

A PROUD RECORD

Tracker

FRANK WILLIAMS

Frank Williams, now living at Green Street, Bourke, was born 73 years ago at Tooralle Station on the Warrego River in the Bourke district. He was brought up in the bush and learnt the art of tracking as a child.

When he was nineteen, he started as police tracker at Drysdale, 23 miles north of Cobar. With a few breaks, he served continuously as tracker for 45 years and retired about 3 years ago. He served in the following towns:—Gongolgon, Cobar, Dubbo, Byrock and Bourke. His longest term was at Byrock, where he was for 25 years, and his last 12 years in the force were at Bourke.

He claims that his eyes are still as good as ever, and, even now though he is retired, he is sometimes called in by the police to lend them a hand at tracking.

He remembers very clearly his hardest tracking job. Mack McDonald was a full-blood who came down to Brewarrina from Queensland. McDonald murdered a boy in Brewarrina under very savage circumstances, and then went bush. Williams set out on his trail and tracked him from Brewarrina towards Weilmoringle Station, a distance of over 50 miles. Much of the tracking was through creeks, where McDonald went to avoid being traced. Williams caught up with McDonald and caught him asleep, off his guard.

Last November Williams was very delighted when he was invited to attend Government House for his investiture. He is very proud of his silver medal, with the red and blue ribbon, which bears the words "For Faithful Service" and has his name engraved on the edge. He is also proud of his citation which was sent to him by the Registrar of the Imperial Service Order from St. James' Palace, London.

Williams is also proud of the gold watch which was presented to him when he retired from the Force by the police. Williams has a comfortable home in Bourke. He had a family of five sons and seven daughters. Two of his sons served in the war, one was killed in Malaya, while the other had over three years on the horror railway line as a P.O.W. of the Japs.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

First Woman Elected

Mrs. Pearl Mary Gibbs, of Dubbo, became the first woman of aboriginal blood to be elected to the Aborigines Welfare Board.

Aborigines of full and mixed blood elected her at the Board's recent triennial election.

She defeated two other candidates by a narrow majority.

Grey-haired and blue-eyed, 55-year-old Mrs. Gibbs is a widow with three children.

Mrs. Gibbs said that for 17 years she had been trying to obtain full citizen rights for all people of aboriginal blood.

The secretary of the board, Mr. J. R. Mullins, announced the result.

He said the board had 11 members.

Nine, including the chairman, were appointed by the State Government.

The other two—a full-blood aboriginal and a mixed-blood aboriginal, were elected by about 1,200 full and mixed blood aborigines in the State.

Mrs. Gibbs' election filled a vacancy for the aboriginal of mixed blood. A full-blood aboriginal had still to be elected.



Members of the Wallaga Lake Gum Leaf Band at Bega Show

"There has been a vacancy on the board for a full-blood aboriginal for about five years," Mr. Mullins said.

"At the last election, three years ago, we called for nominations for this position three times, but none was received.

"We have called for nominations once on this occasion, and will call twice more, to try to fill the position.

"If no more nominations are received, the Board will carry on one member short.

Mr. Mullins said there were about 900 full-blood aborigines in New South Wales at the time of the 1947 census.