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No. 3

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PREFACE

This journal is the third in a series commenced in 1976. In that year it was decided to publish the most original and best presented papers received in Australian History. The essays involved original research and frequently touched on local history topics.

The 1976 initiative has attracted a good deal of favourable comment . The journal now in fact circulates to most Australian libraries.

Our students this year have maintained the standards of previous years. The papers are relevant and imaginative. Congratulations are extended to those whose papers have been selected for publication to the "honorable mentions" listed below, and to the many other students who invested energy and hours in the project.

Howard Byfield	"The Settlement of the Rivers"
Graham Byrnes	"Whaling off the East Coast of Australia"
Suzanne Javes	"The Significance of the Hotel in Australian History"
David Kilby	"The Federated Seamens Union of Australasia and the 1925 Elections"
Danny McCloghry	"Governor Phillip and Major Ross – the Settlement under Strain"
Stephen Pullin	"St. John's Theological College – Armidale to Morpeth"
Tim Wellcox	"The Bush Myth in the Australian Legend."

C. Bacchi
P. Hempenstall
N. Rutherford.

Once again, the History Club is pleased to be associated with the presentation of this collection of essays. The finished product is a fitting tribute to the authors of the essays as well as Carol Bacchi, Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford of the History Department who initiated the whole project.

History Club Executive.

"SOLOMON WISEMAN, AND HIS PART IN THE SETTLEMENT OF THE HUNTER VALLEY."

BY

B.M. PENGLASE

SYNOPSIS:

It was a stirring time in the infant colony of New South Wales when Solomon Wiseman, the indomitable emancipist, brought his large family to his land-grant on the Lower Hawkesbury River. Under Macquarie's orders, surveyors were probing north from Castle Hill, the end of the Government Road, to open a route between Sydney and the Hunter Valley. Where the pioneers' track crossed the Hawkesbury, Wiseman built the ferry that was to become an important link in the Great North Road, and a hub of activity for settlers, bushrangers, surveyors and toiling chain-gangs alike.

The tale of Wiseman's Ferry and of its founder, the indomitable Solomon Wiseman – ex-convict, pioneer farmer, innkeeper, shipowner and Government contractor – is closely interwoven with the early history of exploration and settlement throughout the northern districts of the colony of New South Wales. The activities of those who played their part in the spread of settlement to the north and west of the Lower Branch of the Hawkesbury River, of which Wiseman's Ferry was the hub and the main gateway, provide a colourful illustration of early nineteenth -century life in the colony, and of the development and extension of numerous homesteads and townships from Windsor to Hunter's River.

The figure of Solomon Wiseman looms larger than life in the legends that grew up around him and around the home he built near the site of the celebrated ferry on the Hawkesbury River crossing. The facts revealed in the official records, however, are no less interesting, if in some respects more credible, than the stories for which the man himself was either directly or indirectly responsible.

Believed to have been born in 1778, Wiseman claimed that he belonged to a respected landowning family living near Folkestone, Kent. He claimed to have engaged in the 'respectable profession' of smuggling, conveying coveted French products across the Strait of Dover and the Channel during the Napoleonic Wars. According to the story still told by residents of Wiseman's Ferry, the reckless young smuggler's sloop was apprehended by a Revenue cutter, whereupon he was charged, convicted of smuggling, sentenced to death, then reprieved and transported to Botany Bay.[1] In actual fact, he was convicted of theft while employed as a lighterman on the Thames by the firm of Lucas, Lucas and Barker, of London. At the Old Bailey on October 30, 1805, Wiseman was arraigned on two counts. The first charge involved the theft of 704 lb. of "Brazil wool", valued at 24 pounds the property of his employers; the second was for a similar theft of property belonging to three persons – Richard Buller, Cornelius Buller and Hieroniman Berminster – presumably also the proprietors of a shipping or importing firm. Though death was the statutory penalty for his crime, the reprieve and commutation of the sentence to transportation was a normal concession of the time. Nevertheless, Wiseman's reputed 'good character', to which seven witnesses testified on his behalf, may have influenced the clemency extended to him.[2]

Wiseman's story was that, as he was a gentleman of influential family, the support of Lord Bathurst was gained for him in presentation of a petition for reprieve, which resulted in the commutation of sentence. His status also earned him the privilege of taking his wife and young family with him. Apparently the family was sufficiently well provided with money to secure comfortable accommodation, and there is no doubt that all of the Wiseman family did land in Sydney from the "Alexander I" on August 20, 1806.[3] The Muster Lists and the Indent of the "Alexander I" name Wiseman's wife Jane (free born Middleton), his son William (aged 5 in the year of arrival) and another son Richard Alexander who was born at the Cape of Good Hope on the outward voyage.[4] A female child was listed, but not named. The infant son Richard was baptised on October 3, 1806, his birthdate being given as July 3, 1806.[5]

Little is known of Wiseman's first few years as a convict, but on June 4, 1809, he was included in a list of subscribers to a fund for enclosing the Sydney burial-ground.[6] Thereafter he emerged from obscurity gradually. Although still unpardoned, in 1811 he had a sloop-rigged schooner built for him at Cockle Bay (Darling Harbour)[7] Another vessel called the "Hope" was built for him in 1812, the year in which he was pardoned by Governor Macquarie.[8] A shrewd businessman, Wiseman lost no time in applying for a licence for premises in Bligh Street, Sydney, and becoming an innkeeper.[9] He then added the "Mary Ann" to his fleet, to exploit the first licence granted to export cedar from Port Stephens.[10] With his sloops plying the coastal waters carrying coal and cedar, sealskins and other profitable cargoes, and the social climate of Sydney under Macquarie favourable for the rise of an emancipist, Wiseman seemed set to become a prosperous Sydney merchant. But the risks were considerable.

For the capital necessary to expand his trading interests, Wiseman mortgaged his hotel and two of his sloops.[11] Then, in 1817, disaster struck. The wreck of the "Hope" at Port Stephens in July of that year was followed three months later by another misfortune, reported in the "Sydney Gazette":

"... on Saturday evening last arrived in an open boat from Gummoramorah, lying between the five Islands and Shoalhaven ... with unpleasant tidings of the loss of the sloop Hawkesbury Packet, 28 tons, on a reef of rocks at the entrance of Gummoramorah, whither she was destined to lade in cedar;"[12]

As a result, Wiseman was unable to redeem his property and on July 18, 1818, it was assigned to the mortgage-holder, Samuel Terry. [13] Almost ruined by these losses, Wiseman nevertheless proceeded to live up to his reputed family motto: "Resurgam!" He had already applied for and now received from Governor Macquarie a grant of 200 acres of land, which he selected in the locality opposite the confluence of the Hawkesbury and McDonald Rivers, known variously as Lower Branch, First Branch, Lower Hawkesbury, and Lower Portland Head, and now known as Wiseman's Ferry.[14] With his family, Wiseman moved out to the farm in 1819, and went on to build another fortune, this time based on farming, innkeeping and the profits from Government concessions and contracts.

Under Macquarie's order, various explorers, officially known as 'surveyors', were probing from Castle Hill, the end of the Government Road, to determine the route of the future Great North Road.[15] One of the first of these was Constable John Howe, from Windsor, whose activities may have influenced Wiseman in his choice of a holding.[16] The proposed Great North Road was an important developmental project, for the purpose of providing a land route between Sydney and the towns of the Hunter Valley – Wollombi, Maitland, Singleton, Newcastle and many smaller settlements.

By 1821, so many overlanders were using an unmade track on the north of Lower Portland Head that Wiseman opened an inn on his land, calling it "The Sign of the Packet".[17] His cedar concessions and other profitable trading ventures continued; in 1821 he secured a contract for the transport of a detachment of the 48th Regiment and convicts to Port Macquarie.[18] Within a year or two, his tender for supplying meat to the Government stores was accepted, [19] and he increased his landholdings and his original grant.

On July 2, 1821, his wife Jane died.[20] Some time before this, Wiseman had taken into his employ a man named William Warner, who had arrived in Sydney as a convict under life sentence, aboard the "Admiral Gambler" in 1811.[21] His wife Sophia (nee Williams) sailed as a free immigrant on the "Minstrel", landing in Sydney on October. 25, 1812.[22] Warner accompanied Surveyor-General Oxley as his servant on his first pardon from Governor Macquarie in 1818, and a donation from the Police Fund in 1819.[22] He was working on Solomon Wiseman's farm at Lower Portland Head when he died on May 24, 1825, aged 39.[23] His widow Sophia married Wiseman on November 1, 1826, at St. John's Church, Wilberforce.[24] The Rev. Meares officiated and the witnesses were James Main and William Gow. The signature, "Sol Wiseman", was, according to a note against this entry in the Index, "very shaky".

The index to the 1828 Census lists the following:

Wiseman, Solomon (50), free by servitude, Protestant, Farmer, Lower Portland Head. Number of acres 1100, acres cleared 220, acres cultivated 220; horses 6, horned cattle 80.
Wiseman, Sohpia (40);
Wiseman, William (27);
Wiseman, Alex. R. (22);
Wiseman, John (19);
Wiseman, Thomas (17);
Wiseman, Mary (5);
Wiseman, Sarah (12).

The same Index lists Richard Wiseman, aged 23, as a settler at Nerrern Luskentryre, 880 acres, 20 cleared, 20 cultivated; 1 horse, 60 cattle. (This would appear to be a duplication of the name in the first entry, "Alex. R. Wiseman".)[26]

In 1827 Wiseman built a ferry at the Hawkesbury crossing. He was granted the exclusive rights to levy tolls for seven years, with an exemption for Government horses and property.[27] The punt changed the locality's name (at first unofficially) to Wiseman's Ferry, and paid handsome dividends. Every non-offical traveller had to pay toll; even drovers who swam their stock across were charged 3d per head for 'guiding'.[28]

Wiseman and his second wife had no children.The family lived in Wiseman's large new home, built in 1826–7, and known as Cobham Hall. Part of this building, which was licensed for some time as "The Branch Inn",[29] is still in existence, forming a side section of the present Wiseman Inn. The stone steps leading to the old front

doors were supposed to have been the scene of ghostly manifestations: according to this story, which has apparently survived in the district from the convict days, "one of the ghosts is that of Jane, the first Mrs. Wiseman, who fell or was pushed from the high balcony and crashed to a messy death on the steps."[30] As Jane Wiseman died after an illness five years before the building was begun, the story remains merely as an illustration of the harsh times which produced it.

Wiseman was not noted for leniency to his convict servants. It was asserted that a good worker "never got out of his clutches" if Wiseman could help it; when such a man was due for his ticket of leave, Wiseman provoked a quarrel which involved a charge before a magistrate. The man was given the lash and his ticket was withheld for another year for bad conduct. One such case was that of young William Phillips, who arrived in the colony aboard the Lord Lyndock in 1833, to serve a seven-year sentence.[31] He was assigned to Solomon Wiseman and appears to have been a satisfactory servant until he was suddenly arraigned before a magistrate on a charge of "insolence". Phillips was sentenced to 12 lashes and to be "returned to service". Another case was that of John Dunckley, who was charged on October 22, 1837, with stealing onions and oranges from the garden that he was in the act of weeding when accused.[32] He was sentenced to 25 lashes and, presumably, returned to service.

Treatment such as this and harsh penalties for trivial offences were said to have driven many normally honest, industrious convicts to attempt escape. As death was the penalty for recapture, many escaped convicts became bushrangers and committed "outrages" which stirred the indignation of settlers[33]. Two officers and a detachment of soldiers were stationed at the ferry, and one of their duties was the discipline of convicts, including the men of the chain gangs engaged in road building.[34] The Courthouse Cave – a natural recess under a large overhanging rock beside the convict - built road, about a mile north of the ferry site - was the place where convicts were tried and sentenced by the magistrates; this appointment, which might be purely honorary, was often vested in the surveyors.[35] The verdict was given from Judgement Rock, a natural boulder used as a seat, and it is said that hangings took place at the Hangman's Tree, which was still standing in 1905. There is an almost circular hole in the dome of the cave, and it is claimed that hanging victims were droppedthrough this hole, suspended by a rope attached to the Tree.[36] There is, however, no documentary evidence to support this tale.

During much of Solomon Wiseman's life at Lower Portland Head, surveying and roadbuilding activities, with the frequent passage of settlers and their livestock, created constant traffic through the district and across the river. Under Governor Macquarie, roadbuilding and street layout became a matter for official concern, and this was continued under Governors Brisbane and Darling.[37] The construction of the road from Dural to Wiseman's was commenced in the year 1826 and, though not completed until 1830 "it was trafficable as far as the Hawkesbury by March 1828. Construction on the north side of the river was then undertaken."[38]

The surveyors were at work long before this: Singleton, Major Morriset, Howe, Blaxland jnr. Heneage Finch and others had travelled to and from the Hunter by various land routes, all passing through Wiseman's Ferry since William Parr's Journal had first aroused the interest of Governor Macquarie in 1817.[39] The Government's intention of constructing a "Great North Road" along one or other of the known tracks had been well known for some time, and the plans had come to fruition by May, 1826, when it was reported that:

> "The Great North Road is to be commenced, we believe this day, Mr. Oxley and Mr. Dumaresq having left town for the purpose of marking it out."[40]

With the heavy demand for surveying, as settlers moved steadily north and west and the extension of civilisation demanded means of communication and administration, the lag in the survey of grants and access roads grew steadily worse until, it appears, the Survey Department was forced to employ many unqualified men in the business.[41] One of these was Lieutenant Percy Simpson who, after previous appointments in the colony, took up a grant of land at Dora Creek and in 1828 became an Assistant Surveyor of Roads and Bridges at Wiseman's Ferry, at a salary of 150 pounds per annum and an allowance for his horse. For three years, under great difficulties, he supervised the building of the Great North Road, to the satisfaction of Surveyor-General Mitchell.[42] Among others who worked in the Hawkesbury and Hunter Districts was Lieutenant Johnathan Warner of the 2nd Royal Veterans, who was also an Assistant Surveyor as well as officer in charge of convicts while stationed at Wiseman's Ferry, where he assisted Simpson.[43] It was probably on his trip in 1828, when he was sent to examine a new line of road between Wiseman's and Maitland via Lake Macquarie, that Warner chose his grant of land, 1280 acres, at the spot which came to be known as Warner's Bay.[44] Four of the children of Johnathan

and Mary Warner – James, Augusta Louise, Jonathan, and William – were baptised at Sackville Rectory on the same day, November 4, 1827, the address of the family being given as "The Lower Branch".[45]

With all this activity going forward, Wiseman secured a profitable rations contract, supplying rations to the convict road gangs and the soldiers who guarded them.[46] According to the Government regulations, the ration for each convict in the "iron gangs" was 1 lb. of fresh or salt beef, 1lb. of wheaten meal, ½lb of maize meal, daily." Wiseman's contract, according to Judge Therry, returned him a net profit of between 3,00 and 4,000 pounds a year.[48]

At the remodelled Cobham Hall, Wiseman continued to play the dual role of local squire and elegant host. In support of his part as a genial, kind-hearted gentleman, he wore a swallowtail coat, flowered vest and highly polished boots. A dress-sword completed an ensemble which was more appropriate to a Governor's levee than to a wayside inn.[49] He became widely known as "king of the Hawkesbury", and the legend bloomed; his assigned servants, knowing him for a despot, were not doubt responsible for those aspects of the legend that gave rise to the ghost stories. It was reported in 1833 that he had entertained Governor Darling "and his suite",[50] and in 1835 that he was still entertaining "largely and successfully."[51]

Solomon Wiseman died on November 30, 1838, "at his residence, Lower Portland Head, in his 62nd year".[52] With his famous swallowtail coat and dress-sword, he was buried in his own grounds, beside the remains of his first wife, Jane. After the erection of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, for which Wiseman had previously donated the land (later found to be Crown Land), the bodies were re-interred in a vault beneath the floor.[53] Many years later, after the church had fallen into ruin, they were finally removed to the cemetery farther down the river where a headstone was erected bearing the insciption:

> "In memory of Solomon Wiseman who died January 12, 1838, aged 61
> also his wife, who died on June 20, 1821, aged 45."

No explanation can be discovered for the discrepancies in the dates. The famous ferry was purchased by the Government in June, 1832, for the sum of 267 pounds. "After the passing of Act of Council No. 12, 9/3/1832, for the better regulation of the Tolls and Ferries through the Colony it was considered expedient as being in the public Line of Road to Hunter's River that this Ferry should be under the Control of Government and the Punts, etc. belonging to Mr. Wiseman were accordingly taken by the Government at a valuation."[54]

Until the opening of the Hawkesbury railway bridge in 1889[55] the northern inland was served only by road, and access was by the river crossings where Wiseman's Ferry, and later Peat's Punt, provided the means. As late as 1894, Wiseman's Ferry was still the principal crossing place for large herds of cattle from the northern 'runs', bound for the Sydney markets.[56] The picturesque history of the Great North Road and of the first settlements from Windsor to the towns of the Hunter Valley is everywhere related to the life and fortunes of Solomon Wiseman and the township that grew up at Wiseman's Ferry.

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2. Session Papers, Old Bailey, 1805, No. 713, Mitchell Library.

3. Shipping Indents, 4/4004, Alexander I, Mitchell Library.

4. T.D. Mutch, Index to Muster Lists of 1814, Mitchell Library.

5. T.D. Mutch, Index to Parish Registers, Vol. 1 , Mitchell Library.

6. Sydney Gazette, June 4, 1809

7. Ibid, July, 6 1811.

8. J.S. Cumpston, Shipping Arrivals and Departures, Sydney, 1788 - 1835, Mitchell Library, p.90

9. Charles Swancott, "Wiseman's Ferry", Gosford, B.W.H.S., 1970, p.7

10. D.G. Bowd, Macquarie Country, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1969

11. Registers of Assignments and Other Legal Instruments, A3620, vol. 6, p.292

12. Sydney Gazette, September, 6, 1817

13. Registers of Assignments and Other Legal Instruments, vol. 7 p.125

14. Index to Registers of Grants, 1792 - 1856 (Cumberland), Mitchell Library, vol. 4.

15. H.H. Newell, Road Engineering and Its Development in Australia, Sydney 1938, p.45

16. Sydney Gazette, July, 29, 1820
Sir Thomas Mitchell in his "Report on Roads in New South Wales", 1855, (Mitchell Library), wrote: " ... one line of communication between the seat of the Government and the northern part of the colony having been a desideratum from the earliest days of the settlement, even according to military principles of occupation." p.31

17. Sydney Gazette, March 24, 1821; Sydney Herald, June 13, 1831

18. Ibid, September 8, 1821

19. Ibid, November 27, 1823

20. Sydney Gazette, July, 27 1821

21. T.D. Mutch, Index to 1814 Muster Lists.

22. Ibid.

23. Wentworth Papers, Mitchell Library

24. Index to Parish Registers, Vol. 1

25. Ibid.

26. T.D. Mutch, Index to the 1828 Census Lists, Mitchell Library

27. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, September, 4, 1827, Archives Office of N.S.W.
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28, Sydney Morning Herald, October, 19. 1843

29. Swancott, op.cit., p.8

30. Frank Cayley, Hawkesbury River Sketchbook, Adelaide, Rigby, 1970

31. Swancott, op.cit., p.11

32. Sydney Gazette, November 5, 1837

33. The Australian, April, 3, 1829
H.A. McL. Morgan R.A.H.S., Vol. 44, 1958, Part 4, p.200

34. W.J. Goold, N.H.D.H.S., vol. 3, 1949, p.103

35. K.H. Clouten, Reid's Mistake, Sydney, Lake Macquarie Shire Council, 1967

36. Hodge, Loc. cit.

37. H.H. Newell, Road Engineering and Its Development in Australia, I.E.A. Journal vol. 19, Feb. – March 1938, pp 45-6

38. T.H. Upton, The Establishment of Direct Road Communication Between Sydney and Newcastle, I.E.A., Journal Paper no. 398, Adelaide, March, 1932

39. James Jervis, R.A.H.S., Vol. 16, 1930, p.103

40. The Australian, May 24, 1826

41. H.R.A., series I, vol. 23, p.526

42. Thomas L. Mitchell, Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia ...; London, 1838, vol. 1, pp.8, 10

43. C.J. Mitchell, Hunter's River, Maitland, Est. C.J. Mitchell, 1973

44. Register of Land Grants, County of Northumberland, vol 9. Index, Mitchell Library.

45. Index to Parish Registers, vol.1

46. Therry, op.cit., p.121

47. Goold, N.H.D.S., vol. 3., 1948, p.104

48. Therry, ibid.

49. Ibid.,

50. The Australian, May 3, 1833

51. Ibid, September 1, 1835

52. Index to Parish Registers, vol. 1

53. Sydney Morning Herald, August 8, 1843

54. H.R.A., series 1, vol. 17, p.574

55. Hawkesbury Advocate, December 22, 1889

56. Swancott, op.cit. P.17

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July, 27, 1821; September 8, 1823; November 27, 1823;
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"DAWSON, THE AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL COMPANY, AND THE MANNING RIVER".

BY

LYN STRAHAN.

SYNOPSIS:

The dismissal of Robert Dawson from his position as Chief Agent of the Australian Agricultural Company in 1828 followed a number of accusations made against him by the Company's local committee. This paper is a study of one part of these accusations – that is, Dawson's activities in the Manning River area, or, more particularly, the misappropriation of A.A.Co. articles and labour to the area for Dawson's personal benefit. Dawson's true motives are obscure in his initial interest in the Manning River area, however, the importance of his personal motivation later on cannot be concealed.

Following Bigges' recommendations for the use of incentives to encourage free settlers with capital to migrate to New South Wales the British Government instituted a policy of Crown Land Grants. In this settlers were given free grants of land in accordance with the amount of capital they would put forward. This system led to the formation of joint stock companies in England, the most important being the Australian Agricultural Company (AA Co.) which was incorporated by an Act of Parliament and a Royal Charter on 1 November, 1824, to develop the fine wool industry and to cultivate grapes, flax and olives in the "waste lands" (that is, outside the limits of location) of New South Wales.[1]

Robert Dawson, Esq., was subsequently appointed as principal agent and manager of the AACo. Although he was a man of extensive experience in the control of private estates in England, he knew nothing of the conditions in New South Wales. To advise and assist him was "a committee of Five Gentlemen resident in the colony" who, evenso, also could not have had an extensive knowledge of the country.[2]

The Company was granted one million acres of land which the Committee located in an area extending from Port Stephens up to the Manning River. Dawson arrived at Sydney in November 1825 with a number of fine wool sheep he had procured inEurope and was established at the Port Stephens headquarters in February, 1826.[3]

By May 1827, the pastoral establishment was progressing noticeably and after his visit to the settlement James Macarthur (a member of the Committee) wrote of Dawson's "good management" and of the good condition of the stock.[4]

However, high losses on the Company's activities began to appear and the stock did not thrive in the wet coastal environment. Consequently the Committee began to doubt the suitability of the Port Stephens location of the grant.[5]

Rather than admit their mistake of selection it appears the Committee accordingly looked for some alternate way of explaining the apparent failure and it was not long after Dawson incured the Committees wrath by informing James Macarthur in June, 1827, that he was "no longer disposed to make the Company Grant a burial ground for all the old sheep of the colony" that he was accused of mismanagement and extravagance in the estate and of misconduct due to personal motivation.[6]

It is generally considered that in the cases of mismanagement the Committee was as blameable as Dawson due to their apathy and negligence of their duties.[7] This was acknowledged by the London board of directors in their inquiry into Dawson's activities (January 1829) when they stated:

> ",...the misconduct of Mr. Dawson
> is far exceeded in culpability
> by that of the Committee, whose
> orders he was to obey."[8]

The board consequently dispensed with the Committee before sending out Dawson's replacement.

Two examples of the Committee's culpability include, firstly, the footrot the European sheep acquired whilst they were detained at the Retreat Farm, Parramatta – selected by the Committee even though the owner had previously moved his flocks as the land had become infected. Secondly, the high prices Dawson paid for the local sheep were artifically inflated by the sheep-breeders of the Committee – who took the Company's money whilst condemning Dawson.[9]

Dawson's actions in connection with the Manning River Estate and John Guilding, however, are commonly viewed as "inexcusable" and "especially blameworthy". Although the bulk of the evidence appears to confirm this there is also some evidence that Dawson initially became involved in the "Manning River Affair" with the Company interests at heart, and the involvement only later extended to personal intersts.[10]

Following James Mcarthur's "visit of inquiry" to Port Stephens on 27 December 1827, Dawson was charged in a number of instances relating to the Manning River and John Guilding, which were formally set out in the "Report from the Committee", 7 January, 1829, for the London Inquiry. This report made accusations against Dawson.

"..... in regard,

...

2nd To the Company's Artificers
having been employed in
making Furniture and Implements
of Husbandry for a Mr. Guilding.
3rd To an expedition by sea sent
by Mr. Dawson to the Manning
River having been put under the
orders of this Mr. Guilding.
4th To Mr. Dawson's Letter to Mr.
Oxley, the Surveyor-General,
on the subject of a grant of Land.
5th To Mr. Guilding's correspondence
with Mr. Dawson, which fell into
the hands of Mr. Macarthur."[11]

The predominance of "this Mr. Guilding" in the AACo's sea expedition of October, 1827 and the value of the concurrent land expedition led by Mr. Macleod, both to the Manning River, greatly fuelled the Committee's fiery attack on Dawson.

The sea expedition was not only the first one successful in gaining entrance to the Manning River, but also in tracing the river as far as navigable. Previous expeditions to or through the Manning River area had failed to follow the river or to ascertain the type of country along its banks. The value of this expedition to the A.A.Co., however, was seriously questioned by the Committee, particularly after evidence was given at two meetings of the A.A. Co. proprietors by Mr. Armstrong, the Company Surveyor, who was a member of this expedition. On 27 February 1828, Armstrong claimed:

"that he was informed by the
Pilot that Mr. Guilding was to
have the entire direction
of the expedition..." [12]

and later, on 21 March 1828, he stated that

"the said expedition . . .
was conducted and ordered
by Mr. Guilding and principally
for his benefit . . ."[13]

This evidence, together with Armstrong's journal with comments such as " . . . Mr. Guilding determined on settling here and . . . it gave me . . . pleasure to see his wishes thus realized. . . "[14] and the fact that both Dawson and Guilding subsequently applied for grants of land on the north bank of the Manning River, led the Committee to write in their report to the London Inquiry:

"It seems impossible to arrive
at any other opinion than that
this expedition was designed
by Mr. Dawson to be made
subservient to the personal
interests of Mr. Guilding and
Mr. Dawson's family..."[15]

It it not "impossible", however, to come to any other opinion when one reads Guilding's letter to Dawson, dated 17 April, 1828 and Dawson's report to James Macarthur on 31 January, 1828.

In his letter Guilding indignantly rebuked the "low suspicion" the Committee harboured in respect to his role on the voyage and the obligation then perceived him to have them due to his establishing his grant whilst on an

A.A. Co expedition. Conversely, Guilding "conceives the Comapny are indebted to me," for

> " I [ie Guilding] volunteered my
> services to command the next
> party [ie after previous expeditions
> had failed] ... we were successful
> in fully discovering this Noble River ... a circumstance
> of the highest importance ... to the future interests
> of the Australian Agricultural Company".[16]

In regard to the selection of his grant he pointed out that he "long ago" had been given permission to select land to the north of the Company grant and that the Company's craft was not absolutely instrumental in discovering this land for him, for he could have "repaired to Port Macquarie" which was only one day's journey from the Manning and have been equally as successful.[17]

The selection "Head 9th: Settlement on the Manning" of Dawson's report further pointed out the advantages of the expedition, Guilding and settlement on the Manning for the A.A. Co. Through-out this Dawson emphasised his concern for the "future interests of the A.A. Co.", particularly so when he speaks of Guilding. Dawson indicated that the encouragement of Guilding's settlement was extremely advantageous to the Company as

> "...the objects of his [Guilding's]
> pursuits possess in my mind much
> interest with reference to the future
> prospects of the Company..."[18]

If Guilding was to succeed in his pursuits, Dawson noted, "it may be a subject for consideration [to follow] ... his example in the cultivation of certain productions." If, instead, he failed due to climatic difficulties and so forth, then "no experiments need to be attempted by us [that is the Company] ".[19] From this it appears that Dawson sent the expedition not for personal interest, nor for Guilding's benefit, but, as Armstrong admitted, "to survey and explore" the area. Furthermore, Guilding was to be more advantageous to the A.A. Co. than they were instrumental to him.[20]

The land expedition, led by a Mr. Macleod and conducted at the same time as the sea expedition, was designed to survey the land on the southern bank (that is, the northern part of the Company's grant) and to establish a possible line of communication between Port Stephens and the Manning River. Macleod's journal gave Dawson the

> "opinion , that it is continuously
> the finest and most extensive
> Sheep Country on the Company's
> grant, and ought to be settled
> as early as practicable."[21]

Dawson thus suggested the establishment initially of cattle stations, preceding the formation of sheep stations,in the Manning area of the Company's grant. Even though these plans were not approved by the colonial Committee, Dawson commenced the building of a road to the Manning River from Port Stephens. This prompted the Committee to accuse Dawson of establishing a

> ". . . line of communication . . .
> very valuable to the new settlers
> on the Northern [bank] but . . .
> without object [for] the immediate
> views of the Company."[22]

The arugments of Dawson and Guilding, regarding the sea expedition in particular (which refute the accusations to some extent), are quite plausible. However, once Guilding was settled at his grant, "Jamaica Plains" on a Manning River tributary it becomes difficult to explain Dawson's actions in sanctioning the supplying of Guilding with A.A. Co. articles and labour. The accusations of this began with the initial expeditions and were evidenced repeatedly up to Dawson's dismissal.

James Macarthur, on 19th September, 1828 charged that the fitting out and conducting of the sea expedition was

"altogether at the Company's expense." [23]This was confirmed by Mr. Robinson's (a Company Clerk) statement of 18 March 1828. In it he claimed that both the sea and land expeditions

> "were in every respect fitted out at the Company's cost – that Mr. Guilding directed the loading of the Vessel."[24]

If these expeditions were, as Dawson and Guilding propounded, for the purpose of "discovery and survey", greatly beneficial tothe Company, then it could be expected that they be fitted out at the A.A. Co's cost. Dawson's argument however, tends to be doubted when it is noted "that part of the railway intended for the [Company's] Coal Establishment was . . . landed upon Mr. Guilding's grant"[25] along with "Harness Casks, etc which . . . were not returned to the settlement" [26] and that the vessel was also carrying Guildings sugar rollers and seedling. If, as the Committee claimed, the expeditions were chiefly on the individual accounts of Mr. Guilding and Mr. Dawson then the Company goods had been used wrongfully.

Inrespect to the supplying of Guilding during and after the settlement of Jamaica Plains with AACo. goods and services, as the Committee noted on 7 January 1829:

> ". . . there is not one word in contradiction of this serious breach of duty . . . the indisputable fact still remains that Mr. Dawson gave his sanction and authority for the Valuable Labour of the Company's Mechanics being diverted to the personal objects of an Individual unconnected with the Company, but now known as Mr. Dawson's friend." [27]

To worsen this situation the lists of articles of goods to be made for Guilding embraced almost every necessary commodity for an initial establishment and, the Committee noted, were "of the same general character and description as must have been wanting for the use of the Company's own Establishment."[28] Furthermore, Guildings also used the Company vessels to convey "at sundry times" the Company provisions and manufactured articles to his Manning River settlement.

It was further claimed (addenda 27 March 1828) "that the Company's men (six) were engaged in the cultivation of Mr. Guilding's grant . . . " and that a free man (Palmer) was generally employed by Guilding while his wages were paid by a draft upon the Company which was made out by Guilding and signed by Dawson.[29] Hugh Mackay, a free person employed by Guilding as superintendent was also paid by the A.A. Co, but in a less obvious manner.

Dawson employed him also as clerk of the Company stores at Carrabean, at a salary of 50 pounds per year, with rations , even though he was almost totally incompetent to the duties of clerk. Upon his leaving the Port Stephens enterprise to accompany Guilding to Jamaica Plains Mackay was paid the balance of the salary due to him and he obtained a large amount of clothing from the Company stores.[30]

The state of accounts at the Carrabean storehouse was also focused on by the Committee and particularly the unlimited access Guilding and Mackay had to it. For instance, Robinson claimed that

> "Mr. Guilding and his Agent Mackay had free and constant access to the Company's Store and that articles were supplied to them without any account being taken of them."[31]

No abstract accounts of receipts and deliveries were kept, nor any check against the misappropriation of the Company's property, especially whilst Mackay was employed as clerk. Instead, it was:

> ". . . mere memoranda, without form or information of the purpose [of

> the articles] ; some of them [were]
> written in pencil and . . . consequently likely
> to be obliterated in a short time."[32]

Combined with this lack of accounting was the fact that different craftsmen executed different and separate orders for Guilding, often without the knowledge of a Company clerk or overseer. Consequently, this means "that the articles delivered to Mr. Guilding and to his agent [are] not known to the full extent."[33] The Committee, in their reports, implied a vast amount was diverted to Jamaica Plains. Guilding, on the contrary, claimed them to be a

> "few trumpery articles . . . no more
> than what I myself, or any other
> private individual would willingly
> have afforded to any new immigrant
> fixing themselves in our neighbourhood."[34]

He positively denied the charge of receiving extraordinary favours from Dawson as Agent of the Company and pointed out that he would, naturally, "cheerfully repay" the A.A. Co. The Committee, however, were not "willing to receive as any palliation for this sacrifice of public principle and duty . . . that these article were to be paid for, "particularly as there was no satisfactory account of the articles supplied to enable their value to be calculated.[35]

Dawson was charged not only with diverting A.A. Co. goods and services away from the Company grant, but also of diver his own interests and time towards a future grant for his family, also located on the north bank of the Manning River. James Macarthur reported on 13 March 1828 that

> ". . . a place was shewn [sic] me . . .
> of the shores of [the Manning]
> River on which a tract of 1600 acres
> was pencilled off upon the North
> Banks and marked "Dawson".[36]

As evidence of this Oxley informed James Macarthur that Dawson had written to him requesting his assistance in procuring a large tract of land, upon the north bank of the Manning for his eldest son and his brother, and referring him to Guilding for further information.[37]

The original letter was lost at Port Stephens, where Dawson acknowledged it again came into his possession. He furnished what he termed a copy of it, but this was done in ignorance of the existence of a copy of the original, taken by Macarthur. In both Dawson spoke of his intention to secure a home for his family in New South Wales - which the Committee saw as a failure to fully devote himself to the A.A. Co. It was on this topic of loyalty to the Company that the two letters differed. In the original copy Dawson had stated:

> "I have not the most remote idea of
> quitting the Company's service nor
> devoting any portion of my time to
> private concerns beyond reflections
> and such arrangements as
> everyone must be aware a Husband,
> and Father is bound to do, and
> will do, wherever he is."[38]

In the second letter, however, he did not equate family interests with Company concerns and simply declared "I have not the most remote idea of devoting any portion of my time to any but the Company's Affairs," [39] and added later that he felt it was his "bounden duty" to provide for the female part of his family in the event of his death.

This professed loyalty to the Company was to a certain extent contradicted by Guilding's letters to Dawson. In his first letter, dated 17 April, 1828, Guilding speaks of his desire to have Dawson and his family ". . . comfortably settled on the fine plains I have selected for you", [40] and in his second letter, also dated 17 April, 1828 he advised Dawson to

> ". . . continue in the Company's service

> so long as it is agreeable – and in
> the meantime provide an independent
> home for yourself and your family." [41]

In these sentences, then, Guilding inadvertantly supplied incriminating evidence against his benefactor. Guilding enhanced the Committee's opinion that Dawson had little regard for the Company and was using Company time and resources to further his personal interests. However, if one is to take note of these sentences, one must also take cognizance of Guildings opinion as expressed in his first (and more personal) letter:

> "'. . .it is a pretty farce, their [that is, the
> Committee] pretending to find fault with
> your management of the company's concerns, the
> fact is you have been too good a Servant to
> the Company. Some men would have
> made their fortunes out of them
> without paying anything like the
> sedulous attention you have to their
> interests."[42]

Although this does not exonerate Dawson, for he obviously was guilty of the charges made against him in relation to Guilding and his personal interest on the Manning River, it does prove that he had also been concerned with the Company interests.

It is difficult to make a conclusive statement about Dawson's true motives in sending the two expeditions to the Manning River in October 1827. It appears, however, that once the expeditions had established the value of the land surrounding the Manning River, Dawson's interest in the area was at least partially motivated by his personal interests, as was the establishment of Guilding as his future neighbour. From this essay it can be seen that the charges made against Dawson in relation to the "Manning River Affair" were made with the backing of sound evidence against him. Yet when the extent of the Committee's culpability is recalled the unanswerable question is raised – were Dawson's personal interests so seriously damaging to the A.A. Co., or was the Committee exaggerating in an attempt to cover their own serious misdeeds?

EPILOGUE

Dawson was officially dismissed by the London court of directors in January, 1829. Having returned to England late in 1828, he published a rebuttal of the accusations in his "Statement of the Services of Mr. Dawswon, as chief agent of the Australian Agricultural Company" and continued to press for justice, though a full hearing was never granted to him.

Evenso he remained interested in Australia, publishing "The Present State of Australia; a Description of the Country, its Advantages and Prospects with reference to Emigration: and a particular account of its aboriginal inhabitants" in 1830, and returning in 1839 to N.S.W., where he had been granted land in 1836 in recompense for the grant he had sought unsuccessfully from Darling in 1828. He was reappointed magistrate for the Hunter area, where he remained until 1862, when he returned to England, dying four years later.[43]

By the beginning of 1830, Guilding had lost his Manning River Estate on foreclosure of a mortgage and had left his cattle station in charge of his overseer.[44] Ironically his grant later passed to William Charles Wentworth – one of the colonists who had originally begrudged Guilding's settlement.[45]

FOOTNOTES:

1. [The] Australian Encyclopedia, Volume 1, 1977, p.202
2. Despatches of The Australian Agricultural Company, 1824 – 1875, University of Newcastle Archives, Correspondence A No. AB5369", Inclosure No.10"
3. "Report from the Committee, with reference to Mr. Dawson, 7 January 1828" Ibid, p.461
4. Despatches of the Australian Agricultural Company, 1824 - 1875, University of Newcastle Archives, Correspondence B1, No. AB5370; p. 352
5. It must be noted here that although it was Dawson who applied for this area to be legally surveyed to determine the Company boundaries, this was done on the recommendation and ratification of the move by the local Committee. They had rejected the more fertile Liverpool Plains area and on inadequate and inaccurate knowledge selected the locality closest to a navigatable port.
6. Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 1, 1788 - 1850 p.299 This was particularly vexatious to the Committee as most of the sheep that the Company bought locally were from members of the Committee.
7. For more detailed work on this part of the accusations against Dawson, See Ken Kennedy "The Australian Agricultural Company" in Student Research Papers in Early Australian History, University of Newcastle, 1976 Pp 20 – 28
8. Australian Dictionary of Biography, op.cit., p.300
9. B.W. Champion "Sir Edward Parry", Newcastle and Hunter District Historical Society Journal, Vol.3, June 1949 p.1
10. Kennedy, op.cit., p.26 also
    J. Gregson, "The Australian Agricultural Company" 1824 – 1875, Sydney, 1907, p.43
11. "Report from the Committee, 7 January, 1828" op.cit. p.462
12. "Minutes of Evidence, repecting part of the Conduct of Mr. Dawson, 27 February, 1828" Despatches of the A.A.Co. Correspondence B2, No. AB5371, p.711
13. "Minutes of the meeting of Proprietors, Sydney 21 March 1828", Despatches Correspondence B1, op.cit. p.423
14. "Journal of an Expedition to the River Manning [by Armstrong] "Despatches, Correspondence B2, op.cit., p.577
15. "Report from the Committee, 7 January 1828" op.cit., p.467
16. "Mr. John Guilding to Mr. Dawson, 17 April, 1828" 2nd Letter, Despatches Correspondence B2, op.cit., p.770
17. Ibid. p.771
18. "Report Mr. R. Dawson to Ja^{s} Macarthur, Esq., 31 January, 1828" Despatches Correspondence A, op.cit., p.485
19. Ibid., p.486
20. "Minutes of Evidence, 27 February 1828" op.cit., p.711
21. "Report: Mr. R. Dawson, 31 January, 1828" op.cit., p.484
22. "Report from the Committee, 7 January, 1828" op.cit., p.467
23. "Verbal Information given by Mr. James Macarthur at the Court of Directors, held on 19 September, 1828" Despatches, Correspondence A op.cit., p.416
24. "Evidence supplied by Mr. Robinson, 18 March 1828 Despatches Correspondence B2, op.cit., p.716
25. "Minutes of Evidence, 27 February 1828", op.cit., p.711
26. "Evidence supplied by Mr. Robinson" op.cit., p.717
27. "Report from the Committee, 7 January, 1828" op.cit., P.461
28. Ibid, p.465
29. "Addenda, 27 March 1828" Despatches Correspondence B2 op.cit., p.723
30. "Evidence supplied by Mr. Robinson" op.cit., p.715
31. Ibid. p.718
32. "Mr. Barton to the Colonial Committee, Suggestions for plans of keeping future accounts, Sydney 18 August, 1828" Despatches Correspondence B2, op.cit., p.968

33. "Minutes of Evidence , 27 February 1828", op.cit., p.711
34. "Mr. John Guilding to Mr. Dawson, 17 April, 1828, 2nd letter" op.cit., p.769
35. "Report from the Committee, 7 January 1828" op.cit., P.461
36. "Mr. James Macarthur to the Committee of Management" 13 March 1828" Despatches Correspondence B2 op.cit. p. 528
37. "Report from the Committee, 7 January 1828" op.cit., p.468
38. "Dawson to Oxley – by the original as copied by Mr. Macarthur" Despatches Correspondence A. op.cit., pp470 – 471
39. "Dawson to Oxley - by the copy supplied by Mr. Dawson" Despatches Correspondence A op.cit., p.469
40. "Mr. John Guilding to Mr. Dawson, 17 April, 1828 – First letter" Despatches Correspondence B2, op.cit., p.762
41. "Mr. John Guilding to Mr. Dawson, 2nd letter", op.cit., p.764
42. "Mr. John Guilding to Mr. Dawson, First letter" op.cit. p.764
43. Australian Dictionary of Biography, op.cit., pp299 – 300
44. William Kieth Birrell, "The Manning Valley, New South Wales. A Study in Landscape change 1824 – 1900" University of Newcastle, 1970. p.96
45. Taree: A Short Factual History (anonymous) P.3

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EARLY STEAMSHIPS AND THE HUNTER TRADE 1830 – 1855

BY

HUGH THOMSON

SYNOPSIS:

Australia's sea communications in the early nineteenth century were revolutionized by the introduction of steam powered craft. This paper looks at the role of the early Hunter Valley settlers in developing many of Australia's early steamships and how steam navigation, and the battle for monopoly control of the Hunter trade effected the development of settlement and trade in the Hunter Region.

As Geoffrey Blainey has pointed out in his book The Tyranny of Distance, Australia's main problem in the early days of settlement was distance and the lack of cheap and efficient transport. The Hunter Valley was singularly lucky in having a system of navigable rivers which it could turn to for the transportation of its produce. Before the advent of steamships the Hunter Region was served by sailing vessels which ran regularly between Sydney and Newcastle. From Newcastle passengers could reach Maitland by small sailing packets equipped with oars and sweep which plied the river. But with miles of twisting river to navigate, these small boats were singularly unattractive mode of transport and most people preferred to send their baggage by boat, travelling the rest of the way on horseback along the bridle path to Maitland.[1]

This system of navigable rivers in the Hunter Valley gave impetus to the rapid settlement of the region. Despite the obvious drawbacks of sail-powered craft on rivers such as the Hunter, Williams and Paterson, the settlers turned naturally to these waterways as a means of transporting themselves and their produce to Sydney. It was inevitable then that the coming of the era of steam powered shipping on the Australian coast should have its genesis in the Hunter trade. Many of the early paddle-steamers were shaped from the natural timber along the banks of the rivers by the settlers themselves and were specifically designed for the Hunter trade. As the settlers turned more and more to rely on these steamers as their main means of communication and transport so the steamers in turn had a marked effect on the development of their trade and settlements.[2]

The potential for steam powered craft in the Hunter trade was recognized early in the history of the settlement. The editor of the Australian on the 3 February, 1830 wrote:

> All that is wanted on this River (Hunter) to render the land of double value, and the good people of Sydney a good supply of garden and dairy product at halve the present money, is a good stout and powerful but small steam boat, to ply between Sydney and Maitland twice, and Hawkesbury once a week. There is coal at Newcastle and plenty of wood at the river edge. Why does the Government not get a steamer, so as to show the example.[3]

But at the time the editorial was written the events which were to establish steamships as a reality in Australia were already under way.

In 1828, two experienced shipbuilders, William Lowe and James Marshall, arrived in the Colony. Under the guidance of entrepreneur Sydney merchant John Hickey Grose they selected land on the bank of the Williams River at Clarence Town and by 1830 had set up a shipyard complete with a wet dock carved from a convenient creek. After building a few small boats to get the feel of the local wood they laid the keel of the first Australian steamship, the 'William the Fourth', in early Feb. 1831 [4] J.H. Grose had probably commissioned the building of this steamship soon after he had met Lowe and Marshall in 1828. In the meantime, probably unkown to Grose, the paddlesteamer 'Sophia Jane' was on her way to the Colony from Britain. These two vessels together with the little river steamer 'Surprise' [5] were to provide the impetus for a spate of steamship building and steamship companies which were to prove an invaluable asset to the farmers and graziers of the Hunter Region.

The little cutter 'Lord Liverpool' had offered, when the weather was suitable, a twelve-hour passage from Sydney to Newcastle for a cabin fare of 30/- (wine and spirits included). The 'Sophia Jane' and later the 'William the Fourth' offered the same trip in less than eight-hours, were less dependent on the weather and had the added advantage of continuing the trip up the river to Morpeth. Although the owners of the 'Lord Liverpool' cut their rates, both on their run between Sydney and Newcastle and on their river packet the 'Jessie', the novelty, speed, and convenience of the early steamers ensured their popularity.

In the heady days of the 1830's, with plenty of capital available in the colony[7] the the number of steamships operating in N.S.W. rapidly increased. Of the first twelve steamers, seven were built on the Hunter and Williams rivers and five of these at the Clarence Town yard of Lowe and Marshall.[8] The quality of workman ship in these early steamers was remarkable. In Britain it was generally considered that the frames for steam vessels should be of iron yet those Hunter Valley steamers, built mainly of flooded-gum, in most cases outlasted the imported wooden steamers.[9] The main problem facing the early colonial builders were the engines. These had to be imported from Britain at a cost often in excess of the cost of the locally built vessel. Lowe and Marshall's second paddle-ship was a shallow draught paddle-ship for the Parramatta river trade and was designed to be powered by a team of horses. Her first trip to Parramatta was made on 5 October 1835 and we are told;

> Some difficulty was experienced in getting the horses to work, but when they did they moved her at 6 M.P.H. [10]

Ingenious as the mechanism was, it proved as unpopular with the passengers as with the horses. She was later bought by Edye Manning who emancipated the horses and put a 12 H.P. steam engine in her.[11]

While Edye Manning was busy trying to monopolize the Parramatta trade, Grose had quietly acquired the 'Sophia Jane' and for a short time enjoyed a monopoly of the Hunter trade. The trade was lucrative and expanding and soon attracted the attention of some Sydney entrepreneurs. In 1833 they formed the Hunter's River Steam Packet Association [12] with the aim of competing with Grose for the Hunter trade. Their sole asset was the fine steamer 'Ceres' built for them by Lowe and Marshall. It was a fine ship of 200 tons with spacious decks and a ballroom, and for a short time she was Queen of the run. Six months after commencing trade, and at a time when the company was thinking of expanding its trade by ordering another colonial built steamer, the 'Ceres' was wrecked on the well known navigation hazard the Bullee Norglen rock.[14] There was no loss of life but the loss of the 'Ceres' brought the company to an end.

Once more the Hunter trade reverted to a monopoly with Grose's two steamers, the 'Sophia Jane and 'William the Fourth', running a regular but insufficient service between Sydney and Morpeth. With cleared land coming into cultivation and with increased settlement the Hunter Region was becoming an important source of supply for the Sydney market. Rapid, frequent, and reasonably cheap transport was the backbone of this trade. Attracted by this growing trade the steamers 'Maitland' and 'Tamar' entered the run. The Maitland had been built for Edye Manning at Sydney and the 'Tamar' was owned by the infamous J.T. Wilson. Despite some opposition sailings and rate cuts by Wilson's 'Tamar', these three owners seem to have co-operated well in sharing the trade. Part of the reason for this was probably the high prices for produce between 1835 and 1839 which tended to nullify the effectiveness of lower rates in attracting trade to a particular boat.

In the late 1830s two events occurred which were to have a distinct effect on the Hunter trade. In 1838 J.T. Wilson, now the owner of the 'Sophia Jane' as well as the 'Tamar', left the colony and a debt of 30,000 pounds behind.[16] He also left his two steamers swinging idly at anchor in Sydney Harbour. In 1839 the Illawarra Steam Packet Company was formed to service the South Coast. T. Shadforth, a trustee of the Company, bought the 'Maitland' from Edye Manning [17] and by mid June she had started sailing to the South Coast.[18] The withdrawal of the 'Maitland' and Wilson's steamers left the Hunter trade with a newly arrived and unsuitable deep draught steamer the 'James Watt' as the sole link with Sydney.

Only eight years had passed since the advent of the first steam service between Sydney and Morpeth yet steamships had become so important to the Hunter trade that when the service was cut, Hunter Valley entrepreneur John Eales moved quickly to form a new company.[19] The object of the Company was to trade specifically between Sydney and the Hunter. Eales faced some heavy opposition to the formation of this Company. Almost everyone who had anything to do with steamships was racing to build or to buy steamers to fill the gap in the Hunter trade. A.B. Spark, whose General Steam Navigation Company[20] was in the process of buying Wilson's 'Sophia Jane' and 'Tamar', objected strongly to the formation of the Company. J.H. Grose, who was having the 'Sovereign' built for the Hunter trade by the Sydney shipbuilder Chowne, objected. Other objectors were J.H. Grose and John Korff who were having the 'Victoria' built at Korff's Raymond Terrace yard.[21] Despite these objections the Hunter's River Steam Navigation Company was formed and three of the latest iron-hulled steamers were ordered from Britain. In this meeting can be seen the genesis of the coming battle to gain control of the lucretive and expanding Hunter trade.

In 1841 the H.R.S.N. Co's three iron-boats arrived from Britain. They were the 'Rose' the 'Thistle' and the 'Shamrock'. Barely a year after they had started running, the rival G.S.N. Co found itself in difficulty from a combination of opposition sailing, rate cutting, and bad management. The Sydney Herald of 12 Feb., 1842 said of the G.S.N. Co.

> Bad management was responsible for their winding up. Their first investment of capital their subsequent scale of outlay in current expenses, and their lavish and premature division of profits were injudicious in the extreme.

There ill considered purchase of Wilson's 'Sophia Jane' and 'Tamar' also had a great deal to do with their downfall. Polack, a creditor of Wilson's had gained a court judgement which enabled him to claim 4,500 pounds

from the trustees of the Company. In the economic crisis of 1842 neither the Company nor the individuals were able to meet this relatively small claim.[23] By September 1842 the Company had sold its last steamer the 'Tamar' and was finally wound up.[24] The H.R.S.N. Co. now found itself with a monopoly of the Hunter trade and subsequently pushed up its rates.

Although the rates now charged by the H.R.S.N. Co. were in fact slightly lower than had been charged in the days of sail, the people of the Hunter Valley had had a taste of low rates occasioned by the stiff competition of previous years and did not succumb quietly to the higher rates. The editorials and letters in the Maitland Mercury from June 1843 to July 1844 complain bitterly against the high rates charged by the H.R.S.N. Co. Many of the Hunter Valley merchants turned to sail for the transportation of their goods.[25] A strong movement to have Newcastle declared a free port sprang up, as did the movement to have the river flats dredged.[26] But the real impetus behind this resentment of the H.R.S.N. Co. lay more in the low prices received for produce than in the higher freight rates. For instance, eggs which had been selling in Sydney for 1/- a dozen in 1831[27] were selling for three-pence a dozen in 1844.[28] The freight rate had been fixed at one-penny a dozen which meant in weighted terms a four-hundred percent increase. As a letter in the Maitland Mercury of March 5 1844 puts it:

> Depression has occasioned a fall in the prices but steam boat prices had been fixed when the market was high. The want of consideration on the part of the steam boat managers has very properly produced a strong feeling against the steam boats as a means of conveying produce to Sydney.

In July, 1844 the monopoly was broken with the re-entry of the 'Sophia Jane' into the Hunter trade and the "long wished for reduction in rates at last took place." [29] It was not long before the editor of the Maitland Mercury was voicing alarm about the cutthroat method of competition engaged in by the H.R.S.N. Co.

> Before the advent of the 'Sophia Jane' the H.R.S.N. Co. "waxed fat and kicking " – but when the 'Sophia Jane' began running rates were reduced to low water mark in an endeavour to "run off" the wooden boat.[30]

Passenger rates had dropped from 24/- to 12/6d and freight rates from 20/- per ton to 8/-. The editor further urged the public to support the 'Sophia Jane';

> Even if her formidable rivals should feel inclined to give passage "free Gratis, and for nothing"... If anything prevents the 'Sophia Jane' from continuing ... we shall doubtless have the enormous passage money and freight to pay again. [31]

The 'Sophia Jane' continued in the Hunter trade for a little more than a year, opposed at every sailing by the H.R.S.N. Co's 'Tamar' which had reduced its passage rate to 3/-.[32] Eventually the cutthroat competition took its toll and the 'Sophia Jane' was withdrawn on August 14 1845.[33]

In the meantime a committee of Hunter Valley residents had secured the services of a Government steam dredge which had started dreding the river flats in May 1845. By January 1846 Boyd's deep-draught steamer the 'Cornubia' was able to operate on the river. Another round of cutthroat competition eventually forced the 'Cornubia' "off the run," but she was followed by a string of privately owned steamers all seeking to break the Company's monopoly. In April 1846 the 'Sovereign' [34] reduced her fares to a ridiculously low 2/- Saloon and 1/- Fore-cabin. The tenor of the competition on the Hunter trade can be seen in this advertisement placed in the Maitland Mercury by the owners of the new steamer 'Phoenix'.

> The owners of the new S.P. Phoenix will carry wool at charges lower than the Iron boats let them carry it for what they may.[35]

This cutthroat competition inevitably took its toll of individual shipowners and by 1851 almost all of the coastal trade from Moreton Bay to Port Phillip was in the hands of the H.R.S.N. Co. [36] But their shares had fallen during the period of competition from 20 pounds to 5 pounds and only once had they paid more than a six percent dividend.[37] On the other hand the battle by the H.R.S.N. Co. for a monopoly of the coastal trade had benefitted the farmers and graziers of the Hunter region by providing them with an extremely

cheap means of transporting their products to the Sydney market at a time of economic recession. It has also brought about, through local pressure reacting against the Company's monopoly, a free port at Newcastle. As an editorial in the Maitland Mercury of April 18 1846 had expressed it:

> It is in no slight degree owing to this regular cheap means of communication that the Hunter has become the chief granaries from which the Metropolis draws its supply of the staff of life. It is indeed solely owing to this ready means of access to the Sydney market that we are at all able to export a number of articles; Bathurst or Goulburn could not transport as cheaply.

In the gold rush of 1851 trade began to expand rapidly and the Hunter Valley residents again found reason to be dissatisfied with the H.R.S.N. Co.'s service. Through an inbuilt impediment in its rules the Company's capital was limited to 60,000 pounds which was insufficient for further expansion of its operations. To solve this problem the Company dissolved itself and reformed as the Australasian Steam Navigation Company [38] with the power to increase its capital to 500,000 pounds.[39] The 1851 Victorian gold rush stretched the A.S.N. Co's resources and in an effort to protect its southern trade from foreign steamships the Company left the Hunter trade with only four sailing per week. [40] Public opinion was further exasperated by the forced withdrawal from the Hunter trade of Edye Manning's 'Phoenix' by the A.S.N. Co's threat to run river steamers against him on his Parramatta trade.[41]

Public resentment at the cuts in the steamer link with Sydney culminated in a public meeting held at the Northumberland Hotel in Maitland on the 16 June 1852 where it was agreed that the Hunter's River New Steam Navigation Company should be set up. Its terms were almost identical with those on which the H.R.S.N. Co. had been set up, with the added safeguard of;

> Retaining the direction and management of the Company within the Hunter region in order to prevent the Company's steamers being diverted to any other trade than the Hunter.[42]

Obviously the people of the Hunter realized that steam navigation was a valuable asset and intended to keep their products flowing smoothly and frequently and at a reasonable cost down the river to Newcastle and Sydney. The new Company started business on March 24 1855 with the arrival of their new steamer the 'Hunter' which was closely followed by the 'Williams' and the 'Paterson'. Another round of cutthroat competition followed with the A.S.N. Co. lowering its rates to 3/6d for passage between Morpeth and Sydney. Eventually the A.S.N. Co., faced with a rates war on its Port Phillip run, had had enough and in June 1856 called a truce. [43] For the first time in its history the A.S.N. Co., (ne H.R.S.N. Co.) offered to share its trade This arrangement carried on for many years to the benefit of both Companies and the people of the Hunter Region.

As previously stated the Hunter region gave the impetus to the building and employment of the first steamships in Australia and these steamships in turn helped develop the region. They were not of course the only factor in the development of the Hunter but they were a distinctive factor. The use of steamships established Morpeth, for a time, as the premier port of the New England and Liverpool Plains area, and the frequent bouts of low rates cutthroat competition conditioned the people to expect cheap rates for the transportation of their produce. Indeed, during the economic recession of the 1840's this competition opened the Sydney market to the produce of the Hunter when it might otherwise have been uneconomical. The periods of monopoly control of the trade goaded the people into pressuring the Government for a free port at Newcastle, into dredging the river, and finally into forming their own local shipping company.

FOOTNOTES

1. Grace Hendy Pooley, 'The History of Maitland', J.R.A.H.S. Vol. II., p.291
2. In the book, The Rise and Progress of Australia and Tasmania and N.Z. the author notes that; "the cheapness of steam communications (as) having led to the abandonment of the road formed at immense cost by convicts ... inland between Sydney and the Hunters River". P.143.
3. Despite appeals for Government action it was not until June 1837 that Governor Bourke sought to introduce a Government steamship to the Australian coastal trade and that of such a draught as would have precluded it from the Hunter trade. Sir Richard Bourke to Lord Glenelg, 15 June 1837. H.R.A., Series 1 Vol. XVIII. p.784
4. Harold Lowe, William Lowe Pioneer Shipbuilder of Clarencetown, printed at the 'Examiner' Office, Raymond Terrace, 1961., P.6
5. The 'Surprise', often considered the first Australian built steamer was shipped in pieces from Britain and assembled in Sydney. Although launched before the 'Sophia Jane' reached Sydney (13 May 1831) it did not get its engines until the end of the year. The little known 'Karuah' is however a contender for the honour of being the first colonial built steamer in operation. Built at Port Stephens for the A.A. Co. it was launched on Nov. 30 1831 and was operating in Dec. of the same year (The Australian, Dec. 6 1831) and Parry's Early Days of Port Stevens p.59
6. The Australian September, 30 1831
7. Helmut Kolsen, 'Company Formation in N.S.W.: 1828 – 1851', Bulletin of the Business Archives Council Vol. 1 No. 6 1959
8. Maitland Mercury, May 24 1845
9. The Kangarro a small river steamer built by Mr. Korff in 1840 at Raymond Terrace on the Williams river was still in service as a ferry between Port Melbourne and Williamstown at the turn of the century. It also incorporated, to the best of this writer's knowledge, the first marine steam engine manufactured in Australia. See Capt. James H. Watson, 'Early Shipbuilding in Australia.' J.R.A.H.S., Vol. VI, 1920, P.109 -110
10. A.B. Portus, 'Early Australian Steamers', J.A.H.S., Vol. II. 1904 P.188
(When James Watt coined the term 'horse-power', I don't think he expected to be taken quite so literally.)
11. Ibid., P.188
12. Henceforth to be referred to as H.R.S.P.A.
13. The design of this ship was another first for Lowe and Marshall. The sponsons or paddle-boxes did not stick out at the sides, but were included in the hull and formed part of the deck.
14. For a full account of this comical shipwreck see A.B. Portus op.cit., There were apparently two Captains in comman of the ship and each thought the other had set the course.
15. Insurance being expensive and the desire for profits large, steamship companies often allowed their vessels to sail uninsured. See A.B. Spark's diary. Abbott and Graham (eds.) The Respectable Sydney Merchant. P.123
16. N.L. McKellar, From Derby Round to Burketown The A.U.S.N. Story, University of Queensland Press, 1977 p.4
17. Ibid.
18. Kolsen, op.cit., p.14
19 The meeting was advertised in the Sydney Herald 31 July 1839.
20. Henceforth to be referred to as G.S.N. Co. This Company was formed by an amalgamation of the Illawarra and Brisbane Water Steam Packet Companies. Kolsen, op.cit., p.14
21. Manning and Korff had purchased the wreck of the 'Ceres' and in an incredible feat of marine salvage had raised her engines and boilers from deep water in the open sea, built a 60 ton cutter from the timbers and sailed the lot to Sydney. The 'Victoria' was built to take the 'Ceres' engines. Portus, op.cit. P.195
22. Henceforth referred to as H.R.S.N. Co.

23. Graham Abbott and Geoffrey Little. (eds.) The Respectable Sydney Merchant. A.B. Spark of Tempe. Sydney University Press, 1978. Entries for the year 1842 show that A.B. Spark as one of the trustees of the G.S.N. Co. was harassed by this problem and wrote of it "to such a pass (fear of arrest) has this Co. brought its trustees". (15 Sept. 1842) P.144
24. Ibid. p.145
25. Maitland Mercury Oct. 7 1843
26. Both these movements had as their stated aims the breaking of the H.R.S.N. Co's monopoly. The Free Port committee argued that by using river barges and shipping their produce straight from Newcastle to England they could save one-third of the transport costs. The dredging of the river would allow deep-draught steamers such as Boyd's 'Cornubia' to enter the trade. (Maitland Mercury 1843 – 1844)
27. The Australian, Feb. 17, 1831
28. Maitland Mercury, March 5 1844
29. Ibid, July 27, 1844
30. Ibid., Aug. 3, 1844
31. Ibid.,
32. Ibid., Aug. 22 1844
33. Ibid, Aug. 12 1845
34. The 'Sovereign' at this stage in her career was an H.R.S.N. Co. ship.
35. Maitland Mercury, Nov. 21 1849
36. Ibid. July 5, 1851
37. McKellar, op.cits. p.17
38. Henceforth to be referred to as A.S.N. Co.
39. McKellar op.cit. p.17
40. Maitland Mercury, April, 28 1851. This service was frequently reduced to three and sometimes two sailings per week.
41. Ibid., May 22, 1852
42. Ibid., June, 23, 1852
43. McKellar op.cit. PP 21-22

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E. H. BURGMANN AND THE DEPRESSION IN NEWCASTLE 1930 – 33.

IDEAS AND PRACTICE.

by

JENNIFER CRONIN

SYNOPSIS:

Burgmann was warden of St. John's Theological College at Morpeth from 1926 to 1934. His reputation in Newcastle during the Depression was that of a radical clergyman with equally radical social and political views. Through his widely publicised attitudes to the Depression, unemployment, Communism and other related issues, he earned the reputation of a "red", a "liberal" and a "radical". His image was that of an Australian bushman who would champion the cause of the working class. However, Burgmann is as difficult to categorise in his political beliefs as in his theology. It is hard to determine how much of his reputation was justified and how much created for him by those who considered him a hero. This paper attempts to examine, firstly, his views on the Depression and unemployment, secondly how these were put into action, and thirdly to judge whether his reputation as a radical was justified. The paper also attempts to examine Burgmann's view of the Church's responsibilities towards the unemployed. It attempts to illustrate his belief in education of the people to help them alleviate their conditions. The Clara St. eviction case in 1932, and the Synod resolution to double the dole, in 1933, are used as examples of Burgmann's ideas in practice.

In the light of his reputation as a champion of the working class, Burgmann's actual achievements on behalf of the unemployed seem at first glance, paltry. The two most controversial and public episodes in which he involved himself during the Depression brought little direct improvement in the living conditions for the large population of unemployed in the Newcastle region. The significance of his participation in the Clara St. eviction issue is uncertain, although the aquittal of the defendants was attributed to him.[1] The resolution put to Synod in 1933, in favour of doubling the dole, certainly expressed genuine concern for the unemployed in their distress, yet seems grossly impracticable. However, to judge Burgmann on the results of these incidents is to misunderstand his conception of his role as Churchman during the crisis years of the Depression. His stand is made clear in a letter to Batty in 1931. He envisioned a "mediatory ministry" in which it was necessary

> "to have a sympathetic understanding of the viewpoints and aspirations of the leaders of all the conflicting forces that are operating in the national life. We might be able to do much to help keep people calm and clearheaded in a time of great distress."[2]

Burgmann's responsibility was to people, not to party politics. Burgmann hoped to create an awareness of social injustice in the community, and to encourage its underprivileged members to take up political lobbying for reform.He believed that "the highest welfare of society must be the highest welfare of the individual."[3]

Thus Burgmann saw himself in an educatory role rather than in a political one. His real 'radicalism'lay in his view, that the Church should provide a similar lead. Unfortunately few shared this opinion. The Anglican Church in Newcastle traditionally did not associate itself with protest.[4] If Burgmann was a radical, he was so only in comparison with his fellow clergy. Bishop Batty, for example, prefered to limit his activities to traditional church concerns: "It is definitely not the business of the Church as such to propound economic theories or schemes of social and industrial reform"[5] The Protestant churches have been judged by historians as being "to the right of centre in their response to the Depression ... advocates of 'sound finance'." [6] This conservative attitude of the Church angered Burgmann as he felt that it did not relate to the Australian people. He believed that many people were unable to accept the spiritual ministry of the Church because it appeared to be part of the system that was causing them such hardship. [7] From his own observations and his work with the W.E.A. [Workers Education Association] [8] he was well aware of the deprivations suffered by the miners and industrial workers of the area . The opportunity of the Church to take an active part in fighting the "social sin"[9] of unemployment and its attendant miseries, was clear to him.[10]

Although such views resulted in his being called a communist, Burgmann was far from being so, His lectures to the W.E.A., his use of the Morpeth Press, and his articles and letters in the newspapers, were all part of Burgmann's attempt to help the people and their leaders in both Church and State, understand all sides of the issues surrounding the Depression and politics of the time. It concerned him that people should understand the issues they voted on , and so be able to improve their conditions by parliamentry means rather than revolution." To this end he constantly explained the faults and advantages of systems such as capitalism. He felt that:

> "From the Christian point of view there is a fundamental defect in both capitalism and communism. Both at present accept a materialist philosophy of life and set out to organise human beings as so much machinery ... Neither rises to a conception of man as a personal and spiritual being."[12]

Burgmann was violently opposed to totalitarianism of any kind.To him the value of the individual was of paramount importance. Burgmann hoped to see society run neither on capitalism nor on communist lines, but rid of self-interests in order to "give the largest possible freedom to the individual and yet not allow man to prey on man." [13] Where the economic problem of the Depression was concerned, Burgmann believed that there was "enough wealth in the world at present to permit everybody having a fair share" and that the "real problem would only be met when the public credit was marshalled controlled and used to put well planned public works into operation on a nation wide scale."[14]

So then, Burgmann's Christian principles, rather than his supposed political leanings, lead him to take a "radical" stand in political issues An example was his attitude to an eviction incident at Tighes Hill, Newcastle in June 1932. [15] A returned serviceman, unemployed and unable to pay the rent, was given notice of eviction of himself and his family. On arrival to supervise the eviction, the police were met by a crowd of protesters. Amid variously reported circumstances, fighting broke out and 8 protestersand 2 police were admitted to hospital; a number of arrests were made. This was not a minor incident. The brutal behaviour of the police and the political backpedalling of their superiors and the government, aroused much resentment and anger among the people of Newcastle.

There was some dispute as to how the fighting started but witnesses insisted that the police attacked first without warning.[16] The papers carried lengthy accounts of the incident and there was widespread speculation about the motives of the authorities. The affair became a major subject of letters to the editor and appeals were launched to raise funds for the defence of those arrested for participation in the violence.[17] The papers throughout June recorded continuing arrests of participants, and reports of the numerous meetings of Trade Unions and other protesting bodies kept pace.[18] There was general resentment against the system which firstly kept a man unemployed, and then turned him out on the street.

In the subsequent court case in Newcastle, 18 of the 30 defendants, who had been charged with riotous behaviour and obstruction of the police, were acquitted, but the remaining 12 were committed for retrial at a venue outside Newcastle. The choice of Singleton for the new trial appeared to many people as a deliberate attempt to obtain a conviction since it was clear that another Newcastle jury would be unlikely to find the men guilty. To many, the unemployed seemed to be confronted by a system which could not be beaten, and which has no regard for their welfare. Burgmann, by means of attendance at public meetings and correspondence with the papers, had been a participant in the debate. With the move for a retrial he was able to take a more prominent part.

A public meeting was called in Newcastle Town Hall on 8th November, to protest the change of venue for the trial and to organize a deputation to the Premier. [19] Burgmann, with his reputation as a speaker on such matters from his association with W.E.A., was invited to address the meeting. He spoke on the aims of the jury system and summed up all the salient features of the debate. If the trial was moved to Singleton, the defendants' right to challenge was useless and the Crown could pick the jurymen and judge. This contravened the principles of representation and community judgement. Furthermore, no adequate reason was given for the change of venue. The case belonged "to the Newcastle people and the Newcastle atmosphere" and to take it to the pastoral setting of Singleton would set it in a different climate of feeling".[20] As far as Burgmann was concerned, and many agreed – This lead to only one possible conclusion: a conviction was deliberately being sought. Burgmann suggested "concentrated fire on the Premier"[21] as a means of action, and if that failed, more meetings and resolutions. The speech was strongly commended by Dr. H. V. Evatt, Justice of the High Court.[22] Burgmann's speech was made into a pamphlet and circulated throughout Singleton. When the jury there also refused to convict the defendants, Burgmann was given the credit.[23] How much this was justified is debatable, but he was certainly a man whose views had created a large following by this time. This is a large generalisation very hard to verify among thinking people. The resolution of the issue did not lead to any largescale social reform but it did demonstrate to the unemployed that they possessed the potential to defend themselves against social injustices. Attention was effectively drawn to the problems of unemployed people in similar circumstances. Assurances were given by the authorities that no more evictions would take place under such circumstances and that all would be done to prevent evictions taking place at all.[24] There was widespread agitation to make the government provide a rent allowance to the unemployed and deputations were sent to the Premier.[25] Clergymen as a body were even stirred to participation.[26]

Burgmann had been active in other areas before the Clara St. furure. Through his lectures for the W.E.A.Burgmann had become familiar with the problems of miners and industrial workers and he used this platform to express his views on unemployment and poverty.[27] As well, his lectures illustrated his ideas on education and society. Education should "enable men and women to achieve the full enjoyment of their personal powers and abilities... that these ... will be used in such a way that the service of Australia will be a natural expression of the service of God and man."[28] Many of these lectures were printed in full in the Newcastle Morning Herald, as were some of his articles. A review of his article "The Fight Against Poverty", was published in the Herald in October 1932.[29] The Editor was so struck by "the burning zeal for humanity " it expressed that despite his opposition to Burgmann's political stand, he invited Burgmann to send in anything else he wanted to have printed.[30]

The result was a profusion of articles and letters by Burgmann, concentrated around the time of the Clara St. debate in November; this may have had some bearing on the credit attributed to Burgmann in the case. A series of articles on "Capitalism and Christianity" showed the "world of difference between the spirit of Capitalism and the spirit of Christianity."[31] In a November article he made an interesting summation of the attitude of society towards unemployment:

> "The bourgeoise mind is rooted in self-interest and competative struggle... It is a matter of climb hard and reach the top before the other fellow., When he is secure, then he can afford to dispense charity."[32]

The letters to the Editor commenting on his articles show the respect in which his views were held by thinking people.[33]

By 1933, Burgmann seemed to be making headway in his efforts to arouse the social conscience of the Church and Government. In 1930 he had been instrumental in the appointment by Synod of a Select Committee to report on social and industrial problems.[34] He himself was appointed to the Committee as were the Dean of the Cathedral and Shellshear, two of his co-workers in the dole resolution. In 1932 the latter two men passed a Synod resolution stating that "work is the moral and spiritual need of every man". [35] Thus when the issue of unemployment came up in Synod in 1933, it did not represent a radical departure. However few would have predicted that the conservative non-political Anglican Synod would be stirred to take the political field on behalf of the unemployed. A resolution was passed in favour of political lobbying to double the dole, and to pay half of it in cash.[36] The resolution is all the more surprising in the light of Bishop Batty's previously quoted statement. Burgmann proposed the final form of the resolution and worked to have it passed. His pamphlet "Justice for all and the case for the Unemployed" set out the arguments in favour of the resolution;[37]

> "Our greatest danger is that fatalistic mood in which we inwardly decide that nothing can be done. Something can be done. The dole can be doubled. This will bring life and hope to thousands."[38]

The resolution was passed unanimously. It is evident that Burgmann and his friends had been preparing the ground for some time.

The Herald gave generous space to the account of the proceedings of the Synod motion and Burgmann's speech was recorded in full.[39] On the basis of the Federal Statistician's Report, he claimed that 25 – 30% of trade unionists were permanently unemployed. Industry could not deal with the problem but something must be done at both State and Federal levels, and a solution to alleviating the conditions of the unemployed could be found in doubling the dole. Copies of the Synod resolution were sent to all members of State and Commonwealth Parliaments whose electorates were within the Diocese.

Although on the surface economically naive, the proposal to double the dole had a sound basis. The Rev. Lee quoted to Synod the findings of a wellknown economist, who declared that "an increase in the dole would be of benefit to the state ... because of the need of doing everything possible to strengthen the primary industries... Stimulation of consumption.[40] The motion was applauded by the Trades Hall and union officials.[41] It was followed by a campaign by Burgmann to encourage public support for the petitioning of the Premier. His method was as usual, public address and letters to the papers. At public meetings he received enthusiastic support.[42] Momentum was added to the campaign when the Synod of Riverina and Armidale and the Presbyterian Assembly of N.S.W. all passed resolutions in favour of increased assistance for the unemployed.[43] In a letter to the editor in June Burgmann wrote;

> "If churches, trade unions, shire councils... and party organisations could forget their political dogmas and sink their social prejudices for one month and face the facts of unemployment as a great national tragedy, we could at least make the conditions of the unemployed human and endurable. The task is not beyond the powers of a united people."[44]

Unfortunately, the members of Parliament as a whole did not share his view. In their replies to Synod, most gave accounts of what was already being done. Replies ranged from a balance sheet of assistance to the unemployed,

from the Department of the Interior, to the enthusiasm of R. James M.H.R. who expressed his hope that the resolution would be "readily accepted by the responsible leaders of government in Australia."[45] Some replies were noncommital or answered that "the matter has been taken up in the appropriate quarter".[46] Most replies were self justifying, or as in the case of A. Howarth member for Lorn, openly sceptical; "kindly advise me how the Synod proposes to raise the neccessary money to carry out their suggestion".[47]

Despite those reactions the Synod's pressure was not entirely futile. An editorial on March 24 stated"if the effect of the Synod's decision is nothing else but a reminder to the State and Commonwealth of the poignant realities associated with unemployment, it will be beneficial".[48] This proved to be the case as the government finally granted extra relief to the unemployed.[49] Whether Burgmann and the Anglican Synod can take the credit for this move is uncertain, but there is little doubt that their campaign exerted a significant and unusual pressure on the State governments in the depth of the Depression.

Whatever the results, it is clear that Burgmann was held in respect by the working class for speaking out in defense of the unemployed. At a public meeting in Cardiff in November, where Burgmann had spoken in favour of petitioning the Premier, the Chairman said "It was pleasing that men of the calibre of Mr. E.H. Burgmann were prepared to associate themselves with a movement that aimed at bettering the condition of the working class."[50] There is no doubt that Burgmann made full use of his position as a public figure to put forward the interests of the oppressed classes, and it would seem that the greatest justification of his reputation lies in this. If he was a radical, it was only in comparison to his fellow churchmen. His real achievements as a "champion of the working class" were in the realm of educating people to a social awareness and stirring them to take action themselves by his own example. That he was held in respect by the working class of Newcastle for his attempt to help them improve their conditions during the Depression, was seen at his consecration as Bishop of Goulbourn in Newcastle Cathedral in May 1934. The building was "crowded with Trade Unionists". unusual in a Church which has a predominantly middleclass laity.[51] If only as a mouthpiece for the problems of the unemployed of the Depression, it would seem that his reputation as a supporter of working class interests is no more than he deserves.

FOOTNOTES:

1. H. Oakes, "The Episcopate of E.H. Burgmann". M.A. thesis for A.N.U. 1966 unpublished p.31
2. Batty's correspondence, archives of Newcastle Uni.library. Letter from Burgmann at St. John's College Morpeth to Bishop Batty, 6/9/31
3. Morpeth Review, June 1928, "The Problem of Life", E.H. Burgmann p.8
4. Pam Lane, "The Episcopate of Fran cis de Witt Batty" B.A. Honours Thesis Newcastle Uni. unpublished p.66
5. Anglican Diocese of Newcastle Yearbook, 1932, p.79
6. Loius and Turner, The Depression of the 1930s, 1968, Melbourne p.70
7. Ibid, p.71 View of Church expressed by minister of Cessnock, Alan Walker
8. Oakes, Op.cit., p.30
9. Pam Lane, op.cit., p.16 unemployment was "a social sin and judgement will fall on the community that allows it to continue." Quote from E.H. Burgmann The Beginning and End of Things.
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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE: CONTROVERSIAL BEGINNINGS: 1952 to 1959.

BY

VANESSA TRIPP

SYNOPSIS:

In the late nineteenth century the growth of industrialisation and increasing emphasis on technology posed a threat to the previous total unity of educational thinking, and there developed a conflict between the supporters of the concepts of the "academic" and the "technological" especially in the field of university education. In Newcastle, agitators (especially the Newcastle University Establishment Group) demanded two universities; one academic, and the other technological because they were seen as completely mutually exclusive types of education. However, Newcastle University evolved from a college of the University of Technology in Sydney. The major educational conflict which began in the nineteenth century now revealed itself in Newcastle because this university with its technological atmosphere and bureaucratic administration was seen by many tranditionalists as unsuitable to control the development of academic courses at Newcastle University College. It is the way the conflict between the academic and the technological views of education manifested itself in Newcastle in the 1950s, through these issues which is the subject of this paper.

In the 1840s when the University of Sydney was being planned a position was prepared for "a principal who should be also professor of Classics and Mathematics." [1] This small organisational feature says much about the view taken of education in the 1850s. It was seen as a unity, and specialisation of any sort was almost unknown. But a massive change was imminent because the totally new fields of technology and applied science began to gain advocates and threaten the hegemony of the tradtional studies and the unity of educational ideas. In 1849 when William Charles Wentworth was supporting the establishment of Sydney University he claimed that it would shed a "holy light ... of Education and Civilization .. to elevate the soul of our fellow men". [2] This reveals the almost divine awe in which education was held at the time. A less extreme attitude but with similar emphasis on the impact of education on the person was expressed by Charles Bradham in 1882 when he advocated "classical study" to help expand culture, and "to teach men and women to think"[3] However, as the unity of education began to breakdown this conception of a liberal education aiming at the betterment of mankind and civilization also began to be threatened. If Sir Thomas Stuart speaking before the Royal Colonial institute in 1891 can be believed "students in Australasia frequent the universities in order to acquire some professional qualification... [never] ... simply as a mark of culture" [4] Thus the new ideas of vocationalism utilitarianism and the technologies themselves combined to begin a rift in educational thinking which has not yet been truely resolved.

Throughout the early Twentieth Century the study of technology became essential in an increasingly industrial age. The establishment of the University of Queensland in 1911 reflected this trend. At the inaugural ceremony the Chancellor William MacGregor revealed a growing view that "militarism... competition in industrial production " and a higher standard of living demanded that the "rising generation... be trained" and that it was one of the functions of a University to do this.[5] He defended utilitarian education against claims that it was a lesser field of study by the rousing assertion that "Black ruin stares in the Face of the Nation that neglects it."[6]

In the Twentieth Century this necessity for utilitarian and technological education was obvious but traditionalists asserted that the university was not the place for it. In 1944 an academic E. Ashley, summarised the cries of those who supported universities as the bastion of the liberal arts when he claimed that

> "the university stands for the
> world of ideas and ... its mission
> is to fight triviality vocationalism
> and mediocrity."[7]

To many, these very characteristics of "triviality, vocationalism and mediocrity" were seen to be embodied within the studies of practical science and technology. But these studies were increasingly becoming accepted as part of a university education and many like Ashley opposed this. So by the 1940s the conflicting ideas concerning the nature and function of universities and the place of the technologies in them had become firmly established.

In 1949, the N.S.W. University of Technology was established, an institution which was unique in conception in the British Commonwealth. According to the act of parliament it was to provide:

> "advanced training in the .. branches
> of technology and science in their
> application to industry and commerce."[8]

This institution was called a university but traditionalists opposed this claiming that its preoccupation with the applied sciences was completely opposed to the true idea of a university as espoused by such as Wentworth and Ashley. However, it was in Newcastle in the 1950s, that this conflict between the advocates of a traditional academic university and a technological university really exploded.

In Newcastle soon after the end of World War II the Newcastle University Establishment Group [NUEG] was formed. The aim of this group was to fight for the establishment of an autonomous academic university of Newcastle based on the pattern of the university of Sydney.[9] Instead in 1951 it was the N.S.W. University of Technology which established a University College in Newcastle [NUC] The NUEG continued to fight for the traditional type of University in the light of the government policy which stated that "Two Universities – technological and academic – were planned for Newcastle."[10] The real conflict did not begin until October 1953 when it was announced that "first year courses in Arts and Economics would be "available at the

Newcastle College of the University of Technology and in association with the New England University."[11] This caused a furor because it seemed to show that the government intended the promised academic univerity to develop from the University of Technology University College. The Bishop of Newcastle, F. de Witt Batty,[12] succinctly described the basic opposition to this idea when he said:

> "a University .. must be.. wholly devoted
> to the pursuit of things which we
> value for themselves alone and not for
> ... anything beyond them."[13]

This definition logically excluded the University of Technology because one of its aims as described in the official handbook was

> "the utilization of scientific knowledge
> .. for the solution of immediate problems."[14]

This conflict of ideas was an integral part of the debate in Newcastle concerning the function of a university. It involved the concepts of a generalised education as opposed to training, humanism as opposed to the technologies and the academic as opposed to the vocational idea of education.[15] The supporters of a liberal university education took many shapes but often their claims had a moral almost emotional tone. Oliver Holt provides a brilliant example of this when he writes:

> "the technological bent of modern education ..
> is so insidious that .. a problem for
> universities .. (is) .. to try to keep
> alive the flame of civilisation."[16]

He saw the traditional university as the saviour of a world already dominated by utilitarianism and vocationalism. W.H.C. Eddy [13] writes in a similar tone when he describes the University of Technology as "a monstrosity, the most illiberal university in the state..." [18] However, this highly emotional authorship was usually countered by reasoned opposition to the system of Arts within a Technological University. An official statement of the NUEG showed this when it stated that

> "Our criticisms imply no idealisation of the
> existing universities of the academic type,
> but they .. do imply that it will drag all
> education down ... if it is pretended that
> there is no difference between the academic
> and the technological."[19]

Basically the most relevant ideological opposition centered on this blurring of the distinction between the ideas of an academic university and a technological institute. It was the usurpation of the name "university" by an institute which seemed such a threat to the traditional role of a university as a searcher for abstract truths.

It is essential to note that at no time in the history of the conflict between technology and the humanities in Newcastle were the voices supporting the technological university and opposing the academic ideals nearly so well organised or valuable as the NUEG and its prominent members. This imbalance in the expression of opinion in the public forum says much about the nature of the conflict. Those in Newcastle who believed in the necessity for higher technological education were placed in a secure position in 1951. They, unlike the NUEG, had no need to feel that the future realisation of their ideal was threatened by another type of university, namely an academic university.

A more serious possible reason for the dearth of material in defence of Technology is closely linked with NUC. Oliver Holt suggested that there was "some doubt whether .. complete academic freedom existed" at Newcastle.[20] It was a distinctive feature of the debate [21] in Newcastle that only a very small number of the

staff of NUC expressed their views either supporting the NUEG line or defending their own institution (namely the University of Technology). Holt's claim is substantiated to some extent by correspondence between Professor Baxter [22] and Professor Auchmuty [23] in which Baxter advised Auchmuty and his colleagues to "take no further part in public or private debate." [24] This letter was written in late 1958 and therefore had little immediate bearing on the letter by Holt . However, the fact that this type of instruction could have been given at all throws doubt on the guarantees of academic freedom by the University of Technology., and on the claims of those in 1956 who denied intervention from Sydney.

Whatever the reason, the fact remained that there were more public opponents than open supporters of the role played by the University of Technology in the development of NUC. H. Barton in a letter to the editor claimed that modern industrialists and technologists had "more to do than absorb

> themselves in dead languages,
> obsolete philosophies, forgotten
> religion and the classics of
> the period of chattel slavery".[25]

He was one of the few who managed to attack the humanities with the same vehemence as the then common place attacks on technology. The motivation for Barton's condemnation [based on a somewhat limited delineation of what the study of the humanities involved] was the irrelevance of these studies to the needs of the industrial man. It was this apparent irrelevance in the face of such large scale industrialisation and the demands this made for skilled men that caused the gradual movement of emphasis away from a liberal education to Professional training. In fact the applied sciences had gained such influence that by the 1950s (despite the demands in Newcastle) a truly classical university in the traditional mould was a thing of the past.

An indication of the incredibly rapid growth of the concept of technological university education and the size of the rift in educational thinking can be found in the Recommendations of the 1957 Development sub committee of N.U.C. Dissension within the subcommittee caused a number of minority reports to be submitted along with the majority reports. The main report in stating the arguments for an autonomous University of Newcastle stressed the need for freedom of a university from "the atmosphere of a 'Technological University' "[26] J.K. Mac Dougall [27] and W.E. Clegg [28] submitted a minority report and it is here that the rift becomes obvious. They made the point that

> "it is at least as important for
> technology to be independent of
> the atmosphere of a "traditional"
> university as vice versa"[29]

In the 1850s education was conceived as a unified whole but as this example from Newcastle shows by the 1950s that unity was shattered by the rival claims of technology and the humanities.

Professor J J. Auchmuty was a human embodiment of this conflict. He was an academic in the traditional university spirit but he was also a senior member of staff of the N.U.C. of the University of Technology. In response to this apparently paradoxial situation Auchmuty formulated a view which had the potential to reconcile the two poles of thought. In an article written for the Newcastle Morning Herald he stated that a University had "two duties." First as "a centre of vocational education" and more importantly "of adding to the total of human knowledge." [30] Thus he saw the idea of the university in twin terms; as imparting both education and training and dealing in both the humanities and the techonologies. It was in fact this balanced view which was eventually implemented and forms the basis for the University of Newcastle as it is today.

The conflict of ideas which had become such an issue in Newcastle was in reality only a logical development of the types of views which had been expressed since the late Nineteenth Century . However, it was in Newcastle that a totally new facet of the debate between academic and technological university education emerged. This focused on the practical organisational sphere of the universities and the difference between the administration and structure of an academic university and a technological institute.[31] Bishop de Witt Batty revealed the nature of this relatively recent development in the educational arena when he stated that an academic university

> "must be unfettered by ..
> government .. controlled by
> a senate .. of men who have..
> had university training and
> can appreciate its special character"[32]

In defiance of this view stood the N.S.W. University of Technology which not only had close administrative ties with the bureaucratic N.S.W. Government Public Service but whose council was made up of managing directors, technologists, architects and industrialists with only a small percentage of academics.[33]

Administration of the University of Technology was seen to pose to "the cultivation of the liberal spirit" and academic freedoms. However, it was the constitution of the Council which was the issue which caused most of the questioning concerning the appropriatness of the supervision of the Newcastle courses in humanities by the University of Technology. In the 1954 Annual Report of the N.U.E.G. it was claimed that the University of Technology was not

> "designed to duplicate the function
> of .. academic universities. This..
> decided the composition of its council .. administration
> and its early traditions."[34]

These things: the Council, the administration and the traditions which had been designed for and evolved in a technological university were different from those of an academic university and were not seen, by the N.U.E.G. as suitable for Newcastle's University. This idea was reiterated by the N.U.C. Staff Association in 1956 when it considered the future development of its college. The association concluded that:

> "the council of the University of
> Technology is not competent to
> govern [NUC].. sympathetically
> and wisely."[35]

This decision opposing the technological council may not have been unanimous because in 1954 Mr. Ritchie [36]a member of the staff had stated in the newspaper that :

> "the product of a university was the
> result of .. the quality of teahcers,
> the intelligence of students and the
> course provided .. I am at a loss
> to see how any change in administration
> can affect this." [37]

This type of idea, that all that was needed for a good university were staff and students was often expressed in letters to the Newcastle press. However, this idea was called into question, in 1956 with the report of the Royal Commission into the structure of the University of Tasmania. This revealed the threat to traditional university values and integrity which the lay council of that university had created. As Alan Barcan stated, thie situation in Tasmania showed "how the wrong type of university structure may restrict .. the best functioning of a university."[38]

This debate centering on the administrative structure of universities and the related ideological debate centering on the ideals of an academic and a technological university both reacted a turning point in 1958. On the recommendation of the Murray report [1957] the N.S.W. University of Technology had its aims extended in order to allow the incorporation of medicine and arts into its range of studies. It also changed its name to the University of N.S.W. and was officially recognised as a university of the traditional type. C.G. Lambie[39] described as "disingenuous" the pretence that

> "a change of name and the establishment
> of a faculty of arts in the University of Technology
> would.. convert it into a university of the traditional type".[40]

He thus implied what many believed that this move was an attempt to disguise rather than resolve the differences between the humanities and technology . The administrative structure had remained the same and the council of the University of Technology itself had revealed that the university would still retain "the essentially scientific and technological conception for which it was created."[41] Despite these reservations the move eventually proved to be an effective way of resolving the conflict in Newcastle. In 1956 Mr. C.F. Presley[42] had stated that:

> "Newcastle was in the strange position of having a
> proper university college although the university to
> which it was a college was not a proper university."[43]

The change in the role of the N.S.W. University of Technology in 1958 meant that ostensibly the university to which N.U.C. was a college was now a proper university. Only a year after this change in an attempt to fulfill its new role the University of N.S.W. granted a degree of autonomy to the academic staff of N.U.C. The aim of this was to

> "provide the staff with the opportunity to develop
> a college with characteristics which would meet the
> particular requirements of Newcastle"[44]

Thus the academic freedom and the opportunity to develop a traditional and unique atmosphere at Newcastle which had constantly seemed to be threatened by the utilitarianism and the administrative structure of the University of Technology was given official sanction and security by the University of New South Wales.[45] This fact when combined with Auchmuty's dual concept of the role of the university allowed Newcastle University eventually to emerge and grow as a respected institution offering a creditable balance between the study of the pure and applied sciences and between the humane and the techhnological disciplines.

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