



Bendigo Remembrance Park - Notable Graves Tour

9. JOHN BOYD WATSON

Born: 13 Sept 1828 Paisley, Scotland

Died: 4 Jun 1889 Sydney, Australia

Date of Burial: 8 Jun 1889

Arrived in Sydney in 1841

Richest Gold Miner of the period. Owner of the prodigious Kentish mine and others. Land and property owner in Bendigo, Melbourne and interstate. One of the founders of the Sydney Daily Telegraph Newspaper. Glen Watson in the Mulgraves Ranges, South Australia is named in his honour.



Located in Section C3

Grave number 2991

Interment number 11112

Image From: Mine, Women and Throng

The Central Nell Gwynne Bendigo and its Associations

James A. Lerk

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(photo)BHS Collection.

Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Wednesday 5 June 1889 p 3 Article

DEATH OF MR J. B. WATSON, A SANDHURST MILLIONAIRE.

At twenty minutes past seven o'clock yesterday morning Mr John Boyd Watson, the wealthy mining investor of Sandhurst breathed his last at his brother's residence in Waverly, a suburb of Sydney, N.S.W. Mr Watson, who was 65 or 66 years of age, had been ailing for a very considerable time. For the last seven or eight years he never enjoyed what might be called really good health, and was attended to off and on during that time by Dr Macgillivray. Latterly he became much worse, and his medical advisers ordered him to take a trip to San Francisco as the only means of recruiting his rapidly declining health. Accordingly Mr Watson left on a voyage to San Francisco in company with

Australian Dictionary of
Biography

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/watson-john-boyd-4812>

Bendigo Advertiser (Trove link) Wednesday 5 June 1889
Obituary

Death of Mr J B Watson

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/news/paper/article/88587469/9081931>

Estate of the late

MR. J. B. WATSON

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/news/paper/article/197329356/18427660>



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one of his daughters last December. He returned to Sydney in the early part of last week, having derived no benefit whatever from the change, but on the contrary his health was more impaired than ever, and it became evident that his end was approaching. He took up his residence with his brother, but despite all that medical skill could do, he gradually sank, and died as already stated, the cause of death being a general breaking up of the system. The news of his demise was telegraphed to his wife and family in Sandhurst early in the forenoon, and Mrs. Watson, accompanied by her eldest son (Mr John Watson) and Miss Watson, left by the noon train for Melbourne in order to catch the Sydney express, which will reach its destination between 11 and 12 o'clock to-day. Mr Watson was born in Sydney about the year 1823 or 1824. In 1840 he went to California, but returned very soon, and, attracted by the early discoveries of gold in this district, he came to Bendigo. He was amongst the earliest diggers on the White Hills, once famous for their wonderful stores of the golden treasure. For many years he remained in that locality, but he was not very successful. He then turned his attention to the Paddy's Gully Reef, named after its discoverer, an Irishman, named Lomnasey. It is situated to the east of, and lying parallel with the Garden Gully line of reef, just behind Mr Watson's late residence, in Wattle-street. Lomnasey parted with his interest in the claim to Kelly and Clissold in the early days and these purchasers subsequently sold their interest to Mr Watson and Company, amongst whom was Mr John Wade. Mr Watson's fortunes now took a turn, and it was at this period that he obtained the nucleus of the colossal fortune which he amassed in succeeding years. The new proprietary of the Paddy's Gully claim went actively to work, and for a short time the mine yielded largely, some of the stone returning as much as 17 ozs to the ton. The richest stone was found between the surface and the 55 feet plat. During the first quartz mining excitement the prospects were so excellent in this locality that an offer of £20,000 in cash was made for 373 yards of the ground held by the Paddy's Gully Company, who refused to sell under £24,000, and the negotiations ceased. In 1863, Mr Wade relinquished his interest in the mine, and Mr Watson carried on operations for some time without any profitable results. The surface reef ran out at 55 feet below the surface, and the ground being extremely hard, and the influx of water unusually heavy, work was suspended. This was some 10 or 15 years back. Mr Watson's next venture, and the one that eventually made him one of the wealthiest men in the colony, was on the Garden Gully line of reef where about 20 years ago he became possessed of the Golden Fleece, the Kent, and the Central Garden Gully claims. These mines adjoined each other. They were amalgamated, and they are now represented in the present Kentish mine, which was carried on by Mr Watson up to the time of his death. Between 1871 and 1880 the Kent mine turned out prodigious quantities of gold. From one reef alone Mr Watson obtained the enormous yield of 13 tons of the precious metal, valued at nearly a million and a half sterling. With such returns as these coming in for a long time, it is not surprising that Mr Watson became one of the richest men in the district. A brief history of the mine was published in our mining columns yesterday, also an account of the discovery no later than Friday last of a splendid reef at a depth of 1,785 feet: hence it would seem that the mine is inexhaustible in its mineral riches. There was a good deal of litigation over the prized mine just prior to the first rich discovery of gold. Mr Benjamin Keast and others "jumped" the Golden Fleece claim, which Mr Watson held under miners' right. The case came before the warden in due course, and Mr Watson was defeated. The Keast party however was ordered to pay £40 compensation to Mr Watson for improvements on the mine. The money could not be subscribed, and the mine again reverted to Mr Watson, who, profiting by his recent experience, renewed work, and very shortly electrified the district by the tremendous output of gold. In later years Henry Marwood sued Mr



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Watson before His Honor Judge Skinner to recover one twelfth share in the Golden Fleece claim, valued at £10,000, but Mr Watson gained the case, and continued ever since in sole-possession. Mr Watson also invested largely in several of the mines of the district. He held a large number of shares in the Catherine Reef United Company's mine, and also in the Confidence mine. These were the two principal public companies that he was connected with. He was one of the projectors of the Cornish United Company, whose mine adjoins the Kent claim; on the north. Mr Watson acquired property of immense value in Sandhurst, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Tasmania, which he retained up to his death. He had numerous properties right in the heart of Melbourne, which were purchased in the time of the "Berry Blight." These have since quadrupled themselves in value. He was also the owner of many valuable properties in Sydney and was largely interested in squatting pursuits in Queensland. He was a large shareholder in the Steamship Company that runs from Sydney to Watson's Bay and other well-known watering places. He was with the late Hon. Angus Mackay, one of the promoters of the "Sydney Daily Telegraph," and was a director and one of the biggest shareholders in the Deniliquin Railway Company. Mr Watson took up 30,000 shares in the Melbourne Tramway Company, and afterwards sold out 10,000, which covered the cost of the whole investment. He was connected with the Federal Bank directory. He was formerly a director in the old Oriental Bank, and, receiving word of the impending failure, he was reported at the time to have withdrawn £60,000 just before the bank stopped payment. Mr Watson's fortune is roughly estimated at over £2,000,000. The deceased was a close plodding sort of man, and never took any prominent part in public matters. He leaves a widow and two sons, and five daughters. Of the latter, the three eldest are married. The eldest is the wife of Mr F. A. Cooper, formerly of Kangaroo Flat, who contested the recent general election for the Shepparton and Euroa electors. The second daughter married Mr McEachran, and the third daughter wedded Mr W. L. Murdoch, the well-known cricketer and solicitor of Melbourne. Mrs. Watson has just recovered from a severe illness contracted in Melbourne, and the journey to Sydney will be a severe strain upon her system. In addition to a brother in Sydney, Mr Watson had a sister living in the Rochester district. The coffin containing the remains of the deceased will be brought over to Sandhurst by train, and will be placed in the family vault at the Sandhurst Cemetery. The vault was opened yesterday afternoon, and prepared for the reception of the coffin. The funeral will take place perhaps on Thursday.

On receipt of the intelligence of Mr Watson's death, work was at once stopped at the Kentish mine and the flag hoisted half-mast. The mine will be idle until after the funeral.

The family grave of John Boyd Watson



Image from RPCV records