

Information sheet no. 1:

History of the Cessnock Local Government Area

‘History is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and the facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past.’

What is History? E. C. Carr, 1990.

Our interest in history gives us a way to understand society. Historians value cultural memory believing that we are enriched by understanding the ways in which we are all products of history. By giving us a way to comprehend the past, history helps us to understand our world now.

The questions we ask of the past, the topics we research and the interpretations we make, are heavily influenced by the times in which we live and our social and cultural unconscious biases. For this reason, there are many histories of the Cessnock Local Government Area.

First Nations people are the earliest inhabitants of the Hunter Valley. The Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation represents the Wonnarua People, the traditional landowners of the Hunter Valley: <https://wonnarua.org.au/>

Cessnock Library www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/libraries/Home

Cessnock Library is the place to start for information on the history of our Local Government Area. The Local Studies collection at Cessnock Library is a key repository for local history records.

An active collection, it contains original records documenting the lives of local people, the histories of local businesses, organisations, veteran’s service, political and community groups. It also houses objects related to the local area, oral histories, a photographic and cartographic collection, audio-visual resources and research files. It contains many rare and out-of-print items.

On the Cessnock Library website are:

- Almost 2,500 local history photographs
- Digitised books on the history of the local area
- Digitised research files on different aspects of local history

These are amazing resources which are easy to access. Simply search the Library catalogue for your area of interest, open the book or file and read it on the screen, or download a copy to keep. All free!

There are many books in the Library’s lending collection specifically focused on our local history, here are some recommendations for you to borrow:

- *Mines, Wines and People*
- *Coal Miner's Daughter*
- *Pit Tops and Prams*
- *Lockout*
- *Hunter wine: a history*
- *A Town of Murals: Kurri Kurri*
- *That's the Way Things Were*
- *Beneath the Valley*
- *Greta: a history of the Army Camp and Migrant Camp*
- *Abermain: the beginning*
- *They Called it Siberia*
- *South Maitland Railways: century of railways on the South Maitland coalfields*
- *Wonnarua: a sense of belonging*
- *Lockout: Weston and its Mines*
- *Through the Valley*
- *The Uphomers*
- *People of the Valley*