It might, in this connection, be mentioned that Cooma, too, had a short "gold-rush" in 1897, when a party, led by Mr. Perkins and Charles Solomon, found payable gold at Bushy Hill, about two miles from Cooma. Charles Solomon and his party secured a mining lease, and so did many others, but two years later the work was at a stand-still.

Needless to say that new life began for sleepy Cooma and its district in the forties of this century with the creation of the Snowy Mountains Authority, but there was no influx this time of Jewish settlers and merchants.

—G.F.J.B.

"THEY CAME TO A VALLEY", by D. I. McDonald, Wellington, N.S.W., 1968.

This history of the Wellington Valley, written by Mr. D. I. McDonald, the former Research Officer of the Royal Australian Historical Society was sponsored by the Wellington Historical Society on the occasion of the sesqui-centenary of the discovery of the Valley by the explorer, John Oxley, in 1817.

It gives a comprehensive history of the Valley from the beginning of settlement to the present times and although the reviewer in the Journal of the *R.A.H.S.* found some errors,[1] the well-illustrated book constitutes a valuable addition to the works on local N.S.W. history.

The book is of special interest to Australian Jewish history, because among the first settlers in the Valley, although he never lived there permanently, was a very prominent Sydney Jewish merchant, Joseph Barrow Montefiore.

It seems to me to be unnecessary to deal here with J. B. Montefiore's life in Australia, because his life story has been fully recorded by Professor Israel Getzler in Volume I of the Dictionary of Australian Biography.[2]

Montefiore, on his arrival in 1828, received a grant of 2,560 acres in Wellington Valley, to which in 1834 he added 1,064 acres at Burran Burran. Within four years he increased his holdings by 7,000 acres, whilst having at the same time a considerable area of Crown land under leasehold. His property was then called Myami, but this was changed later to Nanima (the other side of the Mac-quarie River). Here he built a village which still com-memorates his name in N.S.W., Montefiores.

In 1835, two Quakers, James Backhouse and George Walker, visited the Valley and wrote:—

"At Myami a Sydney merchant has erected some good, wooden buildings consisting of a dwelling house, prisoners' huts, a large wool-shed, etc."

Montefiore supported the petition of local residents seeking the establishment of a village close by the Wellington Valley Mission Station for the Aborigines, but the Petition was rejected. In 1839, he leased his properties to Dr. Rygate and Messrs. Temple and Cornish, but the severe depression of the forties and the temporary collapse of the Montefiore commercial Empire forced him in 1841 to put the Wellington Valley properties up for sale.

In the meantime the Government decided to establish a township at the Mission Station across the river from Montefiores and many settlers purchased land in the new village of Wellington, demolishing their buildings at Montefiores and moving them to the new township.

J. B. Montefiore returned in 1841 to London and after three years in England, settled anew in Adelaide. In 1849 he decided to sell Nanima, probably because he was unable to keep an eye from South Australia on these extensive buildings and because he was now engaged in extensive commercial enterprises in the far-away colony.

The property of 16,000 acres with 14,000 sheep was bought for the ridicously low price of £7,125 by Joseph Aarons, Jun., a baptised Jew, who has also found a place in the Dictionary of Australian Biography,[3] where the author of this book has related his fortunes and misfortunes.

He was the son of Joseph Aarons, a Jewish convict of Dutch origin and Rachel, nee Schlesinger,[4] a native of Hamburg (Germany). He was born in London and was brought out by his parents as a child.[4] More about his parents will be said later.

Joseph Aarons, Jun., was educated in Sydney. In 1839 he opened a store in Bathurst, then a hotel and made a fortune in dealing with livestock. In 1854 he acquired the Burrendong Station and in 1859, Nanima. He prospered as a grazier, but borrowed heavily to finance his activities, which finally forced him to subdivide Nanima and to sell 7,000 acres as town and farm allotments. Yet he was unable to consolidate his position, and in 1899 the Commercial Bank of Sydney took over the remainder of the Station. Active in communal affairs, Aarons was Wellington's first Mayor and in 1865 was appointed a Magistrate. In 1842, he had married Mary Kable, of Bathurst, and after her death married Elizabeth Hale, of Goolma,

who, when he died on 23rd June, 1904, survived him with eight of their eleven children. His biography mentions that he was a Trustee of St. John's Church of England and a very charitable man who had unfortunately not been able to withstand the droughts and financial crises of the colony in the nineties.

JOSEPH AARONS, Sen.

As neither this book nor the biography of Joseph Aarons, Jun., in the Dictionary of Australian Biography mentions his Jewish origin and the fact that his parents had been Jewish convicts, it seems to me appropriate, to add to this review the rather sad story of this Jewish convict couple.

Joseph Aarons and his wife, Rachel, were members of the lower class English Jewry, probably recent immigrants, because, when both were indicted in September, 1821, for stealing eighteen yards of woollen cloth, value £15.0.0, the goods of James Blakeley and William Lister, in their warehouse,[5] an interpreter was used by the Court, because he could speak only Dutch. Joseph pleaded not guilty and it appears that he had to suffer for the misdemeanours of his wife. Pleading "not guilty" he was not believed and both were sentenced to transportation for Life to N.S.W.[5]

In addition to this sentence, Rachel, then aged 30, was subsequently sentenced at the Lancaster Quarter Sessions at Manchester on 21st October, 1822, to seven years' transportation, for having stolen at Manchester five dresses and other articles, the property of W. J. Kay, and 60 silk handkerchiefs, the property of R. Potter.[6]

At this time the couple had three young children[7] and it might have been very difficult for them to support their family and so they became thieves . . .

Joseph was transported in *Princess Royal*, which arrived in Port Jackson on 11th March, 1823, whilst his wife was sent to N.S.W. in *Mary*, arriving on 18th October, 1823.

In the indent of *Princess Royal*, Joseph is described as a "shopkeeper", aged 35. It is interesting to note that the indent of *Mary* mentions only Rachel's Lancaster conviction of 7 years' transportation and it appears that her London life sentence had been overlooked. On her arrival she was assigned to Mr. Richard Campbell, but she seems to have lived with her husband, because the Census, 1828, noted that her daughter, Sarah, was born in 1824 in the colony.