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SEVENTY-EIGHT YEARS IN CAMPERDOWN. PIONEER RECALLS EARLY DAYS.

Mr. Alexander Nicol, of McNicol street, Camperdown, arrived in Victoria, 78 years ago, by the ship "The Banker's Daughter", which two days later on the return trip, was wrecked off the Heads. He has lived in Camperdown for 78 years, and during that time has watched the town and district grow into prosperity. One of the biggest factors, he claims, in the growth of Camperdown is the establishment of the pastoral industry.

Mr. Nicol was nine months old, when his family landed in Geelong on the 7th September 1856. By bullock drays his people undertook a nine day's journey, soon afterwards to Lismore, then known as Brown's Water Hole. On the 18th October, 1856, he arrived in Camperdown, and has been in the district ever since. Camperdown in those days was not the most inviting of places. Pioneers looked out on to heavily timbered country, interspersed with swamps and lakes, while towering above the trees stood the giant mounts, the remains of old craters, which once had created a magnificent picture.

The district was then peopled by black fellows, the Lehoura tribe living within a few chains of the house occupied by the Nicol family. "I was reared among the Blacks," said Mr. Nicol. "Often I was put on their backs, and carried about all day. I could find yams as easily as the blacks". The home in which he lived was one of the first houses in Camperdown, and was situated in what is now known as Campbell Street. "The Blacks were quite friendly," said Mr. Nicol. "We lived close to their camp, and we had no trouble with them. I will stick to the opinion that, when decently treated, the Blacks would not harm anyone. My Mother always treated them with respect. However, after the district be-came more populated, and white people gave the Blacks drink, they were not the same people."

The only work in the early days was that to be obtained on the railway, and road constructions. Later, of course, the building trade offered employment, and about the same time the pastoralists employed many men. Mr. Nicol is of the opinion that the establishment of the pastoral industry was the main factor in putting Camperdown on the map. Not only did this industry lay the foundations of the primary producer's market, but it gave permanent employment to the workers in the district.

MT. LEURA IS NAMED.

There are many people who have walked to the top of Mt. Leura and have never discovered how it was named. Originally the Blacks knew it as Mt Lehoura, a native name which meant 'crooked nose.' As Mr. Nicol stated, from certain points on the Colac Road the mount resembles a crooked nose. Some people, thought that the native name was rather awkward and on the suggestion of one of the Manifolds, the mount was given a rather similar name to the native one; it was named Mt Leura, after a mount in England near the place from which the Manifolds came. The mount, according to Mr. Nicol, has not changed much during the years he has known it, except that in the early

days trees grew around it. It has stood there more or less as a sentinel, in some sense guarding Camperdown, and giving a touch of beauty to a countryside otherwise flat. The landscape has changed completely, however. Many trees have been cut down, swamps have been drained, and many of the smaller lakes have disappeared, while some of the remaining lakes are not so deep at present. Then roads have been built, making travel easier. In the early days for instance, provisions came from Geelong by traffic across the plains via Foxhow. At first bullocks were used and later horses appeared.

Mr. Nicol's father brought the first load of store-goods in 1858 for the late James Tait, who had opened a store in what was known as the 'Old Stone House' near the Recreation Reserve this building was demolished about two years ago.

POLICE AND DOCTOR.

Some of the difficulties the pioneers had to face can be gleaned from the fact that the nearest doctor was in Mortlake, and as he had to travel on a horse, it took many hours for him to get to sick people. Again, the nearest police station was either at Geelong or Warrnambool, Nevertheless, the people were happy, as they worked in the wilderness, building the foundations of our present prosperity. Mr. Nicol has watched the town grow. The buildings have sprung up quickly as the years have mounted, and there are not many of them which he has not seen started. He has helped to build railways, and roads. He has worked with others clearing the land for the station owners; and in the latter part of his life, he helped to build up the business section of the town.

A feature of the district which pleases the old pioneer is the plantation habit. At first trees were cut down with little thought. Then it was found that shelter was needed for the stock and Mr. T. Shaw, of "Wooriwyrite" began the plantation habit, which has gone on slowly, until at the present the district is beautified by stately plantations.

UNIQUE REMINISCENCES

Thinking back across the years Mr. Nicol recalled the time when the district experienced a heavy fall of rain, which flooded the local Roman Catholic Chapel, making it impossible for anyone to worship in it for some time. When a priest arrived one day about three feet of water was flowing into the church. Another vivid recollection is a blackfellows' fight. The Hopkins Hill Blacks trespassed on the grounds owned by the Lehoura Tribe who camped near the Mount. The fight which was furious and willing, lasted during the afternoon. Two of the Lehoura Tribe, who were killed, were later buried near the show grounds. In spite of his age, Mr. Nicol, who is one of the grand old pioneers, is still hale and hearty, and the district he helped to build up is very dear to him.