

*SOUTHERN
HIGHLANDS
STORY*

by John McColgan

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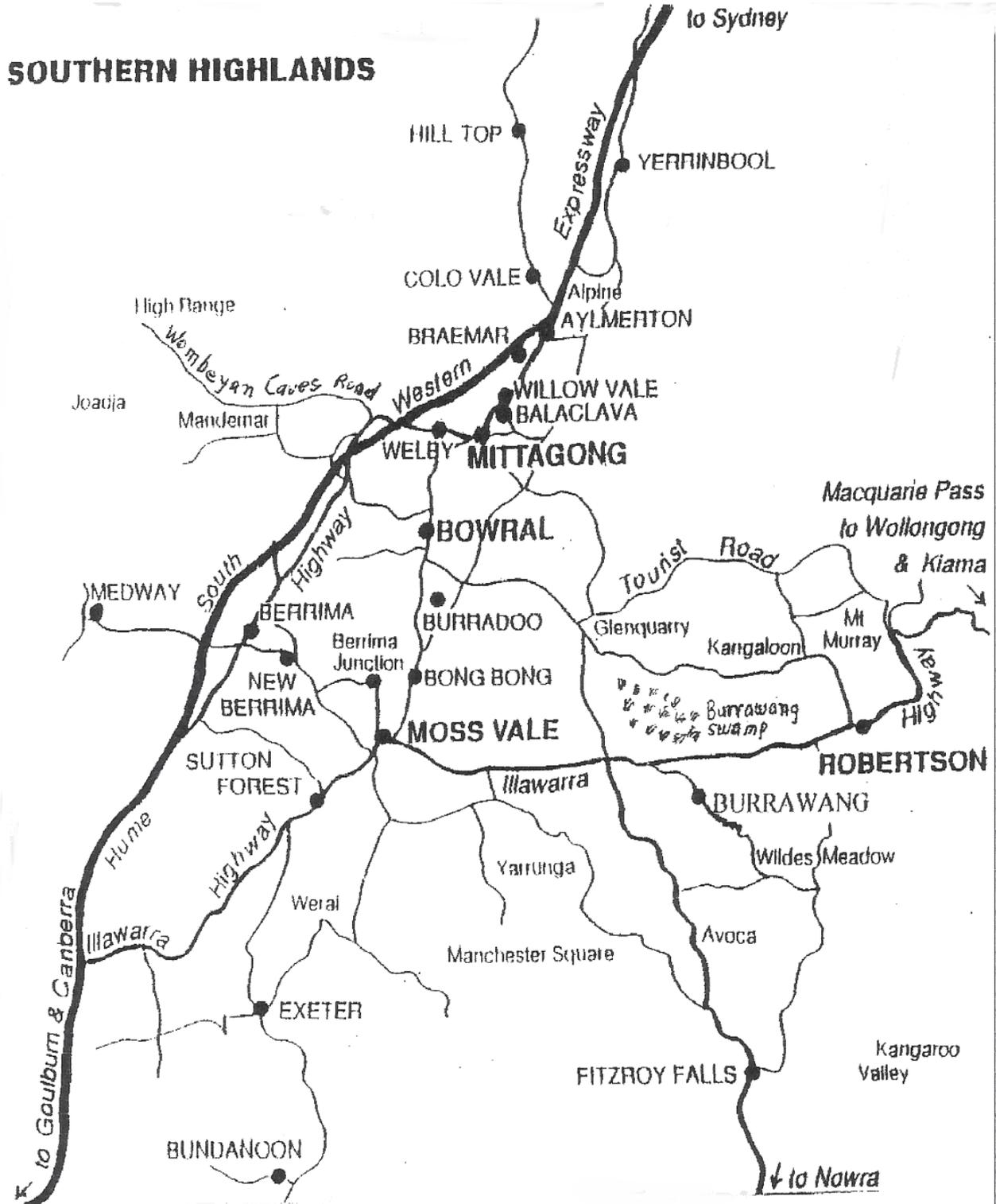
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FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION.

The dominant impression to me of the Southern Highlands countryside is not only it's beauty, but also it's incredible age, which is lost in the mists of time.

It was ancient eons before either black or white man ever set foot here.

Because of the volcanic rock, it is believed Mt. Gibraltar was once a volcano, but there are other signs that Mt Gibraltar was only the edge of a giant volcano.

The deposits of volcanic rock and soil that run in a circle, from Gibraltar to Oxley Hill (Bowral), to Gin-Gin Bullen (Moss Vale) , to Avoca, to Burrawang, to Robertson, to Glenquarry, then Mittagong Range, and back to Gibraltar, form the edge of a gigantic volcano, and the Burrawang Swamp, (which is regarded as bottomless), is the core, which has long since sealed and filled with soil and water.

Other volcanic pipes or upthrusts, such as Mt. Jellore, Mt. Flora, and Bullio give evidence of a cataclysmic volcanic activity during the past millennia, even before the time of the dinosaurs.

From various objects observed over the years, such as fossilised fish, sea-shells etc. embedded in shale mined at Berrima, and the ferns outlined in sandstone ripped by bulldozers near the Wombeyan Caves Road turn off during the 1960's, it would appear to indicate that in the distant past our district was not 2000 feet above sea level, but that part of it was undersea where the compressed silt eventually became shale. The well-known Wombeyan Caves limestone (marble) is said to be the purest deposit of calcite in the world, and I believe it assays at an incredible 99.0% pure calcium. The lack of other mineral impurities would indicate that at some stage it probably was a gigantic undersea reef of coral. Other parts were heaved or jumbled together, at a time when ferns grew between them.

Several million years could have passed before the first aborigine set foot in the district, and thousands more years before the first white man, John Wilson arrived in 1798.

Our own settlement of less than 200 years in the Southern Highlands is a very small portion of the story.

.....

The original main road to the County of Argyle (near Goulburn) wound it's way through Lower Mittagong, over the Mittagong Range to Bong Bong and Sutton Forest, before it went on to Goulburn.

Settlement always followed the main road with it's traffic, and so it was Lower Mittagong, Bong Bong, and Sutton Forest which formed into the first early villages. Bong Bong, on the river flats was chosen by Governor Maquarie in 1820 as an army settlement, later a village, but over the next eight or nine years the site was found to be unsuitable because of unreliable water supply and occasional serious flooding.

When the site of Berrima was chosen as an alternative, it became necessary to divert a "new line of road" from Catherines Hill near Alpine, through Berrima before joining the old road beyond Sutton Forest during 1833.

At this stage of development, the present-day towns of Bowral and Moss Vale did not exist because the area was part of the large land grants of Charles Throsby and John Oxley, which were not subdivided until about 1860. Development of Bowral and Moss Vale was rapidly accelerated when the more direct present-day connecting road between Mittagong, Bowral, and Moss Vale was built in 1852, but even more so by the railways arrival in 1867. John Oxley's subdivision in 1862 later became the town of Bowral we know today.

Once transport problems were solved, wealthy businessmen, politicians, and senior bureaucrats welcomed the opportunity to live in the area, with its English-type climate, and built gracious homes. A more dense settlement soon followed to form the towns of Moss Vale and Bowral, as both Throsby and Oxley subdivided parts of their grants to form the towns.

The “new line of road” to Berrima in 1833 saw the establishment of Nattai Village (near Gibbergunyah Creek) (West Mittagong) (1835) Fitzroy Village (now Welby) 1861 and New Sheffield Village (North Mittagong) (1865).

.....
When I was a child during the early 1930’s, we lived in the house called “Melrose,” which still stands today in 1994, on the Bowral Road in Mittagong, east of Bessimer St.

There were still many artefacts and relics from previous industries or endeavours of bygone years which were in various places about the town and district. The small Joadja louvervan (minus wheels and axles) that stood in the back yard of Frank Beaumont’s house on the corner of Bessimer St., the old wooden bridges of the Joadja and Box Vale rail lines over Chinaman’s Creek near the steam laundry, and even the remains of some of the old sheds (mostly covered in blackberries) at the Iron Works site. Numerous old rail embankments, cuttings, tunnels, and shafts were around the Mittagong and surrounding area, most of which are still in evidence today.

Over the years as I researched the stories behind them, I found a fascinating history of people and events that I feel should be recorded. Where possible, I have also included reasons why they happened, or were influenced by outside forces or attitudes.

I still remember a very large deep shaft adjacent to the Iron Works with an old timber beam across the middle about 12 ins square. In retrospect, it’s a marvel there were no tragedies with children falling in, but again, to crawl to the edge and peer down past the moss-covered bricks to where the water glinted in the dark was enough to frighten most children into being very careful.

Under the nearby road bridge the water was a rusty brown colour, and looked badly polluted with a brown scum on top, but this didn’t affect the hundreds of frogs living happily among the reeds. It was years later I learned it was only iron oxide which formed when the chalybeate (mineral) spring mixes with oxygen after it surfaced. This same iron oxide formed the iron ore deposit used by the Iron Works.

The old chap who lived next door to us in Bowral Rd. was John Ryan, whose father worked at the Iron Works last century. John Ryan was born in one of the workmen’s huts built along the creek years ago, (about where the present Mittagong R.S.L. Club stands today.) John Ryan loved to talk about the old days in Mittagong and from him I first learned that the Mittagong Hall was brought in from Joadja and erected on its present site by the School of Arts Society after the Canterbury Hall in Mittagong was destroyed by fire in late (Oct.) 1910. This was also confirmed and further clarified in the written notes by the Nattai Shire Clerk Claude Lee at the time which states, in his words, “Miners Hall removed to Mittagong by last job of tramway (Joadja) to haul in building material - coloured windows, dance floor, stone.”

This tells us that not only the stonework, but the entire hall was demolished in Joadja, loaded and hauled to Mittagong, then re-erected on the School of Arts block of ground where it stands today. I hope to locate some day, a photograph of the hall when it stood in Joadja at least up until late 1910.

Mittagong became a town by settlement around the Iron Works venture and the “new line of road” taken to Berrima.

This history of the Southern Highlands deals predominantly with Mittagong, and the highway, with associated towns and villages between Picton and Marulan.

There is a beauty, a timelessness, and an almost spiritual “presence” in the Southern High-

lands that goes beyond words or description, and many people who have lived here before find themselves “drawn back” once again

I believe my research has made this a very accurate record of the area. History is the story about people, not just the dry facts. Therefore this record is presented as a story of what happened, and when. At the same time, I believe it will be a valuable reference of the historical events involved and I hope I have presented it in an interesting manner for the readers enjoyment.

It would be impossible to cover all aspects of the district over almost 200 years of history in one book. This book deals mainly with the chronological procession of events since the discovery and settlement, with stories of our early industries, people, and interesting facts of the Southern Highlands which I have encountered during research. There are many other human stories involved in the passing parade during the years. Far too many for this book, and may have to be included in a future publication.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

It is difficult to acknowledge all those who have helped in compiling a history gathered over many years. Even residents now long dead would have to be included, such as John Ryan, Claude Lee, Emile Hill, my own parents and grandparents, and many others.

In recent years I have received assistance from various members of the Berrima District Historical Society in researching the history of the area.

In particular, I would like to thank Mrs. Carole Douch during her term as Archivist with the Society for saving any subjects she encountered dealing with Mittagong history for me, also I would like to thank Mrs. Leonie Knapman for her unselfish sharing of research on various subjects, and for providing copies of some photographs of local historic events, to add to my collection.

My wife Asta, for putting up with the many hours I have spent compiling this record over many years.

Last, but by no means least, my son Jonathan (Jonno) who has spent hours teaching me how to work a computer so that I could put my historical hobby in some semblance of order, and for his assistance in producing this book.

It has been no fun for him having to explain everything about computers to me, over and over again before I understood it.

To all those who contributed research or photographs, I thank you one and all.

John McColgan.

DATES AND EVENTS

1798. First white Men, led by ex-convict John Wilson passed through the valley in which Mittagong is now situated, (ten years after settlement of the colony) 1-2-1798. The party comprised of Wilson, Roe, and John Price, a servant of Governor Hunter, reached the junction of Wingecarribee and Wollondilly rivers before returning to Prospect. A second journey into the area in the same year was made by a party comprised of Wilson, John Price, and a man called Collins. They reached Mt. Jellore 17-3-1798 and Gin Gin Bullen 19-3-1798. From there, they moved on past Marulen to the summit of Mt. Towrang (near Goulburn) before returning to Prospect 3-4-1798.
1802. Ensign Barralier explored the Wollondilly River up to an area around Goodmans Ford near Bullio. A small settlement on Wollondilly named after him. He also explored the Nattai River tributary to an area just north of Mittagong.
1814. Hamilton Hume and his brother passed through the district in company with their uncle John Kennedy. They reached the Bong Bong flats and followed Wingecarribee River to present site of Berrima.
1815. John Oxley moved his flocks south to this area. Cordeaux moved also some years later and settled next to Oxley at Bendooley. (At that time called Bendulie.)
1816. The name Mittagong first mentioned as the name of the range. John Oxley wrote it Mittagong. Governor Macquarie referred to the area as Marrigan or Minnikin.
- Native outbreak at Appin. Captain Schaw on his way South to take action against hostile natives camped at a spot between Yerrinbool and Aylmerton. Local native chief Cannabyagal killed near Appin during fighting.
1820. Governor Maquarie visits area. Travels to what is now Moss Vale. Bestows grant of land to Charles Throsby for his services and names it Throsby Park. Maquarie also selected Bong Bong as a suitable site for a settlement.

Commissioner Bigge arrives in the Colony on his tour of inspection.

1821. Earliest settler in Mittagong area was William Chalker. Chalker's hut was built on what was later surveyed as Portion 82 Parish Mittagong on the south side of the Old South Road. He was given a permit on May 10th 1821 to proceed through the Cowpastures with 93 cattle and two stockkeepers to graze stock on Mittagong Range "until required to move from thence."
1822. William Harper, a surveyor reached Mittagong and recorded 24 grants totalling over 1000 acres fronting the Old South Road. (This road also referred to as the Old Argyle Road.)
1823. William Chalker given grant of 200 acres Jan. 4th 1823 in recognition of his services as Principal Overseer of Government Stock.

Death of William Chalker recorded in "Sydney Gazette" on 2nd Feb. 1823. In response to his previous request because of his imminent death, Governor Brisbane orders the deed of the grant (later surveyed as Portion 25) to be issued to his de-facto wife Elizabeth Sheckell.

1824. Hume and Hovell reached Mittagong Range near junction of Old South and Range Rds. and camped near spring. They were on their way to Hume's property at Lake George from which they were to launch their expedition overland to present site of Melbourne.
1826. Record of aboriginal muster count stating there were 67 natives of Bong Bong tribe, 10 of Mittagong tribe, and 62 of Nattai tribe living in this district. These would be localities, and not the tribal names of aborigines. They would all be members of Gundungurra tribe in this district.
1827. George Cutter obtained land from Robert Plumb Portion 73 on the Old Argyle Road near Diamonds Field Rd. junction and constructed Kangaroo Inn. He was fined for selling liquor before his licence was granted 12 months later.
1828. An official mail service to this district was begun.
1829. About this time Thomas Troy gave 2 acres of his property for use as Anglican cemetery and school. His son Sid Troy was later headmaster of the church/school built at Rowes Hill nearby in 1850.

The unsuitability of Bong Bong as a village site becomes apparent owing to water fluctuation of the river, with flooding during wet weather and non-flowing stagnant pools in dry weather. The area which is now Berrima chosen because of deeper and constant water flow.

1830. Probably the first interment at Rowe's Hill cemetery lower Mittagong. George Riley died aged 24. Grandson of the original settler George Riley.

G. Cutter bought Portion 88 opposite Kangaroo Inn and erected windmill for grinding flour. This mill also served to grind grain for many residents.

About this time the site of Berrima was chosen by Major Mitchell the Surveyor General. Berrima was planned to be the capital of Camden County. Similar to the English system of counties. The idea did not progress.

1831. Captain Charles Sturt farming a grant on Old South Rd. Lower Mittagong.

Edmund Burke builds home "Rose Vale" beside creek and Old Argyle Rd. at Lower Mittagong.

Governor approves Surveyor Robert Hoddle's plan for township of Berrima. 31-5-1831. The plan for making Berrima a centre for manufacturing and administration of the whole county was frustrated when the new road deviation from Bong Bong saw the residents of Berrima switch their attention to catering for the travelling public after 1833.

1832. "Woolpack Inn" established by John Chalker at Nattai Bridge, Braemar. Original site said to be adjacent to where old Gotting home stands today.

Construction of building now known as "White Horse Inn" at Berrima for Mr. Oldbury as a private residence. Later became Oldbury Inn.

1833. Iron ore discovered by Surveyor Jaques in course of making deviation of road from Old South Rd. to Berrima. This deposit later mined by Fitzroy Iron Works.

1834. Henry Dunkley and Lucretia Davies of Goulburn Plains married in All Saints Church Sutton Forest 15-1-1834. Lucretia Dunkley later hanged at Berrima Gaol for the murder of her husband Henry Dunkley at Gunning 13-9-1842.

1835. Bulk of traffic now diverting to new road through Berrima avoiding steep Mittagong Range route.

About this time William Bradley a Goulburn brewer purchased 100 acres of land between Lyell St. and Gibbergunyah Creek. Bradley subdivided and established the private village of Nattai.

"Kangaroo Inn" site bought by Captain Sturt for his private residence.

Governor Bourke lays foundation stone for Berrima Gaol and Courthouse 7th March 1835.

Surveyor General Inn built by James Harper, son of William Harper. Licence granted in 1835 and continued to this day. Harper also built a house for himself on northern end of village. (Known today as Harper's Mansion.)

1836. "Kings Arms Inn" operated by Edward Chalker opened on Portion 82 Old South Road at lower Mittagong. (now Waite's old farm "Elm Vale.") This portion is coincidentally where William Chalker senior first built his hut on arrival in 1821, and may have involved that building.

Stone bridge completed over Wingecarribee River at Berrima. Built by David Lennox.

1837. A grant of one square mile at Mt. Flora sold to James Kiernan of "Redwood" Picton for

£160.

Kiernan did not reside to it, but leased or let it for rent.

“A man killed here.” carved in stone gutter at Berrima.

Minnikin Lodge (now named) on corner of Lyell Street and Hume Highway built by Goulburn brewer William Bradley in 1837. This inn became the second Kangaroo Inn after the first Kangaroo Inn at Lower Mittagong became obsolete with the new line of road to Berrima. George Cutter, the proprietor of the old Kangaroo Inn became the lessee of the new Kangaroo Inn.

1838. After two previous contractors had failed, Berrima Gaol and courthouse completed in June 1838.

The issue of title to Kieghrans Inn and Tollbar granted. A further block of 50 acres at Yerrinbool also “taken up” by John “Paddy” Kieghran in a deed issued 1839.

1839. Rev. B. Clarke, geologist, reported on coal measures.

Innkeeper George Cutter sentenced to penal servitude in Tasmania.

1840. Charles Throsby gave two huts (formerly used by convicts in the “Stockade” during road construction) for land as a Catholic Mission in Berrima. A list of subscriptions started for finance to build a church.

1841. First trial by jury in Australia held at Berrima.

Bartholemew Rush “takes up” land at Braemar.

Census records Berrima population 249 people, 37 houses, and seven under construction. Ten years later the population recorded was 192, (a decrease) the house numbers remained the same.

Part of Mittagong area subdivided and offered for sale as town of Gainsborough. The auction failed.

1842. Another subdivision offered for sale under the name of Livingstone. It too was a failure.

Jack Lynch, multiple murderer confesses his crimes before George Bowen, first Police Magistrate at Berrima (Nov. 1839 to Feb. 1843.)

1843. Lucretia Dunkley and her lover Martin Beech hanged at Berrima Gaol Monday 16-10-1843 for murder of her husband. Her head removed for scientific examination. Later reports of her headless ghost being seen in grove of pine trees near the gaol.

1844. Jack Lynch hanged at Berrima Gaol for brutal multiple murders.

1845. “Fitzroy Inn” (now Oaklands) built by Alexander Brand for Mrs. Anne Cutter.

Fitzroy Inn as it looked in 1948 when operated as Oaklands Guest House.



1845. Large house built at Braemar by Bartholomew Rush a local contractor. It was first named Yarrowong. Later became the Prince Albert Hotel. Now known as Poplars Restaurant.

1847. Foundation stone laid for Anglican church Berrima by Bishop Broughton.

Governor Fitzroy's wife Lady Mary killed in coach accident Dec. 1847 when horses bolted in driveway of Government House, Parramatta. Governor Fitzroy himself seriously injured, but recovered.

1848. Construction of Iron Works commenced at Ironstone Bridge. This industry also attracted population and settlement.

Berrima Gaol closed for a time.

1849. Visit by Sir Charles Fitz-Roy to iron works. The nearby chalybeate spring named after his deceased wife Lady Mary (tragically killed in carriage accident at driveway of Old Parliament House Parramatta in December 1847.)

Quarter Sessions and Circuit Courts moved from Berrima.

The foundation stone laid for St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church Berrima by Archbishop Polding 8-2-1849. Completed two years later in 1851.

Anglican Church in Berrima, designed by Edmund Blacket, completed and consecrated by Bishop Broughton 9-6-1849.

1850. The first church/school built in the Mittagong district (a slab and bark structure) built at Rowe's Hill Lower Mittagong. (Anglican).
The original donor of the land Mr. Troy and Mr Loseby of Leicester Arms acted as guarantors for cost of erection.

About this time Edmund Burke of Lower Mittagong set aside 1 acre of 300 acre estate for a Catholic Cemetery on Diamonds Field Road.

The spade used to turn the first sod of rail construction from Redfern to Parramatta made from Fitzroy Iron works iron. This ceremony performed on the site of the now Sydney yard by Mrs. Keith Stewart, daughter of Governor Sir Charles Fitz-Roy 3-7-1850 The spade and barrow are still preserved in railway archives.

Herald reports Governor Fitz-Roy made a "flying visit to inspect the Fitzroy Iron Works" in March.

Final abandonment of convict transportation to N.S.W. Australian Colonies Government Act passed. This provided for separation of Port Phillip and Tasmania from New South Wales with representative (elected) government for Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

1851. Fitz Roy Iron-mining Company formed Sept. 15th.

Gold discovered near Bathurst N.S.W., and in Victoria at Ballarat and Bendigo. Gold rush to diggings causes severe labour shortage for industry.

1852. Governor Fitz-Roy officially opened the iron works.

Rev. John Dunmore Lang travelled through the district.

About this time a chapel was built on 1 acre Catholic Cemetery donated by Edmund Burke on the first rise of Diamonds Field Road. Named the "Chapel of Ease." This section of road became known as Chapel Hill.

1852. The present-day road between Mittagong, Bowral, and Moss Vale constructed to avoid using the Mittagong Range crossing. The road rejoined the old Argyle Rd. at what is now known as Eridge Park Rd.

Englishman Charles Ledger imports 250 alpacas into the colony from South America with a view to starting a new wool industry from alpaca wool. These animals were moved to "Wingello Park" Wingello but due to lack of knowledge of the species, there were none survived by 1880.

1853. Anglican Rev. James Samuel Hassal appointed to Berrima. He conducted his first church service in the school-church built of slabs and bark at Rowe's Hill lower Mittagong.

The tilt-hammer is broken at the Iron Works. Production of iron ceased, but because of the ease of quarrying, ore was dug and sent to P.N. Russell of Pymont, Sydney.

William Keene, surveyor reported that coal at back of mountain could be suitable for the iron works, but preferred the regular coal seam at Black Bob's Creek.

Scandal erupts when Rev. John Dunmore Lang publicly denounces the morals of the Governor Sir Charles Fitz-Roy for his dalliance with a young Berrima girl and leaving her pregnant. Letters sent to newspapers questioning his "fitness to govern." Fitz-Roy's public popularity never recovered from this episode.

1854. Act passed into law cancelling the Fitzroy Iron-mining /company and transferring all the property to the newly-formed Fitz Roy Iron and Coal Mining Company. Men employed cutting a tramway road around Mt. Alexandra from iron works to Beatrice St. and around to coal pit.
1855. Weatherboard structure church built near Gibbergunyah for Catholic services. Also used for school briefly from 1865.
1856. First N.S.W. Parliament opened. First Premier Stuart A. Donaldson.
1857. Fitz Roy Iron and Coal Mining Company dissolved on March 30th. by shareholders under Section 85 of Private Act which previously incorporated it. A shareholder H.W.Johnson attempts to form syndicate for purchase of assets.
1858. Plant completed at iron works by Johnson syndicate and trial carried out during July.

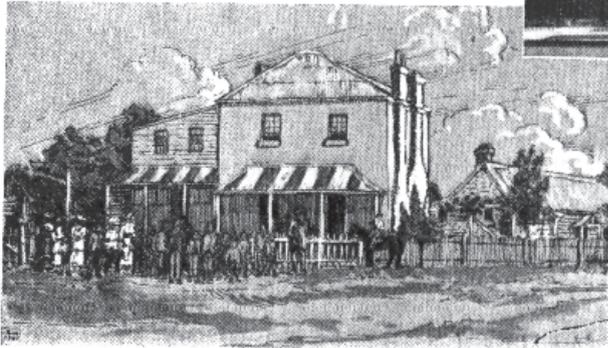
Flooding of Wingecarribee River breaks the arch of stone bridge built by Lennox at Berrima.
1859. Johnson obtained promise of support from William Terry, Thomas Chalder, Joseph Cartwright, Rossiter and other businessmen. Preliminary steps taken to form a company to run the iron works efficiently.
1860. Floods carry whole bridge away at Berrima. Matthews and Jennings build a new bridge which lasts to 1897. In 1897 a timber bridge was erected which lasted to 1962 when present structure was erected.

Henry E. Vaughn Estate Agent, of 142 King St. Sydney built Victoria House about this time. He later built, and removed to Gib Farm which is now owned by Frensham and is operated as Gib Gate School.

The picture below appeared in the Iron Week booklet 1948.

The age of Victoria House stated is not correct. This house was built circa. 1860-1862 by Henry E. Vaughn Estate Agent of Sydney.

Mittagong's most historic building — Victoria House. Built more than a century ago of locally-made bricks, the original hand-cut timbers and hand-made nails are still intact. Below it is shown as a school in 1870; at right, as it is to-day, the home of Dr. Noel S. Solomons.



1861. Surveyor Campbell recommends that the land adjoining the iron mine be reserved for a township.

Anglican bark and slab church/school at Lower Mittagong replaced by a more substantial stone structure.

Village of Fitzroy (now Welby) established.

First post office at Watson's Hotel (previously Fitzroy Inn, now Oaklands.)

1863. After several starts, it wasn't until now that substantial production of iron began. The mine reported to be employing 70 men.

Mittagong/Bowral railway tunnel excavation started. Contractors Wolf & Humphries.

1865. On May 2nd. the iron works furnace changed from cold blast to hot blast with considerable success, and on June 25th. the Fitzroy Iron Works Company became the Fitzroy Iron Work Company Incorporated.

First church/school erected in Albert St. (Wesleyan). Designed by Mr. Hampshire the manager of the iron works. The foundation stone was laid by Mr. E. Vickery the chairman of the iron works in the presence of the Governor Sir John Young. The iron roof supports were smelted by the company. It was also used by the Council of Education as New Sheffield public school until a new structure was built in Queen Street. Teacher Mr. Morris. Average attendance 66.

Governor Sir John Young and Lady Young were present at iron works when first of 54 cylinders required for Gundagai Bridge over the Murrumbidgee River was cast. Each weighed 2 1/2 tons, and measured 6ft. long 6ft. diameter and 1 1/8in. thick. The Iron Works also supplied all other associated ironworks.

Gold found on Diamond Field Road. Minor gold rush locally but deposit soon worked out.

In anticipation of railway station siting a subdivision of 245 blocks offered for sale as Village of New Sheffield. Bidding was spirited and £3000 worth of land sold.

Dept of Railways buy 13 acres of land from William Hines farm west of Mittagong 2-2-1865 in order to construct rail line past Chinamens Creek towards Bowral tunnel. Further land purchased from Hines on 5-1-1869.

1866. New Sheffield name given to village near iron works.

Post Office changed to brick structure in Fitzroy Street shown on Plan No. 33 1866 as about where present day automatic telephone exchange is situated.

John McCallum, a coachbuilder, set up a successful business as a blacksmith and wheelwright. The firm had a large volume of sales of vehicles and all ironwork.



Mittagong/Bowral railway tunnel completed.

Bricks for the construction of Mittagong Railway Station made by Belconnen & Brennan brickworks in Regent St. below the present-day Masonic Temple in Mittagong. It is believed this may have been the brickfield established by the Iron Works during the early 1850's.

Iron works closed down for indefinite period owing to cheaper imports.

Alterations made to Berrima /Gaol. Imposing gateway built.

1867. Railway construction arrives at township. Railways name the station "MITTAGONG"

and erect sign to that effect thus deciding permanently the name of the town. The line opened to traffic 3-3-1867. Names New Sheffield and Nattai Village disappeared through lack of use as the area became recognised as the town of Mittagong. Nattai Village covered area from the Gibbergunyah Creek to Lyell Street.

Locomotive Inn (Prop. J. Hilder), the first inn built in the town area to cater for rail travellers. This was a weatherboard structure situated at the rear of the block where the Mittagong Newsagency now stands. Later replaced about 1880 by a two-storey brick structure at the front of the block called the Family Hotel, which became the present day newsagency.

John Winter Mealing moves from Bowral to Mittagong, builds a bakers oven on an allotment purchased in Main Street (where Bill Forbes now stands), and pursued his trade as a baker. Later erected a shop and residence on the same site.

Coach and Horses Inn (Prop. M. Walker) built by Bartholomew Rush. A private railway platform built behind Braemar Lodge was known until 1892 as Rush's Platform. It was built to allow train travellers to alight when staying at Rush's Prince Albert Hotel (now known as The Poplars Restaurant.)

The section of railway line between Mittagong and Moss Vale came into use 2-12-1867 without fanfare.

1868. First presbyterian service held in a hotel by Rev. C. J. Mood of Sutton Forest.

First services conducted in new Wesleyan Church by Rev. K. Corner.

Hughes and Hughes lease rolling mills at iron works but lack of profit caused cancellation of lease in July. Bladen and Co. took over the mills for a short time then work ceased indefinitely.

1869. Two years after the arrival of the railway a traveller on the Old South Road writes, "This is the Old Settlement of Mittagong, but so strangely quiet one is reminded of a deserted village."

Fitzroy Iron Works Company Incorporated wound up on Nov. 29th.

1870. Two storey refreshment rooms at Mittagong railway station brought into use during August.

Auction of iron works land and assets Jan. 10th. Bought for £10,000 by a shareholder John Frazer.

1871. Some diamonds found in the same locality on Diamond Field Road where prospecting for gold had continued on and off for several years. A few sapphires were found in the deposit but very limited, and mining soon ceased.

1873. Kerosene shale (Torbanite) deposits at Joadja now recognised to be of great commercial value. Edward Carter files application at Berrima courthouse to take up 60 acres on the northern side of the valley for the mining of shale.

New company of English capitalists the Fitzroy Bessemer Steel Haematite Iron and Coal Company (Limited) takes over iron works site.

Rev. J.D. Langley (afterwards Anglican Bishop of Bendigo) began services in Iron Works Manager David Smith' stone house near Ironstone Bridge. Later services were held in a hall erected side-on in Pig Lane. (This structure stood at the rear of the block where the Chinese Cafe now stands next door to the Exchange Hotel in Albert Lane.) Church services discontinued at Lower Mittagong church/school.

Manager of the Iron Works David Smith, donates one acre of land from Fitzroy Bessemer Steel Haematite Iron and Steel Company on which St. Stephens Anglican Church was to be built.

About this time W. Brazenall snr. established a blacksmith's shop and foundry on Gibbergunyah Hill.

1874. Lands Dept. settles dispute between Messrs. W.J. Cosgrove, J.Elsmore, and Edward Carter in Carter's favour over 60 acre shale mining land at Joadja.

Lamb and Brown syndicate take up 500 acres, and P. Larkin takes up 100 acres of shale bearing land at Joadja.

1875. Fitzroy Inn site (Oaklands) delicensed and opened by H.E. Southey as a boys boarding school.

Three-storey Commercial Hotel built on corner of Victoria and Main Sts. by Fred Draper (prop.)

Wesleyan Church authorities complain that no rent was ever paid during ten year period (1865-75) their premises were used by Council of Education as a public school, and asked for a rental of £26 per year. This was agreed to, but steps taken to purchase a site for a public school.

Post Office moved to Mittagong Railway Station. The name of the Post Office officially changed to Mittagong. The stationmaster also filled the position as the postmaster.

Construction by the Iron Works of a skip line over Mt. Alexandra for transporting anthracite coal and coke organised by manager David Smith. Earth embankment for line formed what is now Lake Alexandra.

1876. Working with bullocks and horses, Edward Carter now sending away 200 tons of Joadja shale a month.

Bishop Barker lays foundation stone for St. Stephens Anglican Church in Mittagong on one acre block cnr. Main and Station Sts. given by the Iron Works manager David Smith.

Large country home built by Bartholemew Rush for Judge Coffill. This house was named "Oulart" but is today known as Braemar Lodge.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS STORY

1877. Brown and Parberry syndicate complete tramway lines and winding engine to top of Joadja valley for hauling shale.

Smelting at iron works ceased 16-3-1877. In June the rolling mills are leased by E.G. Larkin, Hunter, and Henshaw to roll rails for Joadja tram line from surplus stock of pig iron, (said to be about 1000 tons.)

1878. Public school opened in Queen St, (now library). The new school named New Sheffield Public School, and was built with Gibbergunyah stone. Building and residence exceeded £1400 and was constructed by C. Groves.

St Stephens church, designed by Edmund Blacket, was built on the corner of Main and Station Sts, Mittagong. Built by Mr. Fred Draper at a cost of £1333/11/7d. Opened by Dean Cowper 11-11-1878. The christening font was made and donated by Mr. Joseph Lee, the stonemason who worked on the building. Fred Draper encountered great difficulty in the erection, and the time allotted was far exceeded. During this time the Fitzroy Iron Mines closed once again and went into liquidation, causing many people to leave the district.

Anglican minister Rev. E. Dixon dies as a result of undiluted dose of laudendaum.

Australian Kerosene Oil and Mineral Company formed to exploit shale deposits on 1944 acres at Joadja valley.

After retirement of Hunter and Henshaw from partnership Larkin continued rolling rails for tramway to Joadja under construction. Later the Joadja company cancelled the balance of their requirements because of cheaper imports. Larkin closed the mills.

Post Office opened in Joadja Nov. 1st. and telephone line established between Joadja and Mittagong.

1879. Construction started of tramway line from Joadja to Mittagong. Webb Bros. (P. Webb and F.C. Webb) sawmillers, with a sawmill in Manchester Square Moss Vale, built all the bridges on this tramline.

About this time E.G. Larkin joins with a Mr Jeavans, who had been associated with John Brown Ironmasters of Sheffield, England, in an undertaking to convert iron ore to steel by means of a patented gas process, at the Iron Works.

Unfortunately, a gas explosion killed Jeavans and the attempt was abandoned.

J. Ruane's store and residence destroyed by fire. He then constructed double-storey residence now known as the Boston Ivy. This building served as a hotel for a time when Nattai Hotel (N/W cnr. of Queen St.) was burnt down during 1893.

Leslie Cottage built by stonemason Joseph Lee on cnr. of Albert and Queen Sts.

John Mealing branches into cordials and aerated waters as an additional side of his business.

1880. Completion of Joadja line to Mittagong siding.