

Early Industry

In the 1830s and 1840s the industries on the Central Coast were the timber-getters, lime burners and ship-builders of Brisbane Water. The lime-burners collected shells from the many Aboriginal middens or from large natural shell deposits around the shores. The shells were sent to Sydney to be burnt to make lime for use in the building industry.

From the 1880's changes began to take place in the land use activities of the Brisbane Water district. The early economy of the area included timber getting, lime burning from shells, small farms and small grazing properties. The chief support of Brisbane Water was it's timber. For many years it was cut and shipped to Sydney in large quantities. Timber-getters worked in the hills to obtain forest oak and ironbark for roofing shingles. Red Cedar was in high demand for furniture manufacture.

This changed to include shipbuilding. Shipbuilding continued using local timber into the 20th century.

THE BLACKWALL SHIPYARD

Work went on from daylight to dark at the yard. Men were put on to erect a shed to work in and the cook shop was lengthened to 40 feet by 10 feet wide . About twenty men and a cook were employed and the cook had a busy time preparing four meals a day for so many men. All were out at daybreak and worked until seven when they had breakfast. Then back to work until lunch at mid-day. "Tea-oh" was called for four o'clock when all knocked off to drink a dish of good strong tea, then work again till dark.

After tea the boys would be put on to spinning oakum until nine o'clock, while the men would yarn and play cards, though seldom was a game played without a row . At nine the cook would order the men out of the cook-shop. There was a large fireplace in the shed and if any delayed leaving when bedtime came, the cook would heave a bucket of water over the fire and cause a general scatter.



Tom Davis of the famous Brisbane Water shipbuilding family began operations in Terrigal about 1870. In fact, he put Terrigal on the map by establishing a big sawmill and blacksmith's shop at the Haven. Two or three times a week a fleet of vessels would arrive to carry the timber to Sydney. In 1878 he employed more than 50 hands and gave work also to teamsters, wood cutters and bullock drivers indirectly.
Ship Building at Erina Creek.

THE TIMBER INDUSTRY.

Tramway Road which links Terrigal to Nth. Avoca gets its name from a tramline built by Tom Davis, boat builder, in the 1870's. The timber was logged and rolled on to tram trucks which ran from Avoca over the hill to the sawmill at Terrigal Haven. Four teams of horses brought in 16,000 feet of logs daily in the summer. The weekly output was over 50,000 feet of sawn timber.



Log cutting could be dangerous work. Here we see two axemen felling a tree. They chopped alternately and in rhythm. A slip could be fatal! There was a strict inspection system. High standards of quality and measurements were insisted on, and there was no payment for rejected timber. The inspectors marked the timber they passed.



Two-wheeled and four wheeled jinkers were in common use to haul single logs from the chopping areas to where they were loaded onto the four-wheeled wagons. The front of the log was chained to the jinker and the rear trailed along the ground.



Here we see a four-wheeled wagon on its way from the forest. The haul from the forest was slow and tedious, averaging about 5 kms an hour. The driver, whip in hand, walked beside the team. The teamsters had to make their own roads and bridges to cross any streams.

From the 1920's mechanised trucks took over.