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**BRO. JAMES BOCKING**  
(1853-1926)

Do you remember when country roads were corrugated gravel and creeks and rivers were crossed by timber bridges with loose decking boards? Musical bridges we called them. Many still exist on the back roads.

This is a story of a man who built many of them.

James Bocking was born at Bancaster in the English county of Norfolk and, in August 1853, he arrived in the *Niagara* at Campbell's Wharf on the western side of Sydney Cove. 1.

A few months later, he was employed by the New South Wales Government in the building of a bridge at Yass.

During his stay in Yass, he became associated with the explorer, Bro. Hamilton Hume.

The bridge-building party then moved across country to Bathurst where they erected a bridge over the Macquarie River.

Bocking became foreman of works and he and his team built several bridges in the Western Districts.

On his return to Sydney, he was foreman of works at the building of the original timber Pyrmont Bridge.

In 1855, Bocking began work on a bridge over the Nepean River at Menangle. It was a low timber truss bridge 8 m. wide on four piers with three 17m. spans. It was opened in 1856. 2.

The bridge had a significant impact on Campbelltown by ensuring that the road to the Southern Highlands, later named the Hume Highway, would pass through the small rural village.

James Bocking, then a young man of about 25 years of age, was presented with a watch in July 1856 by the grateful residents of Campbelltown, Menangle and Appin.

The bridge was destroyed by the flood of 1875 and subsequently rebuilt.

In 1861, Bocking built a bridge over the Nepean River at Camden. This bridge was replaced in 1901 with a more substantial structure.

Perhaps it was the presentation watch but, more likely, James Bocking saw his

