

Extract from ...

275

Police Station
PORT ADELAIDE.
29th July, 1947.

Re DEATH OF ETHEL MAY BRYANT, Aged 39 Years, at Port Adelaide
on 29th July, 1947.

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Sir,

I beg to report for your information that at about 7.15 a.m. on Tuesday 29th July, 1947, a message was received at this Station to the effect that a woman had died at the unemployment camp, near the Adelaide Chemical Works. In company with Sgt Martin and P.C. Kelly, I went to a small wood and iron shack where I saw the body of a woman whom I know as Ethel May Bryant. She appeared to me to be dead. She was lying on a single iron bed.

At about 9 a.m. Doctor Cherry arrived and viewed the body and pronounced life extinct. There were no marks of violence visible on the body. The doctor refused to express opinion as to cause of death.

Deceased was a divorced woman, aged 39 years. She has been well known in Port Adelaide and in the City for a great number of years and has a bad police record. Up till about 5 weeks ago the deceased had been living with a Mrs Ellis at 13 Rutland Place, Adelaide. During the past 5 weeks she has been living with a Mr Hugh Williams, at the unemployment camp at Port Adelaide. During the past three days she had complained of feeling pains in the back. She had been drinking a large amount of water. On Monday afternoon, the 28th instant, Mr Williams returned to his camp at about 3/30 p.m. He had been drinking liquor and was more or less drunk. He woke to the deceased then pulled all the blankets off her and went and slept in another shack about 50 yards distant. Williams said she looked alright to him at that time. At about 6 a.m. on 29th instant, Williams went to the shack occupied by the deceased and she appeared to him to be dead.

When I arrived at the shack, the deceased was lying on a bare iron mattress. She was dressed in a thin short sleeved dress. Her legs were covered by an old overcoat. There was a quantity of vomite underneath the bed along with some dirty clothing. Near the open door of the shack was a partly filled earthenware mug containing reddish liquid which smelt like wine.

The mug and contents were brought to the Port Adelaide Police Station. The shack was in a filthy condition. The deceased had no personal belongings.

After the body had been viewed by the Doctor, it was removed by P.C. Kelly in the Civil Ambulance to the City Morgue, where it now lies.

The following are statements of persons concerned...

A. Williams.....P.C.C.

HUGH WILLIAMS, Pensioner, Residing at the Unemployment Camp, Port Adelaide.

"I identify the body as that of the late Ethel May Bryant. She was 39 years of age. On Monday morning, the 28th July, I left my shack early and went into the Port. I had a fair drop to drink and when I returned to my shack at about 3/30 p.m. I was pretty drunk. I saw the deceased and asked her how she was feeling. She mumbled something to me but the only word I could understand was darling. She had wet the bed clothing, so I took the bed clothes off of her and put my overcoat over her. I did not want to sleep with her so I left and went and slept in another shack about 50 yards away. I must have gone into a drunken sleep because the next thing I knew it was about 6 a.m. in the morning. A chap named Scotty Crossley came and woke me up and asked me if I had a drink. I got up and went to see how the woman Bryant was getting on. When I saw her lying on the bed she appeared to me to be dead. I went straight over to the Criterion Hotel and they rang the Police. I have known the deceased for about three months. She used to come and see me occasionally. During the past 5 weeks she has been living with me all the time. She seemed to me to be quite healthy except during the past three days when she has been complaining of pains in her back. She has been drinking a terrible lot of water. On Sunday night last she drank about three gallons of water. I asked her did she want a Doctor but she told me she was quite alright. She has been drinking a lot of wine lately although I offered her a drink on Monday and she refused. She had no property while she was living with me.

EDWARD PERCIVAL CHEERY, Legally qualified Medical Practitioner,
Residing at Brougham Place, Alberton.

At about 9 a.m., on Tuesday 29th July, 1947, In response to a message recieved, I went to a wood and iron shack situate at the unemplyment camp, near the Chemical Works. On arrival I saw the body of a woman. She was cold and stiff and appeared to have been dead for hours. There were no visible marks of violence on the body and no sign of a struggle. The body was lying on its back without bedclothes. It was dressed in a thin dress. There was a coat over her legs. The shack was in a filthy condition. There was a quantity of vomite on the floor under the bed. There was a mug on the floor near the door containing reddish cloured liquied. I am unable to state the cause of death.

JOHN KELLY, Police Constable, Stationed Port Adelaide.

At about 9/40 a.m. on Tuesday 29th July, 1947, I conveyed the body of a woman whom I know as Ethel May Bryant, to the City Morgue, in the Civil Ambulance.

DOCTOR REGINALD MOTTERAM. Legally Qualified Medical Practitioner,
Residing at No 54 Galway Avenue, Broadview states.

At about 7-30a.m. on Wednesday July 30th. 1947 in the presence of
Plain Clothes Constable Sutherland I performed a Post Mortem Examinat-
ion at the City Mortuary on the body of the late ETHEL MAY BRYANT.
My Summary is as stated hereunder.

The body is that of a middle aged half caste woman in good condition.

LUNGS. Right upper and middle lobes were completely solid result of
Lobar Pneumonia. Heart pale contained thin anaemic blood.

Abdomen adhesions from old operation. Kidneys pale a little granular.

Right kidney contained large hydatid cyst rendering it functionless.

Brain normal. Liver pale and early cirrhosis.

CAUSE OF DEATH. Lobar pneumonia due to natural causes.

W.S.

*Inquest deemed unnecessary
report certificate accordingly
H.C.C. 28/7/47*



CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF PORT ADELAIDE

LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH

TELEPHONE J 1475-4 LINES
P.O. BOX 110

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
TOWN HALL, PORT ADELAIDE

31st July, 1947.

Secretary,
Local Board of Health,
Port Adelaide.

Report re three structures erected without permission
off Ocean Steamer's Road.

Sir,

I have the honor to report having on the instructions of the Officer of Health, Dr. P.T. S. Cherry, visited three structures situated on land beyond the Adelaide Chemical and Fertilizer Company's premises and off the Ocean Steamer's Road, and owned by the South Australian Railways Commissioner.

They are occupied by Messrs. Thompson, Dunn and Crossley. The largest is approximately 6' x 6' with average height 6' constructed of scrap iron and wood, the occupant is an old-age pensioner and according to the police he will after receiving his next pension allotment, apply for admission to the Old Folks Home.

The next, some yards away is of boiler plate semi circular in shape about 8' long 4' in height with a base on the ground about 6' wide, the occupant, an elderly man creeps into it and sleeps there.

The third, is a cover of lino and bags erected in two old 40 gallon oil drums, set end up, the sides are also of lino and bags, this is the home of a third man.

The occupants of each of these stacks are men of drunken habits. A woman recently died in one of them.

These structures should be removed, preferably by destruction by fire which would destroy any vermin in them, after due notice to the occupiers.

A similar structure was burnt down by me some weeks ago, the occupier then being in hospital. The Local Board endorsed my action.

I beg for instruction in the matter.

I have the honor to be,
SIR,
Your obedient servant,

Health Inspector.



CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF PORT ADELAIDE
LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH

TELEPHONE J 1475-4 LINES
P.O. BOX 110

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
TOWN HALL, PORT ADELAIDE

14th August, 1947.

Secretary,
Local Board of Health,
Port Adelaide.

Report re destruction of shacks.
Ocean Steamer's Road.

I have the honor to report having on your instruction destroyed the 13th instant, three shacks by fire situated on S.A. Railways land north of the Adelaide Chemical Company's land, Ocean Steamer's Road.

They were unoccupied, one of the occupiers had left for the Folk's Home, Magill, a second, had gone to reside in Adelaide, the third occupier could not be traced, I am informed he left 10 days ago.

A number of cats belonging to one of the occupiers was placed in the lethal chamber.

This matter was before the Local Board on the 31st ultimo.

I have the honor to be,
SIR,
Your obedient servant,

Health Inspector.

has been living there for 30 years. His home is a 6 ft. by 6 ft. wood and iron shack, and his companions are the cats which follow him round the camp.

SHANTYTOWN TO BE BURNT DOWN

HALTH authorities at Port Adelaide have ordered the demolition of a shantytown located in wasteland near Ocean Steamers Wharf. The district is popularly known as "Siberia."

The three permanent residents have been given seven days in which to quit. His home is a wood-and-iron shed, 6 ft. x 6 ft. His companions are eight cats.

The dwellings, because of their unsightly and verminous condition, will be wrecked and burnt. Another elderly resident has to crawl to get into his bed under a circular-shaped humpy about 8 ft. wide and 4 ft. high.

This action has followed the finding of the body of a notorious half-caste — known as "The Brown Bomber" — in one of the shacks last week. Hessian is draped across the entrance and the floor is carpeted with rags.

Bag, linoleum, and oil drums have been used in the erection of another shelter. No cooking or other domestic equipment is evident.

In Rubbish Dump

An autopsy revealed that the woman died from pneumonia. She had been found on the wire mattress of an iron bed and was clad only in a flimsy dress. The most elaborate hut is set on a mound about half a mile away. Built of wood and scrap iron, it has a built-in stone chimney and cupboards.

The shantytown is situated in a rubbish dump, and has been the refuge of unfortunates for many years. In one corner a small tent has been raised to form a bedroom, which contains two stretchers.

It expanded during the depression years, when homeless unemployed took up residence there.

One of the present inhabitants attends to apply for admission to a home for old people.

He is a 70-year-old pensioner who has been living in the shantytown for 30 years.

His home is a wood-and-iron

Another shack was demolished recently when the owner was taken to hospital.

MISSIONER SEES TENTS AND HUMPIES, SAYS

This housing plight "doesn't make sense"

By the Rev. A. D. McClutcheon, superintendent of the Port Adelaide Central Mission

Last Sunday morning I didn't go to church. Instead I spent the hour of worship in the sandhills at Semaphore.

It happened like this

"The Mail" had given publicity to a family of five living and sleeping in a tent 6 ft. by 5 ft.

At 8 a.m. my telephone rang and a tent 12 ft. by 14 ft. was offered on loan to the family. The man who made the offer brought the tent in his lunch hour, then helped to put it up.

It just doesn't make sense that this father, mother, and three loving young Australians should be living in the sandhills without a home.

There are many families who are forced to live in the bush and in the sandhills, tents, and humpies, and all because there is nowhere else to go, and nothing else to do.

Then, again, we have the sorry spectacle of young Australians herded together almost like sheep in a truck. This mainly applies to our industrial areas.

Many of the working class houses are sub-standard. In some cases there are as many as three small wooden or iron houses on a 60-ft. frontage.

Many of these homes are without a bathroom, while in the average back yard you couldn't swing the proverbial cat.

Recently, I was in a nine-roomed house in which more than 30 people were supposed to live.

to live.

Back rooms, old shops are pressed into service.

The degrading, demoralising, and revolting character of overcrowding is indescribable.

It certainly is not the fault of the people who are forced to live under such tragic circumstances.

Among these people are returned servicemen. These young men have married, as they had a perfect right to do. They have had to seek shelter with mothers and fathers, and with relatives families have been born.

It certainly isn't the fault of the thousands of young Australians who were born and have to be bred under such appalling and overcrowded conditions.

It isn't the fault of the many people who are compelled to live on our beaches and in our sandhills.

To me it simply doesn't make sense that there are most elaborate camps for overseas

migrants of almost every nationality from Europe—with others in course of erection—while our own people, our young fathers and mothers, with bonny young Australians, are compelled to live in sandhills with no amenities, others forced to crowd together like cattle.

Let us have these camps for displaced persons by all means, but not at the expense of our

but not at the expense of our own Australians.

We have no right to secure the future of our new Australians, and allow the old Australians to wallow in the gutter, or smother in the sand.

It doesn't make sense to me that the police barracks at Glanville, for example, a very

fine set of buildings, should be used merely as a staging camp for migrants, when almost every family now on the beach or in the sandhills could be comfortably sheltered there.

It simply doesn't make sense to me that huge sums should be spent in the erection of further new camps, and not one penny in trying to improve the lot of our own countrymen.

A lot of talk is being heard these days about the growth of materialistic communism. Is the Government aware of those conditions which exist, and which constitute fertile soil for the growth of communism.

Surely this is a matter for our State Government. The present Government has given evidence it can do big things if it so desires.

Why can't the Government, in addition to its housing policy, do something about erecting community camps to relieve the position?

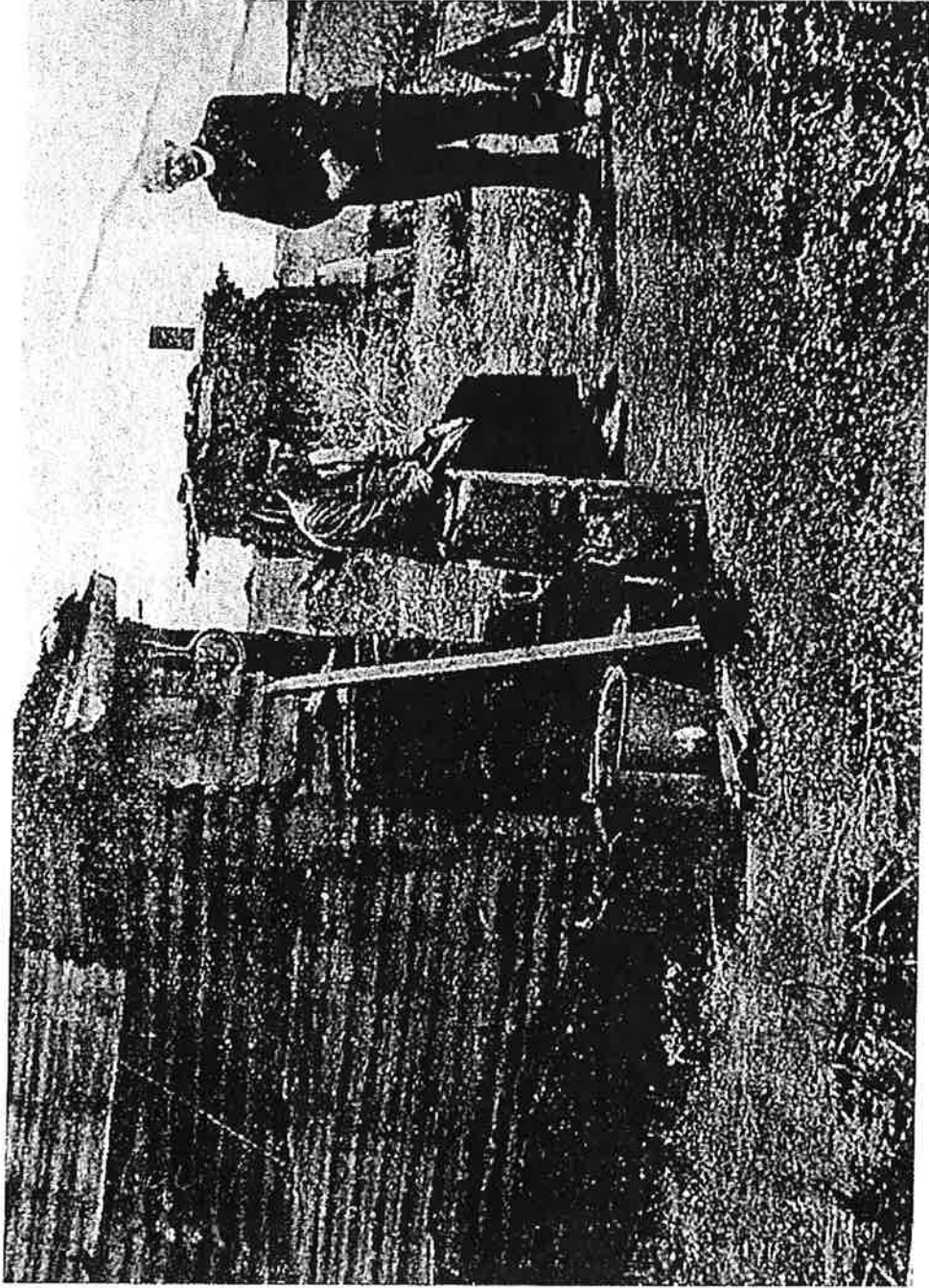
It can do it, and do it easily and well.

The Zinc Corporation has established a camp at Largs Bay to accommodate no fewer than 800 Broken Hill miners and their families (this is occupied for only three weeks every year).

There is no reason on earth why good community camps cannot be established at once to tide over the housing shortage.

The least that can be said is that economic consideration cannot be, and must not be, allowed to over-ride Christian justice.





Port Adelaide Unemployed Camp c1936 with Rev McCutcheon

The Institutions the women in my family cycled through

Edwardstown Industrial School

Fullarton Girls Home

Seaforth

Convalescent Home, Somerton Park

House of Mercy

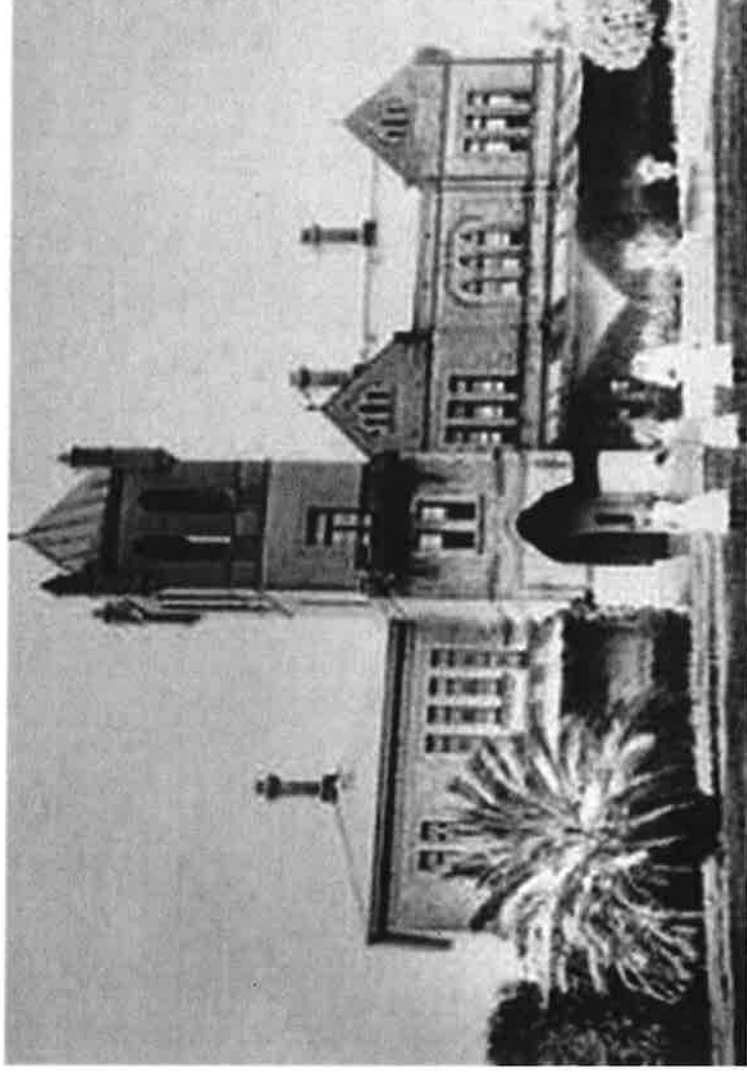
Kate Cox

Barton Vale

Vaughan House (*pictured right*)

McBride's Hospital, Walkerville

Babies Home, Walkerville



Name: **Bryant, Ethel May**
 Date of Death: 31 July 1947
 Age: 39 Years
 Last Abode:
 Service Type: Burial

Cemetery: West Terrace Cemetery
 Section: Road 5
 Path Number: 19
 A/E/W: W
 Site Number: 45

[Interactive Map](#)

[View Location Map](#)

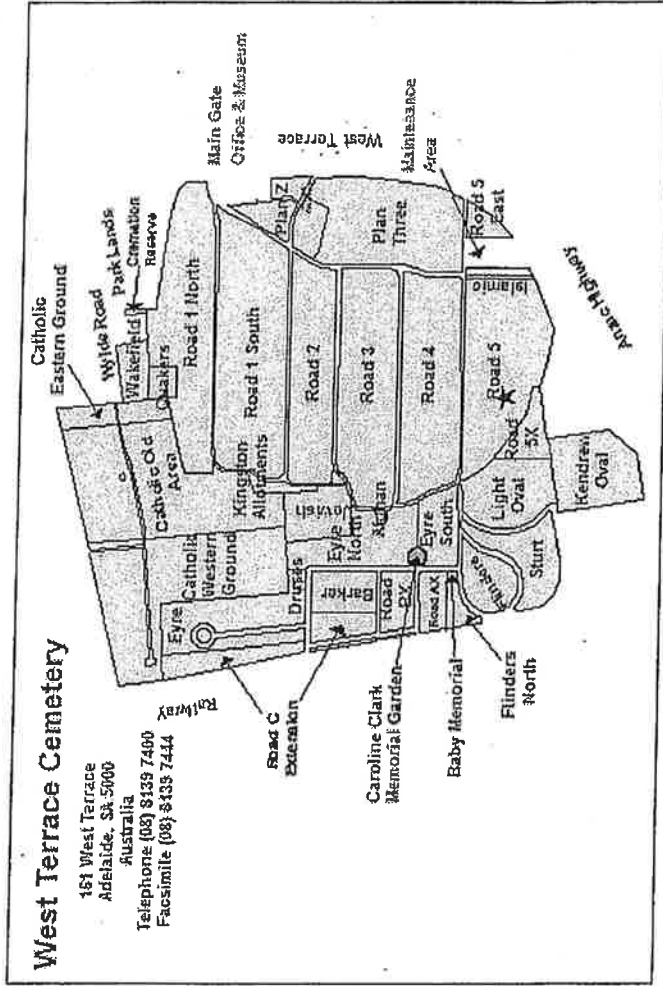
[Print Location Map](#)

Not the person you are looking for?
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Site Record

Surname	Given Names	Date of Death
Florie	Herbert James	16/08/1947
Dunn	Alan Cleaves	18/07/1947
Kleball	Florence	23/07/1883



[Zoom To Location](#)

FINDING HER WAY HOME

Mum at her
Grandmother's (Ettie's)
unmarked grave at West
Terrace Cemetery –
photo taken
28th May 2013
which marks the
100th Anniversary
of the day that Ettie was
forcibly removed from her
family and our Ancestral
lines were broken

