

The Coat of Connie McBride

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Connie lived until she was 95 (died 1970). She sailed from Dublin to Melbourne in 1885 with her brother Darcy. After a few years trapped in the city slums they travelled to Jamieson to prospect for gold.

Darcy moved to Beechworth, but Connie befriended the publican of the 'Diggers Exchange Hotel' where she worked until it closed in 1911 due to the actions of the 'Liquor Licence Reduction Board'.

Connie then moved to the River House (entirely corrugated iron including the chimney) abandoned by a cattle duffer who was under threat of arrest by the local constabulary.

There she set up life as part of the Jamieson community – keeping chickens, putting out yabbie traps, bartering possum fur and mending clothes for the locals.

It is said that she also traded with remnants of the local Taungurung aboriginals and the Chinese fossickers.

Known for her resourcefulness with needle and thread, Connie pieced together this 'All Weather Coat'... her 'Oily' which she was seen wearing year in and year out.

Townfolk said Connie could produce all necessities from the pockets of that coat. In the 1930s when 'Driza-Bone' coats were being produced for stockmen Jamieson locals were convinced the concept had been stolen from Connie McBride.