lllawarra Historical Society

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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
within that area. On the right side of the road going north there were no houses sixty years ago. The Smith's Hill Estate was not sold until the 15th January 1879 and it was not until 1880 that the first houses were erected. On the left side of the road a number of houses were standing. The old hospital was a new building then. Next came the house where Mr. Ned Puckeridge lives at present. Then next was three cottages erected by Michael Rowles from the material of the Waterloo Stores at the wharf. Next came the house where John Rawnsley lived and kept a bootmaker's shop. John Rawnsley and his brother Bill were killed on the Mount Keira line. At that time the line only went as far as where the gas works are now, its construction to the harbour was held up owing to requiring an Act of Parliament to cross the roads, and some difficulty with Charles T. Smith in crossing his land. It was in the continuation of the line that the Rawnsleys were killed by a wagon rolling on them. Mr. Young described the men and places in Gipps Street, or Arthur Robson's Lane, as it was then known. The McCourts, Billy Ahern, The brickworks, the Chinese gardens and Arthur Robson. He told a number of amusing stories about the men and places on the old road. The whole locality between the two lines and the road was very ably described by Mr. Young and much useful information was supplied about the various localities. At the conclusion of the address a number of questions were asked re different localities.

What was the meaning of the upright sticks in the Thumb on the east side of the present bridge? The lecturer answered the question fully by describing the footbridge and the efforts for its construction. What was the date of the opening of the railway to Wollongong? Answer: 1887. Who lit the kerosene lamps erected by the Wollongong Council on Gipps Road? Answer: The residents who fell in the mud passing the unlighted lamps. What had the people for amusement in those times? Answer: The great wide fireplace with its burning log; the children gathered at their parents knees reading a chapter from the Bible or a page or two from Pilgrim's Progress. In those days, sixty years ago, it was not the custom for boys and girls to roam the roads together after dark. If they did go out, they always had their grandmother, mother or elderly aunt to look after them. Was there ever a brickworks or lime kiln in Wiseman's Park? Answer: Yes. Harry Jones made bricks in the park for some-years, and with reference to the lime kiln, when the Wollongong Basin was being constructed a countless number of shells were recovered and as there was no wood at the wharf to burn them, they were taken up the Keira line to Osborne's bush and there, burnt. What year were the shells burnt? 1868 or 1869.

Mr. Milne, headmaster of the Keiraville School, presided. He asked what year the Mount Keira School was opened? The lecturer replied: The Mt. Keira School was opened in a residence at the foot of the Mt. Keira slack heap by Mr. Finchin, in 1865, followed by Mr. Murphy, in 1868, by Mr. Hamilton in 1870, and by Mr. Murphy in 1874. Mr. Murphy taught for two years at the old school, and 38 years at the new school, which was opened in 1876.

A vote of thanks to the lecturer, and one to the chairman, concluded the evening.

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