

MRS. MAUD BARRETT

I was born on 5th September, 1890, the eldest in a family of 10. My parents, William Perry and his wife Vina, formerly Sophia Alvina Jenkins were married at Tarana Church of England, and their children were: William, Les, Charles, Ernie, Ilene (Mrs Warren, Texas U.S.A.), Varnie, Alma (Mrs Lucas), Arthur, Evelyn (Mrs Grey) and myself (eldest).



We lived on the first Sydney-Bathurst Road, about 6 miles east of the Fish River. "Sweet Briar Creek" was our address, the creek being part of the headwater of Antonio Creek.

We commenced school at Cheetham's Flat. Years later, my son Hervan Earrett, also was a pupil of Cheetham's Flat. We changed to Badger Brush, 3 miles away, when it re-opened in 1902. The country-side was thick with scrub so father cleared a track to enable us to see snakes. Mr George Coates suggested we save a bit of time by cutting across his paddock. However, there was one problem—Mr Coates' bull! We often had to run for our lives, and father finally told us to use our old path.

Badgers were prevalent in the area and one drought year starving badgers wouldn't move off our path, so we had to go around them. Pheasants were plentiful too, and they often tricked us into thinking someone was fencing nearby, but it was only their cries imitating the sounds. For years a native bear lived in a tree beside our home.

Because they had so little schooling, Ada Hughes aged 20 and Emily Cullen 21, returned to Badger Brush school when it re-opened in 1902.

After a bushfire which had been brought under control at the school fence, our teacher, Mr Harrison, decided that the grounds should be cleared. The bush was extremely thick, but the boys soon set to with axes and we girls packed it all into heaps. Mr Harrison's horse thereafter had ample grass to eat.

One day Jack Hughes was kept in for not doing his homework. When school was over he asked permission to catch and saddle Mr Harrison's horse. Jack put the saddle on back-to-front, hid the spurs and waited behind a tree to watch results of his prank, but the teacher calmly re-saddled, mounted and rode off without saying a word.

Flash floods occurred often, and we were caught once after school. We had to wait till well into the night for the water to subside sufficiently in Sweet Briar Creek for us to cross, whilst father stood with a lantern on the other side.

In an attempt to avoid repetition of this episode, father next day secured wires to trees on either side. A floating log had

become stuck against the trees just above water level, so whenever a flood occurred we usually were able to cross within an hour or two, by holding onto the wire and using the log as a foot-bridge.

Cox's road was built by convict labour in 1814, and convicts were said to be buried at various points beside the road. One such point was on the left just over Dick's Creek Crossing, 4½ miles S.W. of the Hampton-Rydal Road. There were three graves marked only by heaps of stones on each grave, and wattle trees grew around the spot. It was here that my brother William (Bill) once found three leg irons, presumably cut from the dead men prior to burial—the place was said to be haunted.

When I was 11, Mr Charlie Moore, one night, rushed into our house. He looked extremely pale with beads of perspiration dripping from his face. He told us that when he was crossing Dick's Creek a man had jumped up behind him on the horse, rode a short distance and jumped off. Mr Moore's horse was in a lather of sweat. It was so frightened that father had difficulty in catching hold of it. Mr Moore never again travelled that road after dark.

= cut here red now!

WOMEN!

BYE-BYE!

MAUD'S SISTER.