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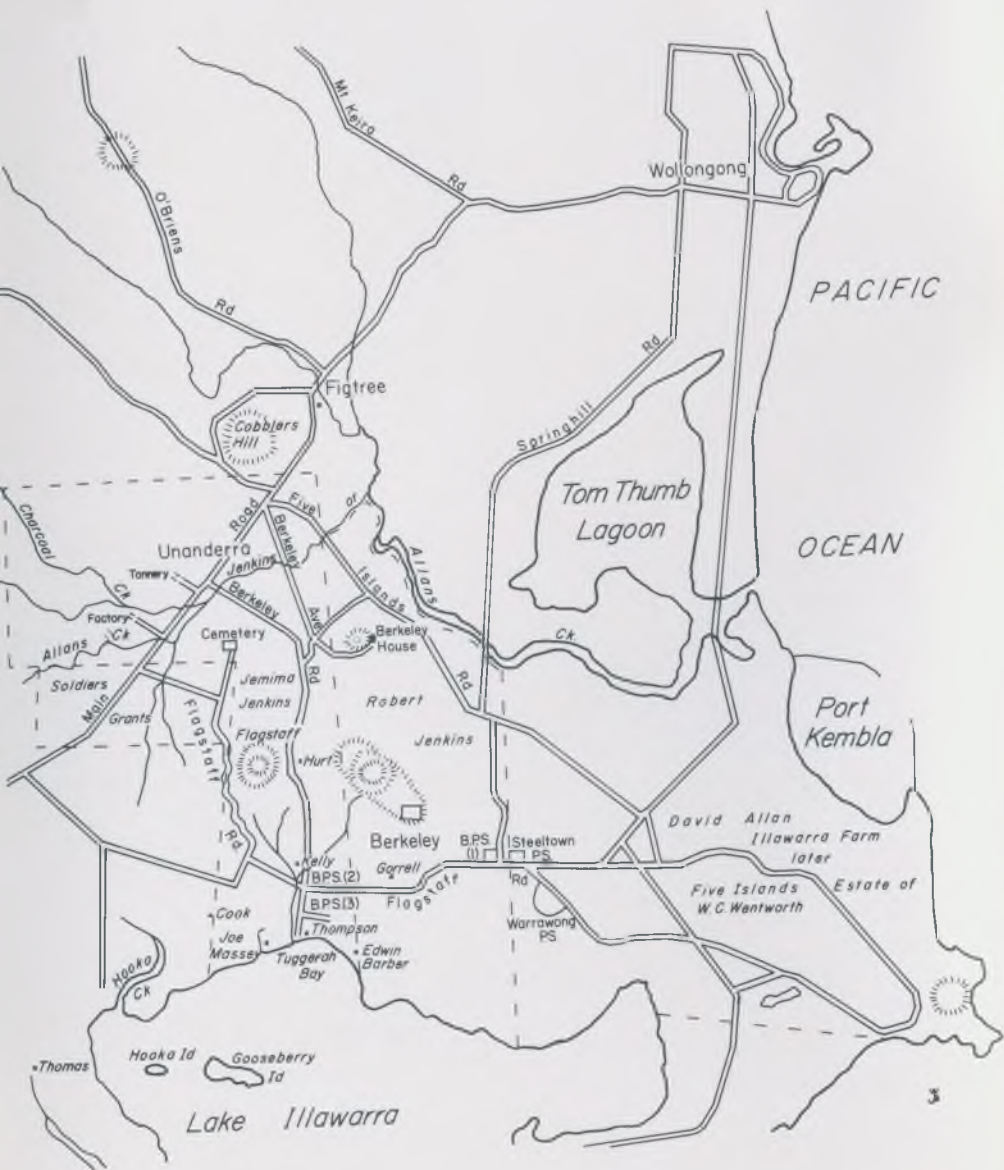
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HISTORY *of* BERKELEY



Kathleen H. Barwick



OLD BERKELEY

HISTORY of BERKELEY

NEW SOUTH WALES

Compiled by

KATHLEEN H. BARWICK

Read before Illawarra Historical Society



Edited by

William A. Bayley

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HISTORY OF BERKELEY

LAND GRANTS AND SETTLEMENT

Thirty-eight years after the arrival of Captain Cook at the eastern coast of Australia and twenty years after Governor Phillip had assumed office as Governor of New South Wales, Robert Jenkins left the estate at Berkeley, Gloucestershire, England where Berkeley Castle now stands, the grand ancestral home of the Grantley Berkeleys on the alluvial flats of the River Severn, arriving in the colony in 1808 to settle in Sydney, though he later made one or two trips to England.

Robert Jenkins, according to Samuel Clarke, was a gentleman of superior education held in the highest esteem for his honour and integrity, known for his public spiritedness and was ever engaged in promoting colonial prosperity. He must not be confused with another Robert Jenkins, a convict who was granted 30 acres of land near Parramatta and who was killed by aborigines while clearing his farm.

Arriving in New South Wales under engagement to a merchant named Wilson, Robert Jenkins of Illawarra soon became a prominent businessman as a shipping merchant and auctioneer. In 1819 he was a director of the Bank of N.S.W. and for three years worked a distillery. He was conversant with five languages, a good classical scholar with literary tastes and possessed a varied and interesting library of books. He composed a short poem in 1817. It was set to the music of "Rule, Britannia" and considered 'eminently prophetic and patriotic'.

Governor Lachlan Macquarie promised Jenkins a grant of 1000 acres of land on October 30, 1813 but, there being insufficient in the settled districts to redeem all promises, Macquarie directed that they be located "at the Five Islands" to which Charles Throsby had evidently sent stock in 1815.

Surveyor-General John Oxley was instructed to proceed to the Five Islands to survey the coastal strip between "Appin and Shoalhaven" and the seacoast and mountain range, map it accurately and to reserve for Crown use certain lands. His instructions, supported by advertisement in the "Sydney Gazette" of November 11, 1816, continued, "Those Gentlemen and other Free Settlers who have lately obtained promises of Land from the Governor may now get them located to them in the New District of Illawarra . . . that such of them as wish to get their Lands in this District are to repair thither on Monday, the 2nd of the ensuing month of December and to meet you on that day at the Hut of Mr Throsby's Stockman, and that you will locate to them their respective allotments accordingly". Oxley was instructed to ensure that each Grantee should have a proportion of good and bad land, the breadth to be one third of the length and the length was not to be set along river or foreshore.

The first five grants were issued to Robert Jenkins, David Allan, George Johnston, Richard Brooks and Andrew Allan. Robert Jenkins' grant was marked out by Surveyor Meehan on December 7, 1816. He called it Berkeley after the historic estate of that name in his native Gloucestershire and it may be identified on present day maps as Portion 52, Parish of Wollongong, fronting the north-east of Lake Illawarra and adjoining David Allan's "Illawarra Farm".

The "Sydney Gazette" of March 27, 1813 records Robert Jenkins' marriage which took place "On Monday last, the 22nd inst. at St. John's Church, Parramatta, Mr Robert Jenkins of Sydney, merchant, to Mrs Jemima Forest, relict of the late Austin Forest, Esq. of Richmond Hill". Mrs Forest was formerly Miss J. Pitt and married A. Forest, a military captain on April 18, 1810. He was killed by a fall from a horse on December 24, 1811, the same way as Robert Jenkins was to lose his life on May 4, 1822.

Robert and Jemima Jenkins had two children, Robert Pitt born January 1814 and William Warren born July 1816. The gravestones of the parents, Robert and

Jemima, and those of the son W.W. and his children, five daughters and three sons, are to be found to this day in the Unanderra cemetery; the other son, Robert, with his wife and sons were drowned off the Anglesea coast on October 26, 1859 while the only daughter, Alice, aged 14 years was in Paris awaiting them. Later she married Hubert de Castella of Victoria in Sydney in 1865.

Eventually the Berkeley Estate comprised a total area of 3280 acres of exceedingly choice land in a compact block, according to Benjamin Lindsay, late chairman of Land Boards, Department of Lands, built up as follows: a first grant of 1000 acres to Robert Jenkins; 2000 acres lying west of and adjoining Robert Jenkin's grant and purchased from the Crown by his widow, Mrs Jemima Jenkins, in 1834; 280 acres embracing the village of Charcoal in 1835, 6 by virtue of five soldiers' land orders. Mrs. Jenkins put her second son, William Warren, in possession of it upon his marriage in 1838.

Meanwhile the "Sydney Gazette" of October 28, 1816 reported that several gentlemen had removed their cattle to the Five Islands (the district later to be known as Illawarra) as there were sufficient pastures and it was hoped that the stockmen in charge would be able to maintain friendly feelings with the natives that at present existed. It was deemed advisable to extend the grant system to Illawarra. The various conditions which existed under which the grants were held were: There was to be a quit rent of 2s per 100 acres; an average of cultivation was demanded in five years in proportion to the size of the grant; reservation of timber was to be made for naval purposes; reservation of land for highways, non-alienation during five years.

Breton, who visited the district in 1830 said, "Even in this interesting district there are not many respectable residents, nor has the land been cleared so that some time will elapse before its various resources are called forth". But the aged of development was beginning.

In Governor Brisbane's time, to ease the cost of maintaining convicts, each grantee was required to keep one convict for every 100 acres. They helped in developing Berkeley in its early days.

At that time there was a great amount of cattle stealing and with few fences and cattle grazing on meadows and mountainsides, six owners of land signed a petition offering a reward of 20 pounds to be paid on conviction of any person found stealing or destroying cattle or property belonging to them. One of the landowners was Robert Jenkins.

Strangely enough, however, none of the five original grantees took up residence in Illawarra, stockmen or managers looking after their properties. Jenkins' manager was John Robertson. The issue of free grants ended in 1831 but those promised were issued even as late as 1861.

It appears that the first settler in the district was George Cribb who took cattle to a site near the Fig Tree, the district being named Charcoal Creek in honour of Cribb's stockman known as Charcoal Will, according to C.T. Smith. That was about 1815 or 1816. The next arrival was Robert Jenkins who settled Berkeley in 1817. He made it a cattle run, placing an overseer in charge.

As soon as W.W. Jenkins took charge he had a large brick cottage erected, the bricks being hand made from clay found on the estate. He took up residence in 1839 in Berkeley House upon which he added a second storey in 1860 making a stately mansion which lasted 80 years. It was situated on the knoll on the north of the first grant to the south of Allan's Creek. From its balcony the Five Islands could be seen. Its site today is just south of the electrical sub-station in Five Islands Road and on the hilltop the outline of the brick foundations of what were apparently convicts' quarters may still be seen.

From the 1840s it was approached through a white gate which left the eastern side of the highroad over Cobbler's Hill from the Fig Tree and along an avenue said to have contained features of rich and unrivalled beauty. A few hundred yards farther on the road curved north-easterly and led to the house. Little trace of the route can be found today.



JENKINS FAMILY GROUP AT BERKELEY HOUSE ABOUT 1860.

*Back row (left to right): Miss Matilda Jenkins (1842-1942); — Wilshire;
Miss Ellinor Jenkins (1845-1933); — Wilshire.*

*Front row (left to right): Miss Alice Jenkins (afterwards Mrs. W. G. Robertson
(1849-1932); Mr. Wm Warren Jenkins (1816-1884);
Master Alfred Matcham Jenkins (1854-1909); Mrs. W. W. Jenkins (-d 1876).*

CHARCOAL STORE OF JULIA AND PHINEAS BEATUS

*The store stood on the western side of the main road near where the
Unanderra-Moss Vale railway now crosses it.*

"H. Toose, photographic artist", Corrimal Street, Wollongong (a carte-de-visite)



ABORIGINES

At the time of settlement the aboriginal population of the area confined by the Illawarra range was not large and might have numbered two to three thousand. They were said, however, to have outnumbered the white population. Alexander Stewart in 1894 and "Old Pioneer" (1923-5) gave accounts of their doings to the "Illawarra Mercury". The latter stated that on the western side of Lake Illawarra lived King Hooka and his tribe, the king promoting peaceful conditions for the settlers. An account of an encounter with Coolangatta blacks resulting in their defeat and retreat but also in the death of King Hooka and his burial on Hooka Creek is given. A camp of 200 aborigines was said to have been on Berkeley Estate not far from the house itself.

LAKE ILLAWARRA

Lake Illawarra was from the earliest times renowned for its beauty and has been depicted in early sketches and paintings. It has been compared with the Sea of Galilee whose area was said by the "Town and Country Journal" of October 18, 1879 to be the same, whilst it has also been compared to Lake Windemere in England by the "Illawarra Mercury" of September 7, 1893.

CATTLE RAISING

As the white settlers moved south to the Five Islands area the major primary industry was grazing and cattle raising. The growth of settlement was slow between 1817 and 1821, twelve grants covering 16,000 acres in Illawarra. Wheat, potatoes and a little maize were grown.

There were few fences and cattle grazed on meadows and on the mountainsides, being rounded up for branding from time to time. W.W. Jenkins, on taking up residence, cut up the estate and let it to tenants under the clearing lease system, whereby it was developed by convicts and settlers.

The estate was laid out into farms leaving belts of timber and English clover and other grasses were sown. There were up to 80 tenants on the estate. Attention was given to raising cattle for market but the tenants also began dairying, milking the cattle at first once daily and from the fifties twice-a-day. Butter was made at each home dairy, cream being set in shallow dishes and scooped off every couple of days to be hand churned and sent to market in wooden kegs.

Berkeley dairymen were relieved when they were able to send their cream to be made into butter at the co-operative factory which they opened in 1887. The factory was in Factory Street at Unanderra between Allan's and Charcoal Creeks. Dairy farmers carted their cream in cans to the factory which opened with 27 suppliers on December 13.

BERKELEY ESTATE SOLD

The estate in the eighties resolved itself into 30 dairy farms and on May 6, 1884 William Warren Jenkins died at the age of 66 years.

W.W. Jenkins had proved an excellent citizen. He was a member of the Illawarra District Council formed 1843, one of the founders of the A. and H. Society, a sponsor of Illawarra butter export and shareholder in the South Coast and West Camden Co-op. Co. He was one of the trustees of St Michael's Church of England at Wollongong, and a member of the board of Berkeley Public School. He was at all times patriotic and generous.

After his passing the estate of 3600 acres was subdivided into farms and sold on August 9, 1890. Robert Thomas Jenkins retained the mansion and homestead farm of 165 acres but after his death on December 8, 1913 it was sold to H. H. Waldron. He died on April 21, 1939 and Halloran's acquired it on May 18, 1939 for subdivision (before the time was ripe) into residential allotments. The mansion was demolished in February 1940.



DEGANIA BESIDE THE SEA OF GALILEE

The upper picture shows the similarity of the Sea of Galilee to Lake Illawarra seen from the heights of Flagstaff Road overlooking Berkeley from Lake Heights. The lower photograph was secured from the heights of Flagstaff Road at Lake Heights in 1957.

Picture above supplied by Consul for Israel; lower by W. A. Bayley



The council acquired a large area of the estate for individual purposes, the electrical sub-station and Glastonbury Avenue which was constructed through the estate. The remainder of the Berkeley home property went to Commonwealth Hostels and Stewarts and Lloyds'.

THE FISHING VILLAGE

Lake Illawarra supplied fish to the aborigines and white settlers soon took advantage of the plenteous fish supply. The "Wollongong Argus" of July 5, 1893 said that the first fisherman on the lake was Thomas Barron who settled Koonwarry Creek in 1824. Consumers were few and markets distant, Barron salting the fish and sending them by boat to Sydney. Next Jarrett smoked the fish and sent them by sailer to Sydney from Wollongong to which he sent them in carts.

The fishing trade grew in the seventies and from the eighties brought fishermen £3000 per annum. In the ten years 63,862 baskets realized £35,104. By that time many families had taken up residence beside the lake. They included Masseys, O'Donnells, Barbers, Cliffords, Thomases, Cooks, Kellys and Thompsons. As many as three generations of the families have lived round Tuggerah Bay, their settlement becoming known as the Fishing Village, which in more recent years became Berkeley itself, the northern part over the hills from the lake becoming Unanderra.

Varieties of fish included mullet, luderick, river flathead, bream and whiting, whilst prawns also abounded. Fishermen used sailing and rowing boats in earlier times, rowing boats on the waters of the lake and paying out the nets to encircle the fish. Different types of nets are used for various fish and for prawning.

In earlier years fishermen had to market their own fish and the opening of the railway through Unanderra in 1887 made it possible for fish to reach Sydney market quickly. In 1926 the Illawarra Coastal Fishery Company was formed with a depot at Berkeley for receipt of prawns for cooking. Competitors opened other depots and the factory closed in 1931, Berkeley fishing fleet marketing their own catches again. Sydney agents visited Berkeley to buy fish and finally in 1946 compulsory marketing was introduced by New South Wales Government.

During recent years 70 men have been engaged in fishing in the lake. Prawn production has doubled that of 1957. It appears that the warming of the lake waters by Tallawarra powerhouse has made possible the opening of prawning in August, whereas in earlier times it began about Christmas time. The increase of salinity of the lake after the 1959/60 floods cut a deep channel at the entrance has also contributed.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

The need for despatch of dairy products, and later milk to the factory and fish to market brought the need for transport facilities. In early days the pioneers had to walk, ride on horseback or horse drawn vehicles. School children walked to school when they had been established, first at Charcoal, then at Berkeley and Unanderra. Horse and sulky journeys were made over cart-rutted tracks through the trees.

In the early days a petition was sent to Governor Bourke in 1834 asking him to visit the area and after his visit he sent the surveyor-general to "inspect it with thoroughness". He surveyed roads linking various parts of the district. In 1850 the roads were reported to be in bad condition and six years after a collection was taken for repairs to streets.

For transport beyond the district there was the formation in the late thirties and early forties for shipping of the Illawarra Steam Packet Company, later the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company which plied from Wollongong for three quarters of a century. At Wollongong harbour the old lighthouse was completed in 1871 with a range of ten miles and near it signals on Signal Hill could be seen from Berkeley Hill.



UNANDERRA BUTTER FACTORY

which began operations in 1887. The factory at the west of Factory Road backed on to Jenkins Creek and was destroyed by fire in 1913.

Weber Collection

BERKELEY HOUSE — HOME OF THE JENKINS FAMILY

The imposing brick mansion was erected in one storey in 1839, a second storey being added in 1860. It was demolished in 1940. The present Glastonbury Avenue passes its site.

Old print



The railway line was extended from Wollongong through Unanderra and Dapto to Kiama in 1887.

At Berkeley itself the fishing village developed with a little harbour at Tuggerah Bay, the tetrahedrons reminiscent of the Second World War marking it to this day.

THE LAKE ISLANDS

Just off the mainland of Berkeley but very much associated with life there from earliest times are Gooseberry and Hooka Islands. In 1830 settlement took place around the shores of the lake from Shell Harbour to the Five Islands, settlers taking up grants of various areas.

About 1829 John Brown of Brownsville visited the lake and in 1836 landed on the islands. His father, George Brown, landed goats on Hooka Island and the other, originally called Garden Island but now Gooseberry Island, was placed under cultivation, vegetables for market being grown. On Gooseberry Island M. A. Brown was producing commercial salt in the early days, the salt being used to salt the farmers' butter. Lime was made from shells secured from the lake shores and burnt in crude retorts.

Gooseberry Island was later regarded as being one of the most charming spots of Illawarra and became a favourite picnic resort. Rachel Henning wrote in her letters in 1877, "Lake Illawarra is a . . . beautiful sheet of water about the size of Lake Windermere. There are two wooded islands on it . . . Mr Jenkins has a boat on it and we went for a picnic with them a week ago, dined on one of the islands under the shade of an enormous fig tree and spent most of the day rowing about and fishing . . ."

In the eighties residents of Central Illawarra erected landing places on the islands which were visited regularly by large numbers of people. Trustees were elected to improve the islands. Fishermen's picnics were often held on them, William Beach and Thomas Clifford, world champion scullers who trained on the lake, attending among the visitors. Two piers were provided for boats. There was a spacious pavilion and an ample supply of water.

One tourist guide to Beautiful Illawarra emphasized the aquatic beauty spot of the district that stretches its mild and placid waters between Dapto and the sea with fairylike scenes. Gooseberry Island was supposed to have vegetation in endless and richest profusion! One was advised to enjoy "an invigorating gallop in the purest of ozone". Such were the havens of happiness for holidays! However during the twentieth century the islands lost their former popularity and returned to their natural state.

SCHOOLS

The development of the estate brought families to settle and the need for education of the children was met first by schools at Charcoal. Jervis states that two schools, a Presbyterian and a Roman Catholic, were both opened in 1840. The first teacher of the Presbyterian school was M. McPhail; Richard Hawkins being appointed to it in 1853. The first teacher at the Roman Catholic school was J. Stapleton but Peter Tresnan senior took it over on his arrival in 1844, carrying it on for 32 years until his death in 1876. Both schools were operating at that time. A meeting was called at the end of 1875 to seek the establishment of a public school in place of the two denominational schools which the "Illawarra Mercury" said were "crippling each other there". Meanwhile a school was established at Berkeley itself, continuing to this day.

A school of some kind was conducted in 1856 in a temporary schoolhouse in which a meeting in July resolved to petition the National Board of Education for assistance to build a school and schoolhouse. W. W. Jenkins gave £50 and two acres of land, the site today being enclosed by Flagstaff Road, Lake Avenue and Grattan Street at what is now Lake Heights. The site was said to command a view of the ocean and in 1878 from it could be seen the Pacific Ocean and Five

Islands to the east, Tom Thumb Lagoon and Wollongong to the north, the chain of mountains to the west and Lake Illawarra to the south. Residents of the Berkeley Estate and the Five Islands Estate of W. C. Wentworth raised £400 to build the school, assisted by a grant from the Board of National Education. A weatherboard school was built.

The school opened in January 1858, the first teacher evidently being C. Hookins. The school was inspected in November 1859 by William Wilkins, "the energetic superintendent of National Schools". The enrolment was 63 with average attendance 42.

Water was obtained from a tank supplied by the run-off from the shingle roof and the school was exposed to the westerly winds. The teachers prior to 1878 were Mr and Mrs Spanswick who were farewelled to Woonona Church of England school at an exhibition of work in "celebration of the anniversary of the school". The display included penmanship, handwork, sewing and fancy work. After a luncheon Wm Coughrane chaired the pupils' recitations and farewell.

Samuel Kemish, appointed in 1878, ascertained "the correct time daily by observing through a small telescope the Wollongong Post Office Time Ball at 1 p.m.". He stated that to that time there had been nine teachers in charge of the school. Enrolment remained between 40 and 50 pupils, with average attendance, noted as usual in those days, at two-thirds of the enrolment.

When Port Kembla opened in the early eighties children walked from there to Berkeley as did those on the east side of the lake. Some rode on the engine from Mount Kembla coal mine and walked up to the school. Two 400 gallon tanks did not hold sufficient water which was rationed to pupils in summer.

Berkeley school enrolment had sunk to 15 on Kemish's retirement in 1892 when a school was opened at Port Kembla and made half-time with Berkeley. The residence at Berkeley was demolished in 1901, the school being again made a full time one and a new school building apparently being erected in place of the original one. Old residents remember the annual school picnic held about November as the event of the year. From the school they watched the start of construction of Port Kembla breakwaters.

From that time no residence was provided for teachers who rode or travelled in sulkies from Wollongong, or walked from Unanderra railway station. In 1913 it was proposed that the school be moved to a new site in what was becoming the Fishing Village and later called "Fish Town". The school building was damaged by white ants, was built to hold 28 pupils whilst the enrolment had risen to 40.

In April 1917 it was decided to move the school to the north-east corner of Flagstaff and Berkeley Roads, about 1 ½ miles down the hill westward from the former site. A former school building no longer needed at Port Kembla was moved to the new site by H. Knight for £248 and school opened in it on August 12, 1918. The old building was demolished and the site sold. Berkeley people built a tennis court on the new school site which became the social centre of the village; meeting place for many years of former pupils of the school.

The development of Port Kembla Steelworks from 1928, unforeseen when Berkeley's former school site was sold, brought the need for a school at Steeltown which developed between the former school site and the steelworks just north of it. A school site on the northern side of Flagstaff Road, 200 yards east of the earlier site, was given by Wentworth. It contained four acres. Whereas the original site was on the eastern boundary of the Jenkins grant, the Steeltown site was on the western boundary of the original Wentworth grant.

Steeltown Public School was built as a temporary or portable structure of two rooms to house 100 pupils, was said to command views of Lake Illawarra, Wollongong and Tom Thumb Lagoon (as had the former Berkeley School) and was officially opened by W. Davies M.L.A. on Saturday, January 26, 1935. An eight-roomed brick structure was planned.

Walter Buckland was appointed in charge of Berkeley School in 1938 and during his ten years there the enrolment never exceeded 25 pupils although a



*BULLOCK TEAM WITH CART
crossing Charcoal Creek on the main road at Unanderra. The Unanderra Public
School and residence can be seen in the background.*

Weber Collection

*CHARCOAL CREEK DENOMINATION SCHOOL
with teacher's residence on the left. The photograph was taken by James
Brothers' London Portrait Studio of Wollongong.*



revolutionary change was experienced. During the Second World War, (1939-45) the Steeltown Public School pupils, with their double portable classroom, were evacuated to the site of Berkeley Public School to which they were conveyed daily in buses. The Berkeley-Steeltown school had 130 pupils during that period, with Harold Taylor as headmaster, Buckland serving temporarily at Windang. Air raid shelters were erected.

When war danger passed the Steeltown pupils, with their building, were removed in 1944 from Berkeley not to the former Steeltown site, but to the new site for the school which became Warrawong in Cowper Street, some quarter mile east of the former Steeltown site which is now reserved for a technical college site.

Berkeley school enrolment fell to about 12 pupils and retained numbers only with difficulty. Except for a few farmers the only occupation was fishing and prawning. Sons followed the occupations of their fathers and Berkeley was a quiet place.

A vast change began in 1951 when the Berkeley Migrant Hostel was erected. Enrolment grew overnight. One class was conducted in the schoolroom, one on the verandah and one in the church hall. Migrants were transferred after a year and attendance again fell. Another influx of migrants occurred in 1953 and enrolments again soared. New South Wales Housing Commission planned a large suburb for Berkeley and the old school and its site were abandoned in favour of a new site opposite it on Flagstaff Road.

New buildings were rapidly erected in sets of four and two until twelve rooms were on the site. Wavering enrolments pending stability in housing brought the school to become an annexe of Unanderra school from which pupils were transported daily in buses, and later Farmborough Road School at Unanderra was organised at Berkeley until its buildings were completed at the end of 1956.

Berkeley school then became the centre for bringing together children of migrant parents of many nationalities and languages until the identity of the earlier school faded away, giving place to a social and cultural centre of a new and vast community.

Of several former pupils of the Berkeley school to achieve success, the most distinguished is Dr Vincent Massey B.Sc., Ph.D. (Cambridge). He began his education at Berkeley, won a bursary to Wollongong High School, gained a brilliant Leaving Certificate pass and proceeded to Sydney University, graduating B.Sc. in Biochemistry in 1947. From 1947 to 1950 he worked at the McMaster Animal Health Laboratory. In 1950 he proceeded to Cambridge University on a studentship from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. After completing his degree there he has lectured at English and American Universities.

Whilst the development of Berkeley school was proceeding the people of Charcoal succeeded in securing the erection of a public school on the main road beside Victoria Street. It was built in brick with a separate teacher's residence to the south of it by George Osborne, contractor. It had three classrooms. John Richardson from Fairy Meadow school was appointed headmaster and the school opened in November 1878. The two denominational schools then closed. The public school continued until growing population after the Second World War brought additional classrooms. The residence was demolished in 1955 and at that time more land was acquired for the site and additional rooms added until there are now 18 rooms.

Unanderra development saw the opening of the Farmborough Road public school one mile south in 1956 with six rooms, subsequently increased to 12. N.S.W. Housing Commission proceeded with big housing development at Unanderra spreading over a large area of the original estate of Mrs Jemima Jenkins and Unanderra grew in the past ten years to a large residential suburb.

Further Housing Commission development at Berkeley itself brought the need for additional schools which have been built in the area of post-war development.



*THE FIRST BERKELEY PUBLIC SCHOOL
at the corner of Flagstaff Road and Lake Avenue about 1890. The school was
later demolished and the site abandoned.*

*UNANDERRA COKE WORKS
begun in 1888 seen from Cobblers Hill. They stood beside the Illawarra Railway
and Five Islands Road.*



CHURCHES

Little is known of the life of the churches in the first years of settlement of Illawarra. One resident wrote on September 8, 1832, "We have no church buildings - those who die have the peculiar advantage of resting their bones under any tree or any swamp. Children are never christened". Soon afterwards, however, Rev. Thomas Reddall visited the district and by the time of his departure "there was not an unbaptized child to be found within an extent of 20 miles". In 1833 Rev. F. Wilkinson M.A. was appointed Anglican chaplain, followed by Rev. M. D. Meares who rode on horseback over bad roads and unbridged creeks, holding services in private homes in outlying areas. His successor, Rev. T. C. Ewing, served 35 years from 1857 to 1892.

In the early times at Berkeley the Presbyterians and Roman Catholics had Church-schools at Charcoal but the Anglicans, represented by the Jenkins family, drove to St Michael's Church at Wollongong until W.W. Jenkins on March 31, 1862 gave one acre for the site of a church and burial ground. Berkeley Church of England was built on the hillside about a mile south-west of Berkeley House as a result of the gifts and money collected by W.W. Jenkins and opened for public worship on Sunday November 9, 1862 by the Dean of Sydney. The church would accommodate 150 and was opened free of debt.

The church served there for some years but was removed before 1877. However the cemetery which a century later remains the last resting place of many members of the Jenkins family may still be seen on the hillside above Unanderra, many of whose pioneers also lie there. The remains of Robert and Jemima Jenkins were removed there from Devonshire Street Cemetery, Sydney, when the cemetery made way for Sydney Railway Station. In a line from their flat tombstones are those of many of the family. An obelisk commemorates Roy H. King and Cecil B. Jenkins who saw active service at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli, and Amiens.

In the early days of church life at the Berkeley of today - the Fishing Village - services and Sunday School were held at Edwin Barber's "Rose Cottage". The first service held there was conducted by Rev. James Shuttleworth on September 20, 1903. Berkeley was part of the Parish of Brownsville and services continued until 1917 and lapsed and re-commenced in 1920 when Berkeley became, as it remains, part of Port Kembla parish. The cause was small, there being only about 12 homes but as the Rector wrote in 1930 every resident was an Anglican! However the Department of Education did not permit the use of the public school for the purpose of worship.

The early thirties saw the collection of funds to build the Berkeley Mission Hall. Mrs. Samuel Thompson collected and Joseph Massey gave the bricks for the foundations and the site in Berkeley Road. The timber building erected by N.J. Sainsbury and J. Gordon cost £160, and was opened free of debt on Sunday, August 8, 1937 by Mary Jane Massey followed by service read by Rev. D.L. Livingstone. The hall was later lined at a cost of £100. services being held fortnightly until they began weekly from April 10, 1938.

CHARCOAL BECOMES UNANDERRA

In Berkeley's early days the north-western part of the estate contained the "little village which rejoices in the name of Charcoal" as the "Sydney Morning Herald" said in 1855. The Charcoal Inn opened with ball and supper in 1856 and Charcoal post office opened in 1860. The name was changed to Unanderra on April 7, 1881, the school also changing its name. The break up of the Berkeley Estate allowed townships lots to be sold at Unanderra in 1890, thus giving the old village the opportunity to grow.

A tannery was established by John Richards about 1860, its site being marked by Tannery Street today. It was a big industry for many years, employing about 28 men and using 150 to 200 hides a week.

COKE OVENS

Berkeley coke ovens began operations in February 1889. They were situated beside the Illawarra railway line where the Mount Kembla coal railway crossed it, really in north-east Unanderra. Slack or small coal had been thrown away before coking began and H.A. Pringle, manager of the Southern Coal Company, sponsored the formation of the Australian Coke Making Co. to supply coke to Silverton, Broken Hill, Adelaide and elsewhere. The Southern Coal Company failed to supply the coal required and it was secured from Corrimbal by rail. There were 54 furnaces with a capacity of 300 to 400 tons weekly, 40 men being employed. At the end of the nineties demand fluctuated. The kilns continued service until the first quarter of the twentieth century when they were closed and no trace of their existence remains today.

BUTTER TO MILK TRADE

Unanderra butter factory continued operations through the nineties but dairymen zealously sought to enter the city milk trade by consigning their milk to Sydney by the daily milk train which began running in 1889. A big quantity of milk was sent from Unanderra station.

The butter factory became a milk receiving depot and in 1909 was leased to the Farmers and Dairymen's Company. The building of a new factory was proposed in 1913 after the factory had been damaged by fire and in 1914 it was reported that both the Dairy Farmers' Milk Co. and the Farmers and Dairymen's Co. were building receiving depots at Unanderra station. They served until direct delivery could be arranged many years later.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Berkeley area was included in the Central Illawarra Municipality proclaimed on August 19, 1859 containing the small villages at Charcoal and Dapto. The first aldermen were Joseph Ritchie, Hugh Higgins, William Warren Jenkins, John Stewart, John Gerard, Evan R. Evans, Henry Osborne, John Brown and John Lindsay.

Council met at Brownsville until in 1900 council chambers were erected at Unanderra where meetings continued until the amalgamation with Wollongong in 1947 the area having been proclaimed a shire on September 16, 1934.

Berkeley remained a rural area with a few gravel roads until the era after the Second World War, after which water supply made available years before to the developing Port Kembla with a reservoir on Berkeley Hill proved an asset to the growing settlement.

BERKELEY SCHOOL OF ARTS

The growing community at Unanderra, following the development of the coke works, decided to build what was the community hall of the time, a school of arts. The committee met at Unanderra Council Chambers in June, 1903 after five years of planning to finalise arrangements for the building. A site on the south of the intersection of the main road and Berkeley Avenue was purchased from Berkeley Estate for £25. The Australian Coke Making Co. gave a building valued at £52 to be sold for funds; Balgownie-Corrimbal Colliery gave £5/5/-. Ford and Mansfield erected the building called Berkeley School of Arts, though it was as far away from what is now called Berkeley as it could be. The building still stands today just south of the Mount Kembla railway bridge over Princess Highway at Five Islands Road intersection, though long since used for other purposes.

Robert T. Jenkins gave 200 books and 243 magazines to start the school of arts which was officially opened by Archibald Campbell M.L.A. in August 1903 and proved a popular meeting place in the early years of the twentieth century.

INVASION SCARE

Old Berkeley lay quiet and peaceful as the Second World War began in 1939. Fishermen continued their tasks at the Fishing Village and the dairy farmers milked their cows which grazed upon the hills.

But the growth of Port Kembla in the preceding decade and the drive there for greater steel production made a potential target for an enemy. Although Berkeley was considered sufficiently far removed from Port Kembla to provide safety for Steeltown school pupils, it was also encompassed in the organization of Port Kembla defences.

Possibly the greatest work was the construction of the tank trap which took a direct line from Mullet Creek to the mouth of Hooka Creek, making the Thomas farm an island. The canal is still there. It was built as part of an overall plan to prevent an armoured thrust along the coast to Port Kembla.

Another result of the war was the placing of the concrete tetrahedrons around the little harbour of the fishing port making a cosy little anchorage for the launches of the fishing fleet. Army files containing the reasons for the work have been destroyed but the blocks remain a reminder of the war period when boats were held for destruction if the enemy had come.

POST-WAR EXPANSION

The development of Port Kembla had begun the use of the south-eastern part of the old Berkeley Estate as a "dormitory suburb" and so the centre called Lake Heights appeared, home building there gaining impetus at the close of the war.

Berkeley itself was selected as a site suitable for the erection of a hostel to house 2800 persons brought to Australia under the migration programme of the Commonwealth government. The hostel was built in the early fifties using rows of galvanised iron huts. At the same time the New South Wales Housing Commission planned Berkeley as a model township of 600 acres to be developed to house 8500 people in 2075 homes, the most ambitious programme launched.

The hostel was built just west of the former fishing village and south of the temporary home centre the housing commission began building its cottages. Expansion moved westerly as streets were laid out and houses built until Flagstaff Road was reached, when planning and building proceeded southwards.

HOMES AND PEOPLE

Migrants of thirty nationalities were housed in the settlement which is essentially a residential area. Homes are mostly of fibro with a brick building on each corner and here and there a block of brick flats. Water, electricity and sewerage were installed as development proceeded. Streets were kerbed and guttered and paved with bitumen.

An area set aside for commercial development has, unfortunately, only been taken up slowly making people go to Unanderra, Port Kembla and Wollongong to shop by bus services. Only now is the shopping area being built up actively with shops and facilities.

To provide for through traffic Northcliffe Drive was extended from Lake Heights around the foreshores to the former fishing village in 1956 thus eliminating the steep "Gorrell's Hill" on the Flagstaff Road. The expressway is being continued in a westerly direction to by-pass the town and link up with the Princess Highway near Kembla Grange.

SCHOOL EXPANSION

To provide for the greater population two additional primary and one high school have been built at Berkeley.

The first to be built was Berkeley West public school designed in modern style framed with pre-cast concrete using steel and fire resistant materials. Walls have



*THE BERKELEY FISHING VILLAGE IN 1957
as the housing expansion began. The little harbour in Lake Illawarra for the
fishing boats is on the left.*

W. A. Bayley

*BERKELEY FROM FLAGSTAFF HILL
showing Commonwealth Hostel for Migrants in 1954. Berkeley Public School is
on the right of Flagstaff Road. It was later moved to its present position
opposite.*

T. S. Nairns



been plastic coated and floors and stairs finished in sheet linoleum and linoleum tiles. The first stage, a six-roomed school was opened with John Sutherland as headmaster in 1959. A two-storey block was added soon afterwards.

Berkeley South school, a two-storied brick building, costing £93,000, opened in September 1962 with Frank Middenway as headmaster. The building is of modern curtain wall construction with tile roof and colour used to good effect.

Meanwhile whilst the two primary schools were being constructed, Berkeley High school was constructed on spacious grounds over Budjong Creek from the original primary school. It consists of two storied brick buildings built around a central quadrangle and has all modern amenities including assembly hall. The school is constructed of brick and pre-cast monocrete. It has 41 classrooms and 1000 pupils. It began in 1957 at Wollongong and moved to Berkeley when the school which cost £440,000 to build was sufficiently advanced. It was officially opened in June 1961.

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

The homes and schools of modern Berkeley were financed largely by funds provided by the government but funds for public halls, churches and such amenities have to be found by the people themselves. As a result social amenities have been slow to appear.

The churches have given a lead in attempting to provide church-hall buildings as first steps in Christian witness in the fast growing suburb during the past five years. The Church of England people installed a portable church lent to growing centres until such time as they can build their first stage which is now being constructed; the Methodists and Presbyterians have each built accommodation in which to start their work among the people. Major church building is for the future.

COMMERCE

A drive-in shopping centre, planned to cost £500,000, is now in its initial stages of development to supersede the few shops built earlier in the new settlement. The sponsors of the project are Flemings Food Stores and the design provides to serve an eventual 20,000 people whom it is hoped to draw not only from Berkeley but from places beyond. Provision is included for professional people and to serve every need for a vast community.

Thus Berkeley passes from the days of its slumbering past to the threshold of what promises to be one of the biggest suburbs of Illawarra.



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