

Cobwebs & Compactus

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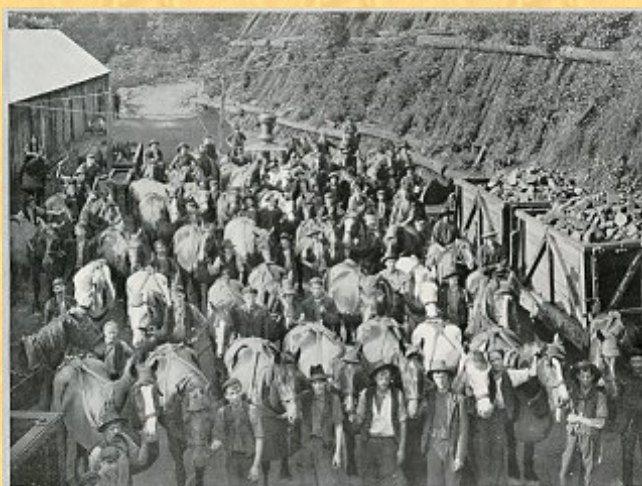
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Bellambi Coal Company

Important Acquisition

The University Archives, through the efforts of Mr Ray Brown of the Black Diamond District Heritage Centre, Bulli, recently acquired an important collection of material relating to the former Bellambi Coal Company and associated enterprises such as the Federal Coke Company. These records (cat. no. D185) date from the 1860s and are the only substantial collection of Illawarra coal company archives at present housed in a public collection. Despite the very long tradition of coal mining in Illawarra - the first mine was opened at Mount Keira in 1849 - and the important role coal mining has played in the local economy, no substantial archival collection of this nature has previously been made readily accessible to researchers and the general public.



Coal miners and pit ponies, Bellambi Coal Mine, 1909

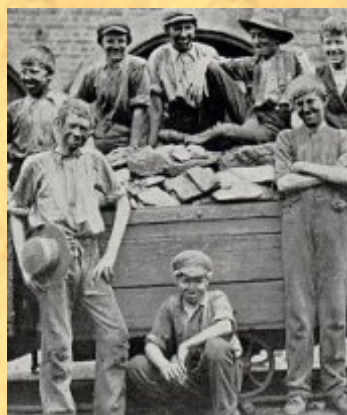
The collection includes correspondence, minute books, wage and production sheets, personnel records, maps, mining leases, publications, and reports dating from the 1860s, with the most substantial part covering the period 1890s-1940s. Supplementing the archive is a 1909 illustrated publication *The Mines of the Bellambi Coal Co. Ltd. Southern Coal District, New South Wales*, which presents a pictorial outline of the company's operations. This book is characterised by perhaps the best images (with regards to quality and content) available of workings both above and below ground on the southern coalfields during this period.

Some illustrative material from the Bellambi Coal Company archive, along with other items relating to the coal mining heritage of northern Illawarra, are at present on display at the Black Diamond District Heritage Centre, Bulli Railway Station. Opening times: Sunday, 10am - 4pm.

HIST325 Students

Archives Project

During the latter part of Autumn Session a group of thirty students from HIST325 (Theory and Method of History) carried out work in the University Archives on a variety of assignments and research projects. Archival material from the collection which was accessed included the records of the Illawarra Ethnic Council; transcripts of the Commission of Inquiry into the Appin Mine Disaster of 1979; World War II reminiscences of Robert Coleman; the papers of World War I soldier William George Agate; material pertaining to the Australian Peace Council and the Peacemaker magazine; the diaries of Francis McCaffrey; records of community radio station 2VOX FM; and a Hill End storekeeper's account book dating from the 1870s.



'Wheelers', Bellambi Coal, 1909.
[D185 Bellambi Coal Company Ltd. 1891-1986]

The archival assignments followed on the presentation of a seminar to the students by the Archivist, outlining methods of accessing archival collections in Australia, along with a brief description of the University Archives' significant holdings. Course coordinators Drs. John McQuilton and Stephen Brown commented on the success of the exercise and indicated that it would become a permanent feature of HIST325.

Rare Books Collection

The University of Wollongong Library holds a small, though varied collection of rare books, pamphlets and ephemera, numbering some 900 individual items. All are accessible via the online catalogue. The Rare Books Collection, housed in the Archives Reading Room on the ground floor of the Library, comprises publications dating from as early as 1582 (Boccacci's *Il Decameron*), through to limited edition art books such as Morris West's *The Heretic - A Play in Three Acts* (Sydney, 1988), scientific treatises including William Whitson's *A New Theory of the Earth* (London, 1696), and more recent material. All books in the Library's collection published prior to 1800 have recently been transferred to Rare Books. Recent acquisitions include Charles Wilkes' *Narrative of the U.S. Exploring Expedition* (Philadelphia, 1845) and Karl Scherzer's *Round the World Voyage of the Austrian Frigate Novara 1857-9* (London, 1865). These latter works were featured in the Library's *Magnificent Voyages* exhibition during 1996. Information on the Rare Books collection can also be accessed from the Archives Web site at

<http://www.library.uow.edu.au/archives/index.html>

The adjacent image is an engraving entitled 'Forest, Illawarra, NSW' taken from the Wilkes volumes. It is based on an original drawing by American artist Alfred T. Agate who visited the region during December 1839 and January 1840, accompanied by geologist James Dwight Dana.



Illawarra Forest 1839

RAAM Database!

New Archives Search Engine

The Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts has recently been launched on the Web by the National Library of Australia (<http://www.nla.gov.au/raam/>). The RAAM database contains records describing non-government archives held in Australian archival repositories and libraries, including the University of Wollongong Archives. RAAM is designed to provide researchers with sufficient information to enable a decision to be made on whether to follow up on accessing the material. The database includes some 20000+ references, pertaining to the following: Collections of manuscript and archival material held in Australia, whether of Australian origin or not; Single unpublished items provided they are primary sources, e.g. a letter, a deed, a diary; Photocopies or microfilms of Australian manuscript or archival material, including non-government overseas material relating directly to Australia; and Personal records held in government archives. The search engine attached to RAAM makes it a valuable tool for researchers.

Aerial Views of Campus



Buildings & Grounds Display

A collection of large aerial photographs of the University of Wollongong campus, which form part of the Archives collection and have for many years been stored in the roof of the Pentagon (Communications Centre), were recently resurrected and incorporated within a wall display located on the ground floor of Buildings and Grounds (building 31). The photographs date from the 1950s and show the transformation of the site from an apple orchard with a coal company railway line running through the middle of it, to the present sprawling complex of buildings and associated educational facilities.

The adjacent aerial view of campus was taken in 1973. The Wollongong University College is seen in the bottom left-hand corner, with the Wollongong Teachers College top right.

[University Archives](#) | [University Library](#)