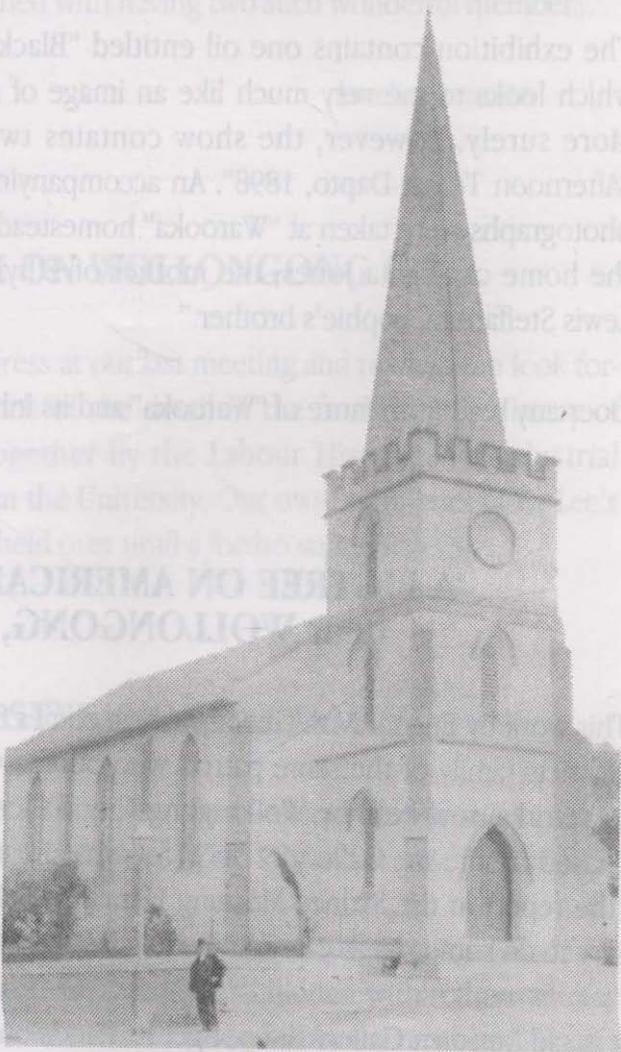


MORE MYSTERIES ON THE MAP

(When did the spireless church expire?)

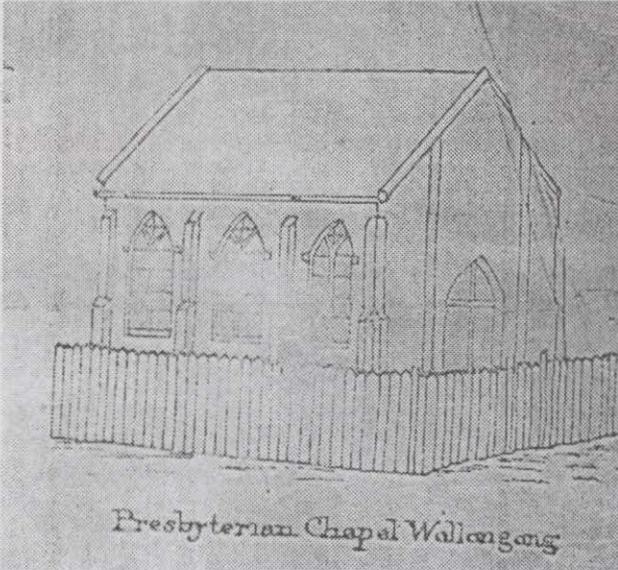
The undated map held by Wollongong City Library whose delights I have tried to convey in the last two issues of the Bulletin also contains the only known image of the original Wollongong Presbyterian Chapel which according to all other sources (and fairly reliable ones at that) was constructed in 1839.

The spire, tower and porch (to architect James Hume's design but known locally as "Atchison's folly") were only added - again according to all the respectable sources - in 1843, during the incumbency of the Gong's second Presbyterian clergyman, Cunningham Atchison, who may have



given his name to Atchison Street.

The map on which the sketch appears has been tentatively dated by some-



one on the library staff as "185?". Other buildings sketched on the map make me think that c.1847 is perhaps the earliest date to which the map could be ascribed. But why then does it show an image of the pre-1843 Presbyterian Church.

To complicate matters there is a watercolour held by the National

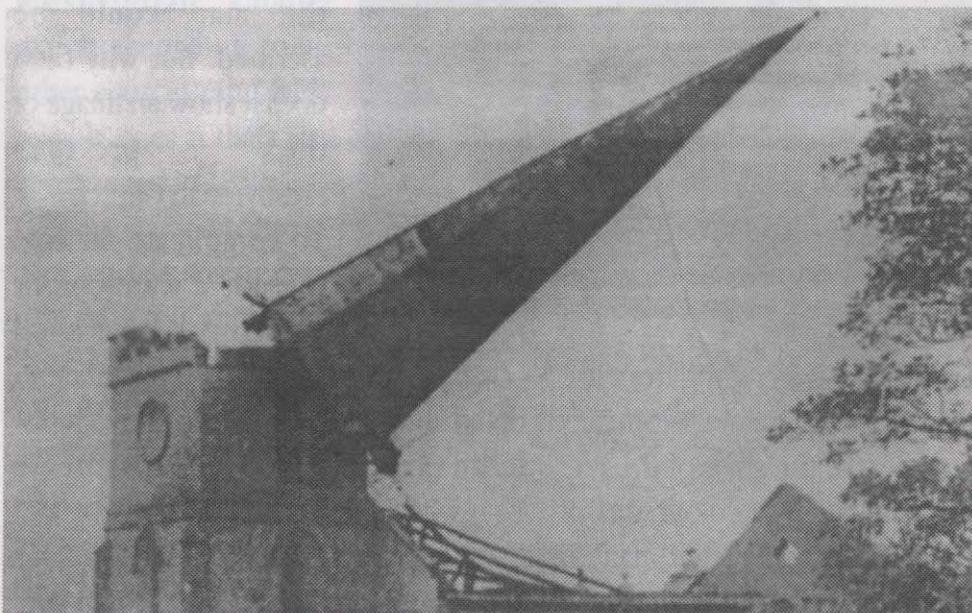
Library of "Wollongong from the Stockade (which Michael Organ confidently ascribes to Captain Westmacott) dated "July 20, 1840" which shows a distant view of the spire of the Presbyterian Church. Michael's view is that the Westmacott watercolour was probably worked up much later in England from an original sketch made in 1840 but that Westmacott then used his memory to fill in extra details in the finished watercolour. This would adequately account for the inclusion of the spire which was supposedly not in existence in 1840.

My guess is that the map in Wollongong Library had a similarly long gestation to that of Westmacott's watercolour and that the cartographer/artist began making sketches prior to 1843 (when the church had no spire) but didn't either finish or publish the map until much later.

The occasional listing of allotments on the map as "property of X formerly Y" adds some slight support to such a theory.

Whatever the case, I am grateful that an image of the original of Illawarra's first permanent church has survived thanks to the work of a mysterious but suprisingly creative mapmaker.

The demolition of the old church - spire and all - in the 1930s is, in my opinion, one of the greatest of Wollongong's heritage tragedies.



Joseph Davis