ANOTHER BROWN IN ILLAWARRA:

A good friend, Miss Margaret Klam of Lithgow writes that she from time to time in her researches comes upon historical material dealing with Illawarra and will send it on.

Miss Klam supplies an outline of an Andrew Brown (who took the western end of Lithgow Valley whilst Thomas Brown took the eastern end).

What interests us in Illawarra is the diary extract which links Brown with Cornelius O’Brien, founder of Bulli (who was evidently staying at Sydney from Yass at the time Andrew Brown was but did not ride with him through his old home area at Bulli down the coast to Jervis Bay and back).

The entry for June 29, 1839 describes the track straight up the mountain from Bulli school, treated by Mr. W. McDonald at our meeting earlier this year.

ANDREW BROWN OF COOERWULL
(No relation to Thomas Brown of Esk Bank)


Brown took up land towards the Castlereagh near the Walker properties, about 64,000 acres at one stage. It took him four days to ride from Cooerwull to the Outstations. In February 1846 he made what, even at that time, sounded like an epic journey to Moreton Bay. He didn’t take up land there and from that time on seemed to want to fight no more dragons, content with the holdings as they were. These gradually dwindled back to Cooerwull in the hands of his descendants. He died at Cooerwull in the early 1890’s.

The diaries are perhaps uninteresting to some people, but I found it touching to hear a visitor from Rylstone say that her husband keeps just such a diary to-day, noting when fences were built, machinery or animals bought and prices given for jobs, etc. So this is what it was, a memory jogger, written on any stray bits of paper.

This is why, you have him in Sydney reminding himself that beds are scarce at Wollongong and that he should book in before the steamer gets in. You probably be able to make more points out of the extract than I could.

The copy of the diary was made available by Mr. Beau Brown of Eglington near Bathurst a grandson of And. Brown who has said we can make the information available to interested parties.

I suppose the Bathurst lands must have belonged originally to And. Brown and I think there are Brown descendents in the Mudgee area on the land.

— Contributed by Margaret Klam of Lithgow.
ANDREW BROWN’S DIARY (Extracts)

1839

June 20th.
To Sydney where I find all friends well. Sale of sheep yesterday went off well. Road between this and Parramatta is almost impassable.

June 22nd.
Mr. C. O’Brien, Mr. Walker and I had a ride during the forenoon and returned at 4 p.m. to dinner. The accommodation for travellers at Wollongong is very deficient, scant of food and beds.

June 23rd.
Mr. Walker and I having procured a horse each for a few days set out at about 9 a.m. taking the road to the southward which leads nearly parallel to the coast, though there are many very tenuous windings in it. I here prefer passing over the journey outwards and commence the return course.

June 26th.
The last four days were occupied in travelling from Wollongong to St. Georges basin. Called at various establishments by the way, amongst others the Hon. Alexander Berry’s who has at Shoalhaven and adjoining country an estate of 80,000 acres consisting mostly of rich limestone soil, in some parts covered with valuable timber and in others perfectly clear and fit for the plough, of which Mr. Berry had taken advantage to a considerable extent. At St. Georges basin we had a ride to Jarvis Bay, a large expanse of water 15 miles across, narrow in entrance and depth of water for vessels of considerable tonnage.

June 27.
After viewing the lake we rode to the Shoalhaven River, where we were taken across by Mr. Berry’s people who were in waiting; the country round Jarvis Bay is very bad indeed, equally barren as any part of the Blue Mts. On approaching Shoalhaven it assumes a totally different character. The ride to-day was about 30 miles, stopt with the Messrs Berry for the night. Mr. John Berry accompanied us to see a saw mill they have at work and afterwards by various paths till he put us on the main road to Kiama where we halted for the night.

June 28th.
Reached Wollongong in time to secure lodgings before arrival of the Steamer. The whole of the Illawarra country is rich limestone soil mostly heavily timbered. Amongst the trees are several varieties of palm, which growing to the height of 60 ft. and upwards without a leaf and then throwing out broad leaves in a drooping position which much like an umbrella gives an idea of a tropical climate as well as rich soil.

June 29th.
Borrowed horses and taking the road by Bulli to Campbelltown arrived at the latter at 6 p.m. The ascent by Bulli from Illawarra is a very steep one and we having it to perform during heavy rain made it hard work. On reaching the top I felt much exhausted and completely saturated with perspiration.

June 30th.
Took coach at Campbelltown at 4 a.m. and reached Parramatta in time for the eight o’clock steam boat by which we got to Sydney at 10 a.m.