



Figure 15. "The Fernery, Blackheath, 9/4/0[?]" The year may have been 1901.  
State Library of Victoria, E. E. Wagstaff Collection, Acc. No. H82-254/9/9.



Figure 16. Hon. Joseph Carruthers.  
Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, PXA 1583, File No. 641852.

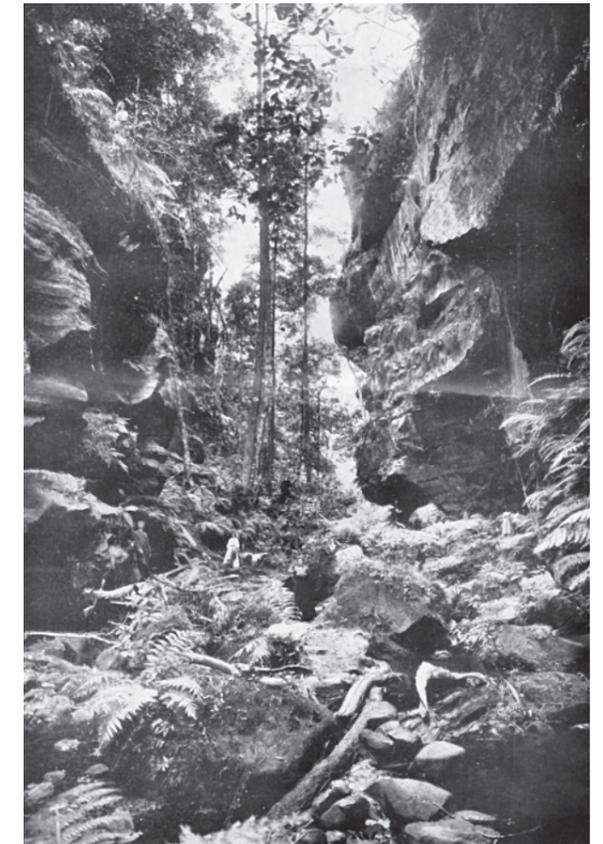


Figure 17. "Grand Canyon". Five people are in the photo.  
Blue Mountains Wonderland, N.S.W., Harry Phillips, Katoomba, c1912, p10.

#### 4. Grand Canyon, Blackheath (1907)

The Grand Canyon track (Walls Cave to The Fernery on Rodriguez Pass) was opened on 16 February 1907 by Hon. Joseph Carruthers (Figure 16), NSW Premier (30 August 1904 to 1 October 1907). He was accompanied by a daughter (probably Ida Mary who was about 25 years old). They and a party of 50 traversed the Canyon (Figures 15, 17) in a five-mile (8km) walk, commencing by walking to Walls Cave.

Lunch and the opening ceremony were conducted at The Fernery, near the junction of Rodriguez Pass and the Grand Canyon track. Mr Carruthers "expressed great pleasure in declaring the Blackheath Grand Canyon open". He said, "... it gave him very great pleasure to be one of the first party to negotiate a passage through the devious and romantic pass of Blackheath Grand Canyon".

The contractor for the track, completed in December 1906, was Tom Williams, who had made the Govetts Leap track. "For some weeks a gang of men had been engaged making the track, which necessitated the building of many causeways, the construction of rude ladders, chipping of innumerable steps in the sandstone rock, and even boring a tunnel or two through the rock."

After leaving Walls Cave the opening party "had to proceed in Indian file along the creek which is crossed a great number of times in going through the canyon. ... Gradually the gorge became narrower, and at points the rocks, 200 or 300 feet overhead, appeared almost to meet, and to leave the party in semi-darkness below. At other points the path went high up on the rocks and wound round precipices which needed very careful walking, and in one case it passed through a small tunnel."

The *Lithgow Mercury*'s report included several references to photos being taken —

"... the new pass ... is considerably over four miles in length, rugged enough for anything, and follows the creek from the Cave to the Fernery, at the foot of the path leading to Evans' Lookout. ... Having reached Fern Bower after a three hours' walk—with only an occasional halt for a refreshing draught from the limpid stream, or to get a snapshot photo in some picturesque glen—the party, which included several ladies, tired and hungry, sat down and were soon regaled with an appetising luncheon. ... Lunch over, the following toasts were disposed of, and before the ascent was entered upon two or three photos were taken of the group by the Misses Trotter ..."

See Figures 18 and 19, Ella and Fanny Trotter.

On reaching Evans Lookout the party found that "several ladies of Blackheath had prepared afternoon tea and that a crowd of over two hundred persons had assembled". The last activity was the taking of "a photo of the Premier, Miss Carruthers, and the five trustees—Messrs. Neate, Laws, Rodriguez, Doyle, and Field".



Figure 18. Ella Trotter, born 1883.  
I believe these are the "Misses Trotter" who took photos on the opening expedition through the Grand Canyon.  
Unfortunately, the Trotter family collection at State Library of NSW did not include any of their Grand Canyon photos.  
State Library of NSW, Trotter family pictorial material, ca.1883-1963; PXE 1329, Loose photos.



Figure 19. Fanny Trotter, born 1887.  
References: *Lithgow Mercury*, 19 Feb 1907, p2 c6,7, Trove#219132216; *Daily Telegraph*, 18 Feb 1907, p5 c3, Trove#238030640; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 Feb 1907, p5 c8, Trove#14841997; *Evening News*, 18 Feb 1907, p8 c1, Trove#115218245; Fox, Brian; Keats, Michael OAM; Fox, John, *Blue Mountains Geographical Encyclopaedia*, p235; Macqueen, Andy, *Back from the Brink ~ Blue Gum Forest and the Grose Wilderness*, p149; Smith, Jim, *Walking Track Heritage Study ~ Draft Historical Report*, p36; Halbert, Erik & Ellis, Ross, *Doing the Grand Canyon ~ Blackheath*, The Sydney Speleological Society, Sydney, 2014; NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages, online search, Births: Trotter, Ella; Trotter, Fannie.



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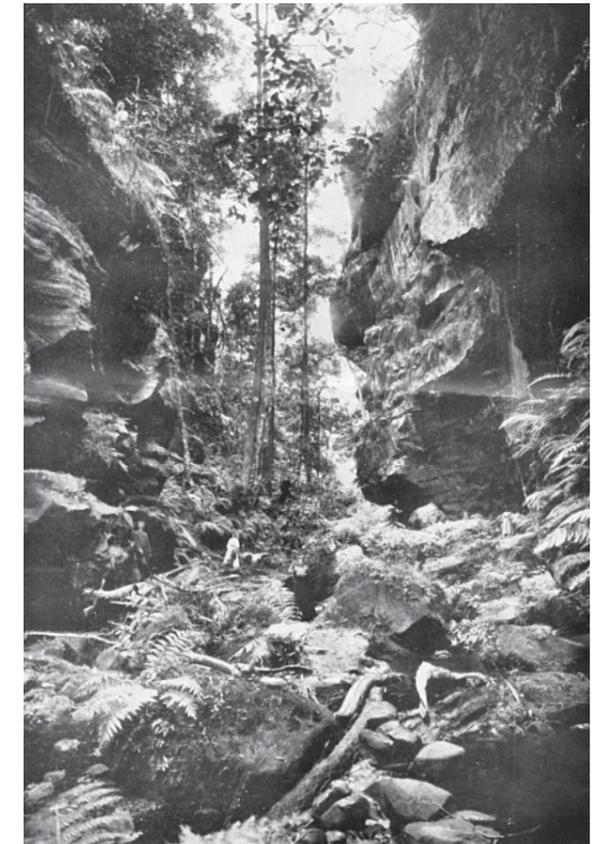


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