Poetry and verse were a common staple of nineteenth century life, ranging from bush verse to literature and 'high' poetry. The advent of the local newspaper press permitted the distribution of verse to a greater audience. The page limitations of the early papers, usually four pages, meant that poetry was very much suited for this medium. As the papers became larger, up to 40 pages as in the case of the weekly papers, more space could be devoted to prose fiction. This was largely taken up by serialised novels, but also by short fiction, some of which was of local origin.

The turn of the twentieth century, from the mid 1880s to the 1920s, was a very productive period for Albury authors, with a wide range of novels and short story collections being published. Sketches of two writers illustrate this.

**JOHN FARRELL** (1851–1904).— Born at Buenos Aires, Argentina, John Farrell grew up on the Victorian gold fields, where his parents established a carrying business and later ran a farm near Maldon (Vic.). Between 1870 and 1878, he found employment at a brewery, tried his luck on the Charters Towers and Palmer River Goldfields, worked as a timber getter, in a cordial factory and again as a brewer. John Farrell came to Albury in 1878 to manage the brewery of Messrs O’Keefe and Manning. From March 1883 Farrell ran a brewery in Goulburn, and later another one in Queanbeyan. In 1887 he entered the arena of newspaper editing and publishing at Lithgow, and later Sydney, arguing for free trade and against protectionism. Farrell died 8 January 1904.

Farrell's true literary career commenced in Albury, with verse published by both the *Border Post* and the *Albury Banner*. His 'Ephemera, an Iliad of Albury' was published in May 1878 as a slim volume by the *Border Post*. In 1879 he entered the competition for the Melbourne Exhibition of 1880. Even though his poem did not win a prize, the entry carried his name well beyond Albury. In 1882 Farrell published ‘Two Stories: A fragmentary poem’, in Melbourne. The 50-page booklet was well received by *The Bulletin* for which Farrell had been writing verse, but only faintly praised by the other Australian press. Farrell’s other early work for *The Bulletin*, written in Albury was the narrative poem ‘Jenny-an Australian story.’

Farrell was a prolific writer, widely published in newspapers and literary magazines. Only one collection, ‘How he died and other verses’ (Sydney 1887) appeared during his lifetime.

**WALTER HENDERSON** (1870–1957).— Walter George Henderson was born in 1870 at Roslyn, near Golburn (NSW). He became a lawyer in 1893, practicing in Albury from 1899 in a law partnership with George T. Fleming, which continued in various configurations until Henderson’s retirement in 1948 at the age of 78.

Henderson, having married Fleming’s daughter Charlotte in 1899, had ‘Lahnoo’ at the top of Kiewa Street built as family residence. After retirement, Henderson devoted his time to the development of his property ‘Upper Wantagong’ near Holbrook, NSW, where he had moved in 1929 while continuing to practice in Albury. In 1950 the Hendersons moved to ‘Robertson. Henderson died on 23 July 1957 at Robertson and was cremated at Rookwood, Sydney.

Throughout his life Henderson maintained a keen interest in the bush and bush life. His first short story collection ‘Midnight’s Daughter and Other Stories’ comprises mainly bush tales, including a number of bush ranging stories from the 1840s to 1860s. He later turned to novels, publishing in 1908 ‘Norah Conough’ a story which deals with the conflict between large and small land-owners in the 1890s. ‘The Bathers’ of 1911 focusses on the impact of perceived wholesome attitudes of country life on urban and religious conservatism, ‘Bush Bred’ published in 1922 presents a romantic tale complicated by the impact of Chinese immigrants on the community; and in 1945 ‘Nelligang’ is a tale of family problems and life in the bush.

In addition, there is a small body of published poetry from the 1930, mainly published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.