

La Trobe's Art: La Trobe's Cottage

Sunday 1 March 2020



La Trobe the Artist

La Trobe as an artist was virtually unrecognised until the publication in 1999 of all his known extant sketches and watercolours in the volume *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Landscapes and Sketches*.¹ Most of these are held in the State Library Victoria, some donated by La Trobe descendants and some acquired by the Library in 1992 from an antiquarian dealer in London as part of the collection known as the 'La Trobe Archive'.²

Before his arrival in Australia in 1839, La Trobe had travelled extensively, recording for his own pleasure and as examples of the wonderment of creation the scenery he encountered. La Trobe sketched as he travelled, with little time available to finish his works, and many of his pictures are incomplete. There are, however, a number of completed paintings which demonstrate how accomplished La Trobe was as an artist.

La Trobe's recorded scenes very early in the European history of the places he visited, such as his view of the site of the city of Chicago in 1832 as a tent encampment, and the church at Port Arthur in Tasmania, complete with the roof which was destroyed by fire a year after his visit in 1847 (not on display). La Trobe's views of Port Phillip were some of the earliest executed after the arrival of European colonists in the southern part of the Australian continent.

¹ *Charles Joseph La Trobe: Landscapes and Sketches*, introduced by Dianne Reilly, notes by Victoria Hammond, Melbourne: State Library of Victoria, in association with Tarcoola Press and National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1999.

² MS 13003. La Trobe Archive, acquired in 1992. Manuscripts Collection, State Library Victoria.

Edward La Trobe Bateman, 1816-1897

Artist, architect and landscape designer, Edward La Trobe Bateman, had established a reputation as a fine botanical artist and 'illuminator' before departing England for Australia in 1852. He came to Australia directly after working with the influential design reformer Owen Jones on the Fine Arts Court of the Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of London in 1851.

After arriving in Melbourne with Pre-Raphaelites Thomas Woolner and Bernhard Smith, he stayed at the estate of his cousin, Charles Joseph La Trobe, and subsequently produced a set of twenty-two drawings of *Jolimont*. After La Trobe's departure in 1854, Bateman developed a significant career in landscape architecture and design, designing many public and private Melbourne gardens, including the garden plan of the University of Melbourne, the Williamstown Botanic Gardens, the Carlton Gardens and Fitzroy Gardens.

George Alexander Gilbert, 1815-1877

One of Melbourne's early settlers, George Alexander Gilbert helped shape the city's emerging culture in his role as Secretary/Librarian of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution. In a varied career that took Gilbert from land agent to assistant gold commissioner, it was his work as an artist and teacher that left a valuable legacy.

Dora L Wilson, 1883-1946

Following an exhibition of her work a Royal Academy exhibition of Australian art in London in 1923, Dora Wilson was commissioned by Sir Baldwin Spencer to undertake a series of paintings of European landmarks, which were exhibited in 1928 at the Beaux Arts Gallery, London, and later at Australia House. In the early 1930s she focused on historical scenes from Melbourne's history, with an exhibition entitled 'Milestones of Melbourne' held at the Fine Art Society Gallery in March 1935. Her painting *Governor La Trobe's House, Jolimont* was included in the exhibition.

Albert Thomas Mockridge, c.1882-1942

Albert Thomas Mockridge was a commercial artist and portraitist and had three portraits exhibited in the Archibald Prize (one each in 1933, 1936 and 1937), at least two of which were watercolours.

Cottage Hall

Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist

Château Oberhofen, 1857

*Ezzolino's Tower, Padua, 1830**

Jefferson's Rock, Harpers Ferry, 1832

Rose's Gap, The Grampians, 1850

*The Pulpit, Cape Schanck, 1848**

Yarra Range from Yering, 1853

*Courtyard, The Mote, Ightham, Kent, 1856**

Prints of pen, pencil and wash, or watercolour*, on paper

Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Deposited on long-term loan in the Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria.

Ê Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria.

Cottage Closets

Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist

Doorway of the inhabited part, The Mote, 1856 Ê

Door to Papa's Dressing Room, Jolimont, 1849

Bishopscourt, East Melbourne, 1853

Gum trees in the hollow below Jolimont Gate, 1852

Prints of pencil, ink and wash on paper

Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Deposited on long-term loan in the Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria.

Ê Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria.

Cottage Kitchen

Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1801-1875, artist

Jolimont in early times as first erected 1839 [c.1845]

Jolimont, 1842

Prints of watercolours on paper

Collection: Archives de l'Etat, Neuchâtel

Edward La Trobe Bateman, 1816-1897, artist

Kitchen and store in interior courtyard, 1853

Jolimont front, 1852

Prints of pencil and Chinese white on brown paper

Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria

George Alexander Gilbert, 1815-1877, artist

A view of Jolimont, Melbourne, Port Phillip, 1843-44

Print of pastel on paper

Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria

Cottage Servants' Quarters

Unknown artist

Governor Latrobe's House at Jolimont, c.1887

Hand coloured engraving

Private collection

Albert Thomas Mockridge, c.1882-1942, artist

Residence of Governor Charles La Trobe, Jolimont, 1937

Watercolour

Collection: National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Dora L Wilson, 1883-1946, artist

Governor La Trobe's House, Jolimont, Spring 1934

Oil on board

Private collection

Charles A Whitman, artist

Back verandah La Trobe's Cottage, c.1914

Watercolour

Private collection

Jo Reitze, artist

La Trobe's Cottage and Garden, 2014

Oil on canvas

Gifted by the artist to The C J La Trobe Society

Helen R Carter, artist

La Trobe's Cottage, 2018

Pen and watercolour on paper

Private collection