

Transcript – Anna Hamilton's Letter Home, 1882

Dear Mama,

Wednesday Evening

I think I shall begin from ~~[before]~~ first when I left the Geelong Station to tell you all about it. I never spoke a word all the way to Melbourne. Of course when I got to the station I had a look out and saw some gentleman with a white necktie on that I thought must be Mr Fitchett. At last he saw me and asked if I was Miss H and said he had come instead of Ms Fitchett (so you see mama Ms Fitchett didn't come after all).

He said he had a cab ready and we would go [straight?] to Hawthorn in it (6/). I didn't know who he was, but I could talk to him fine and he told me lots of things. At last we got to the College (it is not nearly finished, some parts I mean) and he said he would go and tell Ms F to come out but Ms F wasn't at home so he took me inside to a large room where there was a gentleman with a large sort of gown on who was Mr Wheen (Oh! He is such a nice gentleman and seems so young is dark and is married and has a little girl) and then and not till then did I find out that the gentleman who had met me was [line missing – I think it must indicate the gentleman wasn't Mr Fitchett but....] Mr Shaw. He then said goodbye to me and went. I was seated on a chair first as I was asked ever so many questions – where I was born, how old, fathers name, what I was going to learn and then every subject separately was spoken of etc. etc. etc.

Then Ms F came in I spoke to her and then Mrs F with the house keeper took me to a room. It is downstairs, the dormitories not being quite finished. Made my bed and then went into the dining room and had dinner with about 40 others.

I [thought school] was grand then but evening is coming on I feel as dull as I don't know [line missing] what the tears are rolling down my checks and I am doing all I can to keep from crying because tea will be ready in a minute. All the [other] boarders have gone out for a walk. I said I would rather write home.

Mrs Tiddeman is so nice. We were classified this afternoon and I and some more who have never learnt a word of Latin have to learn the first 6 pages for Mr Wheen. I can't write any more it is getting late but have loads more to tell you. There are other girls in my room. I don't know who they are yet.

Write bundles of love to all. I remain your lovely daughter, Anna.

[Other text written across the top of first page but doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Reads...]

I could write 2 ??? more pages. I believe it best. Love to all. I could hand write this for want of a pen I wish I had brought some pen and pencils with me. Mrs F asked me [line missing]...

People in the letter:

- Mr Fitchett = Rev Dr William Henry Fitchett, founding Principal of MLC (1882-1929)
- Ms F = Ms Ada Fitchett, Rev Dr Fitchett's niece, joined MLC staff officially in 1883 as a teacher and an assistant to Mrs Tiddeman, Lady Superintendent
- Mr Shaw = Mr Thomas Shaw of Wooriwyrite, brother-in-law of Rev Dr Fitchett
- Mrs F = Jemima (Cara) Fitchett, Rev Dr Fitchett's wife
- Mr Wheen = Mr Frank Wheen, first Headmaster
- Mrs Tiddeman = Margaret Tiddeman, Lady Superintendent