Macquarie’s crossing

Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson’s journey across the Blue Mountains sparked further and rapid exploration. On their return Governor Macquarie quickly sent his assistant Surveyor-General, George William Evans (1775-1852), to investigate building a road over the mountains.

Evans retraced the explorers’ trail in November 1813, surveyed the route, pushed on into the grassy plains beyond the mountains and discovered the Macquarie and Lachlan Rivers. Macquarie then commissioned William Cox to build the road, completing the task in less than six months with a team of convict workers.

Eager to see the new territory for himself, Macquarie set out to inspect the road and the land beyond the mountains on 25 April 1815. The Governor and Mrs Macquarie left Sydney with a group of 50 people including William Cox, the Surveyor-General John Oxley, and John William Lewin (1770-1819), the artist who was to make a visual record of the excursion.

View William Cox's journal kept during the building of the road in 1814 [1]

a303009h.jpg [2]
Blue Mountains, ca. 1815-1816 / watercolour drawings by John William Lewin - Cox's Pass with Expedition resting, ca. 1815-1816

Share [3]
Once in the mountains, the party witnessed first hand the challenges the road builders had tackled, as well as the scenic grandeur. Descending into the grassy plains on the western side of the mountains, they camped on the banks of the Macquarie River for a week. It was during this time that the Governor selected a suitable site for the erection of a town to be named Bathurst. The party returned to Sydney on 19 May 1815.

Major Henry Antill (1779-1852) and John Lewin both kept records of the trip, Antill a journal and Lewin watercolours. Lewin's paintings of the excursion capture previously unrecorded landscapes, and provide some wonderful behind-the-scene glimpses into the organisation needed for the excursion.

Read Henry Colden Antill's complete Journal [6]
View the full collection of John Lewin's paintings [7]
View a chart of part of the interior of New South Wales by John Oxley, Surveyor General [8]

Celebrating the centenary of the crossing
To mark the centenary of the crossing of the Blue Mountains by Gregory Blaxland, William Wentworth and William
Lawson, historian, writer and lecturer Frank Walker (1861-1948) wrote the official history, published in 1913 by the Blue Mountains Centenary Celebrations Committee.

To support his research, he amassed a large collection of maps, leaflets, brochures and newspaper clippings. Some of Walker’s collection is held at the State Library of New South Wales.

a303013h.jpg [9]
[Blue Mountains, ca. 1815-1816] / watercolour drawings by John William Lewin- Sidmouth Valley showing Macquarie River, ca. 1815-1816

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Crossing the Blue Mountains
First crossing of the Blue Mountains of N.S.W. : [newspaper extracts, manuscript notes, maps, photographs, etc.] Album view
The Committee

Consists also of the Mayors of the Suburban Municipalities, and influential Citizens of Sydney, and Gentlemen of Country Progress Associations and other public bodies.

REGULAR MEETINGS are held at the SYDNEY TOWN HALL and the MOUNTAIN and COUNTRY TOWNS, when important business connected with the CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS is systematically and methodically transacted.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED to attend these Committee Meetings and take a practical interest in the

GREATEST CENTENARY IN AUSTRALIA'S HISTORY

BLUE MOUNTAINS CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

WILLIAM CHARLES WENTWORTH
Frank Walker

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First crossing of the Blue Mountains of N.S.W. : [newspaper extracts, manuscript notes, maps, photographs, etc.] Album view
Macquarie's crossing
Published on State Library of NSW (https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au)

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Remember what the FIRST CROSSING of the Blue Mountains meant to Australia, and what you personally owe to the Explorers.

The extent and nature of the celebrations will depend entirely on the amount of money raised.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS
First crossing of the Blue Mountains of N.S.W. : [newspaper extracts, manuscript notes, maps, photographs, etc.] Album view

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Frank Walker
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Digital ID: a7896052
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a7902007h.jpg
THE
FIRST CROSSING
OF THE
BLUE MOUNTAINS.
(Illustrated)

BY
FRANK WALKER
SYDNEY
1913.

VOLUME I.

[Sydney, 1913]
1913
Frank Walker
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Frank Walker

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The First Crossing of the Blue Mountains
Frank W. Walker
1913.

Australian Pioneers
Artists, Major. Diary of

Blue Mountain Exploration (Frontispiece)

Conquest of
Road Out
First Crossing of
Opening of Road Across
Expedition of 1813
Blaxland, Gregory

Conquest of the Blue Mountains
Caley, George
Cox, Captain William
Centenary Committee. Inaugural Meeting, Mt. Victoria
Meeting
Celebration, the proposed
Crossing the Mountains

Page 20 of 27
A Historical Monument on the Mountains.

First crossing of the Blue Mountains: newspaper extracts, manuscript notes, maps, photographs, etc. [Album view]
Frank Walker

Digital ID: a7902019

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First crossing of the Blue Mountains: newspaper extracts, manuscript notes, maps, photographs, etc.

[Album view]

"First crossing of the Blue Mountains..."
First crossing of the Blue Mountains: newspaper extracts, manuscript notes, maps, photographs, etc.

[Album view]
This story has been developed with the support of the State Library of NSW Foundation.

We would like to acknowledge the generosity of Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation.


Links