

Mrs Mary Sprunt

Rushworth Chronicle

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Widespread regret was felt at the passing of one of the district's finest of pioneers in the person of Mrs. Mary Sprunt, who died at her home at Rushworth early on Sunday morning last.

Mrs. Sprunt, who was aged 90 years, passed peacefully away, having apparently been in her usual state of health on the previous evening. She was widely known throughout the district, being one of the earliest pioneers of the Burrumboot East area.

Born at the village of Glassonby, County of Cumberland, England, she came to Australia with her parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. John Palmer, at the age of five, the long journey being accomplished in a sailing vessel.

Her father was present at the first Crown land sale held in Melbourne, 85 years ago, conducted by the Government of the Colony of New South Wales, which then included Victoria. He purchased an area at Kyneton, which he named the Glassonby Farm, and that property is now farmed by the third generation of Palmers.

She married Mr. Edward Russell Sprunt at Kyneton 62 years ago, and they came almost immediately to Burrumboot East, where Mr. Sprunt had selected land. She lived on that farm until four years ago when she came to reside at Rushworth. Her husband predeceased her by 16 years, in his 80th year. Mrs. Sprunt was the last survivor of the nine children of her parents.

When Mrs. Sprunt first came to Burrumboot East, bullock drays were the popular method of transport. Rushworth was not favoured then by the hardy band of people who opened up the country there (most of whom came from Kyneton district), but Corop was their township. Corop was at that time an important and flourishing centre.

Mrs. Sprunt retained her faculties remarkably well to the last and in reminiscent mood she told many fascinating stories of incidents in the early days. She was a fine woman in every respect. Gentle and kind to everyone, she was a devoted mother, a fine neighbour and a practical Christian. Her passing, besides making another gap in the ranks of the pioneers to whom we owe so much, is felt by all who came in contact with her as distinct personal loss.

She is survived by three sons and three daughters, viz., Grace (Rushworth), Vivian (Burrumboot East), Edward (Burrumboot East), Guy (Ardmona), Olive (Rushworth) and Violet (Mrs. R. A. Stewart, Sandhills, Corop).

The funeral was held on Monday, to the Rushworth Cemetery, Mr. Landers reading the burial service. The attendance at the graveside was large and representative of all sections of the community.

The pall-bearers were: Messrs W. C. Geyle, Ross Furphy, H. P. Bedwell, Dave Russel, Don Stewart and W. Lawrie; the coffin-bearers were: Messrs Don Palmer, Lough Palmer, Ira Dettman, Hugh Dettman, Ced. Sprunt and Vincent Palmer; and the flower-bearers: Messrs Duncan Palmer, Joe Palmer and Vincent Palmer, jnr.

Messrs Whitaker and Diggle carried out the funeral arrangements.