

John Boyle

Waranga Chronicle

25 April, 1878

MAGISTERIAL ENQUIRY.

A magisterial enquiry was held before W. Wigg, Esq., J.P., at the Mechanic's Institute, Whroo, to ascertain the cause of the death of John Boyle, who died at Whroo on Sunday last.

Abina O'Leary deposed that about half past one or two, on Saturday morning, the deceased went to their house and roused witness and her husband up, and asked for his daughter, stating that neither she or her brother were at home. He was told that the children were not there.

The deceased went to their place a second time, and witness and her husband got up. Deceased said his daughter had been seen in their company the evening before, and they would have to produce her. Witness thought the children might be at a dance at Mrs. Pettifer's, and was going in that direction when she met Daniel Cameron. He said the children were there, and that he would bring them. He did so, and they were sent home.

Witness soon after heard from Cameron that the deceased was beating the children. They ran in the direction of the screams, when the cries ceased. The next thing witness heard was a gun shot. Cameron ran in the direction of the sound. The deceased's children then went up to where witness was standing, and said that their father wanted her. Went to where deceased was lying, and saw his shirt on fire, and Cameron putting it out. Did not see the gun with deceased, but saw it broken by his side.

Daniel Cameron deposed to meeting Mrs. O'Leary going for the children, and sending them home, also to hearing a gun go off, and to finding Boyle lying on the ground. Saw his shirt burning, and put it out. Saw the wound in deceased's stomach, and asked him how it happened. Deceased said that he had tried to fire the gun, but that it would not go off, and that he then struck it against the ground, and that it went off and wounded him in the side.

Deceased was then carried to his house, and Dr. Heily sent for. **[Cameron]** Believed the cause of death was purely accidental, and occurred through deceased's own folly. Saw the mark on the ground as if made by the stock of a gun.

John O'Leary corroborated the evidence given by his wife, and added that the deceased was under the influence of liquor when he went to witness's place on Saturday morning. After the accident deceased said that "he had done a very bad job, and was very sorry for it." He added that when he could not find his children, he got wild, and had taken the gun out to frighten them, but when it would not go off he struck it on the ground to break it. Had

known the deceased many years. He was a hard-working, quiet man, and a very good father to his children.

Matilda Boyle deposed that the deceased was her father. Remembered being told on Saturday morning by Mr. Cameron that she and her brother were to go home from Mrs. Pettifer. When near the Church they met their father, and he struck witness behind the ear with the stock of the gun. The blow hurt but only scratched the skin off. Witness and her brother then ran home.

David Welch deposed that he was with deceased on Friday evening, and to the latter having some words with a man named Wilson. Witness told deceased (who was the worse for liquor) that he was in the wrong, and induced him to go home. After the accident, [Welch] asked him [Boyle] why he had taken the gun, and he replied "that he was a bad man, and that it served him right for taking it." He said he broke the gun on reflecting why he had taken it out of the house.

Dr. Heily deposed that he had made a post mortem examination on the body of the deceased. Saw him two hours after he shot himself. The wound was on the left side near the groin. The small intestines protruded through the wound. Sewed up the wound and applied proper dressings. The deceased could not have survived the wound, as many vital organs were irreparably injured.

A verdict was returned that the deceased accidentally shot himself on the morning of the 20th inst.

Whroo cemetery records show 21 April, 1878, as the date of interment of John Boyle.