

THE PASSING OF TWO PIONEERS

The Mudgee Guardian of 15th October 1907 brought news of the death of Mr William Craft Snr:

The deceased was born in Boston, Lincolnshire, England in the year of 1836, and was therefore 71 years of age at the time of his demise. The late Mr Craft landed in Sydney 51 years ago, and a day after the "Dunbar" was wrecked. He did not stay in Sydney, but made his way to Penrith, where for some months he was employed. He afterwards went to Bathurst and from there made his way to this district, eventually he drifted to the Cobbora area, where, in 1877, he selected some land, and there he resided ever since. The deceased was one of the pioneers of the Cobbora district, it being over 45 years since he went there. There was no more esteemed and respected resident of the Cobbora district than the deceased gentleman. The news of his demise being received by his Cobbora neighbours with great sorrow. A widow, five sons, and one daughter remain to deplore the loss of a kind and thoughtful husband and father, viz. Messes George and James, farmers and graziers, Tucklan; Charles, general storekeeper, Cobbora; William, sawmill proprietor, Cobbora, and John, who has been managing the farming and grazing property for his late father, and Mrs Inder, of Tucklan. The remains were interred in the R.C. portion of the Cobbora cemetery. Mr Patterson, of Bonny Plains read the burial service.

Ten years later on 4th January 1917 the Dunedoo Chronicle recorded the obituary of Mrs Catherine Craft:

On Saturday night, December 23, there passed away at Cobbora one of the early pioneers of this district in the person of Mrs Catherine Craft, relict of the late William Craft Senior, who predeceased her some ten years ago. Dr. Lee, of Gulgong, attended during a brief illness, and everything which love and kindness could devise was done to prolong the life of an ideal mother, but the end came as she herself would have wished, in calm and peaceful sleep. The deceased lady was born in Limerick, Ireland, on May 17, 1837, and was therefore in her 80th year. When only three years of age she arrived in Australia with her parents, two brothers and two sisters. Her father, Mr Daniel Dolan, took up land and settled in Penrith district, where he lived and prospered till his death some years ago. On February 14, 1866, the late Mrs Craft was married at St Mary's Sydney, and shortly after arrived in Cobbora, where the deceased husband took up a fairly large property now known as West Cobbora. At this time the railway extended no farther west than Penrith, and the comforts and necessaries of life had to be carried over the mountains per wagon- principally bullock teams. It is whilst remembering the early struggles of the old band of colonists that we should realize the debt we owe to the hardy pioneers who made the land worth living in – those brave, big-hearted men who toiled in an unknown interior, battling against the many difficulties of which we know nothing, but what must be said of the heroic and patient womenfolk, who accompanied them and shared the same hardships? Such a one was the grand old lady who now lies at rest in the local cemetery. She was of a kindly disposition, and was never known to complain,

even when 'all seemed wrong', and right to the end she possessed this beautiful trait of character. Everyone who knew her soon became a friend and remained so always. If you cannot say a good word to anyone, say nothing, was a favourite expression of hers, and it can be truly said that she practiced this throughout her long and useful life. Such a mother could rear only one kind of child, and those who now mourn their sad and irreparable loss most certainly have imbibed their manly or womanly qualities from her genuine teachings. The family are well known and respected residents of the district, and no one can point to a mean or base act committed by any one of them. She has left one daughter, Mrs Alf E. Inder, of 'Cranbourne', Tucklan, and five sons, Mr George Craft ('Newlands' Tucklan), Charles (Dunedoo), William (Cobbora), James D. ('Avoca Vale', Tucklan), and John H. (Cobbora). There are also twenty grandchildren. For the past half century Mrs Craft has resided almost continuously in the Cobbora district, in which she always took a deep personal interest, being ever ready to aid in every way and movement for the welfare of the town. She was a resident whom we could ill afford to lose, but nevertheless a life well spent and one whose memory will remain as an incentive to all in the dark hours of affliction, a fingerpost on the road through life directing us along that straight and narrow way, which leads to life eternal.

The Rev. Father O'Donnell conducted the burial service, and at the conclusion gave a short address to the many who were present, adding words of comfort and consolation to the bereaved relatives.

It is at such times we realize the truth of the beautiful words of Longfellow: -

*' There is no death, what seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call death'.*