As we can see, Martens was enchanted by the Illawarra forests and the area's unique landscape.

Summary:

What can we, today, get from a study of Martens’ works?

* A view of the original Illawarra forests - their lushness and variety. Something we can refer to when arguing for protection of the few remaining segments.
* An image of the region in its primeval state, before coal mining, modern industry and the suburban sprawl scared the landscape forever.
* For myself, I know there is great pleasure in viewing the romantic, almost idealized landscapes produced by Martens.

What we cannot get from Martens, or any of the other colonial period artists is a pictorial record of the role of the convicts in Illawarra society: the struggling immigrant farmers: or the disappearing local aborigines. For the European vision was in most instances loftier, with Martens’ clients invariably trying to forget that they were living in a jail colony, to instead calling for romanticised views of their homes and properties.

While we have all heard that “every picture says a thousand words”, I am sure that, despite our obvious preference for the written word, we would all agree it applies to the Illawarra works of Conrad Martens.

THE LATE MR. EDWARD HARRIGAN. OLDEST AUSTRALIAN NATIVE

By the death of Mr. Edward Harrigan, of Fairy Meadow, on Friday last, the oldest Australian native living up to that time, so far as we are aware, passed away. References to this gentleman having appeared in the Mercury from time to time of late years, many of our readers are therefore familiar, with the fact that he was in all probability the oldest native in all Australia, as well as in reality the oldest in the Illawarra district. He was born in Sydney on the 20th August 1803, or only fifteen years after the founding of the colony in 1788 by Governor Phillip. The part of the then future great city where he was born was what eventually became Phillip-street. In the early days of the boy, his parents removed from Sydney to Campbelltown. At that time Sydney was only a bush township of small magnitude, and possessing little of the conveniences and advantages of civilisation. And as regarded Campbelltown, it was considered in those days a far interior locality, with its wooded wilderness and hordes of aboriginal inhabitants. At Campbelltown young Harrigan resided until he was fifteen years, old, having in the meanwhile attended a night school for about six months. This was the only schooling he ever received, and in those days, and under such circumstances, any youth was fortunate to have even so much advantage in the way of education. At that early age, or about seventy two years ago, he went as a lad with a party of cedar sawyers to work in the ranges above what afterwards was termed Bulli. There he remained for several years, and with the whole party suffered privations and hardships of which modern residents of the colony can form no conception. The cedar, when sawn on the eastern side of the range, had to be carried shoulderwise up to the tableland, whence it was conveyed to Sydney, via Campbelltown or Liverpool in the
crudest of manner, and over the roughest of bush made tracks. Some few months after his arrival at the Bulli ranges he made his way to where Wollongong afterwards sprung into existence. His object was to endeavor to procure some food from a small vessel that was known to trade now and again to that place for cedar. He travelled through the bush along the coast, but was doomed to bitter disappointment. On arrival at the future site of Wollongong, he could not find either the vessel he was looking for nor any white inhabitant. Disappointed and almost famished, he had to return to the haunt of the party in the mountain and as the stock of food there, such as it was, was done, he had to make his way at once as best he could to Campbelltown, where the supplies were not much better. Having attained to manhood, he in course of time applied to Government for a grant of land, and his request having been complied with, he selected the piece of land at Fairy Meadow, where with the exception of a few years, he resided until his death. About forty-two years ago he joined a friend of his (the late Mr. Henry Angel, of Wagga Wagga), in taking up a large piece of land near Hay for squatting purposes. He remained there for about three years, but squatting not being congenial to his inclinations, he relinquished it, and returned to his favorite Illawarra once again. And there he stayed all the remaining years of his life. Of Mr. Harrigan, it has to be said that he was one of the most honest-minded and guileless of men. He was of a most retiring disposition, and in simple manner and demeanor was the very type of the now almost bygone race that pioneered the settlement of this colony, which generally means the settlement of all Australia, so far as such has been done. It is almost needless to state that he was strong and healthy in a marked degree. He was twice married, and leaves a widow, two sons, three daughters, thirty-two grandchildren, and twenty-two great grandchildren. About a year ago he suffered from a severe attack of bronchitis, from which he never fully recovered strength, and a cancer having formed on his lips hastened his end. Thus lived and thus died a man who, though humble and retired at Fairy Meadow, was in a historic sense perhaps the most remarkable man in all Australia during the last few years of his existence. A goodly number of persons paid their last respects to the deceased on Saturday by following his remains to the Church of England new cemetery, at Wollongong, where the Rev. T.O. Ewing, B.D., officiated.

THE ILLAWARRA MERCURY, JULY 14, 1891

NORTH-WEST WOLLONGONG IN 1870

An interesting lecture was delivered in the School of Arts, Gwynneville, on last Monday night, 4th inst., The lecturer was Mr. Frank Young, and the subject "North-West Wollongong and District as I found it in 1870." Mr. Young commenced his lecture by describing the difference between the road to Wollongong 60 years ago and the road to-day. Sixty years ago the road was a nightmare, all holes and mud and slush. There were no lights either on the road or in Wollongong. It was pitch dark and it was impossible to travel without a lantern. This was about 10 years after the incorporation of the Wollongong Municipality. The population of Wollongong was then under 1,000 people.

Taking an area with the Bulli Road as an eastern boundary, the Mount Keira line running to the mountain as a south boundary, and the Mt. Pleasant line as a north boundary. Mr Young commenced to describe the men and places