

## TWO HERMITS OF BULLI PASS:

[The Society has been presented with a collection of manuscript material compiled by the late Mrs. E. Dollahan, daughter of Mrs. Mary D'Arcy, who was the daughter of Mrs. Jane Cawley (born at Kiama in 1834), who was the second daughter of Patrick Geraghty. Patrick had settled at Woonona before 1828 (see Bulletins for August and October 1974). Mrs. Dollahan could therefore draw on family tradition going back practically to the beginning of settlement in Illawarra.

We hope to publish further extracts in later issues].

One man, who lived the life of a recluse on top of the Bulli Mountain, was known as Mr. Darcy. He lived in a hut with a garden and rockery, composed of native plants and shrubs, which was the picture of neatness. The hermit lived in this isolated place until his death. None knew where he came from—he was a mystery to the district. He never left his camp, except when he required provisions, or to collect his mail at Bulli Post Office, when he would walk down the mountain and return on foot. He was hospitable to visitors and would show them around his camp, but made no permanent friends. All sorts of rumours were current about him. He was evidently an educated man. Some said he was a priest, some that he had been disappointed in love, some that he had an illicit still up behind the mountain. Whatever or whoever he was, he kept to himself, but was well liked in the district. He died in Bulli Hospital.

Another identity of early Bulli Pass days was known as "Louie." He also lived a hermit's life, but off the Pass road about halfway up. He was a Frenchman by birth and spoke broken English. He carved and sold whip handles. I remember the thrill, when I drove up the pass with my father, of calling at Louie's hut. He had all sorts of curiosities—snakes, frogs and insects—preserved in bottles, and would bring them out to show my father. He once set out to return to France, but was robbed at the Sydney hotel where he was staying while waiting to board the boat. He returned to Bulli Pass and remained for a few years more; then, when he had sufficient funds, again decided to go home to open a restaurant in Paris, to cater for tourists, with a sign, "English Spoken Here."

He nearly lost his money again. At the hotel at the foot of Bulli Pass, where he spent the night, he was in a very excited state, with everyone shaking his hand and wishing him luck. Next morning he went to the station. The maid, cleaning out the bedroom, found the bag of money under his pillow. My father took a horse tied outside and raced to the station, reaching it as the train was puffing at the platform. Louie was a most pleased and subdued man to receive the bag—I think it contained £160—which he had carelessly left under his pillow in his excitement on returning to his beloved Paris.

—from the Dollahan MSS.