

## VALE HARRY PHILLIPS

Mr. Harry Phillips, affectionately nicknamed "Mudgee" and one of the best-known aboriginals in the State, died in Wellington District Hospital recently.

Mr. Phillips was 91 years of age.

His death followed an illness lasting nearly three months during which time he was receiving medical treatment.

He re-entered hospital and his condition declined rapidly.

The "Grand Old Man" of the aborigines, "Mudgee" was one of the few full-blood aboriginals in the State and was intensely proud of this fact.

He was born in 1866 on a property then owned by Mr. Sid Kidman on the Diamantina River in Queensland.

In his youth Mr. Phillips was christened "Wild Harry" by friends because he would ride and break in any horse saddled for him.

At the age of 15, he left the station and went to Adelaide and later settled down in Melbourne.

He was present when the Prince of Wales visited Melbourne in 1881 and proudly wore a medal commemorating the event.

In 1882 he returned to Adelaide and fought there with success as a boxer for some years.

The call of the bush was too strong and he went "walkabout", ending back at Cooper Creek, Queensland, where he worked as a stockman.

He continued to work as a stockman at various stations in Queensland and N.S.W., finally settling down in later life on the Nanima aboriginal reserve at Wellington about 25 years ago.

He brought with him the wife he married in Peak Hill in 1922, and is survived by Mrs. Phillips, three daughters and eleven grandchildren.

"Mudgee" was a popular aboriginal in Wellington and was rarely in trouble.

His first court appearance was last year when he charged a woman with nuisance by calling him "Dad" and "Father" in the street.

"Mudgee" was remarkably active both physically and mentally for a man of his age.

Four or five years ago he regularly competed at rodeos and gymkhanas and was always a rider at travelling horse shows.

His most spectacular appearance was at the Wellington rodeo, where, dressed in jockey's colours, he rode a steer during the steer riding events.

The organisers, fearful for the aboriginal's age, had ridden the steer for two hours earlier in the morning.

It's not unusual failure to buck with "Mudgee" aboard, annoyed the old man who delighted the crowd by vigorously heeling it in an attempt to make it buck.

There was a breathtaking silence as the old man slid off the steer after his ride and then a tremendous cheer as he jumped to his feet waving his hands triumphantly.

Mr. Phillips and his wife both held certificates of exemption from the provisions of the Aborigines' Protection Act.

The certificates are the reward for good character and good example to other aborigines.

He was a difficult patient for Sisters and nurses at the Wellington District Hospital, refusing to stay in bed.

On one occasion a nurse threatened him when he wouldn't stay in bed, saying, "If you don't get back to bed, you'll die!"

"Mudgee" replied, "Who is doing the dying, you or me?"

His popularity amongst townspeople was reflected in the number of 'phone calls made to the Hospital during his last illness.



Caroline Fox, of Gulargambone, had a lovely smile for the camera but the pet poodle didn't want to be in the picture at all.