

Mr John Pettifer

Waranga Echo

13 May, 1869

From our Whroo correspondent [undated]

Mr John Pettifer, one of our oldest inhabitants, fell 30 feet down a shaft on the London reef prospecting claim on Thursday last, and sustained a compound fracture of one leg, and slight injuries to the other. He was at once taken to the Mclvor Hospital [Heathcote].

Mr Pettifer has been most unfortunate, having been seriously hurt in a similar manner about 15 months ago, in the Byrons reef prospecting claim. He has a wife and 8 young children, only one of whom is old enough to do anything.

From our Whroo correspondent, dated 11 May

It is with very great sorrow that I record the death of Mr John Pettifer which took place at 4 o'clock on Sunday morning in the Mclvor Hospital, from wounds received on the evening of the 29th April by falling from a ladder in London Reef Co.'s prospecting claim.

Mr Pettifer was a miner in the prime of his life, about forty years of age, and highly respected by all who knew him. He has resided amongst us for the last twelve years, and leaves a widow and eight young children (the eldest only 13 years old).

The sad event has cast a gloom over the whole district.

Subscriptions are now being collected for the widow and little ones, and I am sure that everyone will do their utmost to alleviate as far as money can, the sufferings of the bereaved ones, and not let the pressure of want be added to their other afflictions.

J.T. Lewis Esq., J.P., is treasurer to the fund, and our principal men are on the committee. Subscription lists are sent to the business premises on Whroo, and a few also to Rushworth and Spring Creek [Graytown].

"He that giveth unto the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and lo He shall repay him."

The Whroo correspondent also must have worked for the Bendigo Advertiser. The above reports were also published in that newspaper on 7 and 15 May, 1869, one noting the injury, the other noting the fatal consequences.

Mclvor Times

14 May, 1869

MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY

On Tuesday last, His Worship the Mayor, held an enquiry touching the death of John Pettifer, who died in the Heathcote District Hospital on Monday morning last, from injuries received in falling down a shaft at Coy's diggings.

Ellis Glen sworn, said: I'm a miner residing at Coy's diggings; I recognise the body now lying at the Hospital as that of John Pettifer, of Whroo; on the last day of April I saw him on Coy's diggings alive; he was going on the night shift at seven o'clock; I saw him light his candle to go down the shaft; it is thirty feet deep; he was going on to the ladder, and he fell down the shaft; when we got him up he said, "Don't take me home, take me to the Heathcote Hospital". He could not give me any account of how he fell; he was not sober at the time; he

had a fall about eighteen months ago in the Byron's reef and since that he has not been able to take any drink, he had only two or three glasses that day, but a little affected him since he fell in the Byron's; John Holt went down the shaft before Pettifer, and when he fell he went past Holt without knocking him off the ladder, but it put his candle out; the shaft was thirty feet deep.

[In answer to question] By His Worship: Deceased did not complain of any neglect on the part of any one; the ladders were all firm; deceased had his candle lighted and was getting on to the ladder when he fell; I brought him to the Hospital; he did not say much about the accident on the road; he did not complain of any neglect.

Charles Robinson sworn, said: I am a duly qualified medical practitioner and surgeon to the Heathcote Hospital; the diseased **[surely the deceased]** John Pettifer was admitted into the Hospital at six o'clock on the morning of the 30th of April, having travelled through the night from Coy's diggings, and suffering from a compound comminuted **[broken into many small pieces]** fracture of the left leg about two inches above the ankle; he was in a state of depression from the combined effects of the accident and the long journey; he had no medical attendance previous to his admission; his leg had not been dressed or put up in a splint; I considered it advisable to try to save the leg; on Saturday erysipelas **[inflamed skin above swelling]** set in and quickly extended up the leg and thigh; delirium came on; he gradually sank and died about 3.45 on the morning of the 9th instant; the rapid extension of erysipelas did not admit of amputation of the limb; he was sensible while in the Hospital; he never complained of any neglect on the part of anyone connected with the mine where the accident happened; the cause of death was erysipelas, occasioned by injuries received.

A verdict in accordance with the evidence was recorded.

Waranga Echo

22 July, 1869

On Mrs Pettifer's subscription, I have not received a correct return of the list yet. The committee met on Tuesday last, and decided that the amount collected after paying 12 pounds debts owing by the late Mr Pettifer, and about 16 pounds for a sewing machine (at the request of Mrs Pettifer) should be given unconditionally to Mrs Pettifer for her own and children's use, and the treasurer was requested to pay it over.

Waranga Echo

4 March, 1869

Joseph Pettifer, a fine little boy about seven years old, son of Mr John Pettifer of Whroo, had his left arm broken on Friday last by falling off a pole on which he and some other boys were swinging. Dr Heily set the bone, and the little fellow is doing well.

John Pettifer was buried in the Whroo cemetery.