

# HISTORIA INCOGNITA

RESEARCHING AND WRITING FORGOTTEN HISTORIES

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## THE LIFE AND LOVES OF EUGENE ROSSIET LENNON

### Eugene Rossiet Lennon

Eugene Rossiet Lennon, Professor of Languages, educated at the University of Paris, came to Australia in 1843 as a convict.

He had been convicted of inciting one young woman, Louisa La Grange, to commit a crime by robbing the jewellers of London's West End of their diamonds. Louisa was also transported and soon became Madame Callegari – whose story is told in the *Journal of Madame Callegari* and is also available through Historia Incognita.

But Eugene Lennon embarked upon a very different career to that of his former accomplice, Louisa La Grange. He was tutor for the Cotton family at Swansea, on the remote east coast of Van Diemen's Land. And after father Cotton, a devout Quaker, banished him for taking too much interest in his twenty-year-old daughter, Lennon became tutor to the Pillinger family at Antil Ponds. The Pillingers were much more understanding.

Returning to Hobart with a ticket-of-leave, Eugene was almost banished again when he became attached to James Dickinson's twenty-year-old daughter, Sarah. But Sarah was pregnant and Lennon did the right thing and married her.

After several years of self-imposed exile at Southport, a long way south of Hobart, the Lennons and the Dickinsons moved to Victoria where Eugene soon became headmaster of the Flinders National Grammar School in Geelong. His career became illustrious with the school gaining a reputation as a model for teaching excellence. After many years, Lennon and the Education Department could no longer see eye-to-eye. So Lennon parted ways with the National School and established the Geelong High School across the street.

But all of this, and more, can be read in *The Life and Loves of Eugene Rossiet Lennon, Convict School Teacher*.

Historia Incognita



DOUGLAS WILKIE  
Eugene Rossiet Lennon

### DOUGLAS WILKIE The Life and Loves of Eugene Rossiet Lennon Professeur Extraordinaire



What they said about Eugene Rossiet Lennon:

He dressed with “remarkable elegance” when appearing at the old Bailey in October 1842 — *London Morning Chronicle*, October 1842.

He displayed “manly and intrepid conduct” in saving children, “at the imminent peril and risk of his own life” — *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 1858.

They wanted to sack me in order to obtain “the more brilliant services of Mr Lennon” — George Hanson, Teacher, *Geelong Advertiser*, 1862.

Lennon showed “untiring zeal in the cause of education” — *Argus*, 1878.

Lennon was “the father of popular education” in Geelong — *Geelong Advertiser*, 1884.

Eugene Rossiet Lennon, Professor of Languages, educated at the University of Paris, came to Australia in 1843 as a convict. He had been convicted of inciting one

young woman, Louisa La Grange, to commit a crime by robbing the jewellers of London's West End of their diamonds. Louisa was also transported and soon became Madame Callegari – whose story is told in the *Journal of Madame Callegari* and is also available through *Historia Incognita*. But Eugene Lennon embarked upon a very different career to that of his former accomplice, Louisa La Grange. He was tutor for the Cotton family at Swansea, on the remote east coast of Van Diemen's Land. And after father Cotton, a devout Quaker, banished him for taking too much interest in his twenty-year-old daughter, Lennon became tutor to the Pillinger family at Antil Ponds. The Pillingers were much more understanding. Returning to Hobart with a ticket-of-leave, Eugene was almost banished again when he became attached to James Dickinson's twenty-year-old daughter, Sarah. But Sarah was pregnant and Lennon did the right thing and married her. After several years of self-imposed exile at Southport, a long way south of Hobart, the Lennons and the Dickinsons moved to Victoria where Eugene soon became headmaster of the Flinders National Grammar School in Geelong. His career became illustrious with the school gaining a reputation as a model for teaching excellence. After many years, Lennon and the Education Department could no longer see eye-to-eye. So Lennon parted ways with the National School and established the Geelong High School across the street. But all of this, and more, can be read in the forthcoming book, *The Life and Loves of Eugene Rossiet Lennon, Professeur Extraordinaire*.

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*The Journal of Madame Callegari* can be purchased through the links on the *Historia Incognita* website.