



Mounted Constable Richard Willian SPICER

1850 – 1884

Richard was born 22nd January 1850 at Chard, Somerset, England.

After his father died, 26-year-old Richard came to the decision to leave his mother in Somerset and migrate to Australia. He left London Sept. 1876 and after a three-month voyage, aboard the ship "*Kirkham*", arrived in the heat of summer on 6th Jan 1887.

Settling to his new Australian home, young Richard was employed in Adelaide as a clerk. About a year later, aged 28, on 4th March 1878, he joined the South Australian Police as a Mounted Constable. After his basic training at the North Terrace Barracks, he was posted to stations in the Far Northern Division.

The first of these was at the newly founded farming township of Wilmington, where despite great agitation from the locals, there was not yet a police station or cells. Spicer rented his quarters and had to take his prisoners 23 kilometres to Melrose.

Shortly after taking up his posting, he upset the '**burghers**' (local citizens) by enforcing the prohibition against alcohol sales on Sundays, bringing them before the local JP's who promptly dismissed the cases against their mates.

Wilmington's new police station and court house was completed by July 1881. Effective 1st September 1880, 2nd Class Mounted Constable Spicer was formally posted as the first officer in charge.

Tall and slim, with a bushy moustache was he held in such esteem that when he was transferred to Beltana in 1881 the Wilmington JP's and leading citizens organised a farewell dinner and presented him with a gold watch.

In May 1882 the mounted police were armed with a new revolver, Smith & Wesson, .44R calibre. Because of the state-



of-the-art revolver's demountable shoulder stock, police were required to conduct

regular training and target practice, both on foot and horseback. (incentive of cash prizes)

Targets were arranged at 50 yards. At the butts, three quarters of a mile from Farina, Spicer and two other police were present, Browne & Bannigan. While practicing on horseback Spicer's horse 'Needle', ridden by MC Browne, reared up and the revolver fired, shooting Spicer in the neck.

The whole town of Farina rallied, and a telegram was sent to Port Augusta, a stripped steam train was sent from Quorn. Accompanied by Trooper Brown, the mortally wounded Spicer was rushed to Port Augusta. He died of his wounds 29th June 1884 aged 34.



Mounted Constable Richard William Spicer
Buried at Port Augusta Cemetery.
A White marble headstone marks his
grave.

Compiled with much assistance from
South Australia Police Historical Society