**Department of Prisons, Queensland 10 Jan 1898**

**Inquiry at the Prison Roma**

**into the Death of**

**Catherine Mary Brooks**

**By James Saunders J.P.**

B/C The Under Secretary for Justice

These papers were sent to me direct by the Police Magistrate at Roma with a request that I should forward them on to you. I am of the opinion that this woman should not have been sent to the gaol when there was a hospital both at Charleville and at Roma, as such have already sent a report to that office and to the House Department.

Signed: 10.1.98

**CERTIFICATE OF PARTICULARS – INQUEST OF DEATH**

I HEREBY CERTIFY, that on the fifth day of January, 1898, I held an Inquest of Death at Roma Gaol in the Police District of Roma and that the following particulars were disclosed:

Name of deceased: Catherine Mary Brooks

Profession or calling: Housewife

Height, colour of hair, peculiar clothing,

and any other means of identity: Height about 5ft 5in. Dark hair, Grey eyes,

Scar on neck on right side

Where found and when: Roma Prison

Date of death: January 3rd, 98

Supposed cause of death: Puerpual insanity, brain paralysis

Persons last seen in company of deceased,

and names of suspected persons: Prison Matron, Superintendent, Warder

Accused: Nil

Names, residences, and callings of witnesses: Nil

Suspicious circumstances: Nil

James Saunders, Justice

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In the matter of an enquiry into the circumstances attending the death of one Catherine Mary Brooks, held before me James Saunders, J.P., the Roma Gaol on January 5th 98.

Annie Schneider being duly sworn says, I am Matron of the Roma Prison.

On December, twenty-ninth 1897 I received into my care at 9.00 pm a patient named Catherine Mary Brooks. I put her into the females department and put her to bed. The next morning the doctor saw her, and prescribed for her, and I administered the medicine as directed and carried out his other instructions. The doctor saw her every day – except Sunday – until she died. I saw the patient at six am on January 3rd 98 and at 7 am I gave her her breakfast consisting of milk and maize mean, she took the whole of the milk and part of the meal. I saw her again at 10.40 am to administer beef tea, which she took very little of. I noticed that she appeared worse, and I then sent for the doctor at once. He came immediately. I remained with the patient for 10.40 am till she died at 12 noon the same day. I administered brandy and hot water and fully obeyed the doctors instructions with regard to the treatment of the patient.

The patient was able to reply to my questions in a rational manner and did not appear to be insane. She was in a very weak condition when she came in. On Sunday, she told me something about Charleville and asked me questions concerning her husband. To this day she seemed to be much stronger and better.

A. Schneider

Taken and sworn before me at Roma, January 5th 98. , James Saunders J.P.

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John Murphy being duly sworn says, I am senior warder in the Roma Prison. I remember the evening of December 29th 97. On that night at 8.56 pm I received a prisoner from the Police Escort by name Catherine Mary Brooks, and I handed her over to the Matron Annie Schneider immediately afterwards. At sometime after 10 o’clock on the morning of January 3rd 98 I went by direction of the Matron, to call the Medical Officer to attend to the patient. The doctor reached the gaol before I returned. By direction of the Superintendent I obtained some stimulants for the patients use.

J. Murphy

Taken and sworn before me at Roma, January 5th 98. James Saunders J.P.

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Guy Stuart L’Estrange being duly sworn says, I am a legally qualified medical practitioner and Government Medical Officer, residing in Roma.

On December 30th at H.M. Prison Roma, I saw Catherine Mary Brooks who had been sent down from Charleville, I was informed on a Medical Certificate of Insanity.

I examined her in her own cell and found that she was in a extremely weak and exhausted condition and unfit for further movement which latter part I entered in the Gaol books. I ascertained that she had been recently confined, and was informed that she had eaten nothing for some days. She seemed incapable of speech or to answering questions. I ordered her extra diet, soup and milk, every two hours considering the case one requiring strengthening. She showed further symptoms of brain paresis; she rallied slightly eating her food and walking about a few steps, and even speaking an occasional word. On Monday the third instant the brain symptoms became aggravated. I was called to see her she grew rapidly worse in spite of stimulants, and succumbed about two hours afterwards. The cause of her illness, in my opinion was Puerperal Insanity following on confinement.

Guy S. L’Estrange Gov. Med. Officer

Taken and sworn before me at Roma, January 5th 98. James Saunders J.P.

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Frank Oswald Schneider, being duly sworn says I am Superintendant of H.M. Prison, Roma. A lunatic patient Catherine Mary Brooks, was received by authority of exhibits marked A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. which I now tender. I produce and retain two documents I. and J. being “Emergency” and “Property” forms. I saw the patient shortly after she was taken in charge by the Matron, and subsequently several times every day, in company with the Matron. The patient was on the way to Toowoomba, but the doctor could not consent to her being sent on, as she was too weak. She was properly attended to by the Doctor and Matron whilst here as far as practicable, although the District Hospital was in my opinion the proper place for her if she could have been safely conveyed there. On Monday, the third instant, my attention was drawn by the Matron to the said patient. I saw her at once in the Matrons presence and did not like her appearance. The Doctor had already been sent for, and he was here within a quarter of an hour, and saw the patient and prescribed stimulants which were given to her. The doctor remained in the Prison for almost an hour, being called away to see another patient, but returned very quickly. When he returned he told me to remove her to the Hospital if, under the influence of the stimulants, she should revive. About ten minutes after the doctor had left the patient expired. I was present as also were the Matron and the Prison Warder.

Frank O. Schneider, Supt.

Taken and sworn before me at Roma, January 5th 98 James Saunders J.P.

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**A**

**Order for Conveyance of an Insane Person to an Asylum**

I the undersigned Justice and Police Magistrate, having called to my assistance William Broad Kirkaldy and Medical Practitioners, and having examined Catherine Mary Brooks of Charleville (married woman) who has been brought before me as being suspected to be insane, as also the said Medical Practitioners, and having made such inquiry relative to the said Catherine Mary Brooks as I have deemed necessary, and being upon such examination with other proof satisfied that the said Catherine Mary Brooks is insane, and is not under proper care and control and that she is a proper person to be taken charge of and detained under care and treatment, do hereby direct you, the Superintendent of the Asylum at Toowoomba, to receive into the said Asylum the said Catherine Mary Brooks.

Given under my Hand and Seal this twenty ninth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety seven.

To the Superintendent of the Asylum at Toowoomba. I hereby suspend the execution of the Order for the removal of the abovenamed Catherine Mary Brooks to the Asylum for the Insane at Toowoomba for not more than seven days.

Attached is a statement respecting the said Catherine Mary Brooks.

The Certificate of a Second Medical Man is not obtainable at Charleville.

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**A** & **C**

**STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY INSANE PERSON**

*(If any particulars in this Statement be not known, the fact is to be so stated.)*

Name in full Catherine Mary Brooks

Age 22 years

Personal description

Married, single or widowed Married

Number of children Two

Age of youngest child 14 days

Previous occupation Housewife

Native Place Brisbane, Queensland

Late Residence Emu Creek Charleville-Adavale Road

Religious persuasion Roman Catholic

Supposed cause of insanity Puerperium (8th day)

How long has the attack lasted About a fortnight

Has she been insane before? No

State number of attacks -

Age (if known) at first attack -

Has she any insane relations? No

Has she ever been an inmate of any institution for the insane? No

Is she subject to fits? No

Is she suicidal? Doubtful

Is she dangerous to others? No

Name and address of nearest relations or friends: John Thomas Brooks (husband)

(Groom for Cobb & Co)

Strachans Tank Charleville-Adavale Road

(Signed) J Brooks

(Address) Strachans Tank Charleville-Adavale Road

(Groom for Cobb & Co)

*When the Person signing the Statement is not the Person who signs the Order or Request for the admission of the Insane Person, the following particulars concerning the persons signing the Statement are to be added, viz:-*

Occupation (if any) Groom for Cobb & Co

Place of abode Strachans Tank Charleville-Adavale Road

Degree of Relationship (if any) or other circumstances of connection with the patient: Husband

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**B**

**Medical Certificate to Accompany Order or Request for Reception of a Patient into an Asylum or Reception House**

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, being a Medical Practitioner, hereby certify that I, on the 27th day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven at Alfred St, Charleville separately from any other Medical Practitioner, personally examined Catherine Mary Brooks of Charleville, married woman and that the said Catherine Mary Brooks is of unsound mind and a proper person to be taken charge of and detained under care and treatment, and that I have formed this opinion upon the following grounds, viz.:-

1. Facts indicating insanity observed by myself:

*Patient is incoherent in talk, rambling in her statements. Says that she was speaking to God about the weather. Wants her baby to have salts. Cannot be persuaded to take any food. Confuses names of people around her. Has been confined recently.*

1. Other facts (if any) indicating insanity communicated to me.

*By Mrs Byrnes (her nurse). Has not slept for 8 or 9 nights. Will not take any food. Is very excitable.*

Dated this 28th day of December, One thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven

*(Signed)* W.B. Kirkaldy *(Place of Abode)* Charleville

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**D**

**CERTIFICATE OF INFORMATION**

To Accompany a Magistrate’s Warrant of Commitment to, or Order for Reception into, any Public Institution in Queensland, other than a Gaol or House of Correction

I HEREBY certify that the following particulars respecting Catherine Mary Brooks who was this day committed to the Asylum at Toowoomba were furnished to me by John Thomas Brooks of Strachan’s Tank Adavale Road and stated by him to be true and correct to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief, viz.:-

Name: Catherine Mary Brooks

Occupation: Housewife Where Born:

Town: Brisbane County:

Country: Queensland

Father’s Name: Unknown

Father’s Profession: Unknown

Mother’s Christian Name: Unknown

Maiden Surname: Unknown

Married at Charleville at the age of Twenty years to John Thomas Brooks

The issue of said Marriage was Audrey Ethel 1 year and 10 months

Edith 14 days

Given under my Hand, this twenty ninth day of December 1897 at Charleville

(signed) Justice of the Peace

To The Superintendent, H M Gaol Roma

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E

Police Court Charleville

29th December 1897

Before the P.M.

Police v. Catherine Mary Brooks: Suspicion of Lunacy

Alexander Benzies on oath states I am acting head of Police stationed at Charleville. I arrested the patient this morning outside the Courthouse, by virtue of a warrant which I now produce Exhibit A. She seemed very strange in her manner and did not understand anything I said to her.

Taken and sworn before me at the Courthouse Charleville this 29th day of December AD 1897.

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**Exhibit A. F**

**Warrant in the First Instance to Apprehend a Person Charged with an Indictable Offence or a Simple Offence**

TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

To the Principal Police Officer at Charleville in the Colony of Queensland, and to all other Police Officers in the said Colony.

WHEREAS a Complaint has this day been made upon oath before the undersigned, one of Her Majesty’s Justices of the Peace for the said Colony for that Catherine Mary Brooks on the Twenty eighth day of December 1897 at Charleville in the Colony aforesaid was insane and is not under proper care and control.

These are therefore to command you, in Her Majesty’s name, forthwith to apprehend the said Catherine Mary Brooks and to bring her before some one or more of Her Majesty’s Justice for the said colony to answer to the said Complaint and be further dealt with according to law.

Given under my Hand, at Charleville, in the said Colony, this twenty eighth day of December 1897.

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**G**

John Thomas Brooks on oath states I am a groom in the employ of Cobb & Co and I live at Strachan’s Tank, Charleville-Adavale Road. I am the patients husband. I was married to her 6th June 1896 and we have been living together since that date.

I sent the patient to Charleville about nine or ten weeks since to be confined. In consequence of what I was told I came to Charleville Sunday night last and have been constantly with the patient since. She was very strange in her manner. She won’t speak to me at times and refuses to take any food or drink and at times talks very strangely. I am unable to do anything with her. I have no idea what is the cause of her trouble.

During our married life I never remarked anything strange in her manner previous to this occasion.

Taken and sworn before me at the Courthouse Charleville this 29th day of December A.D. 1897

John Thomas Brooks

Committed to Roma Gaol on Certificate of Medical Officer pending her removal to the lunatic asylum Toowoomba.