

**Rushworth Chronicle
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SAD DROWNING FATALITY

A PIONEER PASSES

A painful shock was received by the residents of Rushworth and district when the news was received that Mr Isaac Furphy, J.P., had been accidentally drowned while engaged in duck shooting on the Horseshoe Swamp, near Lake Cooper, on Monday morning.

It appears that Mr Furphy, with his son Ross and grandsons (William and Alfred) and Mr A. Beck, left their home on the Stanhope road before daybreak to take part in the opening of the duck season. Mr Furphy had not missed an opening day except on one occasion (when he was out of the district) in 60 years. But this occasion proved to be the last for our old friend and pioneer met his death by drowning. How the tragic happening occurred was recounted at the inquiry which is published below.

The late Mr Isaac Furphy was the third son of the late Mr and Mrs Samuel Furphy, who came to Port Phillip (as it was then called) from Ireland in the sailing ship "Argyle." They left Ireland in March, 1840, and arrived at Port Phillip in May, 1841, his father having been engaged to come out as gardener on Mr Riley's cattle station, known as "Yerrit", on Anderson's Creek, on the Upper Yarra, now known as Kangaroo Grounds, about 20 miles from Melbourne. Here the late Mr Isaac Furphy was born.

When a young man he went to Kyneton, where he had a threshing machine. He came to Rushworth district with the machine on May 24th, 1868, and selected land at Cornella Creek. He lived there for a time and married Miss Jessie Ross.

During his residence at Cornella Creek Mr Furphy, with his brother Samuel, owned a wood-mill on the Five-Mile Creek, about three miles from Rushworth.

He then selected land at Wanalta, and was manager of the creamery there belonging to the Melbourne Chilled Butter Company. The company went into liquidation and Mr Furphy purchased the creamery, which he conducted for some years. He installed a churning plant, and exported the first consignment of fresh butter to England from the creamery.

Before taking on the creamery, Mr Furphy and his brother Samuel went to Kellawarra, near Wangaratta for a time, but returned to Wanalta. Mr Furphy afterwards gave up the creamery and turned it into a shearing shed, where he shored for the farmers in the district. He retired about nine years ago, and came to reside in Moora road, Rushworth, afterwards living with his son Ross in Stanhope road.

He was a member of Waranga Shire Council, being elected in August, 1911, and during his term as councillor was President.

At the annual municipal elections in August, 1918, he was defeated by Mr. J. H. Gamble, for the Central Riding. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace about 18 years ago and was one of the oldest Justices of the Peace in the State. He was most assiduous in this position, and carried out the duties in an impartial manner and with justice.

No man was more widely respected than Mr Isaac Furphy. Genial in his disposition, fair and just in his dealings, he made a host of friends. He was a member of a family of hardy and progressive pioneers ---- men and women who battled hard in the early days of Victoria and paved the way for those who came after them. There are few of them left, and the death of Mr Isaac Furphy leaves one less.

Despite his 86 years Mr Furphy was very active and enjoyed excellent health. His familiar figure will be greatly missed in Rushworth. There were 11 members of the family, Mrs. Alex. Stewart being the only member now living. She resides in Burrumboot East.

One of his brothers, John, established a foundry in Shepparton, and was the inventor of the well-known Furphy tank. Another brother, Joseph, was the author of note, who wrote under the name Tom Collins. His wife predeceased him about eight years ago. He leaves a family of seven ----- Mr Ross Furphy (Rushworth), Annie (Mrs Cracknell, Rushworth), Jessie (Mrs Brydon, Ultima), Sidney (Shepparton), Emma (Mrs Mancer, Tatura), Eva (Mrs Few, Stanhope), and Joseph (Wycheproof). Five children predeceased him.

The funeral took place on Tuesday and was one of the largest seen in Rushworth, all parts of the town and district being represented. The remains were interred in the Rushworth Cemetery beside those of his late wife, and other members of the family. The coffin was borne to the grave by Cr. J. Borger, Messrs E. Few, A. Mancer, A. H. Stewart, F. Stewart and A. Beck.

The burial service was conducted by Rev. J. Tyson (Methodist). Mr E.F. Anderson had charge of the funeral arrangements. Prior to the departure of the cortege from the house a service was held by Rev. J. Tyson. Mr Ross Furphy being a member of the School Committee, the school flag was flown at half-mast on Tuesday.

INQUEST

The inquiry into the death of Mr Isaac Furphy was held at the court-house on Wednesday, before Mr E. W. Curtis, J. P., (Deputy Coroner), when the following evidence was given:

Ernest Albert Few deposed that he was a farmer at Stanhope. He saw the body of deceased on 15th inst., at 7.30 p.m. at Rushworth. It was the body of Mr Isaac Furphy. Deceased was retired and resided at Rushworth. He was 86 years of age. He saw deceased last about three weeks ago. He was then in his usual health and spirits.

Ross Lachlan Furphy deposed that on the morning of the 15th deceased left his home with him about 3 a.m. to go to the Horseshoe Swamp. When they arrived at the swamp they put three boats in the water. About daylight he went over to the swamp. He left the deceased on the bank at the camp fire. When they were leaving deceased said he was not going out in the boat, that he would stay in the grass on the edge. About 7 o'clock he found a cartridge box floating in the water and recognised it as one deceased had made. He saw two oars floating in the water belonging to the deceased's boat. He returned to the shore and found that deceased had not returned, and found deceased was missing. He returned to the swamp and there saw deceased's boat. It was floating level with the water and was full of water. There were some cartridges in the boat. Later on he assisted in the search for the body. Deceased was his father.

Frederick Wileman deposed he was a farmer residing at Corop. He was on the swamp about 4 a.m. on the 15th inst. He was in a boat duck shooting. He saw deceased about 6.30 a.m. He did not recognise that it was deceased in the boat. He was about four chains away from him on the south end of the swamp. About ten minutes after he saw the empty boat. He saw deceased fire a shot. He missed the bird with the first barrel and he was picking up the oars. He did not see any more. My attention was drawn away for about ten minutes. On looking again he saw the boat floating in the water. It was full of water. He measured the water. It was seven feet deep. He then went to the shore to try and get assistance. He marked the place with a peg about 11.30 a.m. where he had last seen deceased.

Constable Gower deposed that at 5.50 p.m. he went to the Horseshoe Swamp. He commenced dragging near the place indicated by a peg. About 6.30 p.m. he recovered the body in about six feet of water. The body was fully clothed with the exception of the coat. The body was removed to Rushworth. There were no suspicious circumstances.

A verdict of accidental drowning was returned.

EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY

Prior to the commencement of business at the Rushworth Court of Petty Sessions on Monday Mr E. E. O'Grady, P.M., referred with regret to the death of Mr Furphy, J.P. He said he had not had the privilege of knowing the late Mr Furphy personally, but from what he could learn he was a man held in high esteem by the community.

Mr J. R. Hanlon, on behalf of the legal profession, said he wished to associate himself with the expressions of regret. He had known the late Mr Furphy since he (Mr Hanlon) had been in Rushworth, and he had been held in the highest respect, and was a very old identity and his death would make a break in the district. He was one of the oldest Justices in the State and his death came as a shock to the community.

Senior-Constable Sutton, on behalf of the police, also expressed his regret. Mr Furphy was one of the most consistent Justices he had known, and was held in the highest regard.

At the sitting of the court on Wednesday feeling reference was also made to Mr Furphy's death.

Mr D. Crothers (Chairman of the bench) expressed his deep regret at Mr Furphy's death. They were without one of their colleagues that day. Mr Furphy took great interest in his work on the bench, and they would all suffer from their great loss. The manner in which he met his death was so sudden. He extended his sympathy to the members of the family in their sad bereavement.

Mr E. W. Curtis, J.P., also expressed his regret. The district had suffered a great loss and he also wished to extend his sympathy to the members of the family.

Mr A. J. Sleep, J. P., said he had known the late Mr Furphy all his life, and he had practically nursed him (Mr Sleep). He had always looked on Mr Furphy as a trusted friend, and his death caused him great regret. He sympathised with the family, and hoped they would follow in their father's and their grandfather's footsteps.

Mr Hanlon also expressed regret to the family.

Senior-Constable Sutton also expressed his regret on behalf of the police. The late Mr Furphy was always available to sit on the bench, and he gave his decisions in an impartial manner. He was always looked upon as an upright man.