

Stonequarry

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Picton & District Historical
&
Family History Society Inc.

PICTON and DISTRICT HISTORICAL

and

FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

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MEETINGS:- Second Monday of each month at:-
The Community Rooms
Shire Hall
Menangle Street
Picton.
(excluding January)

MEMBERSHIP FEES:-

Pensioner:-	\$8.00
Single:-	\$10.00
Family:-	\$12.00

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Theme of the next issue

June 1995. Wollondilly will be remembering "Victory in the Pacific" on 15 August. The Federal Government has allocated limited funds towards an oral history project which will concentrate on the "Homefront".

However, we would also be interested in receiving articles based on this theme. Any resident of Wollondilly who wishes to contribute to the "oral history" project should contact the editor.

Appreciation

Sincere thanks to John Ruffels who as a distant member is unable to attend meetings. John has donated \$200 to be used to encourage young people to pursue the study of local history.

Also thanks to Merv Rixon who contributed to the overall picture of local government.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT in NEW SOUTH WALES

The third tier of government in Australia is not recognised by our Constitution and as such, State Government has the "power" to dictate to the local authorities.

Some say that the concept of local government dates back to the days of Governor Macquarie. In 1961, Frank Grady reviewed Frederick A. Larcombe's publication "Development of Local Government in New South Wales" and stated:-

"In the vision of Macquarie and in the work and agitation of Greenway one can see an urge towards the vesting in some form of Local Authority of the control of buildings, drainage, water supply, fire prevention, town planning and the like".

Governor Macquarie departed these shores in February 1822. Frederick Larcombe maintains that early attempts of the Central Authority to encourage local administration of public works met with repeated failure. The third tier of government (local) was the initiative of the State Authority. Early settlers were opposed to local control if it was to be at their own expense. Both O'Grady and Larcombe believed that short-sighted selfishness had retarded spontaneous Local Government.

The establishment of District Councils in 1842 had provided for a measure of compulsory although largely unsuccessful local government until 1850. This was reinforced with the implementation of the Municipalities Act of 1858 and another act in 1867. The original act provided for the incorporation of any area, rural or urban, where the majority of householders had signed a petition requesting local government. The Municipalities Act of 1897 consolidated all previous Acts and Amending Acts without interfering with their main thrust.

Picton Borough

In May 1995, the Wollondilly Council will acknowledge the centenary of local government in this area. Picton along with Bankstown, Castlereagh, South Shoalhaven, Warren and West Narrabri did not adopt local government until 1895. Municipal councils had already been constituted in towns which surrounded Picton. These were Bowral (1886), Camden (1889), Campbelltown (1882), Mittagong (1889), Liverpool (1872), Moss Vale (1888) and Wollongong (1859).

Until the Local Government Extension Act and the Shire Act were passed, most of the state's rural areas remained outside local authority although a total of 170 municipal councils had been formed at the request of local communities. A compulsory and universal system was introduced to the state in 1906.

This was when the Wollondilly Shire was constituted. The only other municipalities to be formed between 1896 and 1906 were Gladstone (Wrightville-Cobar 1899), Ingleburn (1896) Manilla (1901) Murwillumbah (1902) Narromine (1898), Warrialda (1900) and Wyalong (1899).

The Picton Borough had been incorporated because it was the wish of the local community whereas the Wollondilly Shire was created by the State. "Power" in Picton was "water driven" although some believed that the "Antill Family" had stifled development.

An editorial in the Picton Argus in June 1892 stated "It seems a mystery that Picton should remain behind less important places in the one matter of incorporation". A special meeting was held to discuss the issue. It was not the first attempt to incorporate. A sub-committee which included Messrs J.M. Antill, W.R. Antill, G.B. Forster, G. Bell, J.W. McQuiggin and G. Bradbury was formed. Its aim was to define the boundaries of the proposed municipality.

When Picton was proclaimed a Municipality seventeen nominations were received for the nine positions of aldermen with 6 nominations for the three positions of auditor although 2 withdrew before polling day.

(*ald - elected as an alderman, *aud - elected as an auditor).

They were:-

George BELL, Hotel Keeper;
John BELL, Blacksmith;
Henry Sivyer CLIFTON, Storekeeper;
(*ald) James CONNELLAN, Farmer;
(*ald) Frederick George DALTON, Medical Practitioner;
Henry Charles EVANS, Blacksmith;
William FIELDHOUSE, Butcher;
(*aud) George Brooks FORSTER, Bank Manager (Auditor);
Adolphus GRAHAM, Auctioneer (Auditor);
(*ald) John Wright McQUIGGIN, Gentleman;
(*ald) Alfred MILLS, Medical Practitioner;
(*aud) Frank MOORE, Storekeeper (Auditor);
(*ald) Moses MULHOLLAND Jr, Grazier;
(*ald) Lachlan NICOLSON, Farmer;
(*aud) Joseph Samuel PASKIN, Baker (Auditor);
(*ald) William PRITCHARD, Contractor;
Henry ROFE, Butcher;
(*ald) George William SELL, Carpenter;
Alfred John SKELLETT, Hotel Keeper;
(*ald) John WARDROBE, Storekeeper;
and Francis WEATHERHEAD, Hotel Keeper.

The occupations of the 17 nominees were 3 farmers/graziers, 3 hotel keepers, 2 blacksmiths, 2 butchers, 2 medical practitioners, 2 storekeepers and 1 each of carpenter, contractor and gentleman. Polling 115 votes, John Wright McQuiggin, a Gentleman, became the Mayor and of the remaining 8 aldermen, there were 3 farmers/graziers, 2 medical practitioners plus 1 carpenter, 1 contractor and 1 store-keeper. The three auditors were members of the commercial sector.

Interestingly all farmers/graziers and medical practitioners were elected. Of the 9 elected to "power", 7 were nominated by Hezekiah Spratt and William Jones Griffiths. The nomination of Alfred Mills was supported by an additional two gentleman, Alfred Sydney Perks

and Joseph Corbett as well as Griffiths and Spratt. William Jones Griffiths in association with John Reeves nominated Moses Mulholland.

The only person to be elected, where neither Griffiths nor Spratt featured in the nomination was James Connellan who had been put forward by Henry C. Evans, T.J. Hilder, John Reeves and Robert Wallace. Only 2 people who were nominated by William Jones Griffiths and Hezekiah Spratt missed out on election. Both were hotel keepers. Who were Griffiths and Spratt?

At one stage, it would appear that there were brothers Simeon born about 1837 and Hezekiah (Fred) born about 1849 living in Picton. Residing in Campbell Street, Fred was a railway employee and Simeon was a labourer. Simeon who died in 1894 had two children with a son also being named Hezekiah. Fred Spratt died in 1930 and along with Dr Woodward, had been one of the original members of the Picton railway ambulance.

A newspaper report in 1897, stated that Mr W. Griffiths had purchased Mr Blunt's property in Menangle Street and that Mr Brain had acquired Mr Griffiths corner house. Mr Brain intended to implement a number of improvements and to add a shop to the house.

Neither Fred Spratt nor William Griffiths seem to have taken an active role in local government. Perhaps their only involvement had been the signing of the nomination forms.

Successful Candidates

Probably one candidate's election and acceptance speeches truly reflected the conflict in the local community at the time of incorporation. When accepting nomination Dr Dalton said:-

"Incorporation of Picton had been a hobby of his for a long time and he never felt so proud than he was that day. He saw Picton 15 years ago and 15 years hence it would be a different place. For 25 years the people of Picton had not had a voice of their own. They had been at the beck and call of other parties. It had been called Antill town, but it was no longer - it was now the Borough of Picton. They had now got the bull by the horns - let us hold him. He was not a party man, he belonged to no clique, but would act on independent grounds. He was not a bigot, by any means and would always listen to reason. Picton was one of the most miserable towns in the colony - they had not a park, racecourse, cricket ground of their own, nor decent public hall, but he hoped they would ere long. He believed that there was enough spirit, energy and candour in the people to raise the town and render it a credit to the colony. He thought the council should keep their expenditure within their receipts, and did not believe in imposing taxes which would be a bugbear to the people. The drainage was a most important matter and it was a great wonder that with their drainage system in such a disgraceful state they had

not been visited with an epidemic. In reply to a question whether he was in favour of the work being done by contract or day labour, he replied that he was in favour of day work in most cases."

Upon being elected Alderman Dalton's speech was reported as:-

"... It was disgraceful that they had no water supply before this and blamed the Progress committee for not handling the matter in such a way as to bring about its accomplishment. Some had considered a 4" pipe not big enough, and had asked for 6" the result being that they had neither. He thoroughly believed the aldermen would work together and would not reflect discredit on the town. He hoped at the end of his term he would prove himself worthy of their confidence."

This acceptance speech prompted a letter to the Editor of a local newspaper. It was written by Mr James Hooke on behalf of the Picton Progress Committee and disputed claims made by Dr Dalton. Mr Hooke referred to a Public Meeting held in 1888, the subsequent petition and the number of unsuccessful attempts to incorporate prior to March 1891.

According to Mr Hooke, the Railway Department had contemplated pumping water from the lakes (Thirlmere Lakes) up to the Lakes Station (Couridjah) and then planned to convey it by pipes to Picton. The Railway Department had intended to install "Stand Pipes" at the Picton Railway Station and to sell the water at 3d per 100 gallons.

Integral to the provision of "Water" was the amount consumed by the Railway Department and of incredible importance was whether or not the Railway Department was going to "tap" into the local supply. In order to borrow the money to finance the "local water supply", it was necessary for the town to become incorporated.

The first meeting of the newly elected Council was held in the Protestant Hall although the Council eventually set up its Chambers at the back of the School of Arts. Both William Redern Antill and his nephew, Robert Henry Antill were active members of the Picton Progress Committee but neither stood for election. The only mention of the Antill name in the reports of the first election was with the nomination of Henry Rofe who only received 30 votes on the day. Of 180 persons entitled to vote, 147 people availed themselves of the opportunity to "have a say".

Robert Henry Antill was elected to the Picton Municipal Council in 1899 and retained his seat until he resigned in June 1919 following the death of Dr Parry who had been married twice, first of all to Theodora Edith Antill and after her death, to Alice Eliza Antill. Both were sisters of Robert Henry Antill who also served on the provisional Wollondilly Shire Council from 1905 to 1906.

When Alderman John Wardrobe resigned in January 1906 no one was prepared to replace him and the Council had to function for twelve

months with eight aldermen. Alderman R.J. Eagles resigned in July 1987 and within three months Alderman A. Graham had also tendered his resignation. The only one of the three men, to again represent the community in local government was Alfred Graham.

Concurrent with Aldermen Eagles and Grahams' resignations was the departure of the editor/proprietor of the local newspaper, The Picton Post and Advocate. Mr J. Dickinson had also served the Council for seven and a half years in the capacity of Council Clerk and the editorial which followed his resignation emphasised the newspaper's reputation for "fair reporting" and praised Mr Dickinson's ability as a journalist. The new editor with the motto of "FAIR PLAY FOR ALL", assured the readers of the newspaper's impartiality but at the same time reserved the right "of comment".

With the advent of the new Local Government Act on 1 February 1988, all nine aldermen had to retire and to seek re-election for a term which was of three years' duration. Prior to this date, only one third of the elected members had stood down each year. For the next twenty years, the Picton Municipal Council did not project an air of stability, with resignations "galore" particularly in the 1920s.

Merging of Local Government Areas

The Picton Municipal Council was merged with the Wollondilly Shire Council on 1 May 1940 and in December 1940, the Picton Municipality formed the nucleus of the "D" Riding. The number of ridings was reduced to three in 1953.

One hundred years after the people of Picton sought incorporation so that they could "turn on the tap", the same geographical area is still confronted by serious "water related" issues, namely "a sewerage scheme".

Bibliography.

Grady Frank. Review of Frederick A. Larcome - Development of Local Government in New South Wales.
Picton Post and Advocate. Various issues.

* * * * *

Centenary of Local Government

The Wollondilly Shire Council will be celebrating one hundred years of local democracy on 6 May 1995. An entrance wall will soon be constructed at the foot of Vault Hill (Picton). Following a ceremonial unveiling of the wall there will be a mayoral reception in the Shire Hall. Community groups will present displays with a central theme of "local democracy".

Unfortunately plans have not been finalised, so I am unable to publish a programme. If you are interested in further information please send us a stamped addressed envelope and we shall forward you details as soon they are released.

File: COLINDEX

Report: ANNOUNCEMENTS

SURNAME	FIRST NAME	RESIDENCE	TYPE	DATE
Abbott	Rugby (Mrs)	Thornleigh, N.S.W.	D	Apr 9 64
Adair	Avis Lila		I	May 22 80
Adams	Albertha		I	Jul 22 76
Adams	Albertha Magline	Barqo	L	Jan 31 74
Adams	Albertha Madgelene	Barqo	R	Aug 8 63
Adams	Albertha		I	Jul 22 65
Adams	Albertha		I	Jul 28 66
Adams	Albertha Madgelene		I	Jul 29 65
Adams	Robert A.C.	C'town	D	May 3 62
Adams	Theresa	W'gonq	D	Apr 18 63
Adams	William Arthur	Maldon	D	Jun 4 64
Adams	William Arthur	Maldon	R.	Jun 25 64
Adams	William Arthur	Maldon	I	May 20 65
Aelterman	Aliide	Thirlmere	D	Feb 15 62
Albon	Eric Sylvester	Couridjah	L	Mar 15 61
Alexander	John Henry Rawson	Tahmoor	D	Jul 9 58
Alexander	Darren Edwin		I	Feb 16 78
Alford	Colin		D	Apr 13 67
Allen	Laurence Henry	Tahmoor	D	Oct 15 74
Allen	Rosie	Douglas Park	D	Feb 23 50
Allen	Ronald George	Crow's Nest	D	Jun 13 63
Allen	Roy		D	Jul 24 76
Allerton	Jessie Alice	Barqo	D	Nov 15 84
Allport	George Clement	Barqo	D	Apr 21 66
Allport	Harry	Mowbray Park	D	Jun 26 18
Alp	Voldemar	Lakesland	D	May 14 64
Alps	Mrs	Lakesland	D	Jun 1 50
Alston	Orville Vivian		D	Aug 2 79
Alston	Vivian Orville		P	Oct 24 79
Altosaar	Leonid	Thirlmere	D	Oct 16 80
Amberg	Christine		D	Nov 2 67
Anderson	Albert Sydney		I	Jun 25 70
Anderson	Albert Sydney		I	Jun 26 75
Anderson	Amy Florence	Moss Vale	D	Jun 23 66
Anderson	Basil Smith	Picton	L	Jan 8 81
Anderson	Charles Frederick	Thirlmere	D	Sep 12 68
Anderson	Charles Frederick	Thirlmere	L	Dec 5 68
Anderson	Colin Sigvard	Douglas Park	D	Sep 29 83
Anderson	Harry	Moss Vale	A	Apr 29 65
Anderson	Mrs	Wilton	O	Apr 26 1899
Anderson	Tom	Moss Vale	D	Dec 23 80
Andrews	Eileen Elizabeth	Bondi	D	May 13 76
Angel	Daisy Isabel	Temora	L	Jul 20 55
Anson	Megan Leigh		D	Jan 1 75
Anson	Glen Colin	Brisbane	D	Jun 12 80
Anson	Harry Cromwell	Picton	D	Jul 28 77
Antill	Edith Helen Wills		D	Aug 2 79
Antill	Hilda Redfern	Roseville	O	Dec 23 43
Antill	Jessie Hassal	Picton	O	Feb 14 17
Antill	John Macquarie	Picton	O	Jun 6 1900

From the Social Secretary

COMING EVENTS for 1995

- 13 March.
6.00 p.m. "A Stroll Along Stonequarry Creek"
Meet at Argyle Street, Stonequarry Bridge
for a gentle stroll around and see
proposed works for "Healing Stonequarry
Creek" and plans suggested by the Creative
Village Team.
- 7.30 p.m. Archeology - An Overview
Speaker:- Andrew Wilson
Topic:- "Comparing the 'dug-up' history
with the 'written'.
- 10 April.
7.30 p.m. Natural History - A Local View
Speaker:- Al Mucci (Manager of Warrimbirra
Sanctuary)
Topic:- Animal and plant species noted by
Europeans, from occupation to
present day.
- 8 May.
7.30 p.m. Aboriginal History - Living Cultural History
Speaker:- Representative from A.M.A.R.U.
(Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Campbelltown)

Winter

June, July and August	Cultural Music / Arts History Old Bush Craft
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Spring

September	Historic Gardens and Homes
October	Cemeteries
November (Evening Walk)	Bush Heritage

Summer

December	End of Year Party
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Help, suggestions and ideas welcome for places to visit, picnics,
guest speakers etc. Please ring Peter Reay on (046) 818774.

* * * * *

Family Reunion

Descendants of Joseph and Elizabeth **Creighton** (nee **Clarke**)
are having a family reunion in October at Picton. Further details
from:- Please mark Attention: Rocco Sorace, P.O. Box 275,
Warrawong N.S.W. 2502.

LIBRARY ACCESSIONS

The Convict Timbergetters of Pennant Hills - A History and
Biographical Register - by Ralph Hawkins
Members Interest Directory and Accession 1994 - Blue Mountains
Family History Group
Tales of Old Macarthur Country - Liz Vincent
Journal of Royal Australian Historical Society - Special Riverina
Issue
This England - A Book of the Shires and Counties
Bawamarra - Picton High 1994 Champions
St Patrick Cemetery Parramatta - Cradle of the Faith, Grave of
the Faithful
Walk the Wicked Waterfront - Australian National Maritime
Museum
A History of Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital 1887-1994 -
Compiled by Jan Ross, edited by Doreen Lyon
Hillview - Country Home of the Governors of N.S.W. - by Berrima
District Historical Society
Early Industries in the Mittagong District - by Berrima District
Historical Society
An Illustrated Diary of Australian Interment Camps Berrima - by
Berrima District Historical Society
A Register of Pioneer Families - Vol 1 - by 1788-1820 Pioneer
Association
The Regions of Australia - by A.D. Tweedie and K.W. Robinson
Architectural Survey of Appin Main Street - by Pat Shephard
The World Almanac and Book of Facts - 1979
Growing up with Barnardo's - by Allan Moore

Plus innumerable current issues of journals from other
societies as well as donations of back copies of journals.

* * * * *

Index of Newspaper Announcements

Published in this journal on pages 7, 10 and 11 is the first
instalment of a new index. We are indebted to member Colin Post
who has extracted these announcements from local newspapers.
The society has copies of the newspapers referenced and Colin
has painstakingly transcribed the details relating to the event.
Most of the material refers to contemporary occurrences and
many people may not see the value in such an exercise but think
of the future. What a boon to the next generation of family
and local historians! On their behalf, I thank you, Colin.

* * * * *

Note the **Coach House** is now open for research on Sundays.

Special thanks to Pat Shephard who has resigned from the
position of secretary. She has worked tirelessly for the society
since its inception.

File: COLINDEX

Report: ANNOUNCEMENTS

11 March 1995

SURNAME	FIRST NAME	RESIDENCE	TYPE	DATE
Antill	Dora	South Australia	M	Feb 1 1899
Appleby	Edwin Thomas	Arncliffe	D	Jan 8 48
Appleyard	Elaine Jennifer		D	Jul 8 76
Apps	Alfred Thomas	Picton	R	Oct 17 68
Apps	Alfred Thomas	Picton	L	Dec 5 68
Apps	Alfred Thomas		I	Sep 25 69
Apps	Amanda Gail	Picton	D	Oct 29 81
Apps	Amy Matilda		D	Jul 11 63
Apps	Amy Matilda		R	Jul 11 63
Apps	Amy Matilda		R	Jul 25 63
Apps	Cassandra	Wilton	D	Oct 6 77
Apps	Deanne	Razorback	B	Oct 3 74
Apps	Gordon Ernest	Picton	D	Dec 27 74
Apps	Ivy	C'town	D	Oct 26 67
Apps	Noel Leon		I	Apr 29 82
Apps	William Ernest	Razorback	L	Nov 13 69
Apps	William George		D	May 20 65
Apps	William George		L	Jun 3 65
Apps	William George		R	Jul 1 65
Apps	William George		I	May 4 67
Apps	William Thomas		O	Jun 19 29
Apps	William Thomas		L	Jul 3 29
Archer	Stella Ann	Picton	D	Dec 2 53
Archer	Stella Ann	Picton	R	Dec 9 53
Archer	Stella Ann	Picton	I	Nov 29 62
Archer	William Alfred	Thirlmere	D	Apr 30 64
Archer	William Alfred	Thirlmere	R	May 7 64
Arenz	Bill		I	Sep 24 81
Ariansen	Donald Ellis	Yanderra	D	Aug 26 53
Armolick	Hilda	Thirlmere	D	Apr 4 74
Armour	Alice Harriet	Barqo	D	Jul 9 58
Armour	Alice Harriet	Barqo	R	Jul 9 58
Armour	Alice Harriet	Barqo	I	Jun 28 61
Armour	Alice Harriet	Barqo	I	Jun 28 62
Armour	Alice Harriet	Barqo	I	Jul 27 63
Armour	Alice Harriet	Barqo	I	Jun 25 64
Armour	Alice Harriet	Barqo	I	Jul 1 65
Armour	Frank	Barqo	D	Jun 3 71
Armstrong	Edward Francis	Barqo	D	Jun 18 58
Armstrong	Edward Francis	Barqo	I	Jun 14 61
Arnold	Arthur	Razorback	L	Dec 12 63
Arnold	James Robert	Barqo	D	Jul 26 79
Arnold	James Robert	Barqo	L	Sep 6 79
Ashcroft	2 yr girl	Menangle Street	D	Aug 24 1898
Ashcroft	Leo Clement	Picton	D	Mar 8 79
Ashcroft	Leo Clement	Picton	L	May 3 79
Ashcroft	Leslie Clement	Picton	O	Jan 18 61
Ashford	Bob	Buxton	D	Aug 22 56
Ashton	Charlotte	Couridjah	D	Jul 7 75
Ashton	Charlotte	Couridjah	I	Jul 1 76

File: COLINDEX

Report: ANNOUNCEMENTS

11 Marc

SURNAME	FIRST NAME	RESIDENCE	TYPE	DATE
Askilssden	Alice Blanche	Redbank	D	Apr 2 ¹⁸ 70
Askilssden	Alice Blanche	Redbank	R	Apr 9 70
Astley	Arthur		D	Mar 18 65
Astley	Arthur		L	Mar 18 65
Astley	Carole Anne	Tahmoor	D	Apr 24 80
Astley	Carol Ann	Tahmoor	I	Apr 2 87
Astley	Nell	Tahmoor	R	Aug 7 47
Astley	Nell	Tahmoor	I	Aug 12 48
Astley	Nell	Tahmoor	I	Aug 3 50
Astley	Nell	Tahmoor	D	Feb 14 80
Atfield	Donald Albert	Tahmoor	M	Jun 20 74
Atherton	Ian	Auburn	D	Sep 9 76
Atherton	Robert	Douglas Park	I	Jan 11 61
Atkins	Irene Marea		I	Jan 11 62
Atkins	Irene Marea		I	Jan 10 63
Atkins	Irene Marea		D	Sep 17 64
Atkins	O.W.	Barco	D	Mar 25 65
Attard	Paul	Sydney	D	Aug 12 76
Attwood	Florence May	Buxton	D	Nov 13 69
Auchterlonie	David		B	Nov 28 74
Auchterlonie	Bradley Douglas	Buxton	D	Apr 21 64
Austin	Anne Selina	Wellington	D	Oct 3 1900
Austin	Eileen Jessie	Barco	D	Oct 1 81
Austin	Florence Elizabeth	Barco	D	Oct 8 81
Austin	Florence Elizabeth	Barco	D	Aug 22 1900
Austin	Henry	Buxton	I	Jun 13 17
Austin	Kathleen	Broken Hill	D	Jun 9 83
Austin	Tom	Tahmoor	D	Sep 19 68
Austin	Trevor	Tahmoor		

Explanation of abbreviations.

A:- Appreciation
I:- In memorium
O:- Obituary

B:- Birth
L:- Legal
P:- Probate

D:- Death
M:- Marriage
R:- Return Thanks

* * * * *

A PERMANENT HOME FOR THE PICTON MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

It was in 1911 that members of the Council resolved to purchase the "old school building" and modify it to accommodate the "Council Chambers". Some say that it was because of war restrictions that there was a considerable time lapse between this decision and the date of its official opening in March 1916.

However, the move to acquire "Council Chambers" was not entirely supported by all the Councillors and the community. Given that the decision was eventually endorsed by a public meeting and combined with the complexity of dealing with bureaucracy regarding a loan, it was more probable that it was merely the unravelling of red tape which caused the delay.

The Council had been hoping to extend the suggested "loan repayment period" and alterations to the application form had not been initialled by the Mayor and Clerk. The representative of the Department of Public Works felt that the Council had underestimated anticipated income. It took over two years for the State Government to approve the application to borrow the money required to implement the alterations.

Having sold the "Old School" to the Council in August 1912 for 850 the Department of Public Instruction was not paid the final instalment until the end of 1916. Ownership of the property was then legally transferred to the Picton Municipal Council.

Meanwhile Mr J.S. Mollison, the Assistant Local Government Engineer had inspected the "Old School" and other buildings in Picton. He presented his report to the Council on 20 July 1914. Since there were a number of serious internal and external cracks in the walls, Mr Mollison felt that he had to conduct a very careful investigation before he could recommend the extension of the building.

The foundations consisted of porous clay and were considered to be unsatisfactory. Upon examining other buildings in the town, it was discovered that most buildings suffered from similar problems. Inquiries revealed that the cracks generally appeared shortly after construction. It was confirmed that the cracks in the "Old School" showed no signs of recent movement. Mr Mollison was of the opinion that once the walls were repaired there would be no further trouble apart from where the new and old work were joined. The bricks were sound and did not show any sign of weathering.

Architects "McCredie and Anderson" had been consulted in October 1912. The main building was lengthened to form a hall which would accommodate 270 people. The longer class room became the "Council Chambers" and two new offices and corridors were added to the front. The smaller class room was converted to a retiring room and the space in between the two classrooms was enclosed to provide a second retiring room.

Across the width of the rear of the building, a supper-room in weatherboard was constructed. A stage was built with a passage along side leading to the supper room with a wide sliding door at the back. The finish on the walls matched the existing walls and those of the offices and the corridor were plastered.

Raised platforms in the old classrooms were removed. The supper room was not lined. To improve the lighting and the ventilation more windows were added and exhaust cowls were installed in the roof. One of these roof ventilators is still visible. It is directly behind the main entrance. Horse stalls and sheds were erected at the back of the Town Hall.

The Architect was instructed to fix marble tablets to the front of the building which were inscribed with the names of the Aldermen,

Officials and the date of erection and forever more the misconception that the Town Hall was a building constructed in 1915 has been perpetuated.

Reinforcing the misunderstanding was the fact that the Council used the phrase "demolition of the present buildings" in a resolution of March 1915. Obviously sections of the "Old School" had to be dismantled and the Council had to ensure that the cost of this work had been included in the total figure. Today's interpretation of "demolition" tends to mean "total destruction".

The local press again compounded the error when in 1944 it was reported that the "Old Public School" had been demolished and the only visible signs (stone foundations) of the original building were from the rear verandah of the supper room.

With the amalgamation of the Picton Municipal and the Wollondilly Shire Councils the Town Hall became the Shire Hall. Further alterations took place during the forties and the fifties. When the Nepean River County Council was formed, its offices were first in the Shire Hall at the front within the curved section which at a later stage housed the Macarthur Credit Union and now accommodates the Picton Community Rooms.

The original building was slightly less than fifty years old when it became the focal point of the community's entertainment. Since then, it has provided a platform for political campaigns, a regular venue for both silent and talking movie shows, a stage for visiting entertainers, a surface for dances and balls plus a hall large enough for formal dinners and school functions.

Currently apart from Council associated services, it is the headquarters of the Picton Theatre Group. The long table which was purchased in 1905 for the Aldermen's use, was restored a few years ago and is now located in The Coach House which is a resource centre operated by the Picton and District Historical and Family History Society.

The names which were inscribed in lead on the marble plaques include those who were associated with the modification of the building. They were Aldermen R.H. Antill, J. Connellan, W. Fairley, L. Nicolson, W. Mitchell, Dr L. Parry, A. Scott, and A. Prior. The Mayor was Alderman J.T. Ashcroft, the Town Clerk Mr J.J. Cleary, the Architects A.L. McCredie and Anderson and the Builder Mr Walter Brown.

In April 1957 the offices of the Wollondilly Shire Council were relocated next door into premises which had been vacated by the Nepean River County Council (N.R.C.C.). The electricity authority had moved to a new building further along Menangle Street. When the N.R.C.C. was absorbed by the Prospect County Council the building became the home of the Wollondilly Shire Council.

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G E O R G E J O S E P H S P E A R I N G

Wollondilly Shire Councillor January 1914 - December 1933.

Written by: Pat Shephard
Assisted By: Merv Rixon

George Joseph Spearing was a "C Riding" Councillor for Wollondilly Shire from 13 January 1914 until his death in December 1933. He was Shire President for a short term in 1931 and was Acting President some time later when Councillor E. H. Downes was on vacation. What manner of man was George Spearing? Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to begin with his parents and grandparents, who first settled in the district in the early 1840s.

George Joseph was the third of eleven children born to Benjamin Spearing and his wife, Emma, nee Wonson. His mother was born in Devonshire England and came to Australia in 1839 with her parents, William and Elizabeth Wonson, and accompanied by her sister and two brothers. The first reference to the family living in the East Bargo area appears in Sir Thomas Mitchell's work diary of 1844 when he refers to Mrs Wonson as an "experienced dairy woman from England" and contracts with William to build a fence between his "Condell Park" property and the grant of land given to William Davis. (1) Sir Thomas also considered leasing "Condell Park" to William, but there is no evidence to date to prove that this eventuated. William Wonson did take up a lease of neighbouring "Broughton Park" in 1850 and later purchased the property from J. A. Broughton in 1856. (2) William lived on "Broughton Park" with his wife, Elizabeth, and large family of children, until his death in 1882. For the most part he bred cattle, raised pigs, had his own vegetable garden and was well known for his rabbit warren. His sons and daughters inherited his property and Emma was given 170 acres by her father which she farmed with her husband Benjamin Spearing. (3)

George Spearing's father, Benjamin, was a well known and respected member of the East Bargo (Wilton) community. Evidence of this appears in his obituary which states that: (4)

In business matters he was active and enterprising to a degree exceeding most men; and his wonderful business tact, experience and talent enabled him to carry through to a successful issue the most multifarious and intricate business speculations. As a public man, it is perhaps not too much to say that his loss to the district can scarcely be supplied. His ready tact, experience judgement, and shrewd commonsense rendered him equal to emergencies where better educated men might have failed.

..... In the words of our local poet, the deceased was
'One of a thousand - a man every inch.'

Benjamin Spearing arrived in Australia in 1857 on the ship "Herefordshire" with his sister, Mary Ann. He is reported to have made the acquaintance of Mr Wonson (possibly a son or grandson of William and Elizabeth) and went with him to the Snowy River diggings. (5) He married Emma Wonson in Sydney

on 24 February 1862 and together they took up farming at Wilton, East Bargo. His father-in-law, William, who died in 1882, had previously held slaughtering licences. Benjamin also took up a slaughtering licence in 1881. (6) This was a prosperous time at Wilton where the construction of the Upper Nepean Tunnel had meant an influx of miners and other workers into the district. An old photograph shows the Spearing home at Wilton with nearby out-buildings, including the butcher shop. They were all built of slab timber and it was here that Benjamin's six sons learnt their trade, becoming cattle breeders (including dairy farmers) and butchers in later life.

Benjamin Spearing died at age fifty-one after being thrown from his horse near the Great Southern Inn at Picton. Emma died four years later and both are buried at St Luke's graveyard, Wilton. Their beautifully worded inscriptions on their headstone bear testimony to the fact that they were both well loved by family and friends.

George Joseph Spearing married Susanah Kershler at St David's Presbyterian Church, Campbelltown and together they had three children, Walter, Frederick and Lil. They lived in Broughton Street, Campbelltown. According to George Spearing's obituary which appeared in the Campbelltown News, 15 December 1933:

By trade the deceased was a butcher following the footsteps of his father, and when a youth was in the employ of the late James Wilson, next to the Campbelltown Post Office. He started his business career in partnership with Mr George Chinnocks, in the premises now occupied as a residence by Mr Thos. Frost in Queen Street Campbelltown. [After his marriage to Sue Kershler] he started business on his own account in part of the old Forbes Hotel, (now Lack's "Federal Hotel"). In business he was always a painstaking man and thrifty, and an excellent judge of beef cattle. By keen buying and his general knowledge of stock, the late Mr Spearing soon became regarded as an expert in the buying of beef cattle both locally and at the Homebush Markets. While in business in the old "Forbes" building he purchased the whole of the building at the corner of Railway and Queen Streets, from a Mr Graham, who then conducted the "Forbes" Hotel. At that time the building was a cottage, and extensive alterations by an additional story was carried out by Mr Spearing after which the Hotel was called the "Federal" Hotel.

George Spearing was elected as an alderman to the Campbelltown Municipal Council in 1906 and again in 1909. His other interests in the Campbelltown area included his involvement with the Campbelltown Agricultural Society, of which he was a life member. He also owned acreage on the Menangle Road at Campbelltown. This land, along with property he purchased at Wilton in 1905, from the Executors of the Estate of his grandfather, William Wonsan, was used by him for his cattle grazing pursuits. According to his obituary, he relinquished his butchery business just prior to the first World War and "confined his activities to matters more congenial to his health, in the outside life of buying and selling, and was constantly to be found at his Maldon [Wilton] property, or his Campbelltown property at which places he fattened beef stock for markets near and far".

On 20 December 1911, Mr R. H. Antill was elected for "C Riding" of

Wollondilly Shire Council, following the death of Councillor John Simpson. Appin Progress Association had nominated George Spearing but "at the last minute his nomination was declared invalid owing to his not adding six pence exchange to his rate cheque". Another candidate, Timothy Fahey, failed to lodge his nomination on time. The Appin Progress Association, George Spearing and Timothy Fahey all complained and called upon Mr Antill to resign. (7) He refused to do so, even though he had been elected to Picton Municipal Council ten months earlier.

At the following election, on 31 January 1914, George Joseph Spearing was elected. He was to serve as a Councillor for Wollondilly Shire for the next seventeen years. (8) He was elected Shire President in September 1931, following the death of his friend and colleague, Richard W. Macarthur Onslow. His nomination was unanimous and, in declaring Councillor Spearing president, it was said that he was "a good councillor and a loyal friend, particularly to their late president, and all felt that council's action in electing Cr Spearing would have been appreciated by their late President", R. W. Macarthur Onslow. (9) Perhaps this was a sympathy vote as three months later he was replaced as president by Councillor E. H. K. Downes.

One of the more amusing comments attributed to George Spearing during his term of office occurred when a Mr Les Hill wrote to council requesting payment for having removed a dead dog "left in the district", presumably on one of the local roads. (10) Foreseeing the danger in creating such a precedent, Councillor Spearing remarked that "if this was passed there would not be a dog left in the district". Despite his protests the council agreed to pay Mr Hill five shillings, but not to pay more than two shillings and six pence in the future.

George Joseph Spearing died at "Braeside" Private Hospital, Stanmore, on 10 December 1933 and was cremated at Rookwood Crematorium. In a second obituary which appeared in the Picton Post, 15 December 1933, it was said that "he was a man who took a serious interest in all matters concerning Local Government" and that he did his "best in the interest of the ratepayers".

Another member of his family to serve as a councillor on Wollondilly Shire was his cousin William's son, Edward Wonson, from 1 December 1934 till 2 December 1944. (11)

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