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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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563A Princes Highway,
BLAKEHURST 2221

September, 1986

Dear Friend and Member,

The September meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday, 19th September, 1986 at 8.00 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale

Business: General

Syllabus Item: Peter Sage will be our Guest Speaker, so do come along and enjoy - "A Look at the Geographical and Historical Aspects of the Hunter Valley and its Tributaries" - as presented in colour by Peter.

Supper Roster: Miss Dunsmore, Captain, together with Mesdames Mendoza and Loring and Miss Wilding.

Thank you ladies

Mr. A. Ellis,
President and Research Officer

Telephone: 587 1159

Mrs E. Wright,
Treasurer

Telephone: 599 4884

Miss D. Row, Asst. Treasurer

Mrs B. Perkins,
Publicity Officer

Telephone: 587 9164

Mrs K. Hamey,
Social Secretary

Telephone: 546 3355

Mrs K. Hamey,
Secretary

Telephone: 546 3355

Mrs E. Eardley,
Asst. Secretary & Bulletin Editor

Telephone: 59 8078

"The Australian Outback"

Out here one is made aware of the meaning of man's worth on earth, the mysterious beginnings of life itself. All of God's creatures equal in the fight for survival. Simplicity stark and cruel. It is almost possible to forget there's another world beyond the desert's fringe, the concrete and steel jungle of man's civilisation."

Quotation from "master of Uluri" by Helen Bianchin

A cheerio to our friends who are not so well. Our best wishes to all for a speedy recovery. A special cheerio to Mrs Ralph Dunsmore who is in hospital, we hope to see you back again soon.

SPECIAL NOTICE

The St.George Historical Society is pleased to announce that the following books, Nos.1-7 written and illustrated by the late Gifford H. Eardley for the Society, have been reprinted and are now available. Books Nos.8, 9 and 10 have been compiled by Mrs Bronwyn Perkins.

No. 1	"The Wolli Creek Valley")	
No. 2	"Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway")	
No. 3	"Saywells Tramway - Rockdale to Lady Robinsons Beach")	Book Nos.1-8
No. 4	"Arncliffe to Bexley Tramway")	\$2.50 each
No. 5	"Our Heritage in Stone")	plus postage
No. 6	"All Stations to Como")	
No. 7	"Tempe and the Black Creek Valley")	
No. 8	"Early Churches of the St.George District")	
No. 9	"Early Settlers of the St.George District" Volume 1)	Books Nos.9-10
	(Price \$4.00 plus postage))	\$4.00 each plus
No.10	"Early Settlers of the St.George District" Volume 2)	postage

Book No.2 is temporarily out of stock

ALL BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE AT OUR MEETING, ALSO MEMBERS BADGES

For your copy of the above books, please contact one of the following:

Miss B. Otton	-	Telephone	59 4259 (after 8.00 p.m.)
Mrs E. Eardley	-	Telephone	59 8078
Mr. A. Ellis	-	Telephone	587 1159
Mrs K. Hamey	-	Telephone	546 3355

NEW MEMBERS AND VISITORS ARE WELCOME

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION AS FROM JULY, 1986

\$7.00 per Member \$10.00 per family

Will any other ladies who are interested to help on our supper roster please give me their names. We need volunteers. Will you help please?

E. Eardley

2NBC-FM 90.1 - ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1986 - Tuesday evenings - 6.30p.m. - 6.45p.m.

- TAPE 171 - 5th August - Fanned into Flame Prt 3 - C.Wilding
The Colonial S.School
- TAPE 172 - 12th August - Fanned into Flame Prt 4 - C.Wilding
The Colonial S.School
- TAPE 173 - 19th August - Question Time-Review 1 - D.Sinclair
- TAPE 174 - 26th August - Question Time-Review 2 - D. Sinclair
- TAPE 175 - 2nd September -Question Time Review 3 - D.Row
- TAPE 176 - 9th September -Question Time Review 4 - D.Row
- TAPE 177 - 16th September- Stories in Stone - M.Callister
Woronora & Botany
Cemeteries -
(by request)
- TAPE 178 - 23rd September- Thomas Birkby's Letter - M.Callister
May 1836.
(by request)
- TAPE 179 - 30th September- The Coming of Gas and - A. Ellis
Electricity to St.Geo.
District.
(by request)
- TAPE 180 - 7th October - Bulletin Quotations - A. Ellis

SIR THOMAS LIVINGSTONE MITCHELL AND HIS WORLD

Book written by William C. Foster

Published by The Institute of Surveyors NSW Inc.

Immigrants to Australia have many temptations. One of them is to embroider the past history of their family, believing isolation will prevent the snoopers and preyers of this world from exposing their life-lie. But sometimes such a life-lie can be the beginning of a career of much satisfaction both to themselves and their contemporaries. Thomas Mitchell, explorer and Surveyor-General of New South Wales, was an example of a man of talent exploiting such a life-lie.

He rose in the British Army partly because of his claim to belong to a family of august lineage in Scotland. He was in fact, as Don Baker pointed out in his excellent article on Mitchell in the "Australian Dictionary of Biography", the son of poor parents. Now that fact and many more have been enlarged on by William Foster in a very thorough life history of one of the explorers of the Australian wilderness.

Mitchell was born in Scotland on June 15, 1792. He died in Sydney on October 5, 1855. His wife had borne him 12 children, of whom five at least had predeceased him. Mitchell had great natural talent. He was fluent in many languages, wrote frothy English, especially when assessing his own achievements, or castigating his many enemies, mastered mathematics, and knew the rudiments of military tactics.

He arrived in Sydney in 1827 to take up the position of Assistant Surveyor-General in the Survey Department with, he believed, the right to succeed John Oxley to the senior position. He began work on a general survey of New South Wales and began to plan the building of arterial roads. Governor Bourke chose him to explore the territory in the vicinity of the Darling River and three expeditions under his command roamed over the area.

William Foster has got the story of Mitchell the soldier, Mitchell the surveyor, and Mitchell the explorer straight. His labour has been prodigious. The book should live as a valuable source of information on the great explorers of the day.

The above writing has been taken from the excellent review of William Foster's book by Manning Clark in The Sydney Morning Herald on July 5, 1986. Manning Clark is the author of the five-volume "A History of Australia".

William Foster's work contains 594 pages and the purchase price is \$40.

OF INTEREST .. ADVERTISEMENTS ..

Taken from "The Methodist" Century Commemoration
Fund Issue -

Sydney - Saturday May 20, 1899
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Liver and Kidneys.

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or Minerals, simply culled from Dame Nature's
Garden, have now been successfully taken in the Colonies
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Abraham's Pills, aperient and tonic, DO NOT WEAKEN - a
result not hitherto obtained of great importance in
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A safe medicine for Ladies - expressly suited to the
constitution and requirements of women. This explains
the great success and golden opinion which follow their
use. Thousands say they save all trouble, effectually
remove all impurities of the blood, beautify the
complexion, no headache, no pain, no flushing, no giddiness,
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Superior to any other known remedy - Prepared only by -
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Many, many changes have occurred since 1899 - Some firms
have long since vanished, others have remained.

Many skills have long since vanished, others have remained.

A different article, but still of historical interest, as
1899, was when so many of our parents and grandparents
were setting up their homes and reading such advertisements.

THE YEAR AMERICANS FIRST SAILED IN:

- Sydney Morning Herald
27th March 1976

- Brian Turner

To many people the most significant aspect of the approaching American bi-centenary celebrations will be the opportunity to see a New York dance company at the Opera house.

If, however, they are first fleeters, descendants of the 700-odd convicted criminals and their guards, who brought civilisation to our shores, they might also consider that, along with their Declaration of Independence, the Americans also decreed that no more British convicts would be dumped upon their shores; otherwise these unwilling colonists would have been dispatched to North America instead of Botany Bay and become the foundation of a line of American families, instead of Australian.

Apart from accidentally siring Australia, the American impact upon Australia was as early as it has been lasting. The colony at Port Jackson was only 5 years old and hungry, when the first speculative cargo to reach our shores in the "Philadelphia" on November 1, 1792. The enterprising Yankee skipper Mr Patrickson, had learnt of the foundation of the colony while at the Cape of Good Hope and took his ship back to its home port, loaded a cargo of beef, spirits and tar, rounded the Cape again, crossed the Indian Ocean and sold most of his cargo to Governor Phillip for the tidy sum of 2,829 pounds and 11 shillings. The rest, in particular the spirits, found a ready market among the officers.

The sight of a ship bearing the stars and stripes must have caused a sensation among the convict chain gangs that hot and hungry summer, especially the freedom-loving Irish, who admired the Americans for their successful bid for Independence from Britain.

Previously the remoteness and isolation of N.S.W. had served as prison walls and escape seemed hopeless, but now with the connivance of an American seaman, perhaps one could stow away to freedom.

But the Yankee skipper was here strictly for business, and was chartered by Governor Phillip to take some stores and passengers to the tiny convict settlement at Norfolk Island for 150 pounds.

Shortly afterwards another American ship "the Hope", from Rhode Island, dropped anchor in Sydney Cove. The captain, Benjamin Page, declared that he was short of wood and water but later announced that he had a cargo of foodstuffs and spirits for sale. The colony's Judge-Advocate, David Collins, wrote rather peevedly, that he would have liked to be in the position to say, "We are not in want of provisions, procure your wood and water on your way." But the hungry and thirsty colony bought most of Captain Page's barrels of cured meat and 7,597 gallons of spirits at 4/6 per gallon. Collins took a very dim view of the excessive boozing at the colony, especially that done on Sunday, and indeed two people, James Hatfield and Martha Todd, "a stout, healthy young woman," did not recover from their hangovers and died as a result of "partaking intemperately" of the American rum.

On October 29, 1793, "The Fairy" of Boston, under Captain Reogers arrived to refresh his crew and supplies. While he was in the Cove, it was necessary for a detachment of the N.S.W. Corps to be stationed on board to prevent convicts from boarding. Nevertheless, before sailing, a convict John Crow, was found on board. He was taken ashore, flogged and placed in the guardhouse. He escaped and burgled two houses at Parramatta, but was caught with the goods. "The frequency of enormous offences had rendered it necessary to inflict a punishment that would be more likely to check the commission of crimes than mere flagellation," wrote the Judge-Advocate. Crow was hanged a few days later.

After a wind-blessed passage of 115 days from the east coast of the U.S., the "Halcyon", of Rhode Island, arrived in Sydney Cove on June 14, 1794. She was commanded by Captain Benjamin Page, who had visited in the "Hope" in 1792, and had a cargo of 5,000 gallons of American firewater. This time the Governor was not in need of supplies, but the thirsty officers of the N.S.W. Corps purchased the spirits for 6s. a gallon.

A month later, the signal for a sail in sight was made from the South Head and "Hope", Captain Page's old command - sailed in - to sell her spirits at a cut-rate of 3/6d per gallon.

Early in 1796, the "Abigail" also from Rhode Island, arrived, but by this time Governor Hunter was so exasperated at the number of convicts who had escaped on "neutral" Yankee ships, that he ordered that she and succeeding American ships anchor in Neutral Bay, on the other side of the Harbour. Here the entrance could be easily patrolled and it was a long swim for a convict to reach them. But so many convicts continued to escape that by the early 1800s, the captains of visiting American ships were required to lodge bonds of 500 pounds to be forfeited if convicts were found on board before leaving.

But the traffic was not all one way. Life aboard many American ships, especially the whalers, was no paradise. A 3 year whaling cruise in cramped and fetid conditions, eating disgusting scurvy-inducing food, without even the gratification of good pay, caused many seamen to desert when they reached Port Jackson.

In October 1794, the skipper of the scurvy-ridden American brig, "Mercury", had to seek convict replacements for some of his crew, who preferred the grog shops and brothels of the Rocks, to the rigours of another voyage across the Pacific.

The 144 prostitutes who arrived in the Third Fleet did a roaring trade with the hard-bitten Yankee sailors when they reached port.

One wonders what the Americans thought of the place as they sailed into Port Jackson, past Rock Island (Fort Denison) with the chained corpse of an executed convict dangling from the gibbet. They certainly didn't think of the inhabitants as Australians, as that name had not yet even been coined. Another half century was to pass before we had name and identity enough for Herman Melville to refer to us in his

immortal Moby Dick - as - "that other great America on the other side of the sphere: Australia."

In 1802, the American brig, "Fanny," sailed through Bass Strait and the commander noted in his log, that his was the first American ship to do so. He was soon followed by many others engaged in the brutal business of clubbing seals to death and flaying them of their skins to sell in the China trade. Soon bloody conflicts broke out between rival gangs of American and Port Jackson sealers, the Americans sometimes using club swinging Hawaiian islanders to clobber their opposition.

In 1804, Governor King was alarmed that whaling, and sealing in Australian waters was fast becoming an American monopoly, "to the evident disadvantage of the colonists", who, no doubt, wished it to become their own monopoly and issued orders forbidding the Americans the use of Port Jackson as a base for sealing. He need not have worried, as within a few short years, the seals along the Bass Strait were all but exterminated. In 1807, one American vessel alone, shipped 20, 000 seal skins to China.

Between 1792 and the outbreak of war between Britain and the United States, in 1812, at least 58 American ships visited Australian waters and were generally quite welcome. They meant good business for the merchants in Sydney Cove, and their boisterous crews were eagerly accommodated on shore in the waterside grog shops, and sometimes even the Governor's official dispatches to England were carried by them. The "Sally" of Boston, brought the news of Wellington's defeat of Massina in Portugal, which warranted an extraordinary edition on the Sydney Gazette on August 25th, 1811.

The first Australian/American alliance must have surely been the use by convicts of those American escape ships in Neutral Bay, but our relationship with America is almost pre-natal. If Britain in our mother country, we were sired by the American revolution which conceived the idea of the establishment of another new world country in Australia.
