

**JULY MEETING:**

At the July meeting of the Society Mr. W. G. McDonald (Councillor) spoke on "Paulsgrove," its owner James Stares Spearing, and the Paulsgrove Diary.

Spearing came free to Australia in 1825, and soon afterwards married a fellow-passenger, Mrs. Harriet Overington. He received promises of two grants of 1000 acres each, covering Keiraville and much of West Wollongong, Mount Keira and Gwynneville. He called this property "Paulsgrove," and set up his headquarters near the present site of the Mormon Church. A further 1920 acres promised to his wife took in most of the land east of Princes Highway from Fairy Meadow Beach to north of Bellambi.

Spearing, who had been a master miller in England, built a wind-mill, and water-mills on Byrarrong Creek (hence its alternative name of Millbrook), and showed himself a versatile and enterprising agriculturist, ready to experiment with practically anything in the way of crops. He also successfully ran sheep and cattle on the property. Apparently he was the first to suggest the making of Mount Keira Road. On the side he conducted a guerilla war with a neighbour, "a person of the name of Smith."

In 1833-34 a free man (whose name is believed to have been Webster) employed on the property kept what is known as the Paulsgrove Diary—mainly a record of farming operations and the day-to-day running of the property, interspersed with bits of local news such as the drowning of Dan the Postman in the floods, the sitting of the Court of Requests ("Nearly all the district there it would have been a hard job to have found an honest man amongst the set"), churchgoing ("Mr. Wilkinson preached a capital sermon on scandalising and slandering and interfering with our neighbours. Very suitable to the Illawarra gentry") and odd items such as the whale which came ashore at Bellambi and was claimed by the Crown as Fish Royal (the Queen being entitled to the whalebone for her corsets). There were also records of numerous expeditions with young Marcus Spearing, and their determined efforts to exterminate the local wild life.

Finally Webster "had a deuce of a breeze with Spearing," and shook the dust of Paulsgrove from his feet. He was drowned a few years later at Tumut.

Spearing himself in 1835 sold the properties to Colonel John Thomas Leahy, who died in 1839. His heir-at-law, his brother Daniel Leahy, conveyed them to Robert and Charles Campbell (to whom the grants finally issued in 1841) on trust for sale. The Campbells sold off the properties in comparatively small lots, the purchasers including Roger Therry (afterwards Sir Roger, a Supreme Court judge) and Edmund Geard. Spearing by this time had returned to England and set up as a gentleman. He sounds like a man who deserved to succeed, and one would like to know more about him.

ERRATUM—In the July Bulletin, by a slip of the pen, the Society was said to have received a copy of the diary from the A.N.U. The original diary is in the Ferguson Collection in the Australian National Library, Canberra. We gratefully acknowledge receipt of a photostat copy from the Library.