

Report on September Meeting.

Speaker: Jack McNamara, author of Life at Cordeaux River NSW.

Topic: Cordeaux River.

Jack, born in 1922, explained that he was fortunate to be born at that time as he knew either the early pioneers or their offspring. The number of families which made up Cordeaux River community was never high. During the time Jack grew up and during his working life most people worked for the Water Board, now known as Sydney Water. He explained that in the early years of the twentieth century Cordeaux River and its subsequent dams were just a small part of the Upper Nepean Water Catchment Area which supplied the metropolitan area of Sydney with water. The Cordeaux River community lasted just under 100 years. Many people who lived there or passed through considered the place to be like the Garden of Eden; just about anything grew there because of the rich volcanic soil. Long before the turn of the century, 1900 that is, many experiments were carried out with apple growing. Out of a large number of orchards three survived the fruit fly in 1938. At present there are only two orchards still supplying fruit, but only on a small scale. People still go up during the fruit season to buy the special grown Cordeaux apples. Jack also showed a number of slides from his large collection. The slides of some of the birds habitating the Cordeaux area is unbelievable. Of the few birds shown he knew most of the details. Being the last 'bushman' who learned the trade on various jobs, he gave us a some idea what was involved. Being one of the last persons still living at Cordeaux River, who was born, educated, lived and worked there all his life Jack saw the end of Cordeaux community in the early 1940s. The Water Board allowed his family to remain there as care takers. A interesting talk about an area that will be 'out of bounds' soon. JH