MARTIN LYNCH’S MEMORIES
Punishments, Pubs and Parsons

Mr. William Wilson purchased Balgownie estate from Mr. Buckland and had his government men clearing and cultivating it who built the oldest Wooden House now standing in Wollongong now occupied by Peter Skerrit keep the first large stores between the Convent and the House. The first Police station was established on the five Islands grant was shifted in the year 1829 to the old Police station in Wollongong. The courthouse then was a little weatherbord place between 8 and 10 ft square the old police courthouse where Constable [name missing] lives now was built in about the year 1835 the watchhouse stands now between Wilmont House and the police magistrate. The gaol yard is you may call it was a slabb affair recollect when a boy going to school to John Davis who taught in Mr. Charles T. Smith’s Barn on that triangle piece of ground opposite the Convent also recollect to see the prisoners flogged by looking through the cracks by black Waddel the flogger and Davie the flogger. recollect to see poor fellows blood flying and flesh cut of their back Butler the first police Magistrate Slement 2nd Gray 3rd Captain Alaman 4th Plunket 5th the first public House kept by tate on Spring Hill next kept by Mr. John Brown3 Dapto father down behind cochchrane Hotel next kept by Mr. Alexander Elliot Who built the old Mercury office where the Convent now stands4 then built Joseph Makin and kept it all the parties who died in them day were burried along between Galvins House and the Harbour5 first [illegible] cemetery now where the town Hall stands first Minister of the church of England the Rev. Mr. Myers6 next Minister parson Tate who built the House now occupied by Mr. Dan Griffiths a presbyterian Minister the next was the Rev. Dean John Rigney who came 1838 Father Therry did come to have Mass once a year also the Church of England Minister.

MS notes by Archibald Campbell

First Store in Illawarra

The first in Illawarra was a crudely constructed slab structure situated on the East side of Harbour Street—on the highest ground between the Convent and the streets running toward the sea, from slightly South of the junction of Smith & Harbour Streets—The store was started & carried on several years by a Mr. William Wilson (who put a cabbage bridge over “Dowal” Creek—Fairy Meadow—from which bridge the term “Cabbage Tree” or “Cabbage Tree Creek” originated.

Mr. Wilson had several brothers in the district—and he or one of his brothers opened the first store at Kiama about 1840—such store being on the site now (1898) occupied by Mr. Dymock’s sale yards—immediately Southward of Brighton Hotel—the name of the first Hotel erected on that spot in the early fifties, by the Steam Packet Hotel—opened and kept for several years by Mr. George Adams—
subsequently of Tattersall’s Hotel Sydney & famous as a “Consultation” promoter.

Schools

The school attended by Mr. Lynch when he used to see the convicts flogged was a Roman Catholic one, conducted where the Presbytery now stands—There were not many pupils —

A Church of England school was conducted at that time by a Mr. John Davis in a large slab structure—situated on the neck of land between Smith Street, Harbour Street & Market Square. The building was the property of Mr. C. T. Smith—had been erected and used by him for a barn, but after he removed his residence from that locality (where he first resided) the barn was used for a school & divine services.

Flogging

The flogging place was immediately at the rear of the old Court House—(old Police Station now). The men were flogged in the forenoon and afternoon as a rule—being tied up to a triangle. The flogger wielded his thong lustily on the bare backs or buttocks of the men (according to sentence)—the “cat” usually was six tailed, but nine tailed in instances of very numerous lashes to be given.

In some cases the men flogged would clench their teeth, and not utter a sound, but in others painful shrieks were uttered.

He (Mr. Lynch) when attending school as a lad, frequently passed through the enclosure where the flogging was being carried out & watched the inflictions—And in the course of the process blood could readily be seen squirited about from the effects of the lashing—After a few strokes the flogger would draw the cat tails through his fingers to squeeze off the skin & flesh which he would cast away, & resume his ghastly work, until completed.

This Mr. Lynch gave from his personal observations, as above—

Stocks

Stocks existed in the Market Square and many a time he saw men confined to them—their legs held fast in openings in two heavy pieces of wood drawn together. Sentences to the stocks usually were not for long, and only for minor offences.

Treadmill

All persons sentenced in the district to punishment on the treadmill were sent to Parramatta to undergo such penalty.

Public Worship

The first place where public worship was conducted in Illawarra was in a structure erected for a barn by Mr. C. T. Smith—It was situated on the peninsula-shaped piece of land between Smith Street East, Harbour Street & Market Square—as now exists. It was a large building erected of hardwood slabs—Clergymen of all denominations—including RC used to conduct service there on their respective visits to the district from Campbelltown or Sydney. Most of the few
inhabitants about attended all the services—which were not held more than about quarterly for some years—A feature of the services—more especially those connected with the Church of England, was that the convicts from the stockade were marshalled to the barn to attend divine worship. The men in those instances were under the command of the officers having charge of them as “Government Men.” The attention paid to the sermons or the services as a whole were not marked for reverence. He (Mr. Lynch) had repeatedly seen some of the men at the rear of the building gaffing with pennies or other coins, while the clergymen, be he priest or parson, was preaching and praying.

It was in this barn, however, that The Gospel was first preached in Illawarra, and that the first school was conducted by a Mr. John Davis (Davies). If ever a Cathedral should be erected in Illawarra the said spot should be the site of it, in National recognition of its being an sacred spot where the glad tidings of the Redeemer were first publicly preached under the Illawarra Ranges, & where the first lessons in Education were taught & learned in the same expanse of new country.

1A note on Martin Lynch appeared in the December Bulletin. In both the reminiscences and Campbell’s notes, “now” means “in 1898.”

2The spelling of the Police Magistrates’ names is, as one would expect, wild. “Slemon” and “Alaman” were Lieut. Sleeman and Captain Allman. The list omits at least Lieut. Fitzgerald, who was Police Magistrate in 1827, and Major D’Arcy, who was appointed in 1828. I do not remember ever before seeing any reference to a Police Magistrate named Gray.

3This should be George Brown. See “The Wollongong Rest Park” by A. P. Fleming, pp. 3-4.

4The words “where the Convent now stands” are interlined, but it is not perfectly clear where they should be inserted.

5According to A. P. Fleming (“Pioneer Park,” p. 3), Surveyor Elliott’s plan dated 1833 shows an “Old Burial Ground” on the site of the former Roman Catholic Cemetery at the foot of Crown Street, southern side.

6The Rev. Matthew Devenish Meares. But apparently the Rev. F. Wilkinson had previously been chaplain to the district. See “St. Michael’s, Wollongong,” by W. S. Musgrave.

—Editor.