



The Late Mr. William Hobbs Station Hand, Teamster and Farmer

The late Mr. William Hobbs, who died, at his residence, Laura, on Thursday, December 30, during his lengthy residence in Australia had a varied experience of early colonial pastoral and agricultural development. The deceased, who was born at Rudge, Wiltshire, England, on February 14, 1830 Accompanied by his wife, arrived in South Australia, in the ship Navarino, in August 1854 when (as Mrs. Hobbs states) they, were very much impressed with the beautiful wattle blossoms that welcomed, the arrival of this young couple to this State. Soon after their arrival Mr. Hobbs accepted a position, as a shepherd on the Booborowie Station, where they remained for a little over twelve months.

In 1856 he entered the employ of Mr. G. B. Yates, who was engaged in pastoral pursuits, at what is now known as Murray Town, remaining there for about seven years, Mr. Yates having disposed of his interests took up a large area of pastoral and cattle country in Queensland, and Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs made a memorable trip to the new holding. Proceeding from Adelaide to Newcastle by water they left West Maitland with a bullock, dray and team, sheep, and horses. Eight months and a fortnight elapsed before Port Denison was reached, the bullock dray being the home of Mrs. Hobbs during a trip of about 1,500 miles.

The old lady recalls with a certain amount of pride and pleasure the experiences of that long trip and states that it was a very enjoyable time, as it gave her the opportunity of seeing new country and fresh scenes. A diary which she kept of the trip, which would doubtless have proved very interesting, has however been destroyed. Mrs. Hobbs after reaching Port Denison remained there, while her husband went 200 miles further on to some country, taken up by Mr. Yates.

After spending about eighteen months in Queensland Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs returned to South Australia and the northern part of the State having attractions for them they settled at Melrose. Mrs. Hobbs, after her return from Queensland left for the Burra for the district in which she had previously spent seven years, on horseback alone. On reaching Canowie the horse she was riding showed signs of lameness and overtaking a bullock team, on the road, asked the driver, who was accompanied with his wife and two children, whether he would allow her to accompany them in the bullock dray as far as Pine Creek. Mrs. Hobbs was intending to make a call on some friends then living on land now occupied by Mr. W. Cowin at Pine Creek.

The bullocky, in reply to the request said he did not think he could accommodate a lady for a couple of days, as they only had the bullock dray. When Mrs. Hobbs however informed him that for over eight months her only home had been a bullock dray, and that she was quite prepared to accept whatever accommodation, this mode of travelling could provide, he consented to allow her to share the dray with his wife and children.

For a period of between nine and ten years, Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs made their home with Mr. Fred Smith near Melrose. They also took up some land about six miles from Melrose for wheat growing, but owing to kangaroos, wallabies and other native game were obliged to abandon the effort. Between the period, of their return from Queensland and settling at Wirrabara Forest, on Fairview, a farm adjoining Mr. Charles Hollitt's property, Mr. Hobbs was frequently on the roads with bullock teams, and established a wide reputation among northern teamsters, as, an expert driver. In camp he made a rule that all who were guilty of embellishing their conversation with swear words were to be fined one penny for each offence. The fines collected were devoted to the purchase of currants for puddings and this gained for him the name among the bullockies of 'The Penny Pudding Man'. After following agricultural pursuits at Wirrabara Forest for nearly thirty years he, with his wife, took up his residence at Laura seven years ago.

For a period of 44 years he was associated with the Methodist Church and was a very, regular attendant, when circumstances permitted at all its services. During the later years of his life, was a great sufferer but bore it all with patient resignation. He leaves a widow and one adopted daughter Mrs. J. Milhinch, of Laura.

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