"MARY WADE TO US"

It seems strange that we have hitherto heard so little of Mary Wade. She was, if not a First Fleeter, very near it, having arrived in New South Wales before the colony was three years old; she was living at Wollongong in its very early days, and was buried here after more than thirty years' residence; and more than one line of her descendants has left its mark on the district. Seven of her children survived her, and it has been estimated that her descendants "probably number tens of thousands".

A committee of those descendants has now made sure that she will be remembered, by compiling a family history which few can have equalled either in detailed research or in handsome production. The book contains an introduction an account of the life and times of Mary Wade, and such source material as the depositions at her trial, followed by nearly 2 hundred pages of family trees tracing the descendants of each of Mary Wade's seven children. The tables for each branch of the family are prefixed by a short historical account of that branch.

At the age of eleven Mary Wade was convicted of "feloniously assaulting Mary Phillips on the King's Highway ... and putting her in fear ... and feloniously taking from her person and against her will one cotton frock value 1s, one linen tippet, value 2d, one linen cap value 2d." For this desperate crime she was sentenced to death. (It should be remembered, however, that she was charged with highway robbery, not petty larceny; and that death sentences for comparatively small amounts were seldom, if ever, carried out.

Mary cheated the gallows to live a long and apparently respectable life, and died in 1859 aged 82. For thirty or more years she had been living in Illawarra. She was buried in the old Wollongong cemetery. By one of the too numerous acts of official vandalism in old cemeteries, her grave was obliterated and her grave-stone buried when the cemetery was turned into Pioneer Park.

Among her descendants in the district were the Brookers (whose name, slightly corrupted, became attached to one of the most prominent features of the escarpment) and the Harrigans, who were pioneers in another field. A daughter married Henry Angel (of Angel's Bridge), who went with Hume and Hovell to Port Phillip and with Sturt and Hume to the Darling.

This volume does not profess to be literature, or even in the ordinary sense a biography. It is a record of facts, particularly of births, marriages and deaths. As a reference book it must be invaluable, and it is a model of its kind.

A few copies are available at the Museum: Price $25.00

A SOLID CITIZEN

Henry Collings, the author of "Seventy Years of my Life's Experience", was a man of some importance in the little Wollongong of his day. He was also, on his own showing a pattern of the Victorian "self-made man", who from the humblest beginnings had by hard work, thrift, and honesty in all his dealings raised himself to gain reasonable financial comfort, the respect of his neighbours, and a position from which he could look back - not without some degree of complacency - on a well-spent life.

He was born at Erringden in Yorkshire in 1850, at the worst period of the Industrial Revolution. His formal education ended when he was eight. He was married before he was twenty to Ann (Nancy) Lonsdale. After seven more