

Alex "Sandy" Darroch

Murchison Advertiser

21 November, 1902

FATAL MINING ACCIDENT AT WHROO. MR A. DARROCH KILLED.

A feeling of pain ran through the district last evening when it became known that Mr A. Darroch had met his death by accident. Mr Darroch had of late been working a claim with Mr Home on the Murchison Road, Whroo, and on Thursday week a fall of earth occurred which occasioned him injury.

Feeling that the ground was not too safe Mr Darroch determined to abandon the claim, but deferred removing his tools until the spell of hot weather cleared up, and thus permit of the mine being freed of foul air. Taking advantage of the cool change yesterday Mr Darroch repaired to the mine. His non-appearance at lunch time occasioned no anxiety to Mrs Darroch, who concluded that he had shared the meal with his mate. When tea time arrived, and her husband was still absent, Mrs Darroch's fears became aroused, and, seeking the assistance of Mr W. Birney, the latter organised a search party.

On descending the mine they were horrified to find the dead body of poor Darroch, who appears to have got his tools together all right and made to within ten feet of the surface. Here, apparently, the effect of foul air overcame him, and he must have fallen backwards down the shaft some 15 feet to where his body was found, the fall having been broken by a spreader. An inquiry will be held.

We postpone our personal tribute to the universal esteem in which deceased was held until next week.

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CORONIAL INQUIRY.

An inquiry was held by Mr C. J. Robinson, J.P., at Whroo, on Saturday last, touching the death of Mr Alexander Darroch. The following evidence was taken:—

Mary Darroch deposed that she was the widow of the deceased, Alexander Darroch. She last saw him alive on Thursday morning, the 20th November. He was then in his usual health. He ate a hearty breakfast and afterwards left, saying that he was going to get a hammer belonging to William Northausen. She knew he was going to the mine in which he had been working with Charles Home. No one else was working there. Deceased knew the ground was not very safe. He had been ailing for years with chest complaint. He was not able to work for two or three days previous to the 20th November owing to foul air in the mine. The remains were brought to her house between seven and eight on Thursday evening by Messrs Home, Hipgrave and others. Deceased was 54 years of age.

C. H. Home deposed that he was a miner residing at Whroo. He had viewed the body of deceased that day. He last saw Darroch alive about ten a.m. on Wednesday, the 19th inst. They were working mates in a claim. He (witness) went down the mine on that morning, and, finding that the air was not fit to work in, he went to the surface again and told deceased. Deceased did not go down the mine that day to his knowledge. They left the mine at the same time. The next occasion he saw him was in the shaft, about 20 feet from the surface. He was then dead. He was on his back with his shoulders against the ladder-way and his head doubled against his breast. The total depth of the shaft was 100 feet. They had been working together about seven weeks. They usually went up and down on the

ladderway. There was no foul air in the mine till last Monday, when they had to stop work on account of it. There were no signs of other persons having worked in the mine since Monday. They left some tools in the mine. He pulled the bucket up before he went down the mine on Thursday evening. There were two picks, a hammer (Northausen's), a bag, waistcoat, watch and cap belonging to deceased in the bucket. The deceased had evidently been down the mine that day. When he found the body he called for help and with Hipgrave's and Pettifer's assistance they got the body to the surface. In consequence of the foul air, deceased had decided not to work in the mine again, in fact, to give up mining altogether.

Dr Heily deposed that he had known the deceased for 37 years and was his medical attendant. He had suffered for years with chronic disease of his lungs and his heart was at times weak. He had made a post mortem examination of the body that day. The primary cause of death was loss of breath while ascending the shaft, then his heart failed and he became insensible and slid down the shaft to the place where the body was found, the fall causing partial dislocation of his neck. Death might have occurred under unusual exertion at any time without his going down a mine at all.

A verdict was returned in accordance with the medical evidence, viz., that death was the result of natural causes.

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The very large number of people who followed the remains of the late Mr Alex. Darroch to the Whroo cemetery on Sunday last provided ample testimony of the universal esteem in which deceased was held. Many of those present attended from a considerable distance. The funeral was preceded by the Rushworth Brass Band and the Masons, in full regalia. The band played the Dead March en route.

The Rev. Mr Ross conducted the church service at the grave and the Masonic service was carried through by the Rev. Mr Walker and Mr J. S. Turnbull.

Mr Ross paid a high tribute to the memory of the deceased and besought those present to profit by his example. During the service the children of the local Sabbath school, of which Mr Darroch was superintendent, sang one of his favorite hymns. The late Mr Darroch was the eldest son of Mr Alex. Darroch, senr., who carried on quartz crushing at Whroo until his death, some 25 years since. The name has been identified with Whroo for a generation.

Of the family several brothers pre-deceased Mr Darroch, and Mrs Angus Cameron is the only member surviving. The Darroch family bore a name for high honor which was fully sustained by Mr A. Darroch. Familiarly called "Sandy" Darroch, deceased had a happy, winsome manner which found favor with all, and his death is deeply regretted. No higher tribute could be paid the late Mr Darroch than that he was in all things a man who lived his life on a plane carrying such a high standard of all that was honorable as to gain him the greatest respect. Deceased leaves his widow and several sons and daughters surviving him.

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