

Mr. Thomas Blake

Rushworth Chronicle

14 January, 1927

It was only on Friday last that we had to chronicle the death of one of Rushworth's oldest residents in the person of the late Mr. Simon Fraser, and we have the same sad duty to perform in this issue, as Mr. Thos. Blake, another of the pioneers of Rushworth, and a neighbour of the late Mr. Fraser, passed away on Saturday last, at the age of 86 years (he would have reached his 87th year this month).

Mr. Blake had enjoyed his usual good health up till about five weeks prior to his disease, but his illness only became serious three days before he died.

Born at Muddy Plains Tasmania, the late Mr. Blake came to Victoria with his father at the age of 12 years. He carried on mining at Heathcote for some years, and later started a blacksmithing business.

He afterwards came to Rushworth where he resided up till the time of his death (over 50 years). He took up the work of contracting and was employed as dayman to the Waranga Shire Council for some years. He also selected land on the Stanhope road, which he cultivated, and resided there up till the time of his death.

The late Mr. Blake was a keen sportsman, and took great interest in cricket, and was one of the members of the first country team to visit Melbourne.

He was also very keen on the gun and would leave his work if he knew there were any ducks about.

He was one of the founders of an attempt to get the eight-hour movement established in Rushworth. A banner was purchased, but on Eight Hours Day only two or three followed the banner, the other workmen in the town refusing to knock off work to take part in the procession.

He was married in Heathcote to Miss Anna Smith, who predeceased him about three years ago. He was the oldest living member of the local lodge of the G. U. O. O. F., having joined the lodge in 1871, at the age of 31 years.

The deceased was generally respected and was one of the good old pioneers who "blazed the track" in the early days.

He leaves a family of nine (two having died in infancy) – Thomas (Numurkah), Mary (Mrs. Brennan, Rushworth), James (Paynesville), George (Footscray), Louisa (Mrs. Cairns, New Zealand), William (Rushworth) Rose (Mrs. O'Callaghan, Melbourne), Maud (Mrs. Anderson, New South Wales) and Allan (Footscray).

The funeral took place on Monday, the funeral procession to the Rushworth Cemetery, which was largely attended, was headed by members of the local lodge of the G. U. O. O. F., amongst whom was the Grand Secretary of the Order (Bro. H. G. Brice) a former resident of Rushworth and an intimate friend of the deceased. The burial service of the Church of England was read by the Rev. F. Grist, who after reading the service, referred to the good qualities of their deceased brother.