

## RACHAEL HENNING'S UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

Those who attended my address to the 1995 March Meeting of the Society will already know that I abandoned my advertised topic to report on my delight at finding not only that the microfilm of Rachel Henning's letters held by the Mitchell Library contains many unpublished letters from Illawarra but also that many of the other letters also contain much unpublished material about our area.

What is even more astounding is that not a single one of Rachel Henning's letters has been published in full. Some of these letters extend beyond 20 handwritten pages.

Henning's letters are the most fulsome record of nineteenth century rural life in Illawarra and therefore deserve very serious attention.

Once I have gained permission from the Mitchell I will begin to publish my transcription (with detailed historical notes) of all those letters which make reference to Illawarra. I will also begin a serious scholarly edition of Henning's Letters. It's a mammoth project, much bigger than my work on D.H. Lawrence, but I feel I can't not take up the opportunity to work on the second of the two greatest whingeing poms ever to set pen to paper in Illawarra.

Joseph Davis