

### Nostalgia Corner

The following story, based on a talk by W A Bayley, was published in the Bulletin of November 1956.

#### The History of Sherbrooke

Sherbrooke is a quiet romantic spot some mile and half (2.5 km) west of the top of Bulli Pass and is both unknown and forbidden territory to most people today. However, during the closing quarter of the 19th century, Sherbrooke was a lively agricultural and timber-getting settlement where lived a happy band of people.

One of the earliest settlers in the area was William Brown from Dapto who selected an area he called Ferndale which he turned into an orchard. It was found that English fruit thrived on the mountain and he planted some 75 acres finally concentrating on apples. They averaged 7/- (70c) per case in Sydney and in 1902 over 9,000 cases were despatched.

In May 1875 a Mr Knight erected a sawmill and built a dam to supply water for his steam engine. Sawn timber from the area had been used as early as 1870 to build a public school.

The people were a united community whose spiritual and social life centred around the Union Church. This building, made of sawn slabs and roofed with shingles, was opened in May 1882, on a site given by J Loveday, who built it on contract.

At the same time the church was opened, postal facilities were being sought and the name Sherbrooke was selected in honour of Lord Sherbrooke. In September 1883, the original school was replaced by a school with a master's residence attached. It was a stone building by Wilson and Walker and at £2,000 was the most costly in the district.

Industrial progress at Sherbrooke continued with the opening of the new Knight Brothers' sawmill in 1884 at the head of the Cataract River. It stood amidst a forest of excellent timber and could handle 6,000 ft per day in addition to the 2,000 ft produced by the earlier mill.

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Sherbrooke also had apiarists working the bees and wild flowers for which the forest became famous. In the 1880s wild flower shows held in spring brought visitors from far and near yielding funds for the church. A wild flower show hosted by Sherbrooke people in Bulli raised funds for the Albert Memorial Hospital and the Sherbrooke Church.

In 1894, Franklin Knight and others converted land to potato growing while the apple and pear orchards were flourishing and being enlarged.

At the summit of Sherbrooke's prosperity a new Union Church was built in 1896, but unfortunately the village soon after was to be included in the catchment area of the Cataract Dam to be built for the Sydney Water Supply. The whole village was resumed early in 1903 and work on the Dam was begun.

During the construction period the people of Sherbrooke moved away; some to the coast and many to the Richmond River area, leaving the village to be invaded by rabbits and hares, which caused a boom industry in trapping until they were brought under control in 1910.

Sherbrooke today (1956) and still is in 2005 forbidden land. The only remnant from the village is the old church which was removed and rebuilt at the bottom of the escarpment in Woonona. Even the road which carried the rich produce to market has long disappeared under forest and undergrowth. □