

dom, the Secretary of State for the Colonies granted them 'Absolute Pardons' on 19 July 1836, though this was not known until the arrival of the despatch in Sydney in December that year.

Ninas, Vassilakis, Voulagris, Laritsos, Papandross, and Strombolis set off for home soon afterwards. For reasons unknown, Antonis and Ghikas Voulgaris did not join their shipmates. Yet in September 1839, the pair presented a 'humble petition' to Governor Sir George Gipps requesting, if he would

be pleased to grant them the necessary means to enable them to return to their native country as soon as possible<sup>3</sup>.

The Governor curiously replied: 'Let passages be provided for them.' However, in April 1840, Antonis and Voulgaris were still in Sydney. The Principal Superintendent of Convicts informed Gipps that the Hellenes had 'declined the offer of a free passage at present but would do so at some future time.' The senior British official's displeasure was quite clear in his response:

As they have now had two offers of passage to England, I cannot but think that all their claims on the Govt. are satisfied, and I cannot undertake to provide them a passage hereafter.

Whether the five made it home remains a mystery. The stories of Antonis and Voulgaris thereafter are presented below.

# Ghikas Voulgaris

At the time of his pardon, Voulgaris was employed on a frontier grazing property north of Braidwood in south-east New South Wales. By now 'Jigger Bulgary', he married a 19-year-old servant girl from County Cork, Ireland, named Mary Lyons at the pioneer grazing property *Arnprior*, nineteen kilometres north of Braidwood. Over the next 20 years, the Bulgarys had five sons and five daughters. After settling at Bukalong, a village west of Bombala, Bulgary bought a nearby 'block' of 26 hectares of lightly timbered hillside near the Bombala River at a Crown lands sale in 1858. On its upper slope, Voulgaris built a substantial sawn-timber house, which remained standing until its demolition in 1967.

Apparently, the family prospered as in 1863, the Bulgarys soon secured another 126 hectares at a Crown land auction as a 'free selector'. This purchase was on a well-watered eastern slope of Ando Hill, fronting the Nimmitabel Road, 24 kilometres north of Bombala. Voulgaris built a timber-slab house on this land, planting a grove of pine trees which still stand today. This home was demolished in the 1930s.

Sometime after 1866, 'Jigger' and Mary moved north to Nimitybelle Station, a sheep-run about eleven kilometres south-west of Nimmitabel<sup>4</sup>, maintaining ownership of his property to the south. In 1867, he was naturalised at Bombala.

There he spent the rest of his life, passing away at his home on 12 July 1874, of 'apoplexy'. Over the years, his name has been spelt 33 different ways in Australian records, including 'Bulgaris', 'Burgery' and 'Bulgary'. About fifteen months before he died, he signed his will in Hellenic as 'Tsikas Bolgkeris'<sup>5</sup>.

Bulgary was buried with Roman Catholic rites in the Old Nimmitabel Cemetery. In the 1990s, the Greek Orthodox Community of Canberra and District Saint Nicholas funded a restoration of his gravestone and tomb.

When Bulgary died in 1874 he left a substantial inheritance to his surviving sons and daughters. 'Jigger' left 100 pounds to each of his surviving daughters<sup>6</sup>, his Ando property to his eldest son William, who left it to his youngest brother, James Manolis, who sold it in July 1889. The rest of his estate to his five sons<sup>7</sup> in equal shares as tenants in common, subject to a life tenancy of the Nimitybelle Station to his widow, Mary, whom he directed to carry on the property. Mary Bulgary survived her husband by 25 years, living either at Nimitybelle Station, or at nearby Boco Creek, or in 1886 in Cathcart. After a year of illness, she died in 1899, aged 84 years, and was buried in an unmarked grave in the Catholic portion of the Old Nimmitabel Cemetery. Their descendants bear names like Bulgary, Macfarlane, McDonald and Stewart, and are scattered across the globe<sup>8</sup>.

