

A VETERAN ISLANDER.

DEATH OF MR. JOHN BUICK.

Mr. John Buick, "the grand old man of Kangaroo Island," died at American River last week in the ninety-second year of his age. For many years he and the late Mr. Angus Reeves, of Kingscote, shared the distinction of being the oldest settlers on the island, the latter having preceded Mr. Buick as an insular resident by about two years. Mr. John Buick, who was a sturdy son of Scotia, was born at Montrose, on May 16, 1822. He had lived on Kangaroo Island for 60 years, and had a most interesting and varied career. His father was a builder, farmer, and manufacturer of farming implements. The farm, a mile outside of Arbroath, was the scene of Mr. Buick's earliest labours. A prouder youngster than he was not to be found in the land on the day when he was first given a team of horses to drive in the harrows. After a couple of years on the farm, he decided that the blue bounding sea was the place for him, and forthwith entered the merchant service as an apprentice. Four years in that position was followed by 12 months before the mast. Then his brother, the carpenter and first mate on another vessel, died in the West Indies. His tools were returned home, and on their arrival Mr. Buick acquired them and secured employment in a Forfarshire dockyard as a ship and boat builder. At the end of four years he joined his uncle's ship *Mora*, at Liverpool, in the combined capacities of carpenter and second mate. On the return of the vessel from the Baltic, Mr. Buick spent a short period in the *Arethusa*, and afterwards joined the brig *Malcolm*, of 300 tons. She conveyed a general cargo to Rio de Janeiro, loaded coffee and cocoa at Bahia, in Brazil, and then came to South Australia for orders. That was in 1844. From Port Adelaide, the vessel proceeded to Sydney, but Mr. Buick had disembarked, and remained in South Australian territory for the remainder of his life, with credit to the State and to himself.

—Boat, Punt, and Bridge Building.—

He had not been on shore many hours when he was engaged to cut mangrove boat knees near Port Adelaide. After he had been occupied in that pursuit for a month he was commissioned by Mr. Bell to construct at Wellington a punt for the conveyance of sheep and cattle across the River Murray. At the completion of the undertaking he returned to the Port and became a boat builder and ship repairer.



THE LATE MR. JOHN BUICK.

That was followed by another trip to the Murray on behalf of Mr. Scott, who had contracted with the Government to build a punt at Wellington. On the way back to the metropolis Mr. Buick and his assistants stayed overnight at Warland's Hotel, on the Onkaparinga. During the evening a mounted trooper handed to Mr. Buick a despatch, in which the Government instructed him to erect a bridge at Langhorne's Creek. His companions, however, were bent upon spending a week in the city, and after a vigorous discussion it was decided to adopt that course. At the end of the seven days the men proceeded to the creek and built the bridge. Mr. Buick then resumed his old trade at the chief seaport, and for years did all the Marine Board's carpentry work. Then the Government offered him the position of master shipwright, which he held for a couple of years; but, finding that he could secure better results from a financial point of view as a private employer, he resigned, and went on his own account again.

—Kangaroo Island, Ahoy!—

Anxious to secure a first-class cutter, Mr. Ranford, of Port Adelaide, engaged him to build a 46-ton boat. Accordingly in January, 1854, Mr. Buick, with his wife and three children, set out for Kangaroo Island, and landed at Point Buick, where Mr. Buick resided ever after. Assisted principally



and landed at Point Buick, where Mr. Buick resided ever after. Assisted principally by his brother, he built the vessel on the foreshore in front of his cottage. As it approached completion he and his wife resolved that they could not do better than "go on the land." The decision was partially influenced by the fact that during her residence on the island Mrs. Buick's health had improved materially. "At that time," remarked Mr. Buick when telling the story several years ago, "there were about only 50 people on the whole island, and our nearest neighbour was miles away. The timber and bush which covered the country did not present an inviting aspect; but, determined to do or die, I obtained a lease from the Government, and promptly

Mr. Buick married, before he went to the island, a daughter of the late Mr. Stephen Filmer, who had come to South Australia in the ship Lloyds in 1838. The widow is now 88 years of age. There was a family of 10 children, of whom 11 survive, and there are about 30 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

began clearing for cultivation. The soil is alluvial, with a clay bottom, and will grow practically anything. Wheat and barley were the first grains I sowed, and the clean up produced between 30 to 40 bushels to the acre. Each year I increased the cultivated area. I have had magnificent cereal crops, but the best returns were 75 bushels of Cape oats and 50 bushels of barley to the acre. As my sons grew into manhood, however, I did less and less farming, and since 1894 I have not done any at all."

—A Fine Orchard.—

Mr. Buick was an enthusiastic and expert horticulturist. Sixty years ago he prepared ground to the rear of his house, and four years later planted it with various fruit trees, which made rapid headway. Then two or three dry seasons in succession killed the apricot trees, but the others thrived, and to-day the trunks of some measure 2 ft. in diameter. They have borne tons of delicious fruit, which has won a reputation, not only throughout the island, but on the mainland as well. The birds showed appreciation of the dainties by feasting upon the best of the fruit; and, notwithstanding devices to combat them, destroyed vast quantities each year. Recognising the hopelessness of the battle, Mr. Buick conceived the idea, which succeeded admirably, of establishing a new garden, 100 yards from the old one. As he briefly explained—"Seeing that the feathered pests and the opossums had the upper hand, I thought if I gave them full freedom to plunder the garden they had frequented for years, they would, perhaps, overlook another near by. Experience showed that my judgment was correct. I planted the new garden with trees similar to those in the other about 1894, and some of the crops have been wonderful. I have also grown magnificent vegetables." Mr. Buick used to dig over his two acres once every year, and in parts twice. He attributed the good general health of himself and wife to the fact that they did all their own work, and "had no time to be ill."

—Descendants.—

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