W. Fraser and Francis and Margaret Wilson's) before it came into the hands of Raphael and Phyllis Cilento and their family of 6 children and it was while they were living here that Raphael was knighted, and they became Sir and Lady Cilento. The Cilento story and the story of *Seiano* are well documented – you can read about Phyllis (McGlew) Cilento in our *Women of Stephens* book and, in *The Accidental Present* by Ross Wilson, you can find out about the relationship between Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) and the Cilentos and the four generations of Cilentos that lived in *Seiano*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Advertising', *Queenslander*, 13 August 1921, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> 'Advertising', *Brisbane Courier*, 23 May 1923, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Sheaffe, 'Lady Cilento', in *Women of Stephens*, compiled by Denis Peel, Pauline Peel and Kate Dyson, Brisbane, ASHG Inc., 2022, pp. 95 - 102; Ross Wilson, *The Accidental Present*, Brisbane, AndAlso Books, 2023.

## Lost Houses: Mysteries



*Seiano*, 683 Ipswich Rd, Annerley, photo by David Cilento, *Australian Women's Weekly*, July 2, 1958, p. 21.

Not long after this photo was taken, the land was sold to Shell to build a petrol station.<sup>4</sup> The Cilento family took their home, *Seiano*, sawn into 3 parts, on the back of a truck in the dead of night, to 268 Vulture St at Kangaroo Point where it remained for a few years, until the plans for the Captain Cook Bridge pushed their way through in the late 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

And supposedly that was the end of *Seiano* (although reportedly there were parts of it, including the fireplace and replanted saplings from the garden in Annerley, that made their way to the new Cilento home, *Altavilla*, on Glen Rd in Toowong.)



Home of Sir Raphael and Lady Cilento on the corner of Villa Street and Ipswich Road, Annerley in 1958

Home of Sir Raphael and Lady Cilento on the corner of Villa Street and Ipswich Road, Annerley in 1958, Queensland Newspapers Pty Ltd, SLQ.

In 2016, a Facebook post and then a couple of articles in glossy home magazines caught my eye: an elegant, refurbished home that had supposedly been moved from Annerley in the 1970s, built in the 1880s, and now with an address near Sandgate in the Moreton Bay area, and it was reportedly the Cilento Home.<sup>6</sup>

From the new owner on Facebook responding to the black and white photo of *Seiano*:

<sup>4</sup> *Australian Women's Weekly*, July 2, 1958, p. 21; 'New Annerley driveway', *Comet*, 12 November 1959, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Sheaffe, 'Lady Cilento', p. 95; Ross Wilson, *The Accidental Present*, pp. 50 and 93.

<sup>6</sup> Tamara Simoneau, 'Bold and Beautiful', *Australian Country Homes*, No. 6, 2019, pp. 84-90.

## Lost Houses: Mysteries

*'We now live in the Cilento house - it was moved from Annerley in the 70s to its current position. This photo shows the clinic end which was attached to our 'playroom' as it is now. The residence was built in 1883 and very different of course from this architecture of the 30s [...] it was moved in the dead of night in 1973.'*<sup>7</sup>

I can't reconcile the date, the look, and the fact that the house had already been moved to Kangaroo Point in the 1960s. But who did the pictured house originally belong to? It obviously has an interesting back story. And who was the 'infamous fraudster' also mentioned in the articles as an owner – was this another house owned by the Cilentos in Annerley or in another suburb? A mystery to be solved – what do you think?



*Photo by John Downs, Australian Country Homes, #6, 2019.*



*Photo by John Downs, Australian Country Homes, #6, 2019.*

---

<sup>7</sup> Jodie Ladhams, responding to Gary A. Collet's post, 'Old Brisbane Album', Facebook, 28 November 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/OldBrisbaneAlbum/posts/1252597338119639> .

## Hardcastle's Hotel/Clifton



*Clifton, (792?) Ipswich Road, Annerley, Soden family residence ca 1895, State Library of Queensland.*

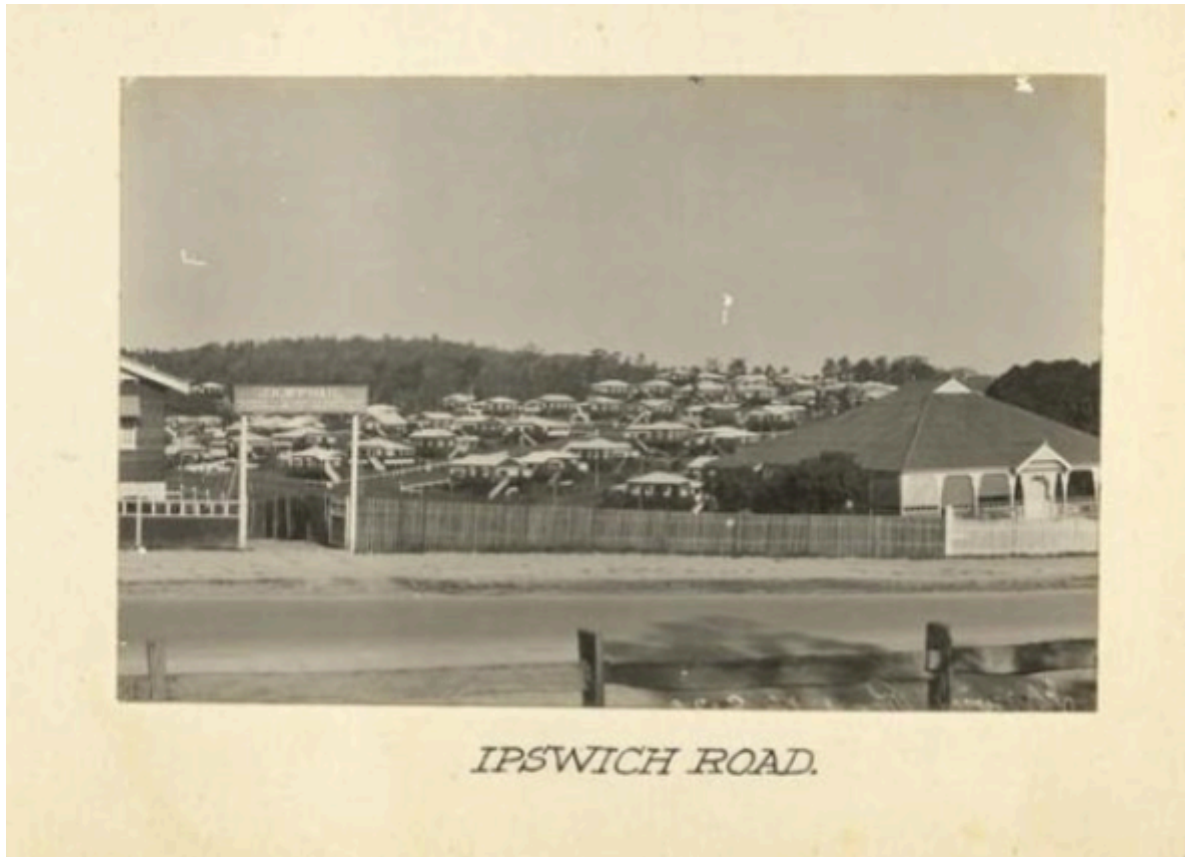
This house pictured above was the family home and business of the Soden family in Annerley. There have been two different houses named *Clifton* built in roughly the same place on Ipswich Rd – opposite School Rd and the Yeronga Memorial Park. This first home, previously *Hardcastle's Victoria Hotel*, was possibly built on the next lot to the south of the second, but this has yet to be confirmed.

The first building dated back to the old Cobb and Co days of colonial Brisbane, when the *Victoria Hotel* (owned by the Hardcastles and later bought by the Sodens and renamed *Clifton*) was one of the few permanent buildings on this stretch of Ipswich Road, and its address was commonly known as the 'the old bus stables', which could be found at Four Mile Swamp.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> 'Advertising', *Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser*, 7 December 1905, p. 6; State of Queensland, 'Qld State Electoral Rolls, District of Logan, Division of South Brisbane', 1915, p. 106.

## Lost Houses: Mysteries



Clifton, (792?) Ipswich Road, Views on Brisbane Tramways, ca 1928, Queensland Parliament Collections, <https://collections.parliament.qld.gov.au/objects/4281/views-on-brisbane-tramways>

This house has been lost twice. The original *Victoria/Hardcastle's Hotel* burned down in 1915 and was replaced by the vernacular timber and tin Queenslander home which can be seen here above (with the newly built Clifton Hill War Service Homes Estate behind) in approximately 1928.<sup>9</sup> To the left is the business sign of Joseph Kenneth McPhail, a plumber.

After the death of Betsy Ann Soden in 1947, this house passed into the hands of other owners. In 1958, members of the Symons family lived at 792 Ipswich Road - they are well-known in Queensland for their clothes manufacturing and, in particular, George Symons Suits. Later the house became part of a car sales business, and locals may remember the red and white stripes on the corrugated iron roof that faced south.

---

<sup>9</sup> 'Fires in South Brisbane', *Telegraph*, 14 June 1915, p. 8; Ipswich Road, *Views on Brisbane Tramways*, ca 1928, Queensland Parliament Collections, <https://collections.parliament.qld.gov.au/objects/4281/views-on-brisbane-tramways>.

## Lost Houses: Mysteries



*Clifton before removal, date unknown, photo courtesy Desley Soden*

If you are local, you will know this house is no longer there, having been removed sometime after 1987, and that there have been a few buildings, including a car yard, onsite. It won't be too long before this site, which once had a coachworks and blacksmiths, is home to a new Coles.



85 Norman Crescent, Norman Park, photo from realestate.com, <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/85-norman-cres-norman-park-qld-4170/>

position seems to be there in the Brisbane City Council 1934 Detail Plan.<sup>10</sup> But it was worth shooting an email off to Kevin Rudd anyway. Maybe *Clifton* did go on to be a prime minister's home! If it didn't, where did it go?

Where did the Soden house go – was it demolished? I have heard that it was removed to Norman Park and that it possibly had gone to *Early Street Village* as part of the historic display there - and maybe it did. I did spend some lost hours trying to work out whether it was this house pictured above in Norman Park at 85 Norman Crescent, but mainly because it was the house that Therese Rein and Kevin Rudd lived in when he became prime minister. After a little further research, it looks unlikely as the house in no. 85's

<sup>10</sup> Brisbane City Council Water Supply and Sewerage Department, 'Detail Plan 864', 1934.

## Annie and Ted Mackenzie's house on Aubigny St



Annie and Ted Mackenzie's house, 60 Aubigny St, Annerley, Frank and Eunice Corley Photo Collection, ca 1970, SLQ. <https://explorer.corley.slq.qld.gov.au/#!/photograph/6169-3464-0023>.

Here is the story of Annie and Ted Mackenzie's house at 60 Aubigny St Annerley– this one, like many in the suburbs around it, got lost in the night!

This is a *Frank and Eunice Corley Collection* [SLQ] photo taken around 1970, and was the home built for newlyweds, Annie and Ted McKenzie, in the 1930s in Aubigny St Annerley.<sup>11</sup> This house was there when I moved into my own house in Moorooka around the corner, and I remember thinking how great it was that the house Annie wrote so lovingly about in her autobiography, *Memories of an Octogenarian*, was still there.<sup>12</sup> In 1992, Annie also wrote *Memories along the Boggo Track*, a local history compilation) and Annie Mackenzie herself was the subject of a chapter in *Women of Stephens* written by Jeanette Wiley, if you would like to learn more about her.<sup>13</sup>

Ted Mackenzie was given the land by his parents after his brother's wife rejected the plot as being too close to the in-laws who lived up the road. Ted and Annie Smith, newly engaged, took up the offer of land, and looked at stock plans from the *Workers Development Board [WDB]*, and eventually Annie drew up what her 'dream house' would look like. Ted had to

---

<sup>11</sup> 60 Aubigny St, Annerley, *Frank and Eunice Corley Photo Collection*, ca 1970, SLQ. <https://explorer.corley.slq.qld.gov.au/#!/photograph/6169-3464-0023>.

<sup>12</sup> Annie Mackenzie, *Memories of an Octogenarian*, Brisbane, Boolarong, 1995.

<sup>13</sup> Annie Mackenzie, *Memories along the Boggo Track*, Brisbane, Boolarong, 1992; Jeanette Wiley, 'Annie Anderson Mackenzie from along the Boggo track', in *Women of Stephens*, compiled by Denis Peel, Pauline Peel and Kate Dyson, Brisbane, ASHG Inc., 2022, pp. 45-52.



## Lost Houses: Mysteries

stand in a queue from 4 am at the Treasury building to get their application for a *WDB* loan in, and the house was gradually built – it was during a tin strike, so the roof had to be either tile or fibro, and fibro was cheaper, and so fibro it was.<sup>14</sup>

Annie kept Ted's letters to her as she worked as a teacher in the bush. Ted wrote he thought the house would 'look great and the best in Annerley' - although he thought the paint job 'was the worst this side of Cribb Island'.<sup>15</sup> When it was almost finished, Ted wrote that he had been advised to sleep in the house to prevent people coming to camp in the empty premises. He also thought he had to get the fence up pretty quickly to prevent 'one of the neighbouring fellows' who had 'kept himself in timber off-cuts since the building started' making off with any more'.<sup>16</sup> Coming home from her teaching job in Guanaba (she had to resign on getting married), Annie cleaned up the mess made by the builders and made the curtains for her new home.<sup>17</sup>

It was to serve them well for many years – with 3 children and trees planted in their garden for their birth days – Annie taught at Yeronga High School, and they took over the Rigby house in Yeronga and managed a wedding reception business.<sup>18</sup> After 40 years, Annie and Ted sold their Annerley house and moved to the Gold Coast.

The house remained on site in Aubigny St for another 30-odd years. At some time after 2002, the house and land were sold. One night, I remember hearing the creaking and groaning of a truck taking away the house, and I thought the house was protesting as it was hauled away. The next day, Annie Mackenzie's house was gone – where it went I have absolutely no idea. But, like the 'neighbour fellow' who had so annoyed Ted in 1938, we took some bits of wood from the yard to make a cubby house for our young children in our garden around the corner. I don't think they would mind too much.

And this is what took its place: I have often wondered if the jacaranda planted for Annie and Ted's wedding, and the other tree such as laburnum, frangipani, bauhinia and 3 book pines planted for each of their children in 1940, '42, and '44 are still there in the backyard.



60 Aubigny St, December 2024, K. Dyson own photo.

---

<sup>14</sup> See Annie Mackenzie, 'Chapter 14 - A house is built 1938', *Octogenarian*, for citations for this paragraph, pp. 72 -77.

<sup>15</sup> Annie Mackenzie, *Octogenarian*, pp. 74 and 77.

<sup>16</sup> Annie Mackenzie, *Octogenarian*, p.77.

<sup>17</sup> Annie Mackenzie, *Octogenarian*, p.77.

<sup>18</sup> Annie Mackenzie, *Boggo Track*, pp.26 -32.

## Dunsdale, Park Road, Yeronga



65 Park Road, Yeronga, Frank and Eunice Corley Photo Collection, SLQ, ca 1970, <https://explorer.corley.slq.qld.gov.au/#!/photograph/6169-3231-0016>.

And finally: here's a house that was never intended to be moved from its site and to get lost, but it did anyway. In 1996, it was included in the Brisbane History Group's 'Yeronga Heritage Tour' and the authors wrote this about *Dunsdale*, 65 Park Road, which was built circa 1888:

*The house bordered by Park Rd, Killarney St and Cork St is surrounded by mature trees [...]. It displays colonial features of timber and tin construction although the gabled porch at the front dates from the inter-war period. [...] It is not a large residence like other colonials in the estate, but fits a lesser type built for middle class families in the 1880s.*

*Ernest G Barton, a draughtsman, was recorded as being the first resident [...] and he resided in the house until in the new century the Primrose family occupied the house in the 1920s. Stan Marriott, who was raised in nearby Knowle in the 1920s, remembers Mr Primrose giving Brazilian cherries from his garden to the local children as they passed by.<sup>19</sup>*

Fast forward a few years, and a new *City Plan* was being developed. The house was initially included in the advertised version of the *City Plan* in 2000, but somehow was dropped from the final version due to a 'technical flaw of the maps of the *City Plan*'.<sup>20</sup> Protests by the council and residents were unable to be accommodated when the house was purchased with the intent to remove it to another inner-city location (which was perfectly acceptable

<sup>19</sup> Bronwyn Price, compiler, 'Yeronga Heritage Tour', Paper No 18, Brisbane, Brisbane History Group, 1996, pp. 22-23.

<sup>20</sup> 'Yeronga to lose historic home after bungle', *Courier Mail*, 3 July 2002, p. 8.

## Lost Houses: Mysteries

under the *City Plan* as it stood). And so, it has gone to another Brisbane site. Another house that is lost to the locality, but hopefully is happy and loved at its new address. Wherever that may be.

**Yeronga to lose historic home after bungle**

A HISTORIC Queenslander built in the 1880s will soon be moved from its Yeronga foundations because of a Brisbane City Council planning bungle.

The old colonial home-  
stead was inadvertently left out of the demolition control precinct, which would have prevented its removal, when the City Plan was approved in 2000.

Despite protests from council and nearby residents, the building will be relocated later this month and the land on which it is



MISSED ... historic 1880s Queenslander.

located will be developed. Deputy Mayor Tim Quinn said that the "important heritage house", although included in the advertised

version of City Plan, was somehow dropped from the final version.

"Council has a strong view that the house should be retained on that site, but because of a technical flaw of the maps of City Plan, it does not have legal coverage," he said. "I have urged the applicant that the council's wishes are for the house to stay, but it does not look promising."

Owner Chris Slack said he bought the Park Rd house on the understanding it could be removed.

"I spent thousands of dollars on professional fees — both solicitors, town planners, surveyors and whatever else — before I bought that property. They all advised me that under the town plan I could do this."

Mr Slack said he was moving the house to another inner-city location where it would be his principal place of residence.

The site would be appropriately redeveloped for student accommodation.

— Lachlan Heywood

3/5/02 C.M. p.8.

Dunsdale, 65 Park Road, Yeronga, Courier Mail, May 3 2002, p. 8, 'Yeronga suburb newspaper cuttings folder', SLQ.

These are just some of the mysteries of the lost houses of our area that are still to be solved. Houses come and go, homes are made, and families move on. Memories are what keep these places alive in our hearts and minds. We look forward to discovering more about the lost houses of our area.