

REFLECTIONS ON THE HEALTH OF PERTH THROUGH THE LIVES OF THOSE BURIED AT THE EAST PERTH CEMETERIES

Lorraine Clarke and Cherie Strickland

A cemetery is defined as a place, not being a churchyard, for burying the dead¹. East Perth Cemeteries is where our earliest pioneers and ancestors are buried; their lives and how they died can tell us much about the colony in which they lived. ‘Of the three divisions of Vital Statistics, that dealing with Deaths is probably the most important, as showing to a certain extent the effect on the population of the conditions under which they live ...’²

In the seventy years that the cemetery was open what epidemics or health issues did the population of Perth face? How did the establishment change the rules and regulations of the colony to face these issues?

The burial ground at the East end of the Perth district, Location R, now known as the East Perth Cemeteries, was assigned on 9 December 1829.³ On 13 February 1830 Governor Stirling issued a Government Notice stating that:

to prevent indiscriminate burials and unpleasant consequences arising there from, in a warm climate, a burial ground will be set apart in every township or parish; and that internments must take place in them only and a Register of the Names, Age, Profession and place of birth be transmitted to the Colonial Secretary’s Office. All burials by the Chaplain must take place as soon after Sun rise as possible or an hour precisely before Sun set, and at no other time unless circumstances should render it absolutely necessary and twenty four hours previous notice must be given to the Chaplain.⁴

Why East Perth Cemeteries? Location R was the burial ground for the Perth district, non denominational, although Reverend Wittenoom, a Church of England minister was the Chaplain responsible for the majority of the early burials. In 1842 Location R was taken over by the Church of England dioceses’, in 1848 the Roman Catholic Church was allocated Lots T41 and T42, in 1854 the Wesleyans and the Congregationalist were granted Lots T40 and T39 respectively, In 1867 the Jewish purchased Lot E72 and the Government allocated Location E73 for their burials of Felons; Presbyterians purchased Lots E70 and E71 in 1881, and the Chinese Lot E69 in 1888⁵. In total eight separate burial grounds.

At the time of Governor Stirling’s proclamation there were three known burials within Location R; John Mitchell, a Private in the 63rd Regiment, was the first officially recorded burial. Mitchell was buried on the 6 January 1830; an earlier death had occurred at Perth, a married woman named Mary Mulligan. Mary was buried opposite the Colonial Hospital⁶ in Murray Street. Mary is known to have died at the end of 1829 or early 1830. Other than the assignment and Stirling’s Proclamation no other records can be found in regard to the location of the Perth Burial Ground. Indeed the Burial Register does not contain the information for

which the Proclamation required. Perhaps there had been no decision on where to place the Perth cemetery at the time of Mary's death?

The ultimate location of the cemetery seems logical, on a hill set apart from the parish within walking distance of the homes of the colonists, albeit up a fairly steep sandy hill. Whose decision was it to place the cemetery where it still stands today?

We have currently identified 9056 burials within the East Perth Cemeteries, made up of 5763 males, 3240 females and 53 of unknown sex.⁷ The pioneers within the cemeteries consist of 2929 infants, 612 children (a child being defined as aged between 18 months and 12 years), 5301 adults and 214 without any age noted most of these are more than likely to be adults.

Statistics can tell us a lot about the health and wealth of a colony however the records do not always give us the information required to obtain the necessary data.

The average age at death of individuals who are buried at the East Perth Cemeteries is 29 years 10 months. This is very young but not unusual in pioneering societies where unfamiliar and harsh environments can take a severe toll.

Emma Constance Strickland Wilson was 29 years of age when she died in 1892. The daughter of Mary Ann *nee* Hokin and Henry Robert Strickland, Emma was born in the colony into a family who had arrived on the *Hooghly* as one of Peel's indentured servants. In many ways the Stricklands are a Peel success story thanks to their hard work and entrepreneurial spirit and yet despite Emma's middle class upbringing she died in child birth and her son died just 37 days after her.

Emma was one of the 35 women we have identified as dying during or resulting from childbirth over the 70 years burials took place at East Perth. George Stone put this low rate of mortality down to their 'naturally moderate and quiet habits'⁸ there is only one female whose cause of death has been identified as due to termination.

The ages of the 35 women ranged from 13 to 40 years. Only two of them have been identified as dying in a 'hospital', which was normal for the early nineteenth century when most births were at home.

Interestingly 14 of the 35 women had no child registered at the time of their confinement suggesting their deaths were unreported. 19 babies died within 12 months of the mother's death, however two babies survived to adulthood and went on to marry.

Unlike maternal deaths, infant mortality in Perth during this period was high, - 32% of the burials at the East Perth Cemeteries were those of infants. Yet the cause of their deaths is mostly unknown, possibly unrecorded.

Of the 2929 infant deaths recorded we have only been able to obtain a cause of death for 30%, and for those the major cause was that of stillbirth.

A Report given by the Registrar General, George Frederick Stone in October of 1844, stated that

Perhaps the most important of the services to the Colony, and to science generally, which a report on vital statistics may confer, is that which arises from its connection with the registry of deaths.

The object of a medical registration has been provided for in assigning a column in the entry of deaths, wherein may be inserted the cause of death, in juxtaposition with the other important illustrative circumstances, such as the age, sex, and calling of the deceased, and the part of the Colony in which each death occurs. If, therefore, the cause of death is correctly inserted by the Sub Registrar, on the careful statement of the medical attendant, there will exist thence forward documents exhibiting numerous important and interesting particulars, which may be made subservient to the advancement of medical science, and greatly conducive to the good of the community.⁹

It seems however that the Sub Registrars did not adhere to these requirements when it came to infant deaths! Over the decades the recording of causes of deaths for infants did not improve, in the 1830s before civil registration, burial records had 32% of infants with no cause of death recorded, by the 1870s, when we gained the fullest access to the Registrar General's documents, 26% of had no causes of death recorded. The legal requirement did not improve the recording of causes of death for the infants of Perth.

As previously mentioned the leading cause of recorded infant death was stillbirths at 42% (the ultimate cause of the stillbirth is unknown). Other causes cited were convulsions at 14%, diarrhoea/dysentery at 10%, debility/weakness at 6 ½%, and premature birth at 5%.

These statistics are consistent with those found by Melbourne researcher Rebecca Kippen into the causes of death for infants in Tasmania in the period 1838-99. She cited convulsions 20%, debility and marasmus or wasting 15%, and diarrhoea and dysentery 14%. Kippen also makes the comment that Infant death was a familiar and frequent occurrence in the nineteenth century, even though the causes of many infant deaths remain a mystery¹⁰. It is a chilling fact that Melbourne's infant mortality rate exceeded that of London until the 1890s¹¹

There are 82 stillbirths recorded in the East Perth cemeteries and yet we have no way of knowing if the foetus was 21 weeks or 40 weeks gestation. This statistic could also be tainted by the fact that many stillborn babies were not recorded at all. We have noted already that 40% of the mothers who died in childbirth have no corresponding birth or death record for their unborn child. Possibly some of these non registrations, are due to the early term of the pregnancy, the baby was still considered a foetus so therefore there was no need for the registration of birth or death, the shame of the family from the pregnancy being out of wedlock, or the cost involved in the registration process as well as the burial.

What was the underlying reason for babies suffering diarrhoea, dysentery, debility and weakness? Was it due to the death of the mother (statistics do not reflect this), was it the lack of wet nurses or was it due to poor sanitary conditions in the colony?

The first advertisement we have been able to locate for a wet nurse was placed in the *Inquirer and Commercial News* on 5 July 1871 by Mrs Salkilld. Another anonymous advertisement was placed in the *Inquirer and Commercial News* on 18 February 1874, for a respectable middle aged woman capable of

taking charge of an infant, wet nurse preferred. Such advertisements appeared infrequently. In general, sisters or mothers of the deceased woman took on the infants. Margaret Grellier, former Assistant Curator of History at the Western Australian Museum, stated that 'there is no evidence that wet nurses were in general demand'¹² Yet she went on to say that the colonial statistician attributed the death of eight infants in 1881 to 'want of Breast Milk'¹³

It was noted in the 1898-9 Year book that in England, and most of the British possessions, stillbirths are excluded from all returns of births and deaths. In fact the registration of stillbirths was not practised in any of the Australian colonies except WA, where they were registered both as a birth and also as a death but excluded from returns.¹⁴

Stillbirths fluctuated as the colony matured and the maternity system improved. The Colonial Hospital did not provide childbirth facilities; it was left to private hospitals, private midwives and family members to bring babies into the world. This practise was traditional: their mothers and grandmothers had been brought into the world in the same manner.

Unlike Infant Mortality, the deaths of children are conspicuously low, only 7% or 612 children's deaths recorded in the 70 years the cemetery was open.

Of the 612 deaths, we have only been able to obtain a cause of death for 215 children, the major cause being accidental death at 16%, with burns and drowning the foremost causes. Other causes were diphtheria at 15%, pneumonia at 8%, typhoid and debility or diarrhoea at 7% and croup at 5%. It appears that if a baby could reach the age of 18 months it had a better than average chance of making adulthood.

Seventy percent of adult burials at the East Perth Cemeteries are male and we have been able to record 59% of their causes of death. As expected in the new society the major cause was Accidental and within this category drowning and falls make up the majority. The next highest cause of death was old age and senile decay 9.9%, 18 men from all walks of life lived to over 90 years, the oldest being 96 years 4 months having arrived in the Colony as a convict in 1859, closely followed by heart disease at 9.8%, typhoid and tuberculosis at 8.5% of male deaths.

With the arrival of the Convicts came the Enrolled Pensioner Guards and Warders the majority of these men had already been pensioned out of the British Military system therefore their age was already above average.

The first convict to be buried at the East Perth Cemeteries was William Sydenham, Convict 682 aged 29 years; Sydenham drowned in Freshwater Bay on 25 February 1852, and was buried 3 March 1852¹⁵ in the Church of England Cemetery. Sydenham had only been in the Colony 4½ months when he died, having arrived on the *Minden* on 14 October 1851. He had been working with Mr Dearden, a Government contractor, at the time of his death; they had been quarrying at Bluff Point on the western side of Freshwater Bay. After breakfast Dearden and Sydenham had loaded Dearden's boat with the stone they had quarried that morning, when a large rock fell upon the boat and sank it. Dearden managed to swim to shore, but Sydenham, or as the newspaper referred to him, the 'other man', drowned. William Campbell, an Enrolled

Pensioner Guard saw the incident from shore and swam out to the boat and attempted to save Sydenham. They rose to the surface twice before they both sank never to rise again. Campbell's body was found immediately and conveyed to the Colonial Hospital, where an inquest was held the same evening. Sydenham's body took seven days before it was washed ashore near where the tragic accident took place.¹⁶

Drowning caused the death of 160 individuals in Perth over the 70 years the cemetery was open - 20 females and 139 males and one of unascertained sex. Most drowned in the Swan River for the small population hugged its shores, the river was their main mode of transport, a source of water for crops and livestock and a wonderful place to cool off on hot summer days.

In 1879 the *Inquirer* published 'Instructions for Saving Drowning Persons' from the *Journal of The Royal National Life Boat Institution, London*.¹⁷ They had a nine step guide on how to approach the drowning victim, stating:-

'make sure that you are wearing very few if any clothes,

do not seize the victim if he be struggling keep off a few seconds until he gets a mouthful or two; for it is sheer madness to take hold of a man when he is struggling in the water.' Once you can get close to him 'take fast hold of the hair of his head, turn him as quickly as possible on to his back and give him a sudden pull and this will cause him to float'

Perhaps what the *Inquirer* should have published is instructions on how to swim and not to panic if you find yourself unexpectedly in the water.

Whilst convicts arrived in the colony through the Penal Establishment, many criminals came from within the colony itself, 66 individuals we believe were buried within the East Perth Cemetery precinct after being hanged at the Perth Gaol, of those 2 are female, 22 are Aboriginal, the rest are white males. Location E73 was assigned for burial of Felons and others on 19 October 1867, no burial records are available.

In October 1884 the Sheriff wrote to the Colonial Secretary asking that the remains of four felons, namely Chilgoorah (native); Thomas Henry Johnson Brown; Ah Kit (Chinese); and William Watkins be exhumed from the Presbyterian Cemetery, and reinterred in the Felons burial ground as originally intended¹⁸

The Swan Valley fringe dwellers believed that both they and the white man had cultural links to the East Perth Cemeteries, in 1989 Robert and Peula Bropho wrote to the Minister for Conservation and Land Management requesting that they be allowed 'to take on the protection' of the Cemetery. Bropho requested that members of his community be employed, through any Grants they may be available, to look after the Cemetery and beautify, care and protect it.¹⁹ The reply was in short - 'No'.

Although life expectancy overall was 29 years this was due to the high infant mortality rate. The average age of death of adults was 48 years 8 months, however the average age of female adults was 46 years 3 months and adult males was 49 years 8 months. There are 188 adult males and 105 females who lived to be over the age of 80 years. In the period 1901-20 the Australian life expectancy was 55 years for a male and 59 years for a female.²⁰

The leading cause of death for our pioneering women was Tuberculosis at 12%. Tuberculosis is an infection caused by a bacterium, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, and it most commonly affects the lungs, although it can affect other organs. Other causes of female deaths – excluding childbirth - were heart disease at 9% and typhoid at 8%.

So what made our women more susceptible to these contagious diseases? Pregnancy can increase a woman's likelihood of getting a contagious disease²¹ and with the majority of our pioneering women spending at least 20 years of their lives pregnant or breastfeeding, this stands to reason. The World Health Organisation states that 'once infected with TB women of reproductive age are more susceptible to developing the TB disease than men of the same age group.'²² It seems logical that women would be also more vulnerable to typhoid for the same reasons.

Whilst stating that women had a lower life expectancy than adult males, the oldest person to be buried at the East Perth Cemeteries was Johanna Enright (Kenwright) *nee* O'Connor (Connors). Johanna died on the 28 January 1897 at Perth aged 97 years. She was born in Limerick Ireland, the wife of Thomas Kenwright, Convict 3194. Kenwright arrived aboard the *Ramillies* on 7 August 1854, having been convicted in the Assizes at Liverpool on 25 March 1852 for feloniously and maliciously setting on fire the barn of Henry Baker, Kenwright's employer, at Bold near Warrington Manchester. Kenwright was found guilty and received 15 years Penal Servitude.²³ Thomas applied for his family to join him in the Swan River Colony on the 31 December 1856,²⁴ and Johanna and their six children arrived in Fremantle on the 8 August 1857 per *City of Bristol*. Born c1800 Johanna had lived through the Napoleonic Wars, the Battle of Trafalgar, the abolishment of the Slave Trade, The Great Famine, the trial, conviction and separation from her husband, a trip to Western Australia which would have taken 13 weeks in conditions that were by no means luxurious, and not to mention having six children and perhaps more pregnancies. I think you have to agree she was made of good stock.

As well as the oldest person buried at East Perth being a woman, the last person to be buried the East Perth Cemeteries was also a woman, Emily Ann Wade *nee* Marshall who died on 31 May 1916 of Natural Causes, after collapsing whilst hanging washing on the line, at her residence 103 Brisbane Street, Perth.²⁵ She was laid to rest on the 3 June 1916²⁶ aged ninety years. Emily was the wife of Thomas Henry Wade; she was born in Paddington, England and arrived in the colony on the 2 May 1839 per *Montreal*. Emily married Thomas Henry Wade June 1843 in Guildford, they had nine children, eight of whom were still living at the time of her death. Emily was buried alongside her husband in the Church of England cemetery. No headstone exists to celebrate the life of a lady who came out to this colony as a 13 year old and lived to the ripe old age of 90 years.

Across the decades what other than Accidents was the biggest cause of death? Did any epidemic affect those who lived in Perth and the surrounding districts?

In the 1830s the largest cause of death was Dysentery and then TB. Colonial Surgeon J Harris Esq sent a Report to England on the State of the Settlement up to 1835, remarking that the weather 'has given to it a

celebrity, which increases as we become better acquainted with the steady and uniform changes which those seasons bring.’²⁷

He went on to reflect that persons arriving in the Colony who were already suffering from Tuberculosis and other Bronchial afflictions which, whilst living in Europe had no prospect of survival, recover perfectly or live with comparative health. He noted that the principal diseases during winter were rheumatism, dysentery, scurvy and catarrh (inflammation of the mucus membrane), while the summer months brought ophthalmia (inflammation of the eye), first appearing in March, it reached its height in May then declined and disappeared fully by June.²⁸ Symptoms included itchy eyes, sensitivity to light, mucous discharge and red in and around the eyes as well as swelling of the eyelid.

Whooping cough was found in 1833 but had since disappeared. An acute, highly contagious respiratory disease characterised by coughing that ends in a loud whooping sound, whooping cough occurs primarily in infants and children less than 4 years.²⁹

Gonorrhoea had been introduced first time in the beginning of 1833, and is supposed to have been introduced from Van Diemen's Land. No case of measles, smallpox, scarlatina, or syphilis, had been met with. He then adds that scurvy has nearly disappeared, which he equates to the early days of settlement when the labouring classes were badly sheltered and badly fed, with a lack of vegetables. Harris reiterates that ‘few of the labouring classes are now without comfortable dwellings, food is plentiful and vegetables of every kind are raised in great abundance with a fine climate.’³⁰

Another report in 1835 by W Milligan Esq. MD Assistant Surgeon in His Majesty's 63rd Regiment states that

the water of the wells, though at first indifferent, from not having been procured from a sufficient depth, is excellent. It sparkles in the glass, cooks food, and washes linen well and speedily, and may be drunk freely without relaxing the stomach.³¹

Milligan goes on to comment that ‘The fevers have likewise become less prevalent as the country has been more widely cleared and better drained.’

The 1840s saw 148 recorded burials with TB again attributed as the cause of the most deaths. Legislation was introduced in the early 1840s regulating the Slaughtering of Cattle in Towns; the rationale for the bill being to

‘prevent the annoyance likely to ensue to the inhabitants of towns from the indiscriminate slaughtering of live stock, that the same should be regulated so as least to interfere with public health and comfort’³²

This bill did not apply to persons killing for their own use. Whilst it was not discovered until 1865 that cattle were carriers of the Tuberculosis bacteria³³, there had been a growing knowledge of the transferability of

diseases from animals to humans, not to mention the sanitary issues involved with slaughtering and keeping of large numbers of animals within urban areas.

The Registrar General's First Annual Report in 1842 states that deaths in the colony were few, and removing those caused by accidents was

far below the average rate of mortality in some of the most favoured parts of the world.³⁴ There is no 'prevailing disease, while the total absence of anything like a fatal epidemic, is a new feature in medical statistics.³⁵

During the 1850s with the population boost from the introduction of the Penal Establishment, 145 females, 250 males, four of unknown sex died doubling the burials from the previous decade. Deaths from TB were still elevated; however a childhood disease struck Perth from 1848 and peaking 1850-53 called Infantine Disease, but actually whooping cough. Twelve children were fatally struck down with this disease between the ages of two days and 17 months- The epidemic started in January 1848, George Frederick Stone commenting in his report of that year that the

virulent Epidemic Scourge under the form of Whooping Cough, which unfortunately effected an alarming stride from one end of our community to the other, entering almost every domestic circle, and sweeping away in its rapid and destructive course, 'in one fell swoop' losing 15 children.³⁶

Oddly, however we have no recorded burials in the East Perth Cemeteries in 1848 from whooping cough. In January 1851 the *Anna Robertson* arrived with Troopers and Miners many of whom had whooping cough, they were quarantined upon Carnac Island and families went to Woodman's Point however unmarried passengers landed free of restraint³⁷. Throughout the decade Whooping Cough continued to affect the colonists.

Burials in the 1860s again doubled, to 682 with stillbirths being the main known cause of death. Technically stillbirth is not a cause, merely an observation, with fifteen babies not making it through the birthing process. TB was still noted as the second highest cause of death aside from Accidental Death. It is worth noting that there were 21 deaths from drowning during this decade. A memorandum published in the *Inquirer* in 1861 remarked that there were no endemic diseases. An epidemic catarrh called influenza occurred twice a year at the change of the season however it was mild and very general when it appeared.³⁸

The 1870s again saw the population swell and the burials increase twofold from the previous decade to 1204, there had been 4161 deaths for the whole of Western Australia. Sixty one babies died from convulsions during the 1870-79 period, all bar one under the age of 18 months, These could be whooping cough deaths. A 12 year old girl Marie Jane Escott, whose death was ascribed to fever convulsions, probably died of Epilepsy. Like a lot of nineteenth century causes of death, convulsions were a symptom rather than a cause. TB or Consumption was still the prevailing cause of death in adults; advertisements for cures appeared in the papers daily. Syrup of Hypophosphite of Lime reputedly 'outcries every other preparation of the day'³⁹

In 1878 The *Western Australian Times* published the Public Health Report from the Colonial Surgeon which reflected on the health of the colony. He stated that 1878 was more favourable than 1877 and there had been no general epidemic:-

Neglect of sanitary laws caused many of the deaths from fever and dysentery, infant mortality is still a third of the whole death rate.⁴⁰

The Colonial Surgeon commented that during the past year little or nothing had been done toward remedying the grave shortcomings in the way of sanitation existing in Perth. He went on to say

Altogether it is a matter for thankfulness, that notwithstanding their insanitary surroundings, the people of Perth have passed another year without a serious visitation of sickness.⁴¹

A 25% increase in burials occurred in the 1880s over the preceding decade while the population of Perth increased by 51%. Of burials in the 1880-89 time period, 65% were adults and 63% of these were over the age of 50 years. So the major cause of death was old age or senile decay and most of these were Convicts and Pensioner Guards. Having arrived here in the 1850s and 1860s many of these men were cared for within Mount Eliza Invalid Depot and the Pensioner Barracks. Most had been under medical treatment for months and even years, some having been admitted to the Depot from outlying hospitals. In a report to the Legislative Council in 1887 Dr Alfred Waylen stated that 'the inmates ... are under the circumstances as comfortable as they well can be, and I believe are better fed than in similar [SIMILAR??] institutions elsewhere.'⁴² Waylen assured the Government that Mrs Dewis, the cook is looking after them.⁴³

The Swan River Colony was over 11,378 nautical miles from London, and even by today's standards isolated. Perth is 22.6 kilometres inland from Fremantle making it even more isolated, most certainly in the early years of the colony.

The length of the journey from Europe to Australia was often longer than the incubation period of many diseases such as measles, diphtheria and whooping cough, meaning that those individuals who had such infections when boarding the ships or caught the disease during the journey had usually died or recovered before their arrival into Australia.⁴⁴

The Government had put in place legislation with regard to quarantine as early as February 1833; this legislation gave government officers the authority to place ships or vessels, all persons and possessions on board such vessels into quarantine locations, making it illegal for anybody to leave such ships or vessels. The mere fact that a vessel had been in a location that may have had an infectious disease was enough to enact the quarantine legislation. The act states

in case of any such infectious disease appearing, or breaking out in the said Colony, or its Dependencies, to make such orders, and give such directions, in order to cut off all communication, between any persons infected with such disease, and the rest of His Majesty's subjects.⁴⁵

The Quarantine Act was amended in 1850, 1868 and again in 1888. This Act along with the distance from the main port kept Perth from suffering from an epidemic.

With the 1890s came the gold rush and, as expected, burials at the East Perth Cemeteries increased dramatically, by 280% to 4250. Of these burials we have identified causes of death for less than 32%. The major cause of death was typhoid with 224 individuals struck down by the disease, their ages ranging from 7 months to 70 years. Typhoid fever is an acute illness associated with fever caused by the *Salmonella typhi* bacteria. The bacteria are deposited in water or food by a human carrier and are then spread to other people in the area.⁴⁶ The main death rate from typhoid fever was in 1895 with 20% of deaths in the state being attributed to the disease.⁴⁷

In 1886 the Public Health Act was brought before the Legislative Council. The Act was divided into seven parts including Central and Local Boards of Health, Unwholesome food, Infectious Diseases and Hospitals, Nuisances and Dwelling Houses. During the second reading of the Bill in July of 1886, the Acting Attorney General questioned the sanitary conditions of both Perth and Fremantle. Up to this time the matter of public health had been contained within the Municipal Institutions Act 1871, and the Acting Attorney General commented that the public health provisions of this Act had been rarely, if ever enforced. And this was despite constant complaints being made, and doctors in the Colony warning the municipalities of health and sanitary issues.

Dr Edward Scott, Member for Perth, said that ‘a radical reform in the direction of sanitary improvement was urgently required’. Mr George Shenton, Mayor of Perth and MLC, then went on to comment that he hoped that the appointment of Independent Boards of Health would improve the sanitary conditions of our towns.⁴⁸ Obtaining a good water supply in Perth was of great difficulty.

Once the Public Health Act was introduced, the public took to writing to the Government complaining about nuisances. The Central Board of Health General Correspondence files held at the State Records Office have letter after letter complaining about the sanitary state of homes, blocks of land, hotels etc.⁴⁹ John W Johnson wrote to the Board on the 11 February 1898 requesting that the Sanitary Reserve No 884 at the corner of Vincent Street and Wanneroo Road be moved, because at the present time there is a great deal of sickness in and around the depot⁵⁰ The depot was ‘closed down’ on the 23 September 1899.

A smallpox epidemic in April 1893 caused the Government to erect an infectious diseases hospital in Subiaco and the Colonial Hospital was placed under quarantine.⁵¹ A temporary building was erected upon the site in Subiaco, close to the railway line and a short distance from the proposed new Perth Cemetery. ⁵² On 18 April 1893 the first burial took place at the new cemetery. Ellen Amelia Montague *nee* Wheelcock had delivered a stillborn child on 5 April and died two weeks later of smallpox. Over the next three years many individuals were buried within the small cemetery, having died from either or both typhoid and smallpox. In 1906 all the bodies were exhumed and moved to the new Karrakatta Cemetery and East Perth Cemeteries.⁵³

Karrakatta Cemetery opened on 24 April 1899 as the new General Cemetery for Perth and Districts⁵⁴, Robert Creighton was the first burial within the new cemetery; he had died at the Perth Public Hospital of typhoid⁵⁵, on the 7 July 1899 the East Perth Cemeteries precinct was officially closed to burials, except in

those vaults that were owned by private persons.⁵⁶ After 1 November 1900 burials at East Perth were discontinued except in cases where special permission of the Governor was obtained.⁵⁷

The East Perth Cemeteries contain 9056 stories reflecting on the development of Perth and its health and welfare. Until 1893, Perth had been isolated from any major epidemic, before the motor vehicle arrived in the Colony it took around half a day to ride from Fremantle to Perth. Whilst Fremantle had the ships, with all they bring, Perth was remarkably unremarkable, a comforting fact to all those who worked and lived within her boundaries.

Endnotes

¹ Oxford Dictionary

² Western Australian Yearbook 1898-1899, p. 299.

³ State Records Office of Western Australia (hereafter SROWA) Cons 5000 item 414

⁴ SROWA Acc 49 letter 552

⁵ <http://members.iinet.net.au/~perthdps/graves/timeline.htm>

⁶ *Inquirer and Commercial News* 16 May 1877 p. 2.

⁷ www.eastperthcemeteries.com.au

⁸ *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News* 15 October 1842 p. 3.

⁹ *Perth Gazette* 12 October 1844 p. 3.

¹⁰ 'Summer is here, fraught with death to hapless babes': the seasonality of infant mortality in late nineteenth-century Tasmania, Rebecca Kippen, Centre for Health and Society, University of Melbourne, rkippen@unimelb.edu.au

¹¹ eMelbourne the city past & present www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00473b.htm - JANET MCCALMAN

¹² The Family; Some Aspects of its Demography and Ideology in Mid-Nineteenth Century Western Australia by Margaret Grellier; appears in *A New History of Western Australia*, 1981, p.473-510 / Stannage, C. T

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Western Australian Year Book 1898-1899

¹⁵ Battye Library, MN 614 Western Australian records of the Anglican Church of Australia. Diocese of Perth, Acc 6809A/2

¹⁶ *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News* 27 February 1852 p. 4, and 5 March 1852 p. 4.

¹⁷ *Inquirer and Commercial News* 12 February 1879, Supplement p. 1.

¹⁸ SROWA Acc 527 item 1884/6155.

¹⁹ SROWA Cons 6787 item o/03/07-2.

²⁰ <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/45feea54e2403635ca2570ec000c46e1!OpenDocument>.

²¹ How to Prevent Pregnant Women from Contagious Diseases by: Suzanne Rose web July 2014 www.livinghealthy360.com.

²² Web July 2014 World Health Organisation 2009 Tuberculosis Women and TB www.who.int/tb/womenandtb.pdf

²³ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* 3 April 1852 web July 2014 <http://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl%2f0000206%2f18520403%2f027>

²⁴ State Library of Western Australia - Further Correspondence on the subject of Convict Discipline and Transportation p. 31 of 1857 electronic resource.

²⁵ *West Australian* 1 June 1916 p. 6.

²⁶ Battye Library, MN 614 Western Australian records of the Anglican Church of Australia. Perth, St George's Cathedral, Acc. 2467A/44

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- ²⁷ *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* 25 June 1836 pp. 715, 716.
- ²⁸ *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* 5 September 1835 p. 560.
- ²⁹ <http://www.healthcentral.com/encyclopedia/408/699.html> Web 2014 Health Central
- ³⁰ *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* 25 June 1836 pp. 715, 716.
- ³¹ *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* 5 September 1835 p. 559.
- ³² *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* 11 June 1842 p. 2, 3.
- ³³ Consumption, the great killer by Christopher W Koehler Web July 2014
<http://pubs.acs.org/subscribe/archive/mdd/v05/i02/html/02timeline.html>
- ³⁴ *Inquirer* 12 October 1842 p. 2.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News* 30 September 1848 p. 3.
- ³⁷ *Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News* 26 December 1851 p. 4.
- ³⁸ *Inquirer and Commercial News* 31 July 1861 p. 3.
- ³⁹ *Perth Gazette and West Australian Times* 13 September 1872, p. 1.
- ⁴⁰ *Western Australian Times* 12 September 1879 p. 4.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² <http://www.findandconnect.gov.au/ref/wa/objects/pdfs/Report%20by%20the%20Superintendent%20of%20Poor%20Houses%201885%20and%201886.pdf>
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ Ground zero in Australia's fight against infectious diseases
Monday 5 August 2013 9:01AM Professor Clement Boughton
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamsrazor/4858772> Web July 2014
- ⁴⁵ Government of Western Australia Quarantine Act 1833
- ⁴⁶ Web MD www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guide/typhoid-fever Web July 2014
- ⁴⁷ *Western Australian Yearbook* 1898-1899
- ⁴⁸ *West Australian* 14 July 1886 p. 3.
- ⁴⁹ SROWA Acc 1003 item 157.
- ⁵⁰ SROWA Acc 1003 item 159.
- ⁵¹ *West Australian* 8 April 1893 p. 2.
- ⁵² *Inquirer and Commercial News* 14 April 1893 p. 5.
- ⁵³ *West Australian* 6 July 1906 p. 2.
- ⁵⁴ *West Australian* 20 April 1899 p. 1.
- ⁵⁵ *West Australian* 25 April 1899 p. 5.
- ⁵⁶ *West Australian* 29 July 1899 p. 5.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*