fire-places; the sort that you could put in, what was termed a “back log” that would last for a couple of days. In front of the fire there always stood old Tom’s teapot, and a great black kettle that held about a couple of quarts. Naturally, I was with the invalid when Dr. Marshall arrived. Glancing at the teapot, the doctor felt Tom’s pulse, remarking “Tom, I have told you before, that strong tea is slow poison.” Looking up at the doctor, Tom’s reply was “Well, doctor, it must be d——d slow.” The old fellow pulled through, and died, I fancy, when he was about ninety four, fairly worn out. Shortly after that, Dr. Marshall decided to practice in Sydney. He took up his residence in Lyon’s Terrace, and was one of the most popular of his profession in the metropolis.

EARLY ILLAWARRA — Reminiscences of Frank Wilkinson ('Martindale');

(Illawarra Mercury, 8th February 1935).

MRS. MACKRETH INDISPOSED:

Council meeting was sorry to hear of the sudden illness of Mrs. Mackreth and expressed the wish for her speedy recovery.

MR. FLEMING ALSO ON SICK LIST:

Again council regretted to hear that Mr. Fleming, who declined to continue on council due to ill health, has not been keeping well. He also is wished a speedy return to good health.

A MEDICAL HISTORY OF THE WOLLONGONG DISTRICT

By H. H. Lee, M.B., Ch.M., F.R.A.C.S.,
Wollongong


(The Illawarra Historical Society does not hold itself responsible for accuracy of statements or opinions expressed).

2. ALBION PARK.

Albion Park is a small town on the South Coast road between Kiama and Dapto. Its population is entirely agricultural. It was for many years a sporting rendezvous for Sydney visitors. Lake Illawarra was about half a mile away, with good fishing, and the country carried plenty of quail in good seasons. Jack Raftery, of Raftery’s Hotel, kept a motor-launch, and pointer and setter dogs. His hotel was rarely empty. To the best of my
recollection, for many years only two men attempted to practise at Albion Park — Dr. Vanzetti, whose deeds are lost in the mists of antiquity, and Dr. Bateman. Dr. Bateman was there for many years. He built himself a very nice house, “Revensworth”. He was an elderly man with a family of eight. His eldest son was drowned in Lake Illawarra when duck-shooting. His second son, with whom I had much good quail-shooting (I was an undergraduate then) inherited an estate in England that had been in the family since the thirteenth century. His third son graduated with first-class honours at the University of Sydney and has been practising at Windsor. Dr. Bateman himself was a delicate man, a Haemophilic. He was extremely well educated and very interested in Volapuk. This was to be a universal world language which was to assist in abolishing war. Dr. Bateman was an enthusiastic disciple, but, I fear, met with little support. He once embarrassed me considerably. As I was walking off the court after a tennis match he approached me with an open “Virgil” with a heavily underlined passage and asked me if I would oblige him with my rendering of it. I was doing arts at that time at the University, so I suppose he thought “Virgil” would be an open book to me. It was not.

For many years Albion Park had no resident doctor; now I understand it has two — Dr. O’Dea and Dr. Needham.

3. DAPTO.

In the dim and distant past Dapto was a sparsely populated, scattered farming and grazing district. Wheat, butter and cheese were the chief reason for its existence. A small sailing ship, the Dairy Maid, used to call at Wollongong and Shellharbour at irregular intervals to convey these products to Sydney. The inhabitants of Dapto received medical attention from the Kiama and Wollongong doctors. Dr. Curgenven settled there some time in the late eighties. I have meagre accounts of him, but I fear he met with financial difficulty. The wheat industry had been ruined by rust and the town had only the dairy industry to rely on. By this time the railway had reached Dapto and the farmers were able to send their products away easily and also were able themselves to reach larger towns. When I last heard of Dr. Curgenven he was laying the odds at Randwick. Let us hope he was luckier as a fielder than as a medical practitioner.

For some years Dapto had no doctor; the Wollongong men worked it for what it was worth. As none of us had motor-cars, and as the farms were very scattered, it was a full-sized man’s job. Some years later the Dapto Smelting Works started on the edge of the lake and the town began to flourish. Dr. Scott commenced a practice there. I qualified soon after; he and I did a lot of work together. He is a very good practitioner when at his best, and a very nice man. Before he came to Dapto he practised at Narrabri. My brother-in-law, Maurice Barton, had a station thereby. They met in an hotel after a day’s racing. They discussed the merits of William Tell and the apple. Barton, who was an excellent rifle shot, offered to shoot a cork off Scott’s head. Scott was willing, so they went outside and Barton blazed away at the cork with a 32 “Winchester”. All
would have been well but for the fact that (owing, I suppose, to the hot weather) Barton had omitted to readjust his sights for the required distance. He blew the cork to pieces, but a neat tuft of hair floated into the air and a thin trickle of blood ran down Scott's cheek. However, no one was really hurt, and after that I understand a good time was had by all.

Whilst in Dapto Dr. Scott achieved fame in two ways. He was the first man to bring into the district a motor-buggy. These were terrible machines. They were high double buggies with an engine under the seat, transmission by two belts, solid tyres, and top speed of about twelve miles an hour. They made a noise like a traction engine, gave out a terrible smell, and never did more than twenty miles without requiring some adjustment. Dr. Scott's second claim to immortality was that he was, as far as I know, the only Doctor in Australia ever to be attacked by a man-eating tiger. He was walking back from a farm-house on Farmborough Road when he was seized from behind by a large animal that he took to be a tiger. The tiger grabbed him by the waist and proceeded to carry him to the road. I presume to eat him on the main road. Dragging him through a barbed-wire fence, he broke a bottle of chloroform that Scott had in his pocket. The smell presumably alarmed the beast, for he dropped Scott and made off. He has never been seen since. Scott escaped but was very badly scratched. He told me the story himself.

In the course of time the Dapto Smelting Works failed; they were moved to Port Kembla, but went finally broke there. Dapto then returned to peaceful slumber. Some time later Dr. Henry practised there. He was an old man considerably past his best. He was one of the first four medical graduates of the University of Sydney (Critchley-Hinder, Mills, Henry and one other). Compare that with the number graduating each year now. Perhaps I may be excused for saying that I was the first Wollongong man to take the degree of bachelor of medicine of the University of Sydney. With the advent of the iron and steel works at Port Kembla and several new coal mines in the district, Dapto again sprang into life, and it is now a flourishing town. In the last twenty years or so a stream of medical men have passed through Dapto. Few have stayed long, for though the practice is quite lucrative it has no outlet and leads nowhere.

ILLAWARRA EXPERIMENTS WITH ALPACAS:

In the early days of Illawarra settlement when almost everything was experimental, the Osbornes tried raising some alpacas. The "Illawarra Mercury" in 1866 recorded the trials.