

Former S.C. drover dies in Timaru

One of South Canterbury's old time drovers who travelled hundreds of miles with stock and spent months at a time away from home, Mr Harold George Traves, died in Timaru last week. He was 82.

Before the days of rapid road transport the drover and his team of trusty dogs were the prime movers of stock between the vendor and buyer, the stockyards and the rail-head.

Mr Traves covered thousands of miles over a 30 year period as a "king of the road."

Sleeping in makeshift quarters or under the stars on a long journey was all in a day's work for the hardy Mr Traves. Falling into the Ohau River and getting thoroughly drenched while trying to fill the billy was the sort of everyday hazard that Mr Traves would readily joke about.

One of his biggest drives was from the Tekapo sale to Blenheim. The Tekapo sale was, in the 1920s and 1930s



Mr H. G. Traves

one of the really big stock events of the year. The 300 mile trip took Mr Traves three months to complete.

Contemporaries of Mr Traves were the well known Tom Probyn, Tom Herbert, Bert Shaw, Charlie Creamer and Marty Wilson. They were men reputed to know every

pothole and gap in a fence anywhere in South Canterbury.

Born in 1895, Mr Traves was educated at St Andrews. He left school when 10 to drive a six-horse team for his father.

DIGGER

He served in the First World War in France with the New Zealand Rifle Brigade and was severely wounded by shrapnel following a shell burst near a trench. A trench mate sitting next to him was killed outright and the jagged metal tore across Mr Traves' chest and ripped through his arms.

A damaged cigarette case in Mr Traves' battledress pocket today bears mute evidence of that ordeal.

Mr Traves was invalided out to England and returned to New Zealand to recuperate at Queen Mary Hospital at Hanmer.

Later Mr Traves took up ploughing and then turned to what was to become his main occupation — droving. Although never a sheepdog trialist Mr Traves often acted as a steward at A and P show trial events.

Mr Traves lived for many years on a small holding at Levels growing mangolds and swedes, onions and potatoes.

At one period during the depression he was forced to dump up to 12 tons of good potatoes even though he was prepared to give them away. People did not have the transport in those days to collect the potatoes.

Mr Traves enjoyed a day at the races and a good game of cards.

He is survived by his son Bill, Mr W. J. Traves, of Timaru.