



Braidwood & District Historical Society

PO Box 145 Braidwood NSW 2622

Newsletter

Number 24 March 2022

President's Report

Let's assume the worst of Covid is behind us, Putin does not use his atomic weapons and the flood disaster does not get any worse, then 2022 will be a great year. We have much to look forward to.

We managed to hold our AGM combined with a Christmas get together and dinner at the Troopers Rest. Attending members and friends were brought up to date with progress on the Heritage Centre, a new committee was elected and the evening was enjoyed by all.

The new committee for 2022 is as follows:

Peter Smith: President,
John Stahel: Vice President
Annette Briggs: Secretary
Cathy Cooper: Treasurer
Committee: Rose Searby, Jill Clarke and Kerrie Beers, Paul Briggs.



AGM dinner guests

The committee mix ensures the continuation of unfinished business, particularly the Heritage Centre and some very skilled and talented additions to the management team. I am very heartened by our future prospects.

Work on the Heritage Centre has been intense. BTB Architects have produced 3 draft masterplans resulting in a combination of these plans being adopted as the preferred option. There has been some streamlining resulting in improvement to the original concept but all elements of the vision have been maintained.

The improvements, such as more accommodation, have resulted in the project running over the \$2.5million budget. We are still waiting to hear if we have been successful in gaining an additional \$500k from the Regional Tourism Activation Fund. If this is not forthcoming, we will be looking at staging the development but ensuring the elements producing the cash flow are in place. We are also exploring other funding options.

The complete concept will be included in the Development Application planned for submission to QPRC late March. A pre-DA meeting with Council identified some issues still to be resolved. Braidwood's 2006 State Heritage Listing should make Braidwood a special case where heritage takes precedence rather than adopting standard procedures as would apply in centres like Queanbeyan. Not everyone gets it. However, we have some great advocates from Council

management and Public Works Advisory.

A great opportunity came knocking on the day of the Monaro bi-election. See the article featuring Minister Franklin's visit to the museum.

Conservation specialist, Cash Brown, has delivered her preservation needs and assessment report under the funding grant received earlier. Her visit was delayed owing to Covid restrictions, but she finally made it and was very thorough and diligent in her assessment.



Cash Brown

She has produced a detailed 40-page report covering our collection. Frankly, it is a bit daunting maintaining a diverse collection to standards applicable to professionally staffed museums. It is another reason we need to push ahead with the staffing goal for the museum that comes with the Heritage Centre. However, with Cash's help we are exploring a grant opportunity for her recommendations to be undertaken.

The museum is now open on Saturdays as well as Fridays from 11am to 2pm or by appointment. We would love to extend to being open on Sundays. If you are interested in volunteering you would find it very rewarding.

Peter Smith

Minister for The Arts' Visit to Braidwood Museum.

**Sent to Braidwood Bugle
15th February 2022**

Last Saturday Hon. Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for the Arts, Aboriginal Affairs and Regional Youth had a tour of Braidwood Museum.

The Minister said, "Regional museums play such a powerful role in today's society - providing a sense of community and a place to have a better understanding of a collective heritage, as well as offering a great way to learn the history of a particular area when visiting. Thank you to Braidwood District Historical Society and Museum President Peter Smith for your time, outlining your plans for the future and showing me your fantastic museum!"



**Peter Smith and Minister Franklin
reviewing the plans for the
Braidwood Heritage Centre.**

BDHS President Peter Smith took the opportunity to show Minister Franklin the plans for the Braidwood Heritage Centre and explain the vision for the future. He said, "The Minister offered his support and requested to be updated as the plans for the Heritage Centre progress to the lodgement of the development application in the next few weeks."

The Braidwood Heritage Centre is a \$2.5 million project under a bushfire economic recovery grant. It adds a new dimension to the existing museum. There will be artisans' workshops, a blacksmiths shop, on-site accommodation, museum shop and café. Peter Smith adds, "It complements the 2006 Braidwood State Heritage Listing and will make Braidwood a centre for Heritage Tourism."



Peter Smith explaining the vision to Minister Franklin for the Braidwood Heritage Centre.

Looking for Irene Gertrude Reader

This letter was written from the heart by Edwina Bohannon, about life in Mongarlowe without a mother, without ever having a photo of her or knowing what happened to her. She asked me for help.

Hello you wonderful people

I cannot express how happy my sister Darryl and I are that you started the ball rolling to solve a mystery that's been like a continuous itch.....me, I was left traumatised.....old enough to remember and be missing something. Nightmares.....sleepwalkingfeeling

unwanted.....seldom in the farm house.....as much as possible outside helping wherever I could with the uncles planting potatoes or gathering them up.....filling my apron row after row.....never set a table.....didn't know when a kettle boiled on a stove but sure did know how to boil the billy in the bush while Eucalyptus cutting with my light weight long bladed knife that Uncle Percy Nolan kept sharp.....can't remember the correct name for those special knivesCracker night when the big square tanks were full of Eucalyptus leaves lit and burning for a few days and nights.....loved that part.



Darryl and Edwina Richardson.

My sister has wanted to find our mother all these years. Darryl started paying for information requesting death and born certificates around 30 years ago with no results. Forever filling in forms and then I got my first PC around 1994, and had a genealogy friend looking from time to time. I found our mother Irene living at Charleys Forest in 1933 which doesn't add up and in Redfern in 1943 which may be OK. I wonder if her hair was auburn like Darryl's and very

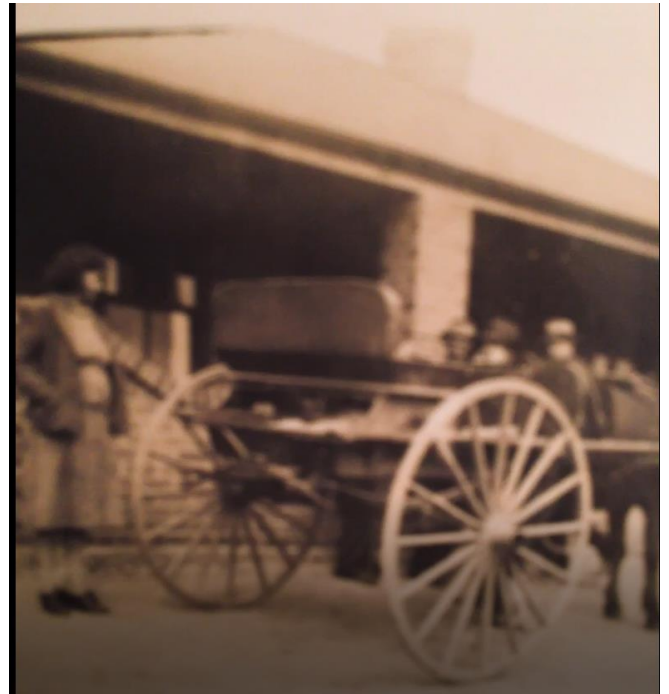
curley.....mine so orange red.....as straight as a fence post.....should be no bush fire flame any brighter.....brown eyed, skinny. Daz chubbier and 4'10".....small boned.....round face hazel eyes dippy nose. Irene was no more than my carrier. Sounds harsh!



Irene Gertrude Reader

Irene's other children were placed in a home (possibly in Goulburn), but Darryl was only 3 months old when she and I were handed over to Mary Seidel Richardson, our grandmother at the outside of the local house that was the general store. The 2 front rooms owned by Jim Cargill.....wife Clara ran the store. The daughter and husband and their 2 daughters lived there as well. I have always retained the memory of Gran having coupons for flour and sugar. Across the road a weatherboard house that Connie and Reuben Burke owned and were the post office and the first room was quite small selling lollies, the odd grocery line.....this part was

very popular with the school kids after school.....you had to go outside to enter the actual post office section from where telegrams were picked up if any.....the Burkes were said to be cousins.....Darryl and I swapped around between the Cargill's and Burke's front veranda to put our bikes during the day while at school.....sometimes in winter invited inside if we were early.....rode the black and white Draft horse Bonny to schoolat times leaving her in the school grounds to graze.....this was a privilege. Gran mostly drove the sulky with pony pulling us along.....took me to the dentist or Dr Cunningham.....all the way to Braidwood, a fox fur wrapped around my neck.....the head hanging down eyes and all.....thank God the nose wasn't wet as with a healthy dog.....that house has been restored and moved sideways away from the culvert that the creek in rain overflowed, running behind the back fence of the house.....Cargill's place was of brick and a couple of sheds to the side back some.



Mary Seidel Richardson outside Cargill's store

The school being of one room and a small cloak room with hooks for our heavier coats etc. Mr Robert Sinclair a

Catholic teacher turned the room over to the C of E minister if he came from time to time. I remember the few of us C of E being asked how many souls we had and I put my hand up and said 4 Sir.....How do you come to that idea? Me being very confident and the only clever kid to put up a hand and being very sure I had the answer.....I have 2 pair shoes so I have 4 soles.



Harold and Connie Burke home and post office.

We each had our own neat gardens to grow what we wanted all boxed around. Very tidy area that each gardener had to maintain.....Mrs Eileen Sinclair came once a month on a Friday to teach us girls sewing. Darryl still has her effort with safety pins and a needle and cotton felt leaves to hold these items. Green cotton embroidered on the front.....cardboard inserted for firmness. Skipping and rounders played at lunch time.....jam sandwiches usually.....never a hat owned, just a water bubbler nearby.....a drop toilet. Gran was called a couple of times by Mr Sinclair as Darryl had not spoken at all that first 12 months.....perhaps she should see a Dr? There wasn't anything wrong she was shy of people.....didn't say too much at home either.....followed me all over the paddocks for hours hardly ever saying a word. I was the explorer she tagging along crossing river.....special stones to hop from one to the other in the shallow parts.....watching while I set rabbit traps.....feeding baby lambs before school while I milked the cow. So

much freedom and innocence.....digging yams up if we were hungry on our "What's over the next hill.....". As I matured I realized how lucky we were in our many hours and frequent wandering all over that farm dotted with shafts with just a log across the top.....most times full grassy tussocks growing all around.....some a ring of stones which we would throw in to see how long before it hit the bottom.....at times a sheep down there found too late.....our dog Pup that Dazz was fond of ended that way.



Mary Richardson nee Seidel

Gran took me twice to Half Moon Cottage.....an old weatherboard house.....the river Darryl and I later found in our wanderings to be wider and dark in colour but able to cross in a certain spot and visit George Humphries little house.....first impression he wasn't too happy us kids on our own.....perhaps I think he walked us part way home that first time.....he must have been an ex soldier as he used crutches always.....if Gran and us were going to Mongarlowe in the sulky he would be hopping along where the Half

Moon Road joined our road.....she offered him a lift.....he always refused.....anyway he had a very good garden we got to know and eventually gave us something to eat and drink one time.....I felt we are now friends.....felt safe.....he was more at ease with us turning up.....he left at some point and his little house wasn't so good after that.....didn't go there anymore.....we never heard where he went to.....we wandered round the bigger house that was Great Grandmother Ellen Seidel's.....it soon went the way of George's place. There was an oval framed raised glass picture of her and a man with a suit, high neck collar/tie stern face.....her hair pulled back most likely in a bun at the back. Mary Seidel Richardson our grandma took me to see her a couple of times in that old house. I was very young but she made an impression with her black high neck dress.....blond reddish straight hair sitting in a chair staring at me.....probably thinking goodness what have we got here. At the top of the stairs 2 bedroom lookout across the river.....think it was called Little River. That same quiet summer a stretch good for swimming.....heavily laden banks of blackberries.....the odd snake seen swimming from under the overhanging berry branches.....such a tangle.....the water so clear that you could easily see the long shelves of rock as we walked across that shaved edge.....tree trunk spanning the narrowest section with a wire to steady yourself as you crossed over.....maybe 6 or 7" flattened out naturally wider one end quite narrow the other.....depending what could be got after the other one had been washed away.....again sometimes a few weeks passed without such a bridge as too much on or helping hands not available.....a very awkward thing to manoeuvre into position.....stake to stop it rolling both endsmore stakes for the so called hand rail.



**Irene Gertrude Reader and daughter
Elsie May Reader.**

May.....Aunty Mavis and Percy lived in a house half dug into the hillside.....Mongarlowe side of the river.....the bedroom at the back quite dark.....no window as it ran under the hill.....coming forward to another room seating spare enough for just 2 then the kitchen which served all purposes I guess.....think there was a kind of sloping walkup entering the kitchen. Darryl and I slept over once or twice.....Percy must have been away shearing as was his way of earning a quid.....Dad would have been with him.....he was the wool classer.....they travelled far and wide while we were growing up. At the top of the stairs a room mostly locked.....not allowed in there but we did get our chance here and there.....very old books.....big ones hard cover lined the wall.....a table with things but we only recall the cameras.....a few heavy like some had

the pleated section that we knew later was the lens fitting.....3 or 4 some had a black cloth attached.....found out the person covered his head with that.....also German swastikas.....other things but no time to linger.....do not make a noise when closing the door.....apparently that staircase was of some concern to Gran as I sleepwalked out. I would go down through the house or down the long hall out the front door.....stand at the river only 60' from the front gate.



**Edwina, Edwin Arthur
Richardson(father)
and Darryl**

Gran put a wet towel leading to the way down on the floor.....my side of the bed.....I was told I still walked or stood on the end of the bed and recited poetry.....just a line or two.....wouldn't have a clue what I'd been up to during the night. So Gran put us in the big what we called special bed down stairs across the hall opposite the so called Parlour. Gran sleeping in a single bed under the window of a closed in verandah. Gradually growing out of the sleep walks I was moved to the single bed on the veranda where I could see the starsthe other end moonlit frosty nights.....suited me in my own space at

last. Dazz had a tendency to creep over from her side of the bed as large as the beds were I didn't like that, I'd be on the very edge so not to have her touch me.....push her away and she'd be back again.....sometimes I would get on the floor taking a blanket with me till I was cold so go the other side and get in. She slept like a log.....nothing woke her.....peaceful mind.....no horrible oversized woman chasing her.....small head big body.....run.....run.....run she's getting close run.....run faster.....can't so tired.....oh it's all right she's a long way away.....no here she comes.....run.....I would be safe then.....Hell she's trying to grab me I would wake crying and wonder who that was but she would come nearly every night. These nights got further apart as I got older but waiting for her to come again.....the bed wetting part of that? Must have been stress. We eventually left May and Percy's place.



Mavis (May) and Percy Nolan

They built a 2nd house.....fibro 2 bedroom fair size living area with fireplace set into one wall.....nice little place water tank on the side near front door which faced the road that branched off a little way along Little River Road as it ran down and across the river to The Brook fairly close to the homestead.



The Brook – 1920 with Mary Ellen Richardson

Had a sheering shed one end.....had dividing sections with straw on the floor.....apples and pears kept amongst the straw for storage and kept fresh for ages. May made jams, pickles out of the fruit, apple pies, rhubarb pies, cherry pies all from the orchard. Huge pear tree and the meat safe hung under the overhanging branches.....a massive tree, a grape vine attached to the end of the house. Gran and May put junket and jellies to set under that grape vine. May was a terrific cook not much of a talker though.....I hated junket yuck.....sat half a day one time because I couldn't stomach Tapioca. When May gave up I went home.....never knew what she did with that mess. Jam cream on toast was good.....May made huge fluffy scones.....she and I would walk through the bush to take lunch to the men cutting wood that was loaded onto the truck as long logs or eucalyptus cutting. Loved to stand out in the rain.....head lifted to the sky looking like a drowned rat no doubt.....red straight hair that they didn't know what to do with it.....cut it off? do plaits?

Dazz and I sat near the fireplace one Sunday night. I'm not going to school tomorrow.....I'm going to work at the Kain's farm. She didn't say anything so I thought well that's ok. So I put in some things.....hardly anything..... only had the very small school case, one dress.....wore the black tunic and white blouse so that I could pretend to be

going to school as usual. Braidwood High School.....hated it.....so out of place.....so uninformed on subjects. Nouns, verbs what in Hell are they.....I notice Betty Webb didn't come in on Percy Webb's jeep school run that started past Charleys Forest where he lived.....2 weeks not a sign of her and by this time I was friendly enough with Margaret Harrison from Araluen.....Bobby Baxter sat near me in class.....he struggled too.....a Briggs boy a Gourlay girl also Helen Dunshea and brother Ray.....they lived in town somewhere and Rae something from Majors Creek.....she had a brother both suffered badly with acne.....a Galway girl Robyn Montie, Cecily, Helen, Robyn. Cecily I felt knew I was not coping but always said hello.....Mr McCaffery a teacher.....another fellow seemed like he might have blood pressure tried but knew I was a hopeless unprepared case.....no questions asked when I didn't turn up nor with Betty Webb.....Betty Thorpe only stayed a little while.



Percy Vincent Webb

I think Percy Webb the driver ended up with only his own son on the jeep.....even Robert caved in as well I don't know about his sister Zilla what she did. Athol Colemane went to the

Catholic school Braidwood.....they ended up putting him in the garden to trim and general clean up then he left. Moral of all that? Mr Sinclair did his best.....no relief teacher at any point coping with 6 year olds to Year 6 and or correspondence for another 2 years.....a big ask poor man.

When Percy and May took Darryl with then leaving for Quandialla, May wanted to take those old photos with them. Percy wouldn't allow her that small thing so Dazz says, nor let Dazz take her movie star collection and my stamp collection.....so many historical items from The Brook lost when that sale went through.....we also stopped going to that area as Harry Neilson came across us one day.....he on his big horse probably looking for stray cattle.....that area too rough for sheep then.....told us better get home.....he might have dobbed us in.....those days neighbouring families were close visiting each other.



Mavis (May) Nolan and Darryl

Dad's sister Mavis loved cooking sponge cakes and big scones for visitors coming. I was handy making the butter.....didn't like it much too salty.....had a wooden paddle to wack it into shape a bit like a waffle these days.....the milk was hung over the iron rods across the huge fire place.....big hooks to hold the cast iron kettle and

things or on the big wood stove as the cream formed and cooled.....was so thick just lifted off the milk into a bowl.....that was to be the butter.....funny how me so young hanging about when things were being done by May or Harry or Billy. I ended up doing that job.....got strong enough after watching.



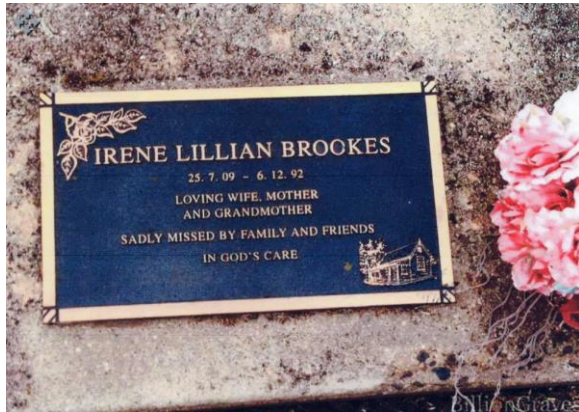
The Brook in later years

Gran split the small logs for the stove to have a go.....eventually gained confidence but only did that now and then to help Gran a bit. I tell her I can't wait to grow up and get a job and leave and not have to say thank you. I did leave a couple of weeks after turning 14, got a job on another farm. Gran died when I was 13 ½ and Dazz was 10 years.

Because of Darryl's persistence bringing this all up, I started thinking about it all.....the good.....the bad.....that's life stuff.

So as I have aged I realise I was mildly curious as to how Irene might have continued her existence a long way from what she was used to. The loss of one child.....a city person with 6 kids living the country life.....basic amenities.....no electricity.....someone else's house. As time passed I undid reservations long held able to see through older mature eyes that she would no doubt have had her reasons..... her limits.....but no

excuse good enough to totally abandon us.....we don't exist.....might as well have fallen down an abandoned mine shaft."



Headstone of Irene Reader



Raymond Seymour Crook, Irene's 3rd husband.

History of 'The Brook'

James Williams and William McDowell were the first to purchase land on Half Moon Flat. John Feagan built the only large house in the area in 1863 – a substantial two story stone building called The Brook which at one time was run as a dairy farm. Feagan's daughter Eleanor married James Richardson and their son Edwin Arthur also lived there with his wife Mary Seidel



The Brook being restored of later years.

Brief Genealogy

Irene Gertrude Reader was born in Hobart 1909 to Edward Charles Reader and Elizabeth Woods. Irene had 12 siblings.

Irene married Eric Charles Hanson in Hobart in 1927 and divorced him in 1940, she having borne him 4 children.

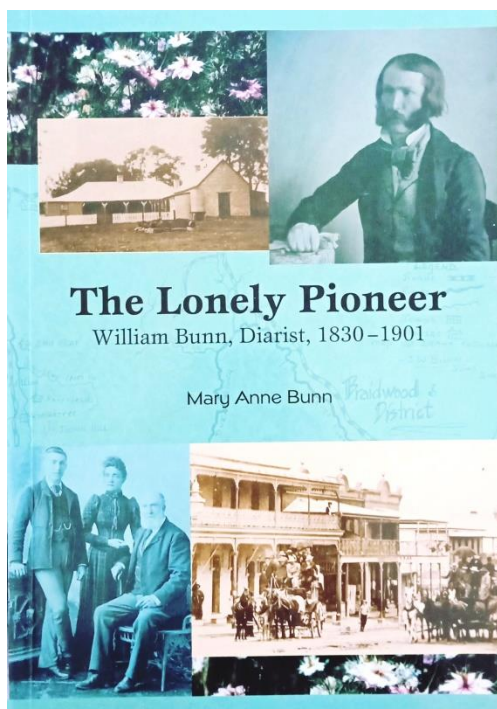
In 1940 in Sydney she then married Edwin Arthur Richardson of Mongarlowe and divorced him in 1949 leaving all her children.

In 1949 she married Robert George Crooks. He was also known as Ransom Seymour Crook. Irene died in Victoria in 1992 and was buried as Irene Lillian Crook.

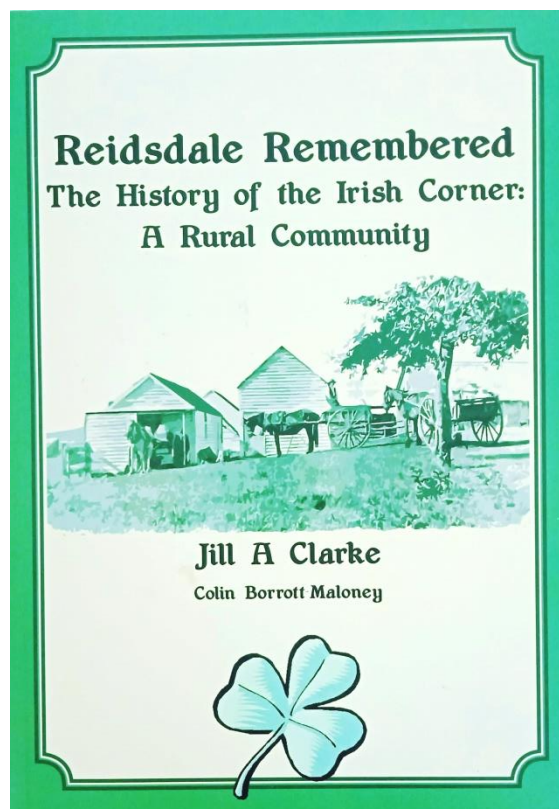
Edwin Arthur Richardson was born to Edwin Arthur Richardson Snr and wife Mary Ellen Seidel (d.1952). Her parents were Edward Seidel and Ellen nee Bryant(d.1944) all of Mongarlowe.

Edwin Jnr had a sister Mavis (May) who married Percy Nolan.

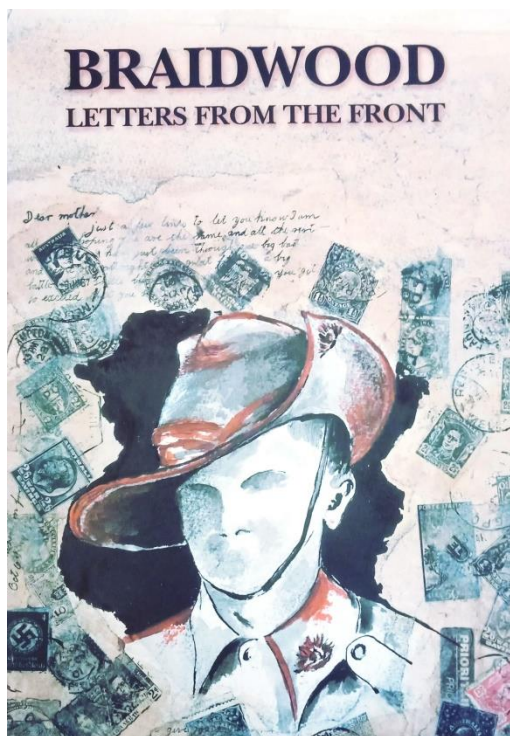
A Selection of Braidwood Museum Books for Sale



794 pages. A slice of history from a personal perspective.
\$45 + \$13.80 postage



242 pages. A biographical and pictorial history of Irish Corner.
\$45 + \$13.80 postage



194 pages. From the Boer War to WW2
\$18 + \$13.80 postage

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