

A GRAND OLD WOMAN

Granny Kemp of Coonamble

LIFE OF COLOUR AND INCIDENT.

Coonamble's grand old woman, Mrs Emma Kemp, has gone to her last long rest. She met death as she did life—with a grave, cheery, and christian spirit.

On a recent morning Mrs Kemp was removed to the District Hospital, where she fell into deep sleep late that afternoon and passed peacefully away at 8.45 the next night.

The late Mrs Kemp had reached the ripe age of 96, having celebrated her birthday in the midst of a throng of relatives and friends not many weeks ago. With her brother, the late Mr George Elliott, the deceased, who was born in London on October 17, 1835, emigrated to Australia when in her early teens. The voyage out was rough and slow, and occupied several months, whereas to-day the ships do the 12,000 mile cruise in five weeks.

By bullock waggon the late Mrs Kemp and her brother travelled inland from Sydney, and after months on the ill-formed and lonely bush tracks they arrived at the Mole, on the lower reaches of the Macquarie River, where their uncle, William Gibson, one of the first colonists to blaze the track out west, had a station. This rich relative had paid the young Elliott's passage out.

The late Mrs Kemp met her husband while driving along the Castlereagh, and they rode to Wallington to become man and wife. Mr Kemp was Australian born, being a native of the Mudgee district. He predeceased his wife by 32 years, dying in the local Hospital as the result of a fall from a horse.

Mrs Kemp, one of the hardy and lion-hearted women of the West, had an outsize family—nine daughters and seven sons—most of whom are still in the land of the living. There are also 136 grandchildren, 80 great grandchildren and several great great grandchildren. Altogether her descendants number well over 200. This must nearly constitute a record.

The late Mrs Kemp was a bush nurse for many years in the hey-day of life, serving in most of the homes of the oldest and best

day of life, serving in most of the homes of the oldest and best known families of the district, including the Fishers. She was a splendid nurse, for besides skill and patience she had an endearing disposition. Right to the end, except for slight deafness, she possessed all her faculties, and she had an insatiable desire to tell tales of the "good old days." Only a short time ago the "Times" published some of the reminiscences of the nonagenarian. These dealt with the droving days, the blacks, and bushrangers. Mrs Kemp once helped the outlaw Dunne, and saw the gaol escapees, Angel and Thurston, heavily chained, in the bush, where they vainly sought her husband to free themselves of the shackles. She was the first white woman in Coonamble.