## **PURSER, James**

**NSW Births Deaths & Marriages**

Birth 1841 – James Purser, parents: Edward & Eliza, District?

Marriage 1862 – James Pursue (sic) & Mary Ann Kyle, Parramatta

Death 1867 – Eliza Purser, father: … Reed, died Parramatta, Parramatta

Death 1888 – Edward Purser, father: John, died Castle Hill, Parramatta

Death 1920 – James Purser, parents: Edward & Eliza, Parramatta

Death 1923 – Mary Purser, father: John, Parramatta

**Cumberland Mercury (Parramatta, NSW: 1875 - 1895), Saturday 24 January 1885, page 3**

Castle Hill.

NARROW ESCAPE. - Last week, while Mr. James Purser was carrying a case of fruit in his orchard, he trod on a large brown snake. The reptile instantly coiled round his leg, and endeavoured to bite him. The case of fruit soon came to grief, but it was with no little difficulty that Mr. Purser freed himself from the grasp of the reptile. A gun was speedily procured, and his snakeship quickly dispatched. A trembling sensation afterwards came over Mr. Purser, and almost deprived him of his muscular power for two days, but he has now entirely recovered.

**Cumberland Mercury (Parramatta, NSW: 1875 - 1895), Wednesday 18 January 1888, page 2**

Castle Hill.

We stated some days ago that Mr. Hardie, of the well-known firm of Hardie and Gorman, had bought some land at Castle Hill for orchard purposes. The land, which is about 40 acres in area, was known as Whiteside's property, and it adjoins Mr. Purser's young orchard. About six or seven men are now employed clearing it, and a substantial wire fence has been erected round it.

Castle Hill is growing out of all knowledge. Scrub clearing is the order of the day, and places which a few months ago were dense bush are now smiling with the green bloom of baby orange trees.

The fruit crops are in great profusion this year, and the output of apples promises to be very large. At Mr. Purser's the trees are literally bent beneath the weight of apples, both cooking and eating; while plums, which have elsewhere been scarce this year, are being collected in abundance in the Castle Hill district. At Mr. Joe Fuller's the peaches are perfect giants, and he also has grown magnificent lemon trees which the genial Joe says can't be beaten. Truly the specimens of fruit we saw were veritable gargantuas. They looked more like young pumpkins than lemons.

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 29 December 1888, page 4**

Mr. Edward Purser, sen., one of the most respected pioneers of the Castle Hill district — an old soldier (4th "King's Own")

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 1 June 1889, page 6**

CASTLE HILL.

For months past the inhabitants of this neighbourhood have been longing and praying that rain might come. The orange and lemon trees, especially the older ones, began to look very much parched up; the fruit on them being of an inferior quality. But on Friday last, the hopes of the people began to brighten up, when great rainy clouds began to roll up from the South; but as on previous occasions when similar indications were visible there was some doubts as to whether the long wished for rain was coming. These doubts were dispelled as night drew on the rain began to descend in right earnest. From that time up to noon on Tuesday the weather gauge showed twenty aue half inches for the time. The like has not been seen by the oldest inhabitant. On Monday, during ono hour, one inch and a quarter fell, and during six hours, five inches, of rain fell. In the creeks the water rose at such a rate and to such a height never seen before by the present inhabitants. It was on this day serious damage was done to the orchards and land, the latter being carried away, not by thousands, but tons of thousands of loads. The orchards, which had been lately worked, suffered terribly in some instances, the top soil being almost carried clean away. I shall not attempt to particularise, as we have all suffered alike — only those possessing the largest orchards have certainly suffered the most. Those who lately have had dams built are partially and, in some cases, filled up with the soil carried by the water from the surrounding hills. Mr. Rogers has had both his dams filled up, and Mr. James Purser, who has a very fine dam on his estate, has suffered similarly. In some orchards which are exposed, the trees have been damaged and much fruit blown off. I heard that Mr. Acres had lost considerably through a creek which runs through his orchard overflowing its banks, and washing acres of large orange trees out by the roots. One of these trees might be seen hanging in the limbs of a large bush tree on his estate. Mr. John Luke has had two dams built at a cost of some hundreds of pounds, and I hear that they are both filled up with soil carried by the water from the surrounding hills. Bridges and a large quantity of fencing have been washed away — in fact, there never was such destruction of property before, even in the experience of the oldest inhabitant. Now, sir, I have been writing about the losses; I must now say a little about what we shall gain. I for one am thankful to God that such a glorious rain has come, although I have sustained considerable loss. I reckon the good the rain has done me that in the spring I shall be the gainer by fifty-fold. The oranges and lemons will come to perfection and [the fruit trees will have such a start they have not had for several years. The sub soil has had such a thorough soaking, the soil will retain moisture for months to come. Further, this rain has done good in a way I think most of the fruitgrowers have little thought of, that is, in the destruction of insects of all kinds. I spent some time during the heavy rain on Monday watching the effect those heavy showers had on orange and lemon trees, which had on them different kinds of insect life. It washed them cleaner than I could have done it with a brush. I visited an orchard only a fortnight ago, and saw some hundred Golden Russet apple trees, three years old, which were literally covered with blight. To-day I saw the same trees, and found that the rain had washed them quite clean. I believe the heavy rain we have had has done more towards destroying the codlin moth than all the fruitgrowers of Central Cumberland could do. So, Mr. Editor, I think you will endorse my words when I say we have much to thank God for in sending us such a bountiful rain.

**Australian Town and Country Journal (Sydney, NSW: 1870 - 1919), Saturday 28 June 1890, page 41**

A VISIT TO MR. PURSER'S ORCHARD.

In our last week's issue we stated that the statements made by Mr. J. Purser (Seven Hills) in the vine and fruit-growers' conference, were regarded as of such a character of to be worthy of a permanent record in the report, in the form of a paper. Mr. Purser not only acceded to the wish of the conference, but will also supply this journal with a copy of his paper, which will appear in our columns at an early date. The specimens of oranges, lemons, and mandarins grown by that gentleman in his orchard at Glenview, near Carrington Hill, about eight miles from Parramatta, were of a very fine quality. His system of grafting and pruning, minutely explained and illustrated in the conference, also awakened a large amount of interest, and led Mr. Purser to invite those delegates who could make it convenient to remain after the conference to visit his orchard and examine for themselves the correctness of his methods. On Friday last he met them at the Parramatta railway station with a drag and buggy, and about a score of gentlemen availed themselves of the invitation, accompanied by Mr. Hugh Taylor, M.P. for Parramatta, Mr. C. B. Cairns, Mr. Quong Tart, and the representative of this paper. After a pleasant drive through Castle Hills and Baulkham Hills, and having had an opportunity of seeing some orangeries and orchards on the way, the party arrived at Mr. Purser's about 2 o'clock. The district is one of extreme beauty, studded here and there with orange groves which at this season are laden with their golden fruit. But in none of the orchards was anything seen to equal the sight presented in Glenview, which comprises about 160 acres, and contains about 8000 trees of various ages, 6000 being of the citrus tribe, and. 3000 of different kinds of deciduous fruits. The plan adopted by Mr. Purser in propagating the citrus tribe is to graft both his orange and lemons, on orange stock. The orange trees to which reference was made in the conference as being 62 years old, but perfectly healthy, and producing crops of fifteen to twenty cases each, were carefully examined, and all that was claimed for them was conceded most heartily by, shall we say, the judges or the party of inspection. The mandarine trees were a picture of health and beauty, and produce from eight to twelve cases each per year. The lemon trees grafted four and five years ago in a different part of the orchard are yielding about two cases per tree, and return at the present time at the rate of £50 per acre. The apple, peach, and plum trees are all in a most healthy state, and the effects of careful selection and culture, specially the personal attention to the pruning of them by Mr. Purser could not escape the notice even of an amateur; but the mature judgment of such practical men as visited these grounds on Friday was expressed in a most emphatic mariner. It was remarked more than once, "We expected much; but what we have seen has far exceeded our highest expectation."

The surface soil of this now-celebrated orchard is composed of a rich loam, on a subsoil of shale resting on sandstone. No artificial manure is used, but a sweet composite of well-decayed forest leaves. The surface is not dug or forked, but kept open, loose, and clean by the use of the steel pronged hoe. In answer to the question, "How many hands do you employ?" Mr. Purser replied, "My two sons and myself, (and we can each do the work of two ordinary laborers) with three good men." To give some idea of the crop produced as the result of this thorough system of orchard cultivation, we may state that 460 cases of plums alone were sent to Sydney last Christmas, about 7000 cases of all kinds of fruit during the year, or in weight, about 250 tons. The great disadvantage under which most of the fruit-growers labour in this district is the bad roads; but when the Dural-Parramatta Railway is constructed, a complete revolution will be effected. A very pleasing fact was stated to us in the course of conversation during the afternoon by "one who knows," that while in Parramatta itself, things are "much as they were," yet the intelligent fruit-growers around

are yearly increasing their fixed deposits in the banks.

After the inspection of the orchard grounds, Mr. Purser introduced the party to Mrs. Purser and her daughters, who invited their visitors to partake of refreshments before returning. Mr. Taylor, M.L.A., presided, and several of the delegates expressed their satisfaction at what they had seen of the success attending the method of fruit-growing adopted, explained, and illustrated by Mr. Purser, and wishing him and his family increasing prosperity. The opinion was also freely expressed by those who spoke, that an immense impetus had been given to the prosperity of the colony, by the action taken by the Minister for Mines and Agriculture in convening the recent conference of vine and fruit-growers. In this we heartily concur.

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 27 May 1893, page 7**

A Little Dog with a Big Record.

Toby, the half-bred Scotch terrier, the property of Mr. John Purser, of North Rocks, Pennant Hills, whose deeds of daring and vermin extinction have previously been chronicled in the columns of the Argus, has been at it again, and beats all previous performances. Last season his record was 365. This season (about six months) he did 447, as follows: — Snakes 14, slow-worms 26, jew lizards 35, rough lizards 174, smooth lizards 45, bush rats 57, house rats 13, mice 67, bandicoots 14, kangaroo rats 2. One of the snakes was 5ft 6in long. This record only includes those which Mr. Purser has actually seen himself. Tempting offers have been made for the purchase of Toby, but Mr. Purser says no money would buy him.

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 10 March 1894, page 4**

Current News.

A Wonderful Dog.

We have to record the death of M. John Purser's wonderful little dog, Toby, the famous snake killer, of the North Rocks, whose record has appeared in these columns for the last two years. On Wednesday week he came across a very large tiger snake, measuring nearly five feet in length, the largest of its kind captured in the district. Of course, as usual, a battle commenced. The snake was despatched, but not before he had driven his fangs into the dog. The usual remedies were administered, but without affect, and the little fellow, after a few hours of great agony, expired. Mr. Purser and his family are naturally very sorry at losing such a valuable animal. This was the thirtieth snake killed, besides, some hundreds of smaller vermin during the two and half years that Mr. Purser has owned the dog. This is the last record of the grand little dog.

**Sydney Morning Herald (NSW: 1842 - 1954), Wednesday 8 September 1920, page 12**

OBITUARY.

MR. JAMES PURSER.

Mr. James Purser, one of the pioneer orchardists of the Castle Hill district, died at his residence, Castle Hill, on Friday last, and was interred in the Castle Hill General Cemetery on Saturday, when the Rev. Dr. Carruthers delivered an address at the graveside. The late Mr. Purser, who was 79 years of age, was born in the Castle Hill district, where he lived all his life, his father being one of the early settlers there, planting out an orchard there in the early 40's, while Mr. James Purser planted his first patch of orange trees in 1864. These trees are still in excellent bearing condition, as also are some of the trees planted by his father. Among those present at the graveside were his three sons Dr. Cecil Purser, and Messrs. Bruce and Edward Purser.

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Wednesday 8 September 1920, page 2**

The Late James Purser.

An Impressive Funeral.

The funeral of the late Mr. James Purser took place on Saturday afternoon, when the remains of that grand old pioneer of The Hills were laid to rest in the general cemetery, Castle Hill, a peaceful and secluded spot on a plateau surrounded by primeval forest where the birds chattered as the beautiful words in the service for the dead were being recited, and those assembled round the graveside sang, "Rock of Ages."

The service was conducted by the Rev. T. Howard, assisted by the Rev. F. R. Swyny [Sweeny?], after which the Rev. F. R. Carruthers spoke words of comfort, consolation and commendation, as he reviewed the home life, the public life and the spiritual life of one whom he had the pleasure of intimately knowing for over 32 years. They had gathered there to pay the last tribute of respect and affection to one of the pioneers of the district. It had been his privilege to have personally known, as far back as 1888, their friend's venerable and venerated father, a grand old Christian pioneer. He had committed his remains to the earth 32 years ago, when he had the mournful privilege of paying a tribute to one who had served his God and his generation well. Now they were laying to rest his son, one who was of catholic spirit, and whose sympathy went beyond the bounds of his own denomination. His outlook was broad, and he was in sympathy with all that went for progress and prosperity, both morally and socially. In all departments of God's service their brother was a worker, on the land or in the church, working for a pure motive to on acceptable service in the eye of the Great Architect. He had played no insignificant part in benefiting the district, in subduing the earth and making it fruitful. Of a sunny disposition, he was not one who went through life whistling the Dead March in "Saul." He saw sermons in stones, music in running brooks, and good in everything, A busy man, whose joy was to work, and whose pleasure was to show the results. He was also a patriotic man, and one who would have served his country in its more serious aspects, for he believed in law and order, and had no time for the modern agitator. Loyal to Country, Empire and people, he cultivated a broad, deep, pure, good, generous character. And it was now for them to take up the banner which had been so well borne by these great pioneers, standing for loyalty to God and Jesus Christ and all that stood for the strength of Empire and country. He had lived a life that we could do well in following loving God and keeping His commandments. At the graveside were the pioneer's sons, Dr. Cecil Purser and Bruce and Edward Purser, the Rev. A. Stephen, son-in-law, Bruce Stephen, Normand Purser, and, Cecil Edward Purser, grandsons, and Donald Nettleton, grandson-in-law. Amongst the friends present were: Rev. W. J. Roberts (C. of E.), Messrs. J. C. Hunt, Councillor Whitling, ex-Councillor Lawson, J. Roughley, E. C. Gilbert, R. H. DeLow, H. J. DeLow, H. J; Saunders, G. Tuckwell, E. J. Black, E. L. Bellamy, J. Drummond, S. I. C. Black, W. Anstey, T. H. Burrell, J. J. Catt, Howard Reed, Pidgeon. L. S. Phillips (Managing Director of "The Argus") T. D. Little, J. Button, E. C. Sherwin (Shire Clerk, Baulkham Hills), C. Booth, Fred. Black, Kentwell (2), Grunsell, Constable Dwyer, E. O'Sullivan (Cheltenham). F. Rogers, VW. James. James James, George High and G. H. Muir.

The funeral arrangements were in the hands of Messrs. W. Metcalfe and Co. The late Mr. Purser celebrated the 68th anniversary of his wedding in February last, and the family was looking forward to the celebration of the diamond jubilee celebrations. Mr. James Purser planted his first orange patch in 1864, and some of these old trees yet remain in good bearing condition. His father, before him, planted his first patch in the early forties, and, strange to say; one old orange tree, practically uncared for, still bears fruit, after an existence of about 80 years.

**Murrumbidgee Irrigator (Leeton, NSW: 1915 - 1954), Friday 10 September 1920, page 2**

A PIONER ORCHARDIST.

Mr. James Purser, one of the pioneer orchardists of the Castle Hill district, Parramatta, died at his residence, Castle Hill, on Friday last. The late Mr. Purser, who was 79 years of

age, was born in the Castle Hill district, where he lived all his life, his father being one of the early settlers there, planting out an orchard there in the early 40's, while Mr. James, Purser planted his first patch of orange trees in 1864. These trees are still in excellent bearing condition, as also are some of the trees planted by his father.

**Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW: 1883 - 1930), Monday 24 December 1923, page 4**

Deaths.

PURSER. - December 23, 1923, at her late residence, Glenview. Castle Hill, Mary, relict of the late James Purser, of Castle Hill, In her 86th year.

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 29 December 1923, page 4**

PERSONAL

After an illness extending over two years, Mrs. Mary Purser, one of Castle Hill’s oldest identities, passed away on Sunday at the advanced age of 85 years. Deceased was a native of Ayrshire; Scotland, but arrived in Australia as a child, and, at the age of 22, married her late husband. She had resided at Castle Hill for a period approximating 60 years, and during the whole of it had, been one of the most highly-esteemed ladies in the district. Her family, consisted of eight children, two of whom predeceased her. Three sons, Dr. Cecil Purser, Mr. Bruce Purser (first President of Baulkham Hills Shire), Mr. Edward Purser; and three daughters are left to mourn. The interment took place on Monday in the Methodist cemetery, Castle Hill.