



Benjamin Singleton

IN THE BEGINNING

Benjamin was born in London on the 7th of August, 1788 and was transported to New South Wales with his father, mother and brother Joseph. They arrived in Sydney on the 14th February, 1792. Benjamin embarked on many projects during his life. He was a miller, explorer, pioneer, inn-keeper, constable, boat builder, grazier and founder of the town, Singleton.



BENJAMIN SINGLETON

1788 – 1853



SINGLETON VISITOR INFORMATION & ENTERPRISE CENTRE

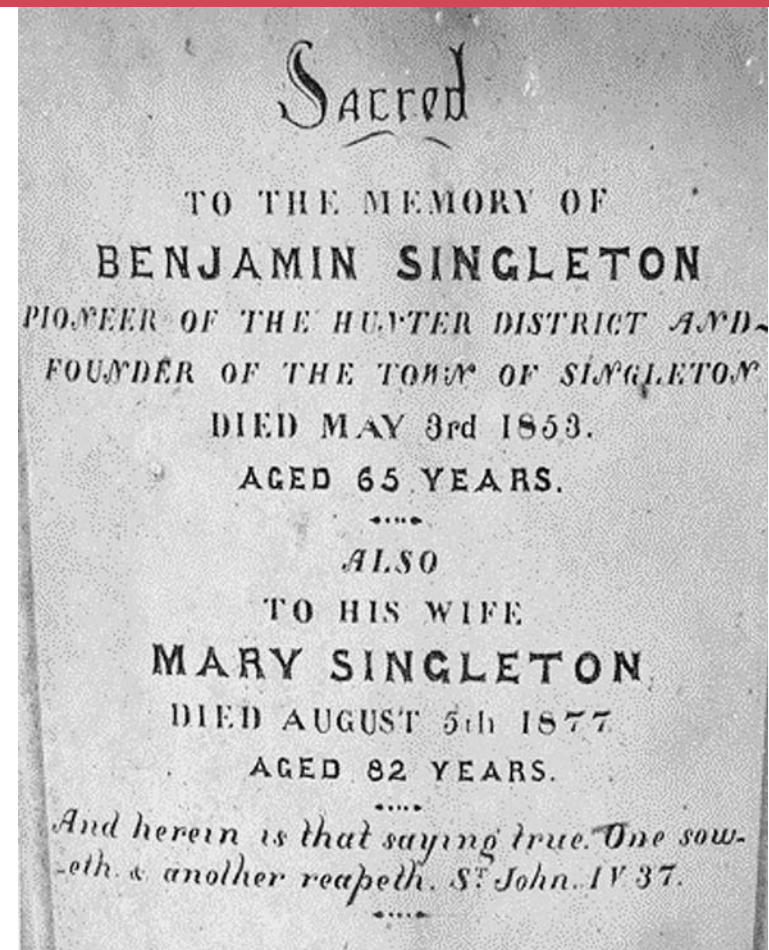
Townhead Park, New England Hwy, Singleton NSW 2330

T 02 6578 7560

E sviec@singleton.nsw.gov.au



Please consider the environment by re-distributing or recycling.



www.singleton.nsw.gov.au



Benjamin Singleton

THE STORY

Benjamin married Mary Lane Sherland in 1811. Together they raised ten children in their 42 year marriage; Elizabeth, Hannah (named after Benjamin's mother), William (named after Benjamin's father), Benjamin, Mary, Sarah, John, Emma, Louisa and George.

Benjamin built his first water-mill near Kurrajong where he and his brother James ground wheat for government stores. A second water-mill was built at Lower Portland Head and a third on James's 50-acre grant at the Hawkesbury.

Benjamin was an ambitious man, wanting to find a route from the Hawkesbury northward. Firstly he accompanied William Parr in 1817 on an exploration to find a passage. He returned home realising the advantages of discovering a trafficable route to the Hunter Valley. He led his own private expedition in 1818. Benjamin's expedition withdrew, although his experiences did prove helpful to John Howe's exploration which Benjamin joined in 1820. They trekked through the present day Bulga Road and came to look down upon the Hunter River and the land which they named St Patrick's Plains (due to the closeness of St Patrick's day).

THE SETTLEMENT OF SINGLETON

In December 1821, Benjamin advertised in the Sydney Gazette that he would take charge of any person's cattle at St Patrick's Plains for the price of 10 shillings per head per annum. Mary Singleton along with Mrs Phillip Thorley crossed the rugged Bulga track to make St Patrick's Plains their home in 1822.



↑ Singleton Historical museum

They were the first white women to cross the track and Benjamin's son John is believed to be the first white child born at Patrick's Plains (1823).

By 1823 a steady stream of settlers began to arrive in the district and in February Benjamin Singleton was appointed as district constable.

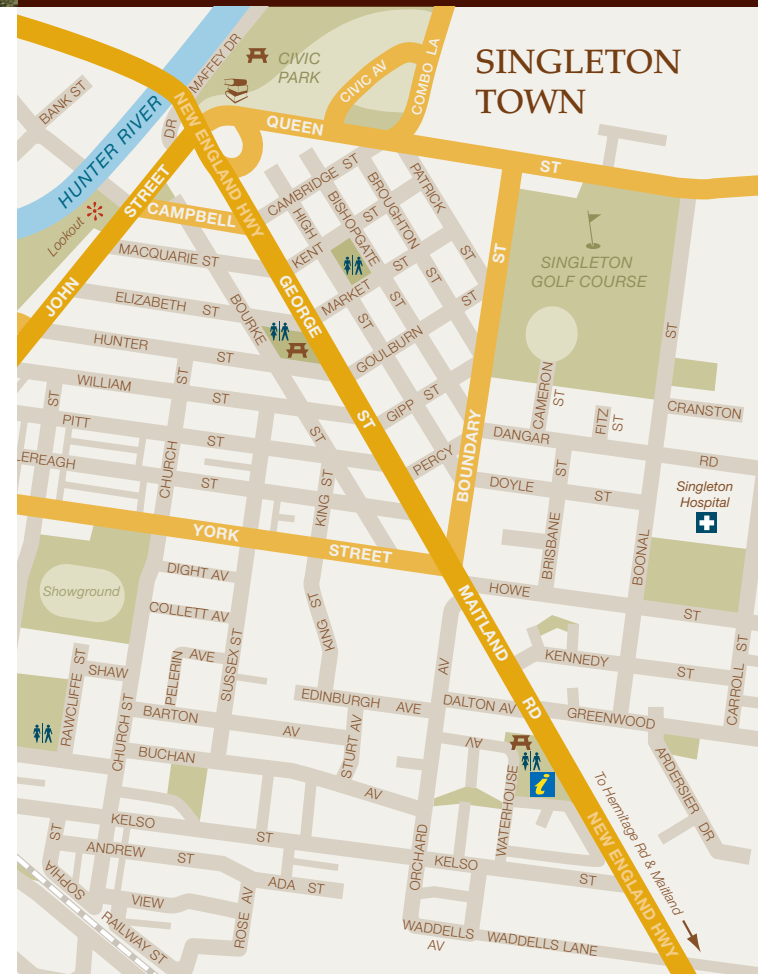
Benjamin built a residence near the Hunter River on his 200 acre grant of land which became the core of the town of Singleton. In 1827, Benjamin established the first Inn in the district, *'The Barley Mow'* as well as a punt service across the river.

The ford became a favourite river crossing for those heading north. In 1829 Benjamin opened a flour mill on the riverbank and established a post office at his Inn.

By the late 1830's Singleton had become a town. Benjamin had built roads and sold a number of town allotments. Benjamin donated land in 1837, now known as *Burdekin Park*, for a market square and a courthouse was erected at the site in 1841. A lock up was also built at Burdekin Park. Unfortunately in the late 1870's the court house was demolished. The cells of the lock up still stand and can be seen at the Historical Museum (pictured above).

The depression of the 1840's led Benjamin along with hundreds of others to be insolvent but this did not prevent him from making the first gifts of land to the Anglican and Presbyterian churches in Singleton. Benjamin was declared bankrupt in 1842 and passed away in early May, 1853. Benjamin was laid to rest in Whittingham cemetery.

For more information on what to see and do in the Singleton area, contact the Singleton visitor Information & Enterprise Centre.



SINGLETON TODAY

A full map of the town that Singleton has become can be obtained from the Singleton Visitor Information & Enterprise Centre.