

What you should know

■ The CSU Regional Archives is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building at the South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.

■ Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.

■ For further information, phone 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au or visit the website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.

Recording our region's history

at the archives

Wayne Doubleday



At the archives is a new fortnightly piece showcasing some of the many historic records and items held at the Charles Sturt University Regional Archives (CSURA). These documents, archives and photos tell the real and personal history about not only the history and people of Wagga and district, but also of the Riverina and Murray regions.



The CSU Regional Archives

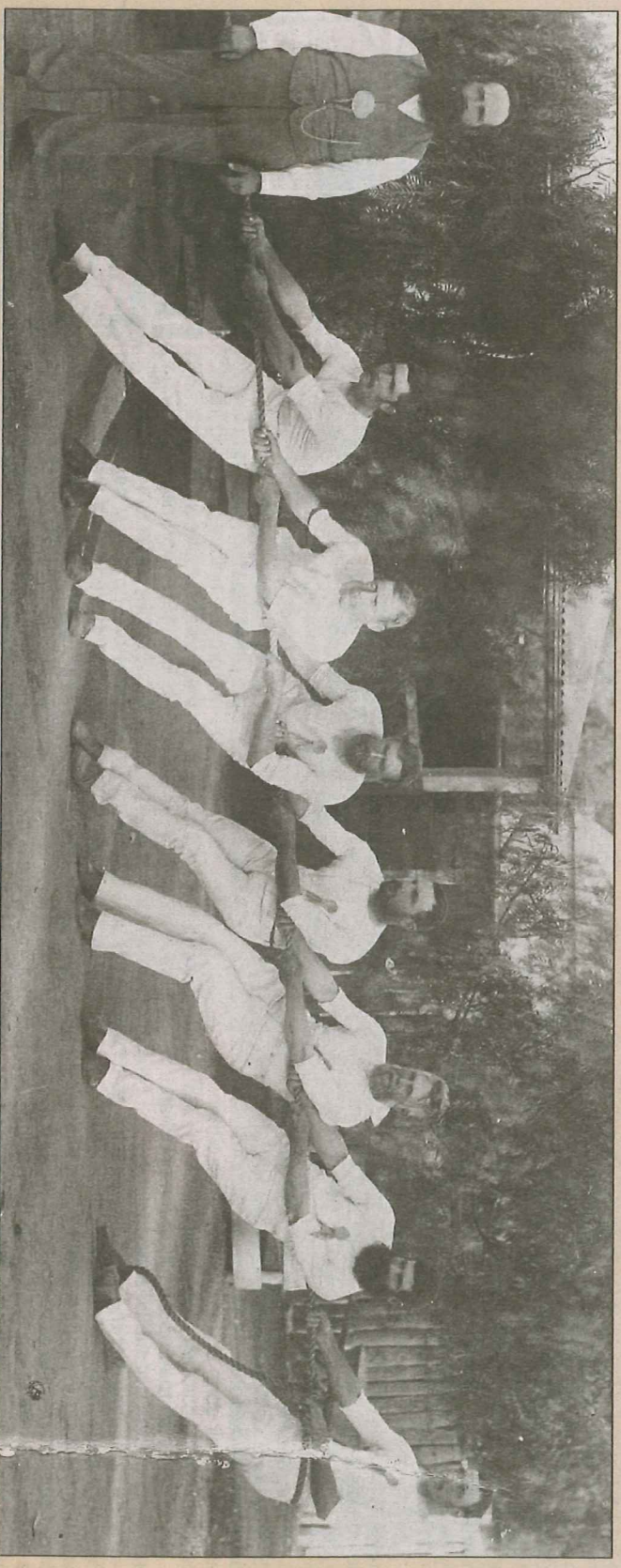
THE archives collection was established in 1973 and has grown to become the third largest university archive in Australia, with just over 4000 linear metres of archives and records. As a regional repository for State Records NSW, the archives store material from a huge geographical area which stretches from Tumut in the east, to the Victorian border to the south, to

Temora to the north, Hillston to the north-west and the South Australian border to the west. Collecting from such a huge area gives the archives collection a great degree of diversity. Most importantly, having the regional archives in Wagga allows local records to remain in the region, rather than being kept in Sydney or Canberra, which lets local people access their archives much more easily.

Broadly speaking, the archives collect records from three different areas:

- Charles Sturt University and precursor institutions such as Wagga Teachers College and Wagga Agricultural College.
- State government agencies, including Department of Lands, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and Local Courts to name a few; and
- Regional records, including private papers and non-government records from local and regional businesses, community organisations, agricultural and pastoral bodies, religious agencies, politicians, academics, interest groups, sporting bodies and individuals.

The CSU Regional Archives also has a wealth of family history and genealogical resources available in the search room for public use.



The Lake Albert Farmers Tug-of-War team, 1892 (RW987/2) are (from left) James Angel (captain), W Hennessy (10 stone 4lb, 65kg), C Annison (11-8, 73.5kg), H Holder (11-4, 71.5 kg), J Monks (11-0, 70kg), Henry Angel (12-6, 79kg), J Brooker (11-0, 70 kg), and JJ Wild (11-8, 73.5kg).

Farmers and Irish battle in record war

During March, 1892 several residents of Wagga took the unusual step of organising a Tug-of-War competition, and not surprisingly, the event captured the imagination of the entire town. Between March 19 and March 29, Oddfellows Hall was filled to capacity, often with female spectators outnumbering the men, to see local teams battle it out.

The make-up of the teams was quite diverse, with many men representing teams based on their country of origin, birth or heritage. Other teams, like the pictured Lake Albert Farmers, were from similar occupations or trades.

Each team paid a deposit of £5 to nominate, and by the first night of competition the 10 teams assembled were: Australia, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Town and Country, Agents, Infantry, Riverine Laborers and the Lake Albert Farmers.

Of all the rivalries that surely existed between the different teams, one appears to

have been the most intense. The teams representing the Lake Albert Farmers and Ireland first competed against each other on Saturday evening on March 26, 1892.

After a tiring three hours, neither side had achieved victory, and owing to the late hour (midnight) the pull was declared a draw.

Two days later on March 28, a rematch was held between the same two teams to determine which team would progress through to the finals.

The pull began at 9pm, as it had the previous Saturday evening, with a shot from the starter's pistol.

The two teams battled back and forth, gaining and then losing advantages. Amazingly, when the time reached midnight, three hours into the struggle, the teams were even again, just as they had started. However this time, there had to be a result.

Incredibly, the contest was only decided after an astounding five-and-a-quarter hours. At around 2.15am, the Irish team finally

triumphed over the exhausted farmers from Lake Albert. What makes this story even more remarkable is the fact that the Lake Albert Farmers team gave away an incredible weight advantage to their Irish opponents. While the Irish team averaged 14 stone (89kg) each, the farmers averaged only 11 stone 4 pounds (71.5kg) in weight.

Both the duration of the Tug-of-War and the respective weights of the two teams were verified by both the details written on the back of the original photo and the information published in *The Daily Advertiser* on March 29 and 31, 1892.

The wonderful photo of the Lake Albert Farmers team was donated to the CSU Regional Archives by Mr Bill Bullivant from Cowra in 1987.

For the record, the Irish team finished in third place overall, behind the Riverine Laborers and England, no doubt exhausted from their record-breaking battles with the farmers from Lake Albert.