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Wreck Of The Early Days

Koroit Residents Recollections

Of late, as a result of the attempts to obtain particulars concerning the old story of a wreck of a 17th century Dutch or Spanish ship near Warrnambool, public interest has been aroused in this interesting piece of early Australian history. Mrs Ogle, of Koroit, an old resident, 78 years of age, widow of the late Mr J. Ogle, has supplied some facts which may help the investigation. Mrs Ogle has resided in the vicinity of Tower Hill for the past 66 years. She was a niece of the late Capt. Mills, a whaler of the early days, who resided at Port Fairy. When she was twelve years of age she remembers that Capt. Mills went to the wreck of the Mahogany Ship and he marked the exact position of it in his log book.

At that time the very oldest aboriginals told him that the wreck was there when they were picaninnies. Taking Mr *[sic]* Ogle's residence in the district as 66 years old, and that of the oldest of the aboriginals as another 66 years that would account for a period of 132 years during which the wreck has been known to exist. The road to Port Fairy from Warrnambool in those days was along the top of the sand hills. A Mr Cronin built on this road a large two-storied house to be used as a hotel, but the sand encroached so much that the building was useless for that purpose. The house is still there, and known as "Tara". Great admiration was aroused by the beautiful timber with which the house was lined and furnished. There were great window beams which were thought to be of cedar, and the fittings were carried out in similar wood in first class style. The wood is now stated to be mahogany.

The house is at present occupied by Mr H. Smith and is leased from Mr S. Gleeson of Melbourne. It is considered probable that the wood used in the building was from the old wreck, as such timber would not be imported about the year 1844 for a roadside inn. Particulars of the position of the wreck, according to the bearings taken by Capt. Mills, have now been obtained, and probably a systematic search for the vessel will be made shortly.

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