

Death of an Old Colonist.

THE LATE MRS WATSON, OF
STRAWBERRY

One of the oldest pioneers of the Victoria District passed away on Thursday last in the person of Mrs Ann Watson, aged 82 years, relict of the late Mr Joseph Watson, of Strawberry. Mrs Watson, with her husband, landed in Geraldton about 60 years ago. Mr Watson was taken connected with the police force, and was in charge of the whole of the coastal and Murchison districts almost from Roebourne to Perth. After residing in Geraldton for some time they were removed to Northampton, Mr Watson having been promoted to the rank of Sergeant of Police. Sergeant Watson was widely known throughout the whole of his district as a terror to evildoers, and was familiarly known by the sobriquet of "Immortal Joe." Nearly fifty years ago Mr and Mrs Watson removed to Strawberry, where they engaged in farming pursuits. Many exciting experiences fell to their lot during the early years of their settlement. Their neighbours were few and far between, and they suffered as pioneers their share of misfortune, losing their home on three occasions.

On two occasions their home was washed away by floods and on the third was destroyed by fire. On the first or second occasion there had been no rain at Strawberry, and the flood came upon them like an avalanche. Mrs Watson, having occasion to go outside, saw in the distance what looked like a flock of sheep, but it proved to be the rolling, fumbling waters of the Upper Irwin. A Mr Johnston, and Mrs Watson's eldest son, the late Mr James Watson, of Geraldton, with the aid of an old horse, succeeded in getting Mrs Watson and her children to a place of safety on the opposite side of the

safety on the opposite side of the river. Returning for Mrs Johnston the horse became exhausted, and James and Mr Johnston had to climb onto a haystack, which in turn was lifted by the flood waters, and they were in danger of being carried away. Fortunately the waters soon subsided, and the haystack was the only thing left standing. The only article of furniture saved was a table, with old fashioned turned legs, which was driven through the floor when the house fell, and is now in the possession of her son, Mr S. J. Watson, of Mill Farm, Strawberry.

On the occasion of their being burnt out, Mr Watson had been away from home on business, and returning fatigued, had fallen asleep. A pet parrot, who was fond of mischief or frolic, playing with some matches, set fire to the house. Mr Watson was almost suffocated when rescued and it was some time before he was restored to consciousness. Mrs Watson shared her husband's fortunes and misfortunes and the loneliness of her pioneer life heroically as she never once left the district throughout her long life. A member of the Methodist denomination during the greater part of her life she was an example of uprightness and good living. She was well known by her generosity and no stranger or traveler but was made welcome. Vice Royalty had on more than one occasion been entertained by her. Her husband predeceased her eight years ago, since which she has resided with her son, Mr S. J. Watson, Mill Farm Strawberry, where she passed away on Thursday morning.

Her remains were brought to Dongarra by train on Friday, being followed to the siding at Strawberry by almost every resident of the district. The funeral cortege, which was a very large one, moved from the Methodist Church, in which a short service was held by the Rev E. A. Pearce the chief mourners being Messrs W Watson (Mt Magnet), A.

Messrs W Watson (Mt Magnet), A. J. Watson (Yowergabbie), T. Watson, J. I. Watson (sons), Mrs M. Fitzgerald, Mrs H. Pascoe, Mrs J. Fitzgerald, and Miss Watson, daughters, Mrs Veryard (Lee-terville) sister, Mr Veryard, M.L.A., brother-in-law, and Herbert and Kenneth Watson, grandsons. At the grave side the service was conducted by the

Rev E. A. Pearse, who also delivered a very appropriate and impressive address. The pall bearers were Messrs E. W. Clarkson, T. Hughes, F. Waldeck and J. Rowlands. Floral tributes were sent by Mr and Mrs A. Fitzgerald, Mr and Mrs B. Fitzgerald and family, Mr and Mrs T. Watson, Alick and Jack Pascoe, Mr and Mrs W. Peck, M. and Mrs Herbert, Staff of Mill Farm, Mr and Mrs McAuliffe, M. and Mrs Veryard, Mr and Mrs E. W. Clarkson, C. Goldbraith, Waldecks of Dongarra, Mr and Mrs Cogan, Mr and Mrs Field Joe and Laura Ridley, Mr and Mrs W. McAuliffe, Mr and Mrs W. Rowlands, Mr and Mrs Payne, Mr and Mrs W. B. Mitchell.

An "In Memoriam" service was held in the Methodist Church on Sunday evening by the Rev E. A. Pearse, and though the weather was very inclement the attendance was good. The service was very impressive throughout, and at the close the Dead March was played by Mrs F. Waldeck.

The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs J. Dehmagé and Co., of Dongarra.