THE LATE MR. PATRICK GERAGHTY1:

It will be noticed from an announcement in another part of this issue that Mr. Patrick Geraghty, who for many years was a resident of this district, died at Lismore, on the 3rd instant, at the advanced age of 92 years. The deceased arrived in this colony when he was about 25 years of age2. Not long after landing, he settled in this district, at North Bulli3, in the then wild bush, and with short intervals remained there until within twelve years ago, when he removed with some members of his family to the Clarence River, where he died on the day stated. Mr. Geraghty leaves a family of ten sons and four daughters, one of the latter being Mrs. Michael Cawley, of Bellambi, all the other members of the family, like that lady, being highly respectable. Mrs. Geraghty, who it may be mentioned was born in the year Mr. Geraghty reached this colony, also survives him. And in addition to the large family stated, not less than seventy-two grandchildren may be counted as descendants of the deceased. Mr. Geraghty's connection with this district was an eventful one, and his name will be handed down to posterity, as one of the landmarks of the Illawarra coast—Geraghty's Creek4, where he resided so long at Bulli, has been named after him, and this it may be remembered is officially set down by the Government as the northern extremity of the port of Wollongong as recently proclaimed under the Customs regulations of the colony. One remarkable instance in Mr. Geraghty's connection with the district was that he was the first man that brought a team and dray down the mountain into the seaboord. This he did shortly after the late Mr. Matthew Ryan having decided to settle down at what is now known as the Figtree5, Mr. Geraghty with great difficulty managed to bring Mr. Ryan's "flitting" from Campbelltown in a bullock-dray. This was the first vehicle that ever came down the Bulli mountain, over which three day coaches now run every week, and a mail coach every day, not speaking of other vehicles. We understand that it is about sixty years since Mr. Geraghty performed the eventful and historic feat referred to. In the course of his early residence in this district, the deceased, as may be imagined, had much to contend with in one way and other (sic) as invariably is the case with early settlers in a new country. In one instance a gang of bushrangers attempted to stick him up, and fired at him, wounding one of his hands. He proved too much for his assailants, however, as he shot one of them and captured another6. As may be imagined, Mr. Geraghty was a man of good constitution, health, and vigor, being capable of enduring many hardships and overcoming difficulties before which persons of less physical powers would quail. And withal he was kind hearted and generous almost to a fault. His house and hospitality, literally speaking, were at the disposal of all who might reach his place in need of shelter or food, so long as he knew nothing against them. As an illustration of the large heartedness and broad Christian qualities which characterised him, we need only mention that his house and the best it could afford were at all times at the disposal of clergymen of all denominations who might travel in that direction in those days, when such Christian generosity was even more valuable in this district that at the present time, when Bulli and Coal-Cliff has not less than seven public houses for the accommodation of travellers. And like nearly all generous hearted individuals, Mr. Geraghty was brave, and this fact, with the excel-
lent character which he always bore, caused the Government to secure his services in connection with the police force on several occasions, and in many such instances he rendered good service to the country in hunting down bushrangers or other lawless prowlers which infested the community in those days.

1.—The extended obituary notice referred to in the September Bulletin, from the Illawarra Mercury, 12 December 1879.

2.—The writer of the obituary is discreetly vague about Patrick’s reasons for coming to Australia and the circumstances of his arrival. The 1828 census shows Patrick Geraghty and James Geraghty, aged 32 and 30 respectively, as ticket-of-leave men who had arrived by the ship Canada in 1813. They are described as “Farmer and Constable, Illawarra,” so that in spite of the discrepancy in Patrick’s age, they must be our men. The census does not list the offences for which prisoners had been transported, and the space for length of sentence is blank; but the sentences must have been solid—probably life—for them still to have been on ticket of leave after fifteen years, when both had evidently become solid citizens and pillars of law and order. They are listed as “Cath” (surprise, surprise!) and had “total acres 100, cleared 25, cultivated 22, horse 1, horned cattle 35.”

3.—“North Bulli” became Austinmer (W. A. Bayley, “Black Diamonds,” p. 36) but the Geraghtys’ hut was “between Woonona and Bellambi of to-day . . . about where the Woonona Bowling Green was later built” (“Black Diamonds,” pp. 3-4).

4.—The name of Geraghty’s Creek seems to have disappeared from modern Lands Department maps.

5.—Matthew Ryan had two grants at Figtree—one of 100 acres which included the fig tree itself and the sites of the hotel and the High School, and one of 40 acres adjoining it on the west (Portions 23 and 21, Parish of Wollongong).

6.—As Mr. Fleming pointed out when forwarding Patrick’s death notice, this account differs somewhat from that of Alexander Stewart, who says that both Patrick and James Geraghty were involved, and that the bushranger killed was shot by James. He does not mention any of the bushrangers being captured.

THE MAITLAND BOYS’ AND GIRLS’ HIGH SCHOOLS, 1884-1974:

We have received a copy of The Maitland Mercury (the Hunter Valley newspaper, established 132 years) of Tuesday, July 30, which has an historical supplement commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the founding of the two schools. Originally both at West Maitland, now at East Maitland, they are the second oldest public high schools in the State.

Whilst we knew there were enough ex-“Pumpkin-pickers” in the Society to elect a couple of Councillors, we were not aware that the district was “alive” with them until perusing the list of greetings, so this note is to bring the above supplement to the attention of those who missed it. En Avant, Labor Omnia Vincit!

(The Maitland Mercury is the oldest country daily newspaper in N.S.W. and predates The Illawarra Mercury by thirteen years; both are tabloids and both carry a picture of Mercury at their mast heads).

—A.P.F.