**Australian Town and Country Journal (Sydney, NSW: 1870 - 1919), Wednesday 27 February 1907, page 18; Evening News (Sydney, NSW: 1869 - 1931), Tuesday 5 March 1907, page 2**

DEATHS.

LUTHERBORROW. - Mary Ann Lutherborrow, February 22 at "Luther Villa," Coward-street, North Botany, late of Pennant Hills and Thornleigh, in her 94th year.’



**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 9 March 1907, page 8**

An Old Identity.

Her Interesting Life Story.

Early Days at Ryde and Pennant Hills.

There has just died at Coward Street North Botany, at the age of 94 years, Mrs Mary Ann Lutherborrow, whose life was identified with the earliest history of Ryde. Her father was one of the first settlers that arrived with Governor Phillip in 1788, and her mother, one of the earliest-born natives, was the daughter of another first settler. They were, therefore, pioneers of Kissing Point, which was known as Ryde from somewhere in the forties.

The late Mrs Lutherborrow was born in 1813, and was, therefore, in her 94th year. Retaining the use of her faculties until a few days before she died, she was an encyclopaedia of the past, in the district of Pennant Hills, where she lived for 89 years, removing thence to her daughter's house at North Botany about four years ago.

In clear-cut, accurate pictures, she could tell the story of her youth — of times which are absolutely foreign to the greater part of the present generation. Her first marriage was at St. Anne's, Ryde, by the Rev. Dickerson, when she became a bride at 16, her sister, only 14, being married at the same time.

Hardships, such as would be impossible nowadays, were hers, when away in a bark hut in the bush. She waited many a weary hour for the measure of wheat to grind into coarse meal for her own and her children's dinner. "Bunging the mill" was a term used for grinding corn in those days, and very often several families got a mill by subscription, when more waiting would have to take place, if out of flour and the mill in use elsewhere.

BUSHRANGERS AND HER HUSBAND.

"Bushrangers infested the district," said the old lady some time before her demise, "and especially do I remember Butler. He was the son of a gentleman in England, and was sent out — a harmless fellow enough, whose worst fault was that he would not work, and as everybody had to battle for a living, he could not be kept in idleness, so took to the bush.

"There was a very heavy penalty upon giving an outlaw food, and my first husband was a kind man, who could not bear to know anyone was hungry. Someone informed, and he was arrested for harbouring bushrangers. I never saw him again, as he died in prison. They were cruel times. I was left to struggle with three little daughters, and nothing but a shilling and some tea in the house."

The second marriage was happier, her husband being a cedar-getter, one of a fine type of bushmen now almost extinct. The sawyers mostly made money, and Mr. Lutherborrow put his into land, and ended his days as a prosperous orchardist in the Pennant Hills district. ORIGIN OF A FAMOUS PLUM.

His wife grew the first fruit trees — plums — raised from two brought by her husband from Sydney, which in that fine virgin soil grew into such an excellent variety that orchardists from all parts came for slips, and named it the “Lutherborrow,” which name is retained at the present time by the large black plum so much in demand.

The principal industries round Kissing Point were wheat-growing and pig-raising, outside of timber-getting, in those early days, there being some splendid farms belonging to the big men, in the Blaxlands, Commissary Walker (across the river), and others; but there were great difficulties in getting both timber and produce to market. The old lady remembered the days when the small farmers, loading up a rowing boat at the Point, would wait for the tide to help them down the river to market in Sydney, and would return any time during the night, as the next tide served.

There were few roads, and such as there might be were infested with robbers, so one was safer with a load of produce on the water, and also more secure there when returning with money in one's purse.

In those times an informer was looked on with great contempt; and for many years it was remembered against a certain man that his grant of land was the Government reward for giving information which led to the arrest of a number of bushrangers, for whom the small farmers had a sneaking sort of sympathy, so long as it wasn't their fowl roost that was depredated or their cattle that disappeared.

ROMANTIC WASHING DAYS.

The wonderfully perfect water supply which citizens of Sydney, and even the distant suburbs, now enjoy was a topic that Mrs. Lutherborrow often spoke of, comparing domestic conditions of to-day with the trials of the housewife of the days (in Australia) "when George was King." Every drop of water had to be brought in buckets from some creek, or from the river, carried over the shoulders by a yoke. "I remember," said one of Mrs. Lutherborrow's daughters, "how mother and we girls used to take the three-legged iron pot, the tubs, and the clothes in the dray, and go off for a day in the bush, down by some creek, where we could get plenty of water. At night we returned with piles of snow-white linen and the washing gear. It was a simple healthy life, and conduced to my mother's long years, for she was (outside of the infirmities of old age) always strong, and never knew a day's illness." Her family consisted of thirteen children — eight girls and five boys — nine of whom survive her. There are also forty-two grandchildren, eighty-one great-grand-children, and one great-great grand-child.

VICE-REGAL SYMPATHIES.

Lady Tennyson, when in New South Wales, became interested in the old lady, through her son-in-law (Captain Keast) being skipper of the Government launch, the Premier, and her Ladyship paid several visits to listen to her wonderful reminiscences of early days in the colony, when Mrs. Lutherborrow said "the Government women might be seen at Toongabbie working in the wheat fields alongside of the men."

A DREADFUL HOLE.

Her memories took in the dreadful “Billibot,” so often referred to by early timers. In close proximity to the stockade on the Windsor Road (then in course of making) was a pit, into which any convicts who died, either naturally or by hard usage, were thrown. It was a round hole, dug out like a well, about thirty feet deep, and many bodies were there interred with not even the leg-irons removed, covered with quicklime and earth. Dr. White, a well-known early medico of Hawkesbury, often spoke of the horrors of Billibot.

THE STILL IN THE GULLY.

There still may be seen near the Pennant Hills station reminders of the time when ------- had his big still in the rocky gully. They were wild times, and people were not improved by the presence of these illicit stills, where vile spirit was made. The more respectable residents of the district where relieved when the police made a raid and cleared the neighbourhood of the principal offenders, when a very undesirable lot of people, who always congregated where there was a still, would soon disperse to other places. Few people who attain the remarkable age of Mrs. Lutherborrow have any clear and definite recollections of their youthful days worth recording; therefore, there is special interest in speaking of her early memories, which refer to the earliest agricultural settlement outside of Rose Hill.

OLD MEMORIES.

How Kissing Point settlers got their stock is an interesting story. For 20 acres of wheat and 30 acres of maize, examined just before harvesting, the Government reward was two heifers and two ewes; while for half the quantity was given one heifer and an ewe. Eighteen hundred and one saw a Chapel of Rest, where St. Anne's was afterwards erected, through the instrumentality of the Rev. R. Johnson, himself one of the largest orchardists of the day. In the quaint old graveyard round the church lie four generations of Mrs. Lutherborrow's kinsfolk; therefore, it was a source of grief that the old lady, one of the last of her time, and certainly nearly the oldest inhabitant of the Commonwealth, should not be laid to rest there; but no burials being allowed she was interred at Botany cemetery.