

## The Cuisinier From Brittany François Moriniere

The death of Eleanor Isabelle Jessie Moriniere in 1918 marked the end of an era for land ownership in Carlton. Her father, François Moriniere, was the original owner of a crown allotment running from Station Street through to Nicholson Street, south of Princes Street. The land, together with five houses, a shop and a factory building, stayed in the Moriniere family for more than 50 years.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1850s, the area bounded by Station, Nicholson, Elgin and Reilly (Princes) streets was reserved for the Yan Yean tramway terminus. Matthew Bullock Jackson proposed that a wooden tramway, built to aid pipe-laying for Melbourne's water supply from Yan Yean, could be converted into a railway line for carrying building materials and passengers. This major transport project never went ahead and the land was released for sale in 1863. François Moriniere was one of several land buyers who took up the opportunity and in 1864 he paid £90 for the allotment measuring 66 x 198 feet.<sup>2 3</sup>

François was a French national, born in Rennes, capital of Bretagne (Brittany) about 1831, the son of François Moriniere and Isabelle Day. A "cuisinier" (cook) by trade, he migrated to Australia via London in 1854 on the ship *Thorwaldsen*. François applied for naturalisation on 14 May 1861 and he stated his wish "to be secured in the freehold properties he has bought in Alma Street Fitzroy ..." His address at the time was 6 Albert Street East Melbourne, but he had previously lodged a *Notice of Intention* to build a house in Alma Street Fitzroy in April 1860. He followed with a second *Notice of Intention* in January 1863 for a 3 room brick cottage. Fitzroy rate books record François as owner/occupier of 14 Alma Street, while the adjoining house at 12 Alma Street was rented out.<sup>4</sup>  
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In the same year as his naturalisation, on 20 October 1861, François married Emma Elizabeth Hablethwaite at St Peter's Eastern Hill. Emma, the daughter of Thomas Hablethwaite and Eleanor Butcher, was born in Camberwell, England and was 28 years old when she married. François' and Emma's first daughter, Eleanor Isabelle Jessie, was born in Fitzroy on 11 August 1862, followed by a second daughter, Jessie Emma, on 16 May 1864. Both girls were baptized years later on 24 May 1877, in the same church where their parents were married.<sup>8 9</sup>

By 1867, a new brick house was built in Nicholson Street Carlton, north of "German Cottages". This house became the Moriniere family home, where Mrs Moriniere operated a "Ladies School" from 1869 to 1873. A second brick house was added in 1872 and a factory building in 1886. The factory was leased to Charles Heath, mantle manufacturer, who also occupied one of the houses. The mantle and cloak manufacturing business was continued by Weinberg & Lyons, and Mrs Nellie (Ellen) Elmslie, wife of MLA George Alexander Elmslie.<sup>10 11</sup>

The Moriniere family remained in Carlton until 1882, when François acquired a substantial property in Punt Road South Yarra, on land measuring 99 by 179 feet. Named "Brittany" after François' birthplace, it remained his home until his death on 25 August 1909. "Brittany" was also the death place of François' second daughter Jessie. She married surgeon dentist Edward William Linnell French on 3 April 1889 at St Peter's Eastern Hill, and died at "Brittany" on 3 March 1897.<sup>12</sup>  
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Photo: CCHG

**154 and 156 Station Street Carlton**



Photo: CCHG

**158 and 160 Station Street Carlton**



Photo: CCHG

**Site of François Moriniere's properties in Nicholson Street Carlton. The factory building facade (on the left) was added in the 1920s and the entire site was redeveloped as apartments in the 1980s.**

Following François' death in 1909, probate was granted to his widow Emma and surviving daughter Eleanor. His Carlton real estate assets, rental properties valued at a total of £2,695, were described as:

No. 273 Nicholson Street, brick factory let to Mrs Elmslie

No. 275 Nicholson Street, 2 storey brick house 8 rooms let to Mrs Elmslie

No. 277 Nicholson Street, shop and dwelling let to Mrs Hickey

No. 160 Station Street, 4 roomed brick cottage let to Mrs Hargrove

No. 158 Station Street, 3 roomed brick cottage let to Mrs Power

No. 156 Station Street, 4 roomed brick cottage let to Mrs Derby

No. 154 Station Street, 4 roomed brick cottage let to Mr Jones

Two of the Station Street cottages (nos. 154 and 156) were sold in November 1909, but the other two cottages and Nicholson Street buildings remained within the Moriniere family. Emma died at "Brittany" on 11 February 1910 and probate was granted to her daughter Eleanor and law clerk Leslie Charles Morrison. The Carlton properties were advertised for sale in May 1918 and Eleanor died 6 months later on 21 November. Probate was granted to the Union Trustee Company of Australia on 21 May 1919 and the properties were subdivided and sold to separate owners. The factory building in Nicholson Street had a makeover in the 1920s with a new facade, which can still be seen today. Over the next 60 years, a variety of clothing was manufactured on the premises - shirts, underwear, sportswear and knitwear. Bromley Knitwear was the last factory occupant in the early 1980s. The shop and dwelling was demolished by the 1970s, and the entire site was redeveloped in the 1980s as residential apartments.<sup>15 16 17 18</sup>

The Alma Street houses, François Moriniere's first freehold properties, were demolished in the 1930s and the south side of the street is now part of St Vincent's Hospital. "Brittany", the house in South Yarra where the Moriniere family lived and died, was replaced by the Dalvene flats in the 1920s. The modest brick cottages still exist in Station Street Carlton and appear remarkably unchanged.<sup>19</sup>

Judging by his real estate holdings François Moriniere, the Cuisinier from Brittany, successfully fulfilled his wish of 1861 "to be secured in the freehold properties he has bought", and he continued to prosper in his adopted country of Australia.

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#### Notes and References:

- 1 Property ownership and occupancy information sourced from land title records, rate books and Sands & McDougall directories
- 2 Plan of Allotments at Carlton, North Melbourne, Parish of Jika Jika, Public Lands Office, 1859
- 3 Yan Yean : A history of Melbourne's early water supply, Tony Dingle and Helen Doyle, PROV, 2003
- 4 Naturalisation file of François Moriniere, NAA:A712, 1861/S4339 (National Archives of Australia)
- 5 Notices of Intention to Build (VPRS 9288)
- 6 Fitzroy Rate Books
- 7 The Alma Street house numbers were changed to 10 and 8 in 1867/68
- 8 Marriage Registers, St Peter's Eastern Hill
- 9 Baptisms Solemnized in the Parish of St Peter's in the County of Bourke, Victoria AD 1877
- 10 Melbourne City Council Rate Books, Smith and Victoria Wards (VPRS 5708)
- 11 Marriage Registration No. 1799, 1887
- 12 Family Notices, *The Argus*, 26 August 1909, p. 1
- 13 Marriages Solemnized in the District of Bourke, 1889
- 14 Family Notices, *The Argus*, 6 March, 1897, p. 1
- 15 Probate file of François Moriniere, 112/556, 1909 (VPRS 28)
- 16 Probate file of Emma Elizabeth Moriniere, 116/292, 1910 (VPRS 28)
- 17 Probate file of Eleanor Isabelle Jessie Moriniere, 161/876, 1918 (VPRS 28)
- 18 Carlton, North Carlton and Princes Hill Conservation Study, Nigel Lewis & Associates, 1984
- 19 The flats were advertised as "new" in *The Argus* in 1924.