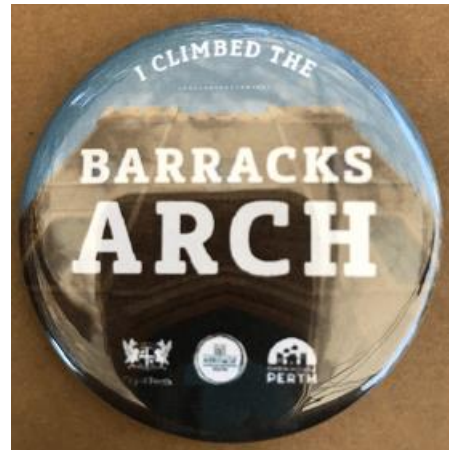


## THE ARCHIES!

Open House Perth is a free, two-day festival that celebrates the best of architecture, design and the built environment in Perth and its surrounds. It gives visitors unprecedented, behind-the-scenes access to Perth's best places and spaces.

The Open House concept was founded in London in 1992 with the aim of fostering a better understanding of architecture outside the architecture profession – it now spans the globe.



In association with The Heritage Council and the City of Perth the Barracks Arch was open to small groups over the weekend of 16 and 17 November.

The Enrolled Pensioner Guard SIG was on hand to provide information and the City of Perth graciously distributed brochures about our work - due to safety reasons, small groups only could tour and this meant only about 200 people could make a booking to climb the Arch.

Then and now:



An intrepid band of your SIG representatives climbed the Arch to reacquaint themselves (some for the first time) with the Barracks Arch:



Thanks to the City of Perth and in particular to Rachael O'Toole far right above for all the work in ensuring the opening of the Arch went smoothly.



The history of the Arch has been both interesting and controversial. The picture left is the beginning demolition of the Pensioners Barracks in 1966.

Demolition did not come without opposition - an announcement of these plans created public outcry and a Barracks Defence Council emerged in 1961.

From 1900-1904, the Arch buildings were converted into office spaces. Previous tenants were relocated and the Public Works Department (PWD) moved in. Notable occupants include C Y O'Connor whose office was directly above the arch and was visited during our tour.

A history of the Barracks follows including Daisy Bates 1911 Western Mail article on this historic landmark.

oooooo

In 1862 the Imperial Government decided to withdraw the troops of the line from Western Australia and use pensioners in their place. When this proposition was presented to the Governor, he together with Lt. Col Bruce, Commanding the Troops in WA, stipulated a few changes that had to be made.

The Company was to comprise 60 men ie 1 Acting Sergeant Major, 2 Sergeants, 4 Corporals, 1 Bugler, and 52 privates together with the usual non-commissioned officers. These were to be carefully chosen men with families of not more than 2 children.

They were to be housed in a Barrack that was to be built in Perth and paid for half from Colonial coffers and half from Britain, at the time it was pointed out that the Fremantle Barracks had been paid out of the Convict Estimates however this was no longer feasible. After some discussion the Imperial Government agreed to the requests and detailed they would increase the number of guard on the next 3 convict ships to 50 instead of the usual 30. The ships carrying the extra men were York, Merchantman (1863) Clyde.

Needless to say the men arrived before the barracks was built and were housed in rented accommodation for the interim period.

The next problem was the site of the Barracks. Those previously used by the Troops were on the corner of Barrack and St Georges Terrace opposite the Council Chambers (now the old Treasury buildings) and these were not suitable for married men and were boxed in by development.

Another site between the boys school in St Georges Terrace and the river was limited in area so eventually a Board of Officers was drawn up consisting of Lt Col Bruce, Commandant of Troops, as President, Staff Surgeons C W Poulton MD, Captain E.M. Grain Commanding the Royal Engineers to look at the available sites they decided the Mt Eliza was the best available as it was in an commanding position and removed from public houses with ample room for the necessary conveniences attached to a Barracks.





private contract. All fittings and stores that were required from England to be sent out on convict ships. The contractors were Alexander Halliday and James Brittain.

Among the materials needed were 21,000,000 bricks, 162,000 shingles, 270,000 feet of mahogany scantling, 3,100 squares of glass 14 inches by 10 inches, a further £105/- for an 8 day turret clock and £50 for a well pump.

The complex was to include:

- Each family to have two rooms 12'9" x 12', (Twelve feet nine inches x twelve).
- A room 54'8" x 25'6", (fifty four feet eight inches x twenty five feet six inches), for 20 single men.
- Also quarters for the Sergeant Major, 3 rooms.
- A workroom for females.
- A reading room for the men.
- An armoury.
- The detached buildings:
  - Quarter Master store, 16' x 14', (sixteen feet x fourteen feet).
  - A magazine, 12' x 10', (twelve feet x ten feet).
  - Cooking shed, 30' x 15', (thirty feet x fifteen feet)
  - Washing shed, 40' x 15', (forty feet x fifteen feet).
  - Working shed, 50' x 15', (fifty feet x fifteen feet). The latter, is intended for the men to work in at mechanical trades, and to instruct the youths of the Force.
  - An ablution shed for the Males, 30' x 15', (thirty feet x fifteen feet).
  - A general Guard room, 30'x18', (thirty feet x eighteen Feet) with 3 cells attached.
  - A hospital for 8 men, with a separate ward for 3 men; surgery, and quarters for an attendant.
- Construction of brick upon stone foundations; mahogany timber, and shea oak shingles.
- The bricks to be made burned and transported by Convict labour.
- The lime to be burned, and transported in Government flats by Convict labour.
- The mahogany laths, and shingles to be obtained, and delivered on the spot by contract

One can only wonder where the ablution facilities for the women and girls were located.

By April 1866 the Barracks building was completed and the pensioners moved from the temporary accommodation they had occupied for three years. (The old Barracks in Barrack Street was turned into a Post office.)

**TENDERS** in duplicate, will be received at the Commissariat Office, **Perth**, until noon on **SATURDAY**, the 14th April next, for the supply of Groceries, and other articles of general use, for retail to the Enrolled Pensioners in the **Canteen at the Perth Barracks** from the 1st of May till the 31st of December, 1866.

A list of the articles to be supplied, and the quantities likely to be required each month, may be seen at the Commissariat Office, where the conditions to be observed will be exhibited; and all necessary information, not given in the conditions, may be had on application to Col. Bruce.

Colonel Bruce will accept the whole, or such portion only of a tender or tenders as may appear most advantageous to the service, but he does not bind himself to accept the lowest or any tender.

**J. W. BOVELL,**  
Deputy Commissary General.  
Commissariat, Perth, W.A., }  
March 22. 1866.

*Inquirer and Commercial News Wednesday 28 March 1866 page 2*

A canteen was located at the left hand side of the Archway, as well as groceries it sold ale and stout but not spirits.

Later a hospital was built opposite the north east wing which later became a Government school before Hale School was built beside the present Government house. A fives court was added to the North East wing for the enjoyment of the pensioners and their families.

The Barracks from when it was completed to the disbanding of the Enrolled Guard in 1887 was specifically to house the men of either the Enrolled Force or the Enrolled Guard in one place so that in the event of being called out for Civil disturbances they could be mustered and armed very quickly.

The War Office also sent out a fire engine which was housed at the barracks specifically for use in the case of fire in the Barracks although it was available to the Civil Power. In one instance a fire broke out one Sunday morning when the pensioners were all at Church Parade and the pensioners' wives manning the fire engine had the fire out before the heroes came home.

There were several fires in the Barracks, one in 1878 when Pensioner John Callaghan was the hero of the hour and another much more serious one in 1887 damaging the North East wing. In this instant the Barracks fire engine was no longer

usable and the fire was eventually brought under control by the citizens of Perth manning a bucket brigade from the well until the Fremantle Fire engine was dramatically entrained to Perth to eventually quell the fire.

Great alarm was felt for the safety of the Magazine no doubt spurring the rescuers on. The damage to the building was estimated at £2,000.

List of Pensioners and their families in Mt. Eliza Barracks 1880:

Room	Rank	Name	Children		Remarks
			Boys	Girls	
	L/Corp	Michael Daily	2	3	
8	L/Corp	Wm Ryan			Single
9-14					Spare
15 & 16	Pte	Joseph Mellow	4	2	Off
17					Spare
18&19	Pte	McCarty	1	2	
20	Pte	Thomas Gardner			
21	Corp	Job Rush	1	3	Wife dead
22	Pte	David Leary (?Daniel)	1	3	Off
23	Pte	Patrick Sullivan	3	2	
24 & 25	Pte	John Callaghan	2	1	
26	Pte	Bernard Kelly	3	1	Off
27	Pte	Michael Brown	3	4	
28-31					Offices
46-48	Serg	Wm Latimer	5	3	
49	Pte	Michael Mack	2		Off
50	Pte	Patrick Sheehan	2		
51	Mrs	Fahey	2	1	1 girl in convent
52 & 53	Pte	Patrick Hayes	3	2	Off
54 & 55	Pte	John Seery	4	3	
56	Pte	Thomas Evans	3	1	Wife dead
57	Pte	John Murphy	1	1	
58	Pte	Hugh Cameron	1	2	Off
59	Mrs	Casey			

Along with the usual disruptions there were marriages as when Isabella the widow of John McKay (96<sup>th</sup> Regt Merchantman 1863) married John Gardner (HEIC Lord Dalhousie) after the death of his wife in 1872. The children especially the boys, were often in trouble with the law for raiding orchards, swimming (not suitably clothed), breaking windows and generally raising mayhem as they scoured the country side for fun and adventure.

Order in the Barracks was kept by a Barracks master and no doubt the boys escaped his iron rule at every opportunity.

Today when we live in our 4X2 houses, children rarely share a bedroom, privacy is expected, we think "How could the whole family live in 2 rooms" but the pensioners and their wives must have blessed their luck at having an area where they could shut a door and call it 'Home,' having spent most of their lives living in curtained off section of a barrack room, in tents and under conditions we cannot image let alone appreciate.



*An early photo of the Barracks still showing the tram lines used to carry materials to the site - Image from the SLWA collection 303442PD*

Further reading for the lay out of the barracks see Daisy Bates article in The Western Mail Saturday 1 April 1911 "The old Barracks." In the following pages.



## THE OLD BARRACKS, PERTH.

### AN INTERESTING HISTORY. HOW THE PENSIONERS LIVED.

(By Daisy M. Bates, F.R.A.S.)

(See Illustrations.)

This history of the old building which dominates not only St. George's Terrace, but practically all Perth, is not one in which fine Lords and Ladies figure, nor is it a place where high revelry reigned at any one period. Rather is it a history of humble people, men who for services "rendered to their Queen and country" were taken from the enrolled pensioners' lists of the British islands, and brought to the little West Australian settlement to end their days in the enjoyment of secured quarters and a modest daily allowance.

Much might be said in praise of these men and the wives who accompanied them in their exile. It may be safely assumed from the names of their descendants, that the majority of the pensioners, and, of course, their wives, were Irish, and to them of all others, for we Celts have a huge strain of sentimentalism mixed with our really heart-deep love of the "ould-sod," the pain of leaving their native land—that Isle of Beauty, which it really is—must have given them many and many a wakeful night spent in hushed sorrow on the long, long voyage to far-off Western Australia, and for many days after their arrival on its sandy, unlovely soil.

#### They were Brave Women,

those pensioners' wives, who accompanied their husbands to the unknown land of Australia, or Oceania "as it was in our geography books." They brought the courage of their race with them, which helped them to trudge lightly over the heavy sandy tracks of those early days and treat with many a lilt and joke the sharp roughness of Colonial life as contrasted with the humble comforts of their English or Irish barrack life. Their descendants should be proud of such forbears. The old barracks, which, however, is not the oldest, since the oldest barracks were situated in what is now Barrack-street, were built in 1863 and finished in 1865, Alexander Halliday and James Brittain being the contractors. It is constructed in the battlemented Tudor style, and in those early days must have been considered an imposing edifice by the residents of Perth, standing out so boldly in its red newness over the grey-green of bush and sand that sloped down towards Perth proper. Sherwood (also a brewer), the architect, also built what is now Judge Parker's house, but the battlemented Tudor embellishments of the house came later and were consonant with the rising fortunes of the family. On entering the front gate of the building, we pass through an archway, underneath what was once the clock tower, where a large clock, regulated by the old-fashioned weights, apportioned the hours of "sentry go," and the manifold others hours of duty of the pensioners within the barracks. The bell which struck the hours of the clock was also the fire bell, and was clanged loudly whenever a fire occurred.

#### Description of the Building.

Mr. Bowra, the watchmaker of those days, held the contract for the regulation and winding up of all Government clocks, and he journeyed up weekly and gladdened the hearts of the children of the barracks, who loved to watch him open the casements and adjust the weights. Excitements ran small in those days. On the right of the archway were six cells for drunken or refractory pensioners, and on the left was the guard-room (although this appears to be a matter of uncertainty, since what is now known as the guard-room adjoins what used to be the bakehouse.) Over the cells and guard or orderly room on the first floor were four large rooms, two on each side, used as store-room, ward-room, or orderly room, office and children's school-room. These have now been transformed into offices for the Minister for Works, the Under-Secretary and staff. Over these again, on the second floor, were four more large rooms, used doubtless as store-rooms, etc., now the offices of the Engineer-in-Chief and staff. These completed the front of the building.

From the top of the tower, which is reached by a stairs and ladder, a most comprehensive view of Perth is obtained; the view taking in all the points of the compass, so that one wondered whether probable raids by the aborigines were thought of in planning the building, as, if an outlook were constantly kept from the top of the tower, no one could approach the building from any side without being observed. The building is a little over 40 feet in height. From the ground floor to the clock-room floor, the height was 14ft. 7½ in.; from the floor of the clock-room to the office above about 9ft. 9½ in.; and from the office floor to top of lead flat was 16ft. 10 in.—in all 41 feet 3 inches. This disposes of the central part of the building. The wings projecting from either side contained each

#### Thirty-three Rooms, Eleven on Each Floor.

On the ground floor, the first room on the left entering from the archway was the canteen, which was opened for two hours twice daily, at 12 noon and at 6 p.m. How the thirsty men must have watched for the opening of the canteen! and what a rush of business would be transacted in the all too short two hours of its opening! There was no need for the canteen bell to ring the opening of the doors, I am sure! The angles of the wings on each floor were occupied by the married Sergeant-Major and Sergeants, who were allotted three rooms each for themselves their wives and families. There were six of these three-roomed apartments in the building, all the rest being married privates' quarters, each private having two rooms. Of the thirty-three rooms which each wing contained, twenty-four were twelve feet square, and ten or twelve feet in height. These were the married privates' quarters, and I have been told that a man and his wife and ten children have lived in one of these tiny homes.

The living rooms (all the living rooms opened on to the verandahs, there being but one entrance to all of them) had a fireplace, dresser, with crockery, table, and forms—no chairs. The bed-room held wooden pegs over which a curtain was drawn, and an iron bedstead and bedding, children's cots, perhaps, but where the cots could be placed was a mystery. Sheets and blankets were also allowed all, with the broad-arrow marked upon them. The sergeants' quarters, although they possessed three rooms, were not nearly as comfortable as the two-roomed homes of the married privates. Two of the rooms, being in the angles of the building were of irregular triangular shape and small size, and it must have needed some "contriving" to fit in the regulation furniture supplied. There being but

#### One Entry to Each Set of Rooms,

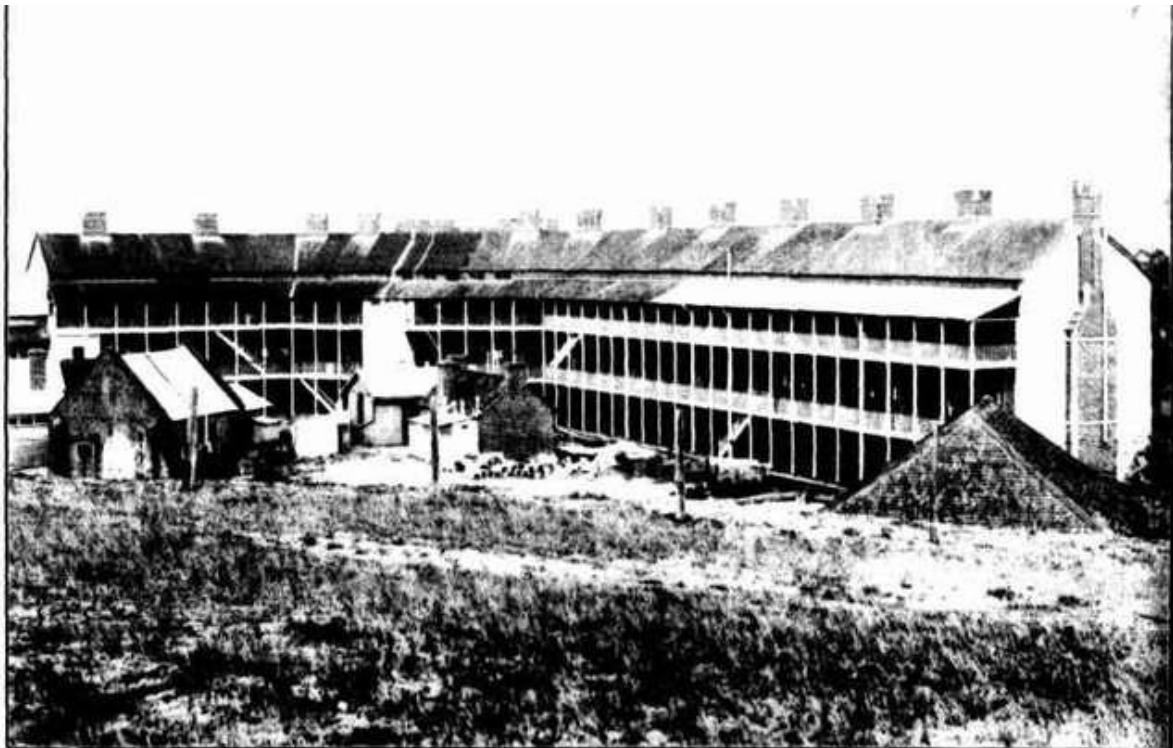
one went through the living room to the bedroom of each. All the bedroom windows looked out upon the terrace, but being "Tudor built," not much view could be obtained from them unless one were moderately tall. However, the lives of the occupants were too busy to allow them time to think of scenery, and such abstract things. (It is possible that one of the large rooms in the centre of the building was a single men's or "widowers" sleeping room.) Sergeant-Major McCarthy was in charge in the early sixties, the pensioners then numbering probably 1 sergeant-major, 5 sergeants, and 24 married privates. Doubtless some single men or soldiers were also quartered in the barracks, as I understand that some men from the 12th and 16th regiments were called away to Melbourne during the riots there, and also to New Zealand at the time of the Maori war.

Colonel Harvest, who resided at Mount House, was in command of the barracks, and from all accounts appears to have been a sort of mixture of "the Bull of Bashan and the Sucking Dove."

The pensioners mounted guard daily and nightly at the old prisons, and a corporal and three privates guarded Government House from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., their hours at the latter being two hours on and four hours off. Their guard-room is still standing near Mr. Feakes's cottage, in Government Gardens. A sentry was stationed inside the barrack gates. The present Under-Secretary's office was Col. Harvest's office in those days, and here he and Captain Finnerty adjudicated on the drunks and recalcitrants and administered a "jacketing" to those who fell from grace. Courts-martial were also held in this office.

#### The Rations Allotted

to the married pensioners were 1½lbs of meat per day, and weren't there rare rows when the meat was being cut up, and distributed! For some had to take the scrag ends, since a beast was not all composed of sirloin! and a sheep had only two good mutton legs! Black sugar, tea and flour were also supplied and besides this the married men received 3/6 per day, not a princely sum in those days, but then the pensioners' wives and daughters did not vie with their richer fellow-citizens in extravagance of dress and ornaments, and a pensioner's wife and daughter told me that in those days "they never want.



A REAR VIEW OF THE OLD BARRACKS AT THE TOP OF ST. GEORGE'S TERRACE. THE EARLY HISTORY OF WHICH IS RELATED BY MRS. DAISY M. BATES, F.R.A.S., ON PAGE 43.

ed a pound when it was necessary to spend one." They were all able to save something weekly from what we would now consider very meagre pay. Single men received 1/- per day besides their rations. There were two bakehouses for the married and single men, where the cooking of each was done, the "bakers" being drawn from the pensioners themselves. The wash-house adjoined the bakehouses, and near them was the engine house, which contained a fire engine. Where is that fire engine now, one wonders? Close to the engine room, a well was sunk, and from here the water was pumped as far as the hose reached. Two other wells were sunk in the court or barrack yard, and worked with a windlass, and the water in these was "the best that could be tasted." The refuse water from the wash-house had to be taken over to the hill, where Parliament House now stands, the clothes lines being also on this rise. Much grumbling was indulged in over this necessary arrangement, which must have been most tiring during the hot summer months.

Mrs. Clinton's baby was the first girl baby to be born in the barracks, and naturally her advent was the occasion for a fine "christening" to take place, when her health was drunk in tea, beer, and whisky, according to the taste and fancy of the drinkers. The young boys belonging to the barracks were known amongst their confreres in the town as

#### The "Barrack Shiners."

In the lowly lands of West Perth, towards Leederville, warders and older pensioners lived in several two-roomed cottages, built for them by the Government, and so many of these were built in the district, that the place was known as Pensioners' Village. These pensioners were allowed a certain sum to build these cottages, but one man, Houston, a tailor, refused to accept the money, and, as I am told, "the Queen had to build him a house in Murray-street (which still stands near the Empire Hotel), the house costing £250. There's Houston for you!"

The young sons of Pensioners' Village were known as the "Swamp Shiners," and many a battle royal occurred between the Barrack and Swamp Shiners. The parties met for cricket, football or hurley or some game that boys delight in, but no game ever ended between them without a fight for mastery, one or the other side of "Shiners" coming out second-best. There were dances and wakes, too, amongst them, either of which brought excitement in their train. A plate of salt and one of soil were always placed on the body of the corpse, these being supposed to be effectual in keeping the body from swelling.

The square inside the barracks yard was bricked over and washed daily; and neatness and cleanliness reigned throughout. Not a single article of any kind, chair or table, was allowed on the verandahs, which were also scrubbed daily, and whatever temptation the mothers might have had to place their babies and the little one's toys on the spacious balcony, it had to be resisted, for a breach of this rule meant a "jacketing." Every night at 10 "Taps," as they were called, sounded, that is,

The Corporal went Round to every Door and tapped to know if the inmates were within. The father or mother answered; and the man went on. If no answer came a report had to be made. Are we to believe that the daughters of this regiment found no way of communicating with their citizen lovers? And must we think that the sons of the regiment also abided by the rules obtaining? Even before Kipling invented the term "there has been a 'shut-eye' sentry in every regiment, who because of his own youth, was merciful to the younger generation. We may be sure that "Lights out" at 10 p.m., did not always mean sleep for the young lads and lasses, who stole to many a town dance and found their way safely back to the parent nest at this or that time in the morning. Love finds a way through bars, locks and sentries, said my lovely friend, who is now in the 60's. "We were well watched, but we managed it all the same, and when lights had to go out we got sheets and quilts and hung them over the table and got under it and read stories. We even did our washing after blocking windows doors and keyholes, so that we should have it first on the line next day. There was many an escape we had, and if we had been caught by the Colonel it would have been all up with us, providin' his mood was wrong with him; but we had a friend here and there, who helped us, and never a girl or boy who was real wishful to go to a dance, but got there all right."

#### The Dances and Lovers' Meetings

were well-earned in the fears and heart throbs that preceded them as the young girl or boy glided from shadow to shadow until well away from possible espionage. There were not many tell-tales amongst the little band of pensioners, and a kindly feeling and friendly appears to have prevailed amongst them, except, perhaps, during the division of the meat, but little quarrels of that kind did not lengthen beyond the day, for she who got the scrap end to-day might secure the loin to-morrow, and so peace came to her.

These little happenings filled up their daily lives, which ran on in slow course for years. In 1873 a Fives or Tennis Court—unroofed—was built, and was called a skittle alley by the frequenters. This gave amusement to the men when off duty, but there were no privileges granted the women, who continued to find their own amusements as best they might. However, they could always gossip, for that resource appears to be open to all women from my lady in her boudoir to the black woman in her maia, and so many little "I thought so!" "Oh, really now!" "She never!" and such like comments enlivened the hours of idleness few as they were, amongst the women.



#### Fire at the Barracks.

In 1887 a fire broke out in one of the rooms in the barracks, just over the archway near the east wing and burnt both wing and lower floor, the old clock sharing in the destruction. A number of prisoners had to be allowed out to try and quench the flames, and both men and women helped in fetching water from river and wells. The fire-engine was hard at work, and several sailors were commandeered to pump water from the river below, the sailors singing their chants as they pumped the water up from the river. The fire was not subdued until the flames had just reached the west wing, and the ruins were smouldering for many days afterwards. No lives were lost, but a prisoner had a leg broken. Some other prisoners were relieved, because of the special effort they made to save life and property. The little personal possessions of the pensioners and their wives, who lived in the east wing were all destroyed, and cherished little tokens from their old homes were mourned for many a day; pictures of home or parent, little mementoes in sampler or antimacassar, the hundred and one little things that these home lovers had brought with them to the new country to keep reminding them of the old, all these went in the blaze, together with marriage lines, good conduct medals and certificates for this or that service. The homeless families had to sleep on the hills above the barracks, making holes in the sand to rest their bodies until accommodation was found for them elsewhere. The clock bell that was fire and alarm bell as well—was it destroyed in the fire, I wonder, or where is it? Across the road from the barracks, in the building that is now part of the High School, was then the pensioners' hospital, Sergeant Scanlan being in charge, and here the injured prisoner was taken, and any others who had met with slight accidents while fighting the fire. The hospital also became a temporary refuge for some of the homeless pensioners. Measles and whooping cough filled the wards of the hospital on one or two occasions, but the excellence of the site upon which the barracks were built (it is said to have been one of the best-built places in Perth) the order and cleanliness of the pensioners' lives, and the clearness and purity of the West Australian climate, prevented any outbreaks of illness occurring and mitigated greatly the risks of infection from imported diseases, and so except when the measles and whooping cough epidemics arrived,

#### There was Very Little Serious Illness

amongst the band of pensioners and their wives and families. Both men and women were sturdy, healthy sons and daughters of the home soil; a fact evidenced by the extreme longevity of many of them, and colds and "rheums," now so common amongst the younger generation, were thrown off without help from doctor or medicine. "We did a good day's washing, and our colds soon left us." The natives helped them very fitfully in some of the wood cutting and carting. They tell me the natives used to "winnow" wheat by lifting it in bucketsful and emptying it out on a sail cloth spread in the open, the wind blowing the chaff away—a very primitive winnowing machine.

Pensioners' widows were allowed to retain their quarters after their husbands' death, but when the Public Works Department took over the building, the widows were allowed 8/- per week for rent in lieu of the quarters, which had so long been their homes. Partitions have now been removed between the old sets of rooms, but one or two are still intact to show what they once were like. The bakehouses, wash-house, store-rooms and engine room are still standing, but alterations have been made with them, too. The old powder magazine, with its strong buttresses has not been touched, and retains its possession of the ground whereon it was built so many years ago, but everything else is rapidly changing and soon the old shingle roofs of many of the outbuildings will rot away and their places will be taken with the hideous corrugated iron, which adds so much to the heat of summer days, and the cold of winter nights. The history of the barracks is but a chronicle of the doings of humble folk, who, however, came to this country in the capacity of soldiers serving Her Majesty, which they did right-faithfully, and who can say more of Governor or administrator?

The old barracks which has apparently many more years of life left in it, may fitly serve as a reminder to the sons and daughters of these fine capable men and women, for whose home it was built, that they in their turn should do their best to maintain the traditions for which their fathers and mothers exiled themselves from their beloved homeland.

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