

MR. F. B. Hamilton

The death occurred at the home of his daughter (Mrs, W. McKechnie, Moree) on Thursday night last, of Mr. Francis Benjamin Hamilton, one of the best known and most colourful local identities , at the age of 79.

The late Mr. Hamilton has been in poor health for some months with an incurable complaint but he showed great fortitude and up till recently still pursued an active life.

Few men in the Gunnedah district were better known than Frank Hamilton, or, as he was familiarly known, "Brickie" Hamilton (a nickname coined from the trade of brick making which he followed in his early youth). His term of citizenship went right back to the turn of the century and he was one of the oldest surviving returned servicemen at the time of his death. He enlisted in the Australian Expeditionary force for South Africa to fight in the Boer War and saw lengthy service there, and was always a patriotic Australian. A captain in the militia after the outbreak of World War I, he resigned his commission to enlist in the AIF, but after some time in camp become ill and was ultimately discharged as medically unfit. This did not dim his enthusiasm for the allied cause and for the remainder of the war he carried out duties as a local recruiting officer and had the honour, not only of enlisting most of the Gunnedah men who volunteered for the AIF, but also in farewelling them and welcoming the home. This enthusiasm was carried onto World War II, when he was a foundation member of the Gunnedah Send-off and Welcome Home Committee and was active on the committee for many years. Deceased's activities however were not confined to the patriotic side of

public life. He was captain of the Gunnedah Fire Brigade from early in the century until 1916, when he resigned to enlist in the AIF. His other varied activities included a period as an alderman of Gunnedah Municipal Council from January 1911 to June 1917, when he did not seek re-election. He followed the occupation of a brick maker, bricklayer and shearer in his early days. He took a keen interest in sporting activities, particularly racing and swimming, and was a great worker for anything for the betterment of the town. He was a familiar figure in racing circles for a long period of years as Clerk of the Course and as a keen swimmer was actively associated with the local swimming club.

But the M.U.I.O.O.F. lodge was his greatest activity, and an old friend described him this morning as the "truest Odd Fellow he had ever known." Deceased had over 50 year's membership of the Lodge and served in every office. He was a Past District Grandmaster of the North and North West District and throughout the whole 50 years was a great worker for the Lodge and the Order as a whole.

But the work which the late Mr. Hamilton was possibly best known for was the voluntary work he performed at any hour of the day or night in assisting when floods occurred in the Namoi River. The people he assisted and the time he gave in ferrying people across flooding on the northern side of the bridge is legend, and a public service which no one could have performed better over such a long period of years.

Born in Tamworth, deceased came to Gunnedah when eight years old and had resided here practically up to the time of his death. About 52 years ago he married Mary

Applebee, whose parents resided at Mullaley, and in her he found a mate who was just as public spirited as himself. After following the trades previously referred to until 1920, deceased took up Lodge Farm on the northern side of the river near Gunnedah, which he conducted as a dairy for many years and his family still reside there.

One of a family of nine children, the late Mr. Hamilton has a family of twelve children, four sons and eight daughters, all of whom survive him. Sons are Messers Frank (Ryde), Basil (Newcastle) and Warwick and Douglas (Gunnedah). Daughters are Merlene (Mrs. A. Hornery), Mildred (Mrs. H. Buckman), Zilla (Mrs. S. Thornton), Ina (Mrs. Les Uhrig), all of Gunnedah and Kathleen (Mrs. W. McKechnie, of Moree), Gwen (Mrs. Harris, of Brewarrina), Elsie (Mrs. Schneider, Neutral Bay) and Eve (Mrs. R. Lawler, of Freeman's Reach).

Four brothers, Messrs. Joe and Jim, of Gunnedah, and Pat and Archie (Sydney) and one sister, Kate (Mrs. G. Grace Senr, of Tambar Springs) also survive him.

He is also survived by 38 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

The funeral which was very largely attended took place from Christ Church, Church of England on Saturday afternoon, the Ven. Archdeacon Stockdale conducting the service at the church and graveside, while the Lodge funeral service was read by P.D.G.M. Bro. E. W. Collins, and the R.S.L service by Mr. "Wally" Westerweller. The "Last Post" was sounded by Mr. T. Bowden.