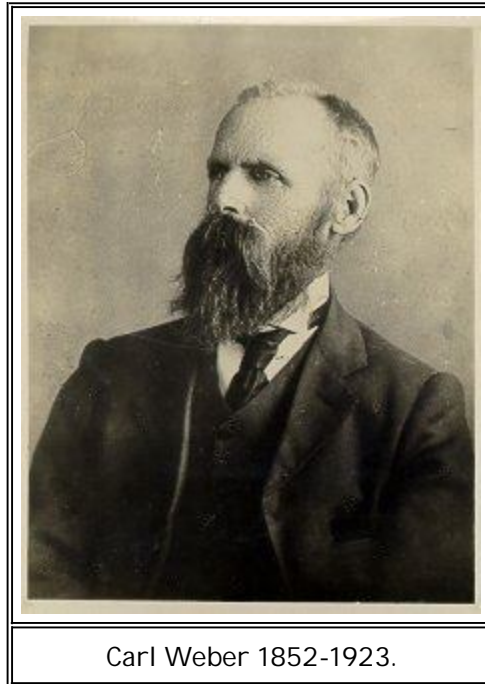


Carl Ludwig Adalbert Weber - Pioneering Surveyor and Engineer

1852 - 1923

Compiled by Michael Organ



Introduction

The following web page contains biographical and other material relating to Carl Weber, a pioneering surveyor and engineer who spent a large part of his life working in the Illawarra district of New South Wales. Items of interest reproduced below include:

- Biography of Carl Weber by Anne Wood
- Carl Weber & Family - Timeline
- Presentation by Bulli Residents 1883
- Obituary of Mrs Carl Weber, 1903
- Obituaries (3) of Mr Carl Weber, 1923
- Listing of Carl Weber Collection, University of Wollongong Archives
- Carl Weber material held in other public collections

Carl Weber - Pioneering Surveyor and Engineer

Anne Wood

{Originally published in the Illawarra Mercury, 27 April 2000}

Carl Weber was born in London in 1852, the son of Adalbert Arnold Weber and Adelaide Amelia Schleswig. Adalbert had fled to London two years before the birth of his son, because as a Captain in the Prussian Army, he had challenged his Colonel and Captain to a duel, and now faced the possibility of a court-martial. He was also secretly engaged to Adelaide, a Baroness, despite the fact that she was to wed a Prussian prince in an arranged marriage. Because of their connections with the Royal family, England gave the pair a warm welcome.



Carl Weber's house, Harbour Street, Wollongong. Mr and Mrs Weber are seen at the entrance on the ground floor, whilst their daughters Lilian and Gertrude are standing on the first floor balcony.

Adalbert and Adelaide spent four years in London, in which time a daughter and a son, Carl, were born. Carl's godparents were Sir Robert Napier and Lady Emma Duke, who later married Lord Ponsonby, but at the time was one of the maids of honour to Queen Victoria. When Carl was christened in the Lutheran Church in Savoy Street on 27 November, 1853, his godmother took him to see the Queen, who cradled the babe in her arms. She could not have predicted the remarkable career that Carl was to carve out for himself as a surveyor and engineer in the harsh outback of the colony of New South Wales.

In 1854, Carl Weber arrived in New South Wales with his mother and sister on the screw steamer, "Croesus". Adalbert had travelled ahead of his family, and because of his connections, had letters of introduction to the Governor and other influential men in Sydney. He was immediately offered a position in a bank, but because he would have had to

shave off his beard, declined the offer. Soon after, he received an appointment under Sir Thomas Mitchell, who was both Surveyor General and Chief Engineer of the colony. Over the following years, Adalbert was to lay out and construct roads from the Clyde River to Braidwood, and from the McLeay River at Kempsey to Armidale, and to open up communication for the goldfields at Kiandra.

When he turned fourteen, Carl Weber decided that he was capable of starting a life for himself and soon found himself surveying in some of the loneliest parts of the colony. He surveyed previously uncharted rivers, setting up camps as the work demanded. When he was surveying the Endrick River near its union with the Shoalhaven, his food of corned beef and biscuits would be lowered to him over cliffs each evening, and he and his party had only rock shelves to rest on. Later when he camped on the Molonglo River near Queanbeyan, he would spend his evenings with the old shepherds from the nearby Carwoola Rutledges Station, and listen to the horrifying tales of their convict days. Their flogging scars were sickening to him.

At the age of twenty-two, Carl was working on the initial surveys of the Sydney Water Supply, and was camped in the Darkes Forest area in a scrubby paddock owned by Mrs Rice, who lived there with her four daughters. Their father was Captain Rice, who spent most of his time at sea. Carl was working in the field all day, and on his calculations late into the night. The worry of the project put him under great stress, and just before Christmas, 1874, his health failed. He lay for some weeks solely dependent on the kindness of Mrs Rice and her eldest daughter, Elizabeth.

By the time that Carl was well again, he had asked Mrs Rice for her daughter's hand in marriage, and had written to Captain Rice on the same subject. Elizabeth and Carl were to enjoy a very happy marriage, Carl later writing, "Life was now one holiday, though I was at the bridge [over the Moruya River] almost ten hours out of twelve, the pleasure of having my darling to see me start and to meet me

on my return to dinner and in the evening made the days pass quickly."



Illawarra owes much to Carl Weber. He surveyed the top portion of Macquarie Pass, part of the road from Bodalla to Cobargo, the mountain road at Cambewarra over what was called the Good Dog Mountain, the road from Broughton Creek to Kangaroo Valley, and the coastal road from Clifton to Stanwell Park, where men had to be lowered over the cliff for the initial excavations. Importantly, he supervised the building of the first lookout at Bulli Pass, which for a long time was known as Weber's Lookout. Carl Ludwig Adalbert Weber died in 1923, outliving his beloved Elizabeth by twenty years. He was survived by three sons and four daughters.

Carl Weber & Family - Timeline

Date	Event
• 1850	Adalbert Arnold Weber and his wife-to-be Baronness Adelaide Amelia Schleswig flee to London
• 1852	Carl Ludwig Adalbert Weber born in London, son of Adalbert and Adelaide Weber
• 1853	27 November - Carl Weber christened
•	Adalbert Weber travels to Sydney ahead of his family. Gains employment in the Surveyor General's Department.
• 1854	Mrs Weber and her two sons arrive in Sydney aboard the Croesus.
• 1866	Carl Weber, aged 14, begins working as a surveyor.
• 1874	Carl Weber, whilst surveying for the Sydney Water Supply scheme at Darkes Forest, meets the Rice family. He later marries the eldest daughter Elizabeth Rice (born circa 1856).
• 1879 - 1883	Carl Weber resides in Bulli district, northern Illawarra.
• 1883	17 March - Presentation by Bulli residents to Carl Weber in appreciation

	of road works.
• 1890	21 October - Adalbert Weber dies at St Peter's, Sydney.
• 1896	20 December - death of Letitia Rice, sister of Elizabeth Weber (nee Rice).
• 1903	11 April - Mrs Carl Weber (nee Elizabeth Rice) dies at Smith Street, Wollongong, aged 47. Survived by a husband, 4 daughters and 3 sons.
• 1910	Carl Weber - invitation to opening of School of Arts building, Wollongong.
• 1923	12 April - Carl Weber dies, aged 69 years 6 months, at his residence 'Sunny Nook', Corrimal.

Presentation to Mr C. Weber {[Illawarra Mercury](#), 23 March 1883}:

One of those pleasing occasions which so immediately bind together the friendship of man to his fellows, making good the poet's adage that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," took place at Host Dwyer's, Bulli, on the evening of the 17th instant, the occasion being the presentation of a purse of sovereigns to Mr C. Weber, late Government Road Superintendent, which had been subscribed by a few friends in this district, where, during his residence of some four years, his obliging and gentlemanly conduct has been thoroughly appreciated.

A very elegant supper had been provided in one of the apartments of the establishment, which had been tastefully decorated with an abundance of floral contributions. The viands and wines were provided in hospitable abundance, and were choice in quality. The chair was occupied by Mr Walker, and after ample justice had been done to the lavish display of good things, he proposed the health of her Majesty, followed by the other usual loyal toasts, and then in a neat and appropriate speech gave the toast of the evening, "Our Guest," in which expressions of goodwill entertained by the inhabitants of the district were happily blended with regret at his departure, and as a peroration presented Mr Weber with a handsome silk purse containing a goodly number of sovereigns, as a small token of regards and esteem.

The recipient, in response, apologised for his want of oratory, especially at such an unlooked for and spontaneous expression of good feeling, and, in wishing them farewell, did so with but one regret, that of parting with the many kind friends who had in such tangible shape evinced their appreciation of his conduct since his residence among them. Other toasts followed, and a most enjoyable evening was passed.

Obituary of Mrs Carl Weber {[Illawarra Mercury](#), 15 April 1903}:

The Late Mrs. Carl Weber - The sad news of the sudden death of Mrs. Weber, wife of Mr. Carl Weber, surveyor, of Smith-street, on Saturday, night last [11th], caused quite a shock throughout Wollongong on becoming known. She had been somewhat unwell during the last three months, but only on Tuesday week last did her illness give special anxiety to her family. And even up to the moment of her death no fear of such an immediate result was entertained. On Saturday evening, however, symptoms being not as desired, Dr. Lee, who had been attending to her throughout, was called in, and during his visit at 9 she suddenly passed away by heart failure.

The deceased lady was most exemplary in the best attributes of a woman. As a wife and a mother she was devoted and true in the full sense of the expression, as her sorrowing husband and family are best aware of, with sacred memory. In accordance with an oft-expressed wish by the deceased, and at the request of her parents (residing at Sylvania, George's River), the remains were taken by train to Sutherland on Monday forenoon, and buried in the Church of England cemetery there beside those of a dear sister. At the request of Rev. G. D'Arcy Irvine, the local C.E. clergyman conducted the burial service.

She was the daughter of Captain William Rice, and had completed the 47th year of her age, leaving a husband, three sons, and four daughters to mourn their loss, and for whom much sympathy is felt in their bereavement.

Obituary of Mr Carl Weber {Illawarra Mercury, Friday, 13 April 1923}:

The Late Mr. Carl Weber

On Thursday morning the death occurred of Mr. Carl Weber, at his residence, Riedtown. He had been in indifferent health for some time and the end was not unexpected. The late Mr Weber was one of Nature's gentlemen, but was of a quiet, retiring disposition, yet during his life he succeeded in accomplishing work which will remain as monuments to his memory for many a long day.

An engineer and surveyor by profession, in the early days he was associated with the Gold Commissioner at Braidwood and Hill End, and carried out surveys in connection with goldfield claims. He was Road Superintendent for the Government at Windsor, and then came to the Illawarra district, where as Government Road Superintendent he had charge of the district from Sydney to Moruya, and during his term of office some important works in that large district were carried out under his supervision. He subsequently supervised work for the Government at Bega. He then went to Glenn Innes as Road Superintendent.

About thirty five years ago he settled in this district with the object of following the profession of a surveyor, and was associated with the initial surveys of the Sydney water supply at the back of the Mountains. It was here that he met his wife, Miss Rice, daughter of the late Captain Rice, a well known identity on the coast at one time. It was in Captain Rice's boat that the building stone of St. Michael's Church, Wollongong, was brought from Sydney.

The late Mr Weber was responsible for carrying out the survey of the coastal road from Clifton to Stanwell Park, and the work of construction was carried out under his supervision, men having to be lowered over the cliff to carry out the initial excavations. The first Look-Out at Bulli Pass was also carried out under his supervision, and was for a long time called Weber's Look Out.

Under directions from the late Mr Archibald Campbell M.L.A., he surveyed the top portion of the Macquarie Pass, which the Chief Commissioner for Railways recently stated is one of the best mountain grades in the Illawarra district. The surveys in connection with the old Dapto Smelting Works [and] the deviations at the top of Mount Kembla Road are a few of the important works which Mr Weber carried out.

He was actively associated with the early South Coast exhibits at the Royal Show, and his professional knowledge helped considerably towards laying the foundation of the success which has attended these exhibits ever since.

Born at London in 1853, the late Mr Weber came to Australia at an early age with his father, the late

Mr Adalbert Arnold Weber, who was also an engineer by profession and who was employed by the Government shortly after his arrival in New South Wales, and for some years afterwards in laying out the roads to the then goldfields.

The deceased survived the death of his wife by twenty years and one day, and he is survived by a family of three sons and four daughters, viz., Mr Arnold Weber, J.P., of Wolumla Public School, in the Bega district; Mr Guido Weber, who was also in the Education Department, but had to retire after his return from active service, owing to injuries received during the war, and is now on the land in the Eden district; Ald. W.L. Weber of Corrimal; Messrs Gertrude and Bertha Weber; Mrs J.R. Smith, of Corrimal; and Mrs G.L. Watson, wife of the Rev. G.L. Watson, C. of E. clergyman of Bendigo.

The remains will be interred at Sutherland cemetery this afternoon beside those of his late wife. It is expected that the funeral cortege will reach the cemetery gates at about 1.30 pm.

Obituary of Mr Carl Weber {Sydney Morning Herald, 17 April 1923. Extracted from Illawarra Mercury obituary, though some of the details vary}:

Wollongong, Monday

The death has occurred of Mr. Carl Weber, at his residence, Riedtown, Wollongong. An engineer and surveyor by profession, in the early days he was associated with the Gold Commissioner at Braidwood and Hill End, and carried out surveys for goldfield claims. He moved to the North Coast, where he laid out the road from Kempsey to Armidale, which is regarded as a fine piece of engineering work. He was road superintendent for the Government at Glen Innes, and then went to the Illawarra district, where as Government road superintendent he had charge of the district from Sydney to Moruya. He subsequently supervised work for the Government at Bega.

About 35 years ago he settled in the Wollongong district, with the object of following the profession of a surveyor, and was associated with the initial surveys of the Sydney water supply at the back of the mountains. He was responsible for carrying out the survey of the coastal road from Clifton to Stanwell Park, and the work of construction was carried out under his supervision, men having to be lowered over the cliff to carry out the initial excavations. The first look-out at Bulli Pass was also carried out under his supervision, and was for a long time called Weber's Look Out. He also surveyed the top portion of Macquarie Pass.

Born at London in 1853, the late Mr Weber came to Australia at an early age with his father, the late Mr Adalbert Arnold Weber, who was also an engineer by profession and who was employed by the Government shortly after his arrival in New South Wales, and for some years afterwards in laying out the roads to the goldfields.

Obituary of Mr Carl Weber {South Coast Times, 20 April 1923}:

The Late Carl Weber

Mr Carl Weber, who passed away at his residence, Corrimal, last week after an illness which caused him broken health for some years, was a prominent figure in the district as a road engineer and surveyor; not a little of the earlier road work in this and other districts was of his designing. His most notable work was the lay-out of the Macquarie Pass road, an admirable grading achievement. Mr Weber, in fact,

earned a high reputation as a roads grader. The late John Brown, of Dapto, esteemed him one of the best in the State. Another road which he laid out which has never been faulted was that to Kembla Heights. He it was who also formed the Bulli Pass Lookout, which for years after was known as Weber's Lookout.

Unfortunately for himself, Mr Weber did not profit as much by his good works as their merits deserved. He was of a rather retiring than a self asserting disposition; at all events, there is to his memory much good practical work in the opening of htis and other districts for settlement. He had in his ill health the affectionate attendance of his daughters. His sons, Mr Arnold Weber, master of the Wolumla School; Mr William Weber, now a prominent Corrimal resident, and Mr G. Weber, a returned soldier, now farming on the Far South Coast, are wellknown.

Carl Weber Collection (D174) University of Wollongong Archives

1. Stereophotograph on card -
'Portion of Survey Camp.
Shellharbour. Illawarra'

2. Photograph of Carl Weber

3. Photograph of road at top of
Macquarie Pass

4. Photograph 'Webers Home,
Harbour Street, Wollongong.
Upstairs Lillian & Gertrude.
Mr & Mrs Weber at door'

5. Postcard photograph of Carl
Weber on backyard swing



6. Card: 'C.L.A. Weber, Surveyor and Engineer, Crown Street, Wollongong.

7. Invitation to laying of foundation stone of Wollongong School of Arts building, Crown Street, on
14 September 1910

8. Invitation to laying of foundation stone of Wollongong Hospital, on 29 August 1906

9. Order form for 'Illawarra Tourist Guide', Carl Weber agent, 1893.

10. Letter to Carl Weber from Chas. McD. Stuart, Railway Construction Branch, Sydney, 22
December 1899.

11. Letter to Carl Weber from Chas. McD. Stuart, Railway Construction Branch, Sydney, 27
December 1899.

12. Letter to Carl Weber from J.A. Beatson, Wollongong Municipal Council, 15 February 1909,
regarding railway from Wollongong to Robertson.

13. 'The Royal Agricultural Show 1912', 4 page supplement to Illawarra Mercury, Friday, 19 April

1912

14. 4 pages from Illawarra Mercury, 1 February 1894.
15. Illawarra Mercury, Friday, 5 February 1932. Featuring story on completion of Moss Vale to Port Kembla railway and a transcript of correspondence with Carl Weber from 1899-1900 on this topic.
16. 'William Rice, Master of a Foreign-Going Ship' certificate, Marine Board of New South Wales, 4 July 1872. Original on velum. Captain Rice was said to have brought the stone for the Wollongong Court House (Brighton Beach) from Sydney to Wollongong in 1858. [Copy]
17. 17 Carl Weber Album of Photographs [Copies - originals in family collection]. Inscribed 'E.D. Weber, 24 Decr. 1897, Wollongong' inside front cover, and 'C Weber Surveyor Reidtown Corrimal'. Photographs (148 x 100cm) mounted on board. Titles, including those with original pencil inscriptions, as follows:
 1. 'Survey Camp Dunmore'
 2. 'Market St Wollongong'
 3. 'Wollongong'
 4. 'Breaking up camp Shellharbour'
 5. 'Clifton'
 6. 'Wollongong'
 7. 'Wollongong'
 8. 'Wollongong'
 9. 'Wollongong'
 10. 'Nowra Bridge'
 11. 'Nowra Bridge'
 12. 'Scene of Great Fire at Wollongong' 'Globe Lane to Commercial Hotel'
 13. Scene of Great Fire at Wollongong
 14. Gun at Smith's Hill
 15. Wollongong Harbour
 16. Bush scene Debbie's paddock
 17. Hay load Osbornes bush [Mangerton]
 18. Clifton
 19. Coal Cliff
 20. Windmill Dunmore
 21. Unighted Figtrees Dunmore [Archive Grieves S/C of Police Woll. Son.]
 22. M'Qarrie Gap
 23. Swing bridge Nowra Showground
 24. Lodden Falls
 25. Helensburgh falls
 26. Helensburgh pit
 27. Wollongong basin
 28. Survey Camp Albion Park. Original Survey McQarrie Pass [Guido Weber, Archie Grieves]
 29. Davis Pond Keira Line [near Bowling Club]
 30. Big Figtree
 31. Ghost Bridge Geards Hill
 32. Wollongong
 33. E.S.&A. Bank Wollongong
 34. Wave Wollongong Harbour
 35. Wave Wollongong Harbour

36. [Trooper Frank Andrews Monument]
 37. [Jim Quinn Albion Park Survey of McQuarie Pass. Mr Savage. Pelican off wingspan]
 38. [Lake Illawarra]
 39. [Wollongong Breakwater]
 40. [Port Kembla Harbour]
 41. [Darkes Forest Farm House Cartrice Family]
 42. [?Darkes Forest Farm Buildings]
-

Other Material held in Public Collections

- Carl Weber Collection, Reference Section, Wollongong City Library
 - Carl Weber surveying equipment, Illawarra Historical Society Museum
 - Glass plate negatives - Illawarra Historical Society Museum
 - Carl Weber surveying maps - Mitchell Library, Sydney
 - Wollongong City Library Reference Collection:
 - Photographs - 767 glass plate negatives
 - Survey Books
 - Letter, 'Alf Parsons Story', 22 February 1926
 - Illawarra Mercury, 23 March 1884
 - Wollongong Argus, 19 January 1884
 - W.A.Bayley notes
-

Any comments, corrections, or additions to the content of this document are most welcome. Please e-mail the author at: Michael.Organ@uow.edu.au, Australia. Site last updated: 14 May 2000. Return to [Home Page](#).