**Beecroft Railway Accident 1919 – death of Robert Wickham**

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 13 June 1896, page 12**

Shocking accident at Beecroft.

An Engine-Driver Killed.

An engine-driver named Robert Wickham met with a fatal accident on Thursday morning. Ho was taking the 9 a.m. express train from Sydney to Newcastle, and while travelling

at a fair rate past Beecroft, he walked along the side of the engine to apply some oil. By some means his foot slipped, and he fell, but one foot became caught, and he was dragged along some distance. The train was pulled up as soon as possible, but Wickham was quite dead, his neck and one of his legs being broken. It was thought he lost his footing when the train swung round a very sharp curve in the line at this spot. The Parramatta Coroner (Mr. J. E. Bowden) held an inquest on the body yesterday (Friday.)

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 20 June 1896, page 10**

Fatality at Beecroft.

An Engine Driver Killed.

Me. J. E. Bowdon, the Parramatta District Coroner, held an inquest at Hornsby Junction on Friday into the circumstances of the death of Robert Wickham, a railway engine driver, whose death took place at Beecroft on the previous morning.

Henry Wickham, a brother of the deceased, deposed that the late Robert Wickham resided in Augustus-street, Enmore. He was an engine driver on the Great Northern Railway and left a widow and 9 children, ranging in age from 19 to 2.

Edward John Plummer, fireman on the Great Northern Railway (residing at Redfern), deposed that he had been fireman on the deceased's locomotive off and on for 6 years. The deceased was a steady, sober man and was noted as a careful driver Witness was with deceased on the 9 a.m. down express from Sydney to Newcastle on Thursday. Deceased was driving and witness fire-ing. There was no one else on the engine. Just on the Sydney side of Beecroft station deceased went out on the engine to oil one of the axles. He had his oil feeder in one hand and was holding on to the rail with the other. He seemed quite well and was perfectly sober. Witness was firing at the time, and, when he finished, he saw deceased's oil feeder fall on the foot-rail of the tender, and looking out saw the deceased falling from the engine. Did not know what caused him to fall or whether he missed his footing or his handhold. He did not cry out. Witness stopped the train immediately — it

was running at the rate of 20 to 25 miles an hour at the time. When the train stopped, he went out to see the deceased, and the guard came too. He was quite dead and the body was lying several yards behind the train. The body was greatly injured. The deceased was a very careful driver and of cheerful disposition, and never said or did anything to indicate that he might want to do away with himself.

Henry Phillips, the guard of the train, said that when they got near the Beecroft station the train suddenly stopped. Witness looked out to see what was the matter and saw the fireman coming from the engine. Looked back and saw the deceased lying on the “six foot” between the two lines of rails. He was quite dead, and death must have been instantaneous.

The jury found that Robert Wickham died on the Great Northern Railway Line, near the Beecroft old platform, on the 11th day of June, 1896, from injuries received through his accidentally falling from a railway locomotive engine while in the exercise of his duties as a driver thereof. The funeral took place at the Necropolis on Sunday afternoon, and was largely attended by railway officials, the friends, and many fellow workmen of the deceased.