

MEMORIAL TO OLD PIONEERS.

Historic Shark Creek Ceremony.

FIRST PUBLIC SCHOOL WIRELESS INSTALLED.

Lesson in Energy and Self-Reliance

History was made at Shark Creek on Saturday afternoon last when the first memorial to be erected in this State to the memory of the early settlers was unveiled in the presence of a large and representative gathering. The memorial, which is the work of, and was erected by the schoolchildren of Shark Creek, bears the names of 44 of those settlers who made a home on the Lower Clarence in the fifties.

A wireless receiving set, the first of its kind in any of the schools of our State, was also installed. Thus Shark Creek School, which has but a small attendance, can boast of the most up-to-date educational facilities, and under the guidance of an energetic headmaster in Mr. J. B. Walsh should go on to increased prosperity.

HISTORY OF SHARK CREEK.

The following ancient history of Shark Creek was compiled by the local Parents and Citizens' Association, and was issued in souvenir form:—

"It is generally admitted that the Clarence was discovered by Richard Craig

in 1834, but in the absence of records the discovery of her ana-branches, as we know them in geography, is somewhat obscure.

"Shark Creek, whose aboriginal name was 'Decregun,' is no exception. Within the shadows of Mt. Wohimora, Shark Creek moved slowly with the tide for some years after Craig's discovery till the white man disturbed its solitude. There are evidences that the Smalls, who settled in Tyndale, had been about the upper reaches of the stream, but no attempt was made at settlement till 1864.

"W. Perkins selected in 1864, M. McDonnell 1865, O. Maloney, T. Loughman, B. Connolly, J. Connolly, J. Loughman, E. Bloomer, 1868; J. O'Mara, J. Mitchell, 1867; J. Ryan, 1868; P. Fennessey, W. Johnson, T. Maguire, J. Leddy, 1869; H. Cullen, 1871; T. Corbett, M. Hinchey, 1877; D. Broderick, 1887. Selection was in terms of the Robertson Land Act. The conditions were £1 per acre, 5/ deposit, balance at 5 per cent., over an unlimited period; holding restricted, 40 to 320 acres.

"This little band migrated from Ire land, and though not all known to each

land, and though not all known to each other in the land of their birth they quickly fraternised in the land of their adoption and were as an Irish clan in Australia. Possessed of the dogged spirit of their race, they fought the adversities of pioneering. Having erected their humble dwellings they attacked the timber with a vim and soon among the stumps and logs the sun was hurrying the golden grain to harvest. Those crops planted with the hoe, were gathered on the backs of the pioneers and marketed at 11d to 1/6 a bushel. Floods, frosts, vermin, etc., gave these "toilers of solitude" many rebuffs, but they returned to the attack to win. All this time he is living a life of solitude, when roads were nil; and the necessaries of life hard to obtain. Provisions were obtained either from Rocky Mouth or Grafton. The settlers banded together and rowed to either settlement in the Mutrina, the only boat on the creek, owned by Mr. McDonnell. Gradually the timber clears, bullocks are employed on the selections, roads are building, bridges building, ferries established, and the pioneers reach Rocky Mouth by road. A ferry punt was established at the mouth of the creek about 1872 and worked by J. O'Mara till the first bridge was built in 1882 by the department of Roads and Bridges. The contractor was H. Denning, Upper Shark Creek Bridge was built in 1903, the contractor being P. Fully. This bridge was the result of the untiring efforts of the late M. Hinchey. A concrete bridge took the place of the timber structure at the mouth of the creek in 1916.

"Education had its birth under the Denominational system about 1875, when Miss Hackett opened a school on the hill near "Tara Hall." After a couple of years the Department of Public Instruction took over the school and placed W. Walsh in charge, who was succeeded by Mr. Myers. In 1885 the department acquired 1½ acres from T. Maguire, and built a school which was opened in charge of Mr. Sheehan, with the following teachers in order of succession:—H. Stevens, H. Schaeffer, D. Macrae, Miss F. Maclean, R. McDonald, E. Gentle, A. Nicholson, H. Turnbull, J. A. Walsh, J. B. Walsh. The structure of 1885 gave place to the present modern building in 1920. The remains of the old school chimney were

present modern building in 1920. The remains of the old school chimney were buried in the concrete of the 'Pioneers' Memorial.' Postal communication was established with receiving offices at Upper and Lower Shark Creek about 1890. These offices were conducted by Messrs. Maguire (Upper), and J. O'Mara (Lower). Telephone communication was established at Lower Shark Creek about 1899, the Upper Shark Creek office being closed. Upper Shark Creek received its second receiving office in 1922, and telephone communication in April, 1923.

"Sugar cane was introduced in the early seventies. A. J. Ryan was the first to plant. Contract price with the C.S.R. Co. was 10/ per ton.

"Dairying commenced about 1905, when the milk was carted to Maclean and sold to the Fresh Food and Ice Co. After a couple of years the separator was introduced and the cream sent to Maclean, Grafton, or Ulmarra, which is being done to-day. James Gallagher worked a sawmill near the mouth of Shark Creek from 1872 to 1882, removing the plant to Mangrove Creek.

"About 1900 much of the land on the south bank of the creek passed in the hands of the Hay and Morton Syndicate.

"A drainage trust was formed, and after draining, the land was resold.

"The grand old men and women who formed the band of pioneers on Shark Creek and known far and wide for their hospitality, are gone to their reward, with the exception of D. Maloney, M. McDonnell, T. and K. Corbett, who are residing at Shark Creek, and Mesdames Hinchey and Cullen, Sydney.

As O'Hara wrote of Flinders:—

"To fadeless memory
They left a deathless name."

SCHOOL AND GROUNDS.

The school is situated on the main Shark Creek road and has extensive grounds. These have been utilised by the teacher in the preparation of gardens. At the rear of the school the land has been

tilled and cultivated, and should soon blossom into a fine vegetable reserve. In the front of the building is erected a

... into a fine vegetable reserve. In the front of the building is erected a towering flagstaff, and a sun dial is already in course of preparation. An outstanding feature connected with the school grounds is a map of Australia built in soil and embedded in concrete. Space is left between the soil and concrete, and water is floated all around to resemble the oceans. The harbors and ports are built in, while the defences are typified by the installation of toy cannons. The cables, represented by small wires, jut out from the stations, while the connection by railway is typified by small model trains built on "steel" tracks. Lakes have been set in and connection by water is provided. Those parts of the continent where artesian bores exist are exemplified by gushing streams, the water being tapped from the pipes. The pasturing reserves are shown by the toy model of a cow being placed at the suitable positions, while the ranges are also featured. The lighthouses are shown by means of small electric bulbs, and when these are lighted a pretty picture results. The routes of the explorers are shown by small photos, while on a nearby board are shown the distance travelled, the time taken and the name of the explorer. The whole map is certainly one of the most novel and brilliant kind. It gives the history, the resources and the topography of Australia in a manner that can never be approached by books, and as an educational aid, it stands alone. It was built by Mr. Walsh, and Shark Creek children are fortunate to have a teacher who takes such deep interest in their training, and who is prepared to go to such trouble in order to give them the best educational facilities. This map is the pride of the district, and was much admired on Saturday.

THE MONUMENT.

In the front of the grounds is erected the monument. While the structure is not elaborate it is convincing, and adds to the charm of the school. It is constructed of cement which was obtained from the old chimney of the old Shark Creek School and is built on the three tier approach principle with the short tower. At its summit an aluminium plough is embedded in the cement.

plough is embedded in the cement. This is of the old style such as was used in pioneering days. The monument bears the inscription on its front base: "Facti Non Verba" (deeds not words), and then follows: "Erected by the S.C.P.S. children, 1923; J. B. Walsh, teacher." On a scroll at the base are the names: Nurses E. Noolan, A. Shearer, B. Plater, M. Gale. On the four sides at the centre of the tablet are printed the following names of old pioneers:—Mr. and Mrs. T. McGuire, Mr. and Mrs. J. Ryan, Mr. and Mrs. D. Maloney, Mr. and Mrs. J. Loughman, Mr. and Mrs. E. Bloomer, Mr. and Mrs. M. Hinchey, Mr. and Mrs. H. Cullen, Mr. and Mrs. T. Corbett, Mr. and Mrs. P. Fennessey, Mr. and Mrs. J. Mitchell, Mr. and Mrs. J. Donnelly, Mr. and Mrs. T. Loughman, Mr. and Mrs. J. Gallagher, Mr. and Mrs. J. O'Mara, Mr. and Mrs. T. Powell, Mr. and Mrs. D. McIntyre, Messrs. M. McDonald, W. Johnson, D. Hinchey, M. Kelly, J. Liddy, B. Connolly and B. Broderick.

The structure stands in a concrete bed surmounted by iron railings, and the whole of the work, with the exception of the railings and the marble work was done by Mr. Walsh, who had the assistance of the following boys:—Michael Hinchey, Bren and Joe Maloney, Joe Collis, Joe Connolly, Michael Maloney, Ron Kirby and George Maloney.

The erection of such a monument by teacher and boys is a tribute to the advancement made by the school, and adds further laurels to rural education. The work occupied about four months.

THE WIRELESS SET.

Great interest was manifested in the wireless set. This is the small model receiving set and was built by Mr. T. Wilmott, of Coramba road. It is capable of receiving 2600 wires and has been tested and found to be able to get in touch with New Zealand and Samoa. It was purchased by Mr. Walsh for the use of schoolchildren. With the advancement of wireless that will shortly come about there is every reason to assume that Shark Creek will be one of the best equipped schools of the State. The wireless is fitted up in the main schoolroom, which is of a most modern design, and has the latest in school furniture. Taken

has the latest in school furniture. Taken all round the school, considering the population, ranks with the best of its kind.

Reference must be made to the great work performed by the local Parents and Citizens' Association. This energetic body is right behind the school, and the making of a happier and more advantageous lot for the children enlists its heartiest support. Mr. J. B. Gallagher is the energetic secretary to the movement, and was at all times ready to oblige with any desired information concerning the school and its history.

THE UNVEILING.

Councillor T. McMahon (Harwood Shire), who presided at the function, after explaining the object of the gathering that afternoon said that as a native of the Lower Clarence he was pleased to be present to do honor to that brave band of men and women who had come to that district in the early days, and had cleared the vast scrubs and forests into the present day fertile areas. They were the class of people who had built up this country. The early emigrants had come from the British Isles and they had made good. Notwithstanding the low prices they had received for their produce they had reared large families. He was sorry that they only had three or four of the old pioneers with them that day. There were two ladies there that he thought he should mention. Mrs. Plater, of Talloumbi, and Mrs. Grewer, of Maclean. (Applause.) Mrs. Plater had rendered yeoman service in nursing at a time when doctors had been very scarce. The only doctors lived in Grafton, and the early settlers had to row from Maclean to there in order to bring down their provisions. The memorial which was the work of Mr. Walsh, the teacher, and the schoolchildren reflected very great credit upon them. It showed that rural education was playing an important part in the schools'

syllabus, and he hoped to see established at an early date an Agricultural High School. (Applause.)

Four of the old pioneers of the district, Messrs. D. Maloney, T. Corbett, M. McDonald and D. McIntyre, then hoisted the

Donald and D. McIntyre, then hoisted the flags which draped the monument and the Shark Creek memorial to its old pioneers was fittingly unveiled. The Maclean Band at this stage added tone to the proceedings by rendering "Advance, Australia Fair," the gathering cheering loudly. Several apologies were received and these were read by the secretary. These were from Mr. R. J. Middleton, District School Inspector, who wrote congratulating Mr. Walsh and the school on the fine work achieved. Mr. A. J. Pollack (president, Grafton Chamber of Commerce), Messrs. McDonald (Chief Inspector of Agriculture), P. and M. Kilkelly, Revs. L. Gray and T. McLean, Mr. and Mrs. Nieve and Mr. W. Hunt (president, L.C.R. and A. Society)

BULOGISTIC SPEECHES.

Mr. Martin (headmaster, Maclean School) said that Mr. Walsh was to be congratulated on instilling into the minds of the children an ideal in the shape of the work done by the old pioneers. On one side of the monument was written "Facto Non Verba" (deeds not words), and this was true of the old pioneers. They had done their bit, and he hoped that the children of the present generation would follow in their footsteps. The school, he continued, should be the centre of the district, and he was proud to see such a representative gathering there that afternoon. The success of any country was due to its educational system, and he was proud to belong to a department where the individuality of the teacher was given full play. The practical aids to education that were on view in the school's playground were wonderful. They were well known in the department and throughout New South Wales. In his opinion the thought that brought into being the erection of such a fine monument was indeed a happy one. The Shark Creek people were also a happy people by reason of their having out there all the latest educational advantages. Wireless was one of these city advantages that they had now brought right to their door. He would like to think that every school in the State was supported as Shark Creek was supported by its Parents and Citizens Association. (Applause.)

(Applause.)

Mr. T. Ousby (headmaster, Palmer's Channel School) first congratulated the school on having Mr. Walsh as its teacher. Referring to the monument he said that the old pioneers were entitled to all honor and credit. They were indeed Empire builders. Some of them had come out here from Ireland and other parts of the British Empire. He was glad now that Ireland was a part of the British Empire, and that the old hard feeling was dying out. (Applause.) Looking at the old pioneers, concluded the speaker, "I take off my hat to them, and I would like every man here to do the same and to give them three hearty cheers."

The speaker's example was followed with alacrity, and three hearty cheers were given.

Rev. Father Durkin said that the memorial struck a note of sadness in his heart. It brought back memories of the Nambucca River, where he had lived for 13 years, and where he had met many old pioneers and had seen many pass away. It brought back to him then a feeling of separation. He would always be ready to pay a tribute of respect and honor to the men who had opened up this district. These were the men who had come on to the Clarence and had opened up the lands, cleared the country and formed the towns, and had given us the advantages that we enjoyed to-day. To them all honor and respect were due. He was pleased to see the wireless set installed. Wireless had been of great advantage to mankind in rescue work and shipwreck, and in many other ways. He was pleased to see that a thing that he had advocated for many years ago had come to pass in some town in England, and that was the installation of a wireless set on motor cars. Now that he had a car he would like to see a wireless above it as this would prove of great advantage to him when on duty. The professional man that had to leave his home and go away on an urgent call was in need of some such protection in the event of getting stuck up on the road. It would mean that he could get in touch with someone and be located. The thanks of the district were due to Mr. Walsh and his pupils for bringing joy into the lives of the old pioneers, their wives and their children, and he hoped that the wireless set they

had installed would be a means of spreading that joy.

Rev. Mr. Boyer (Macleay) said he was satisfied that it must be a joy to the old pioneers who were alive to-day to know that their work was appreciated. Referring to the monument, he stated that while they were in a sense looking back they were also in a sense looking forward. They were taking something from the past and using it for the future. The future was in the hands of the boys and girls of that district. They would be able to take an example from the work done by the old pioneers. This generation had reaped the benefit of the old pioneers' work. Not only was there the material benefit in the clearing of the lands, but also the spiritual benefits in the ideals of the old pioneers. He congratulated them on what had been done, and, as secretary of the Macleay Parents and Citizens' Association, he was going to tell that body at its next meeting that Shark Creek could show them a point as far as sticking to their school was concerned. (Applause.)

Rev. Mr. Wood said that he would like to congratulate the people of the district in having a fitting memorial erected to do honor to the men who had helped to make Australia what it was to-day. They had blazed the trail and had made living conditions much easier for us. The little plough that was erected at the top of the monument brought back to his mind the difficulties with which the old pioneers had to contend. To-day we were enjoying the fruits of their efforts not only on the land, but also in science and industry. We were living in ease if not in luxury. The present generation was the child of the past but the parent of the future, and it was left for the children of to-day to carry on. There was still work to be done and difficulties to be overcome, and so when our day came to shuffle off this mortal coil he hoped that it would be said of us that we had done something. (Applause.)

Mr. G. Marks (manager, Experiment Farm) said that some 50 or 60 years ago the old pioneers had settled in that district. In those days there had been no motor boats nor motor cars. Much had been done during the past 50 or 60 years, but he wondered what would be done in the future. He said a tribute to Mr.

out he wondered what would be done in the future. He paid a tribute to Mr. Walsh, and stated that the children of the district had many opportunities. There were very few countries where more was being done for the boys and girls than in New South Wales. With such a fine teacher as Mr. Walsh the children of Shark Creek should learn all they could. Shark Creek had set an example. In their monument they had shown a grand ideal and a good principle. The progress of the North Coast that had been made during the last 15 years was due to the fine principle and the fine example set by the old pioneers. The installation of wireless had shown that they were determined to avail themselves of the best

facilities for education. Wireless had not been thought of in the times of the old pioneers, but thus the march of science and the march of education with all its manifold ramifications went on. It would be a sad day, he concluded, if the memories of the old pioneers were forgotten in the country for which they had done so much. (Applause.)

Mr. Fennessey, in referring to the difficulties experienced by the old pioneers, stated that when they had first seen the Clarence district it resembled a brush insurmountable and impassable. Unfortunately there was only a remnant of the gallant band left with them that day. He could not miss the opportunity without thanking Mr. Walsh and the children for the splendid exhibit they had there that day. It showed that Mr. Walsh was a man with a wonderful constructive mind and a man who was above the average for a schoolteacher. (Applause).

Mr. R. J. McDonald stated that most of the old pioneers had been personally known to him. He remembered the time they used to pass through Maclean and call at his father's place for water. Shark Creek was about seven miles long and in those days the only way of getting to Maclean was by water. He had seen many sights, but he had never seen a more appealing one than a funeral on the water, when some 30 or 40 boats of all shapes and sizes paid a last tribute to the memory of a friend. He wondered if we of the second generation were doing as

of the second generation were doing as much as the old pioneers—whether we were worthy of the heritage that we had entered into. (Applause.)

Mr. J. B. Callaghan (secretary P. and C. Association) said that as secretary to the committee, and as an Australian of the second generation with four of the names of his grandparents gracing the monument he was proud to pay a tribute to the work done by the old pioneers. He congratulated Mr. Walsh on having originated the idea for the erection of the monument and said that the mind that could conceive such a patriotic and noble idea was not lacking in energy or initiative. Mr. Walsh not only conceived the idea, but he put it into practical form. He thought that if Mr. Walsh accomplished nothing else in his life, that one act would alone be sufficient to hand his name down to posterity. The wireless set that had been established would serve its purpose as an educational medium. (Applause.)

Mr. A. E. Harrison (president, Maclean Chamber of Commerce) added his congratulations. He thought all praise was due to Mr. Walsh and to his band of willing workers for the erection of such a noble monument to the memory of the men who had done so much for the Shark Creek district.

Mr. Ken Mackay thought that Mr. Walsh had blazed a new trail. He would like to see the example of the Shark Creek School followed in other centres. The children of the present generation had never been told of the difficulties with which the old pioneers had to contend, and Mr. Walsh was setting a fine example.

Mr. C. A. Watson (president, Farmers and Settlers' Association) said that he was not in favor of waiting until all the people had died before they told them how much they appreciated their work. The monument would remind all of the sacrifices made by the early settlers.

The Mayor of Maclean (Ald. Cameron) on behalf of the people of Maclean, thanked the committee for the opportunity they had given him to be present that afternoon. In the position that he occupied he was thus given a chance of coupling his name with what he thought was a red letter day in the history of Shark Creek. (Applause.)

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The chairman at this stage thanked the Maclean "Advocate" for donating the souvenirs free of charge. He also thanked Messrs. Matheson and Collins for donating the marble slabs of the monument, and for making a reduction in the lettering costs.

Cheers were then given for Mr. Walsh, the schoolchildren and the president of the P. and C. Association (Councillor McMahon).

Mr. Walsh, who was eventually prevailed upon to speak, was accorded an ovation. He said he would have to apologise for not being in a position to speak that afternoon as he was far from well. He thanked them for their reception. (Applause.)

Afternoon tea was served on the grounds by a band of willing helpers, and after this had been partaken of a musical programme was enjoyed and showed that Shark Creek and district have some talented performers in the musical world.

The programme was as follows:—Overture, Miss Hinchey; recitation, Mr. T. D. Ousby; item by Maclean Convent Orchestra; song, Miss Jean McIntosh; jig, Master and Miss Commerford; step dance, Mr. M. McDonnell, one of the old pioneers; two items by Maclean Brass Band.

The Maclean Town Band considerably enlivened proceedings during the afternoon with the rendering of appropriate selections.