PIONEER KEROSENE WORKS IN 1873
(From “Illawarra Mercury” 21/3/1873).

“The ‘Pioneer Kerosene Works’ are situated at American Creek, Mount Kembla, about 5 miles from Wollongong. The plant consists of 23 retorts, 3 stills, a steam engine, and other necessary appliances for extracting the kerosene oil. The oil is obtained by heating the shale in retorts, and is afterwards purified by distillation; it is considered equal to the best imported, and has gained prize medals at Exhibitions in Paris and Melbourne. The refuse from the retorts is at present wasted, but it is said to be convertible into a good mineral manure, and experiments which have been made seem to confirm this opinion. The works employ 35 men, and export to Sydney about 2,000 gallons of oil weekly. During the year 1872 there were raised 3,000 tons of kerosene shale, for the retorting of which nearly 1,000 tons of coal were consumed. Coal is abundant on the property, and obtainable at little more than the trouble of breaking it down from the 17 feet seam.”