

ACQUIRING LAND AND A BRAND

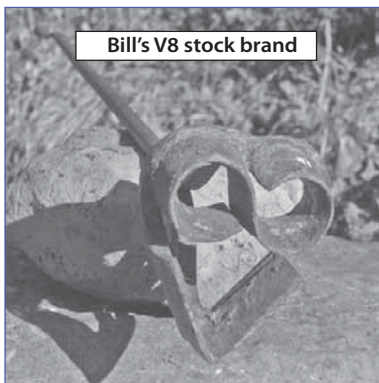
In July 1945 (*when I was 4 years old*), my 27-year-old father had been working, ever since leaving school, as an automobile mechanic in his father's Ford business in Prince Street, Grafton.

Regularly, during the war years, the garage would receive Ford trucks from Sydney, which my father and mother would then drive up to Brisbane, to be delivered to the military authorities. *King Skyvington* (known as "*Bill*") belonged to some kind of light-horse unit stationed in Grafton, but servicing and delivering trucks seemed to be his main military effort.

My father had always dreamt of becoming a grazier. In July 1945 (*a month before the surrender of Japan*), he finally found a small property on the outskirts of South Grafton that he was able to afford.

Alas, a wartime law (*designed to force people to participate in the war effort*) limited the acquisition of grazing land to existing graziers.

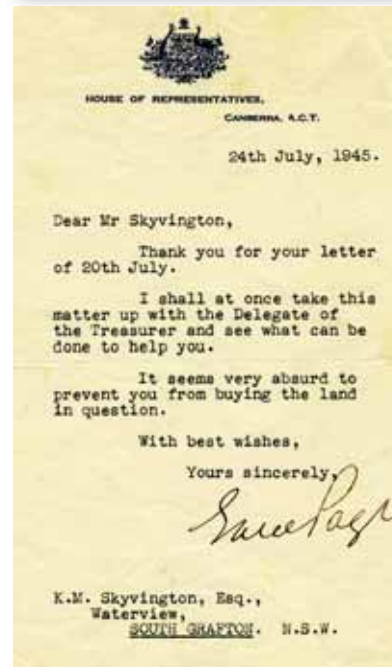
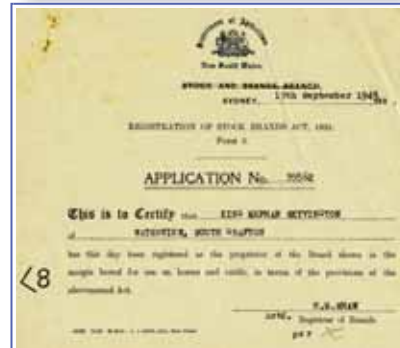
My father appealed to *Sir Earle Page*, who promptly unblocked the situation. In September 1945, my father's application for a registered stock brand was accepted. As a symbolic reminder of his past contacts with Ford vehicles, he chose **V8** as his stock brand.



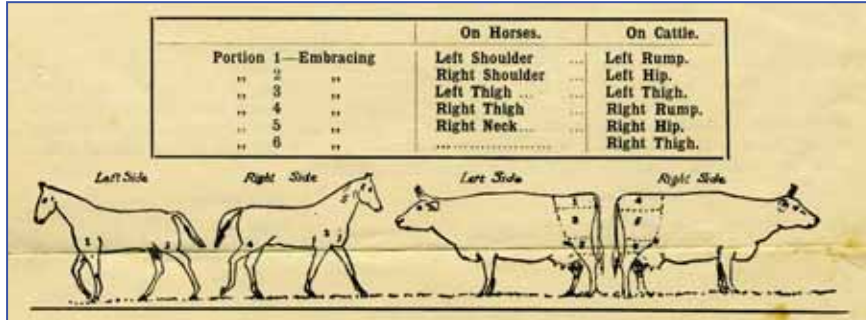
Bill's V8 stock brand

William Skyvington

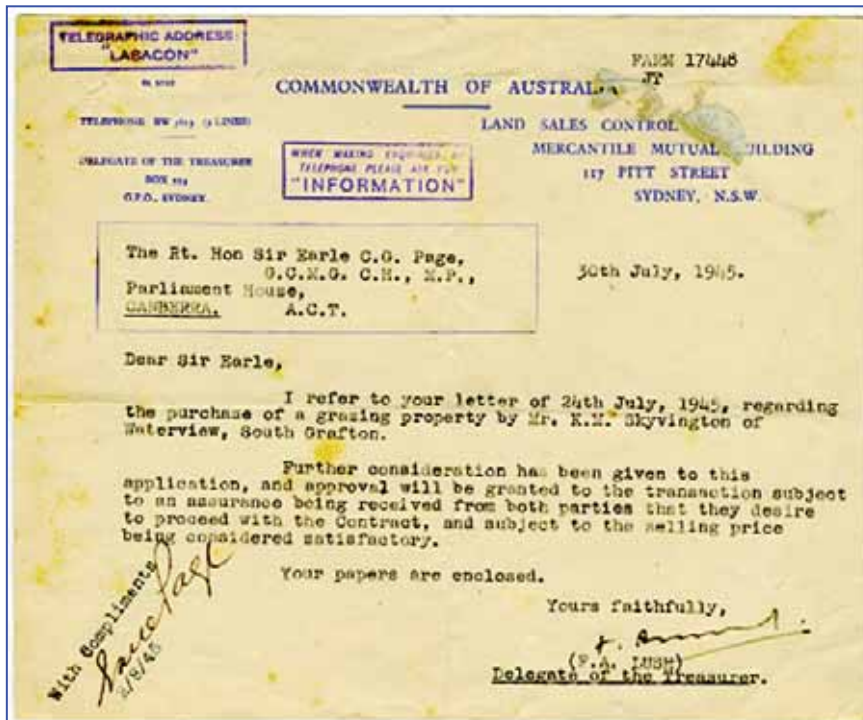
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Time wounds all heels.



These instructions have interested me in the sense that stock branding has always been a fundamental aspect of our Australian rural heritage, and it's normal that the government regulations should be precise and strict. The theft of cattle and horses was an everyday concern for ages... and not only during the epochs when bushrangers were operating. A good registered brand was a precious rural trademark.



Sir Earle simply typed "With Compliments" in the lower lefthand corner of the Treasurer's letter, followed by his signature (on 2 August 1945), and forwarded it to my father.

Those were the days, I might exclaim, when an ordinary rural citizen such as my father could get such rapid and efficient personalized treatment from a former PM of Australia!

I broke my leg in two places. The doctor told me to quit going to those places.