



No. 2 poses enroute from Joadja to Mittagong.

N.S.W.P.T.C.

The Joadja Shale Mines and Railways

The sites of the shale mining activities at Joadja were located within the walls of a picturesque deep valley excavated over aeons of time by the normally tranquil waters of a small stream known as Joadja Creek. This watercourse commences in the hill country west of Mittagong and flows in a general westerly direction to enter its sunken valley and then join with the beautifully named Wingecarribee River, which, in turn, empties into the Nepean River and from thence into the famous Hawkesbury River before reaching the South Pacific Ocean at Broken Bay. The above mentioned sunken valley portion of Joadja Creek is several miles in length and varies in width, between its rocky crests, from about a half to one mile, its boundaries being irregular and marked by numer-

ous indentations. The precipitous cliffs of the valley surround are skirted by their accompanying talus slopes, averaging some 500 feet in height, composed of fallen rock and broken detritus covered by a somewhat sparse gum-tree forest, the home of kangaroos and wallabies.

It has been stated that the area was first traversed by Messrs Wilson and Barracks in 1798, but it was not until the eighteen-forties that the cattle-graziers moved in and the Joadja Valley came into the hands of Benjamin Carter. The son of this early settler, Edward Carter, whilst driving a herd of cattle through the north-western branch valley (in which the shale retorts were later erected) noticed a black outcrop at the top level of the talus slope. This discovery was made in the early eight-