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History Club

Department of History

STUDENT RESEARCH PAPERS  
IN  
AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

No. 5

1980

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## PREFACE

In the Australian History course offered in Second Year at the University of Newcastle, as part of their progressive assessment, students have the opportunity of either presenting a conventional essay or of researching a topic of their own choice from primary sources. Many students choose the second alternative, and since this programme began in 1976 a considerable corpus of material on the local history of this area has been built up. The papers are all available for public use in the local history collection of the Newcastle Public Library. The best of the papers, however, are made available to a wider readership by publishing them each year.

This, unfortunately, may be the last issue of the publication, as a reorganisation of the courses offered in this department has meant that Australian History will be taught in First Year only, where unstructured private research by students would be less appropriate. However, the editors hope you will find the papers in this volume as interesting and useful as we did.

Peter Hempenstall, Margaret Henry, Noel Rutherford.

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THE NEWCASTLE AND NORTHUMBERLAND BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

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BY

SUSAN ARMSTRONG

SYNOPSIS:

While the Australian colonies sustained many of the social and political ideals of Britain, one area in which Australia differed was in its dealings with the poor. Although our charitable institutions reflected the current nineteenth century Victorian attitudes towards the poor, they adopted different ways and means of dispensing charitable relief.

This paper looks at one such institution, the Newcastle and Northumberland Benevolent Society\* from its inception in 1885 through to 1900. It attempts to examine the aims and the role of the society in dispensing charity in the colony of Newcastle, to see how its growth reflected the changing economic conditions within the colony and to estimate how the Benevolent Society reflected nineteenth century attitudes towards charitable relief and the poor, and maintained these attitudes into the twentieth century.

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Australian social institutions were fashioned in a climate of opinion "where not only did early colonists have a horror of the English Poor Law, but the very nature of the Australian economy and the lack of a system of local governments made its introduction impossible".<sup>1</sup> However the question soon arose over who should accept responsibility for the destitute of the colonies, and the pattern of organization that relief work should follow. Governments were reluctant to assume responsibility for such relief, as the widely held belief was that government intervention in relief work "not only undermined initiative and self reliance, but encouraged a pauper class".<sup>2</sup> The solution was found in government subsidized voluntary organizations which came to assume the central role in charitable relief work in most colonies of Australia.<sup>3</sup>

In the colony of N.S.W. the Benevolent Society became the Government Almoner dispensing charity and poor relief "within a community where self improvement was the dominating ethos and Christian duty frequently underlined".<sup>4</sup> The Victorian attitude towards poverty combined fatalism "the poor ye always have with you" and a moralizing and patronizing form of dispensing charity which saw "destitution as the result of individual weakness of character, and philanthropy [as] the bridge between business dealings and Christian consciousness".<sup>5</sup> Such was the climate of thought, that set the tone of the Newcastle Benevolent Society at its inception in January 1885 and which accompanied all its charitable works for the next fifteen years.

This attitude of moral rectitude was present from the very start of the Newcastle Benevolent Society. The minutes of the first meeting opened with the statement, "the Benevolent Society in Newcastle owes its origins under Divine Providence to the united efforts of many members of the Newcastle Relief Society and Women's Crusade".<sup>6</sup> These ladies seeing the distress amongst them called on the Mayor to convene a public meeting to form a Benevolent Society whose chief aims would be "to procure an asylum for helpless people and to relieve the destitute poor around them".<sup>7</sup> The ladies hired premises near the St. John's Church in Parry Street and the ladies' committee proceeded to take over the entire management and responsibility of the asylum.

The objects of the Newcastle Benevolent Society were  
 "1) to relieve the wants of the poor - supplying them with clothes, food and necessities both inside and outside of the asylum in Newcastle and surrounding districts  
 2) primary consideration to be paid to the sick and poor women in their confinements".<sup>8</sup>

Underlying these aims was the assumption that poverty was self-inflicted, and that assistance should be individual temporary and reformatory".<sup>9</sup> The Newcastle Benevolent Society set out to establish restrictions and prohibitions so that only the desperate would apply. Widely held assumptions in regard to relief were "that assistance should be below the lowest prevailing community standards, that recipients should be institutionalized where possible in benevolent homes and that recipients be required to undertake arduous and unpleasant tasks".<sup>10</sup> Rigorous character investigations were carried out by lady visitors and almost inevitably "the general morals of the

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\* The ladies had to form a Benevolent Society in order to obtain £ for £ subsidy from the government.

applicant came under review; as attempts were made to distinguish between the deserving and the undeserving poor".<sup>11</sup>

These attitudes towards the poor were reflected in the rules of the asylum. "In the men's ward there was to be no gambling, no entering other wards, spitting, rude or improper behaviour. Men were to rise at 6 a.m. in summer, half an hour later in winter. They were fed three times a day, with lights out at 9 p.m. In the women's ward similar rules applied. But there were children to wash at 6 a.m. or half an hour later in the winter, evening prayers had to be attended and a lock up at 9 p.m. Both sexes had to be bathed completely once a week and to change their clothing. In return for their keep, they were expected to contribute to the maintenance of the asylum".<sup>12</sup>

Mrs. Ellis, the President of the Society speaking at the official opening of the asylum, encouraged her band of workers to "try by God's grace, to carry out his great command, to love thy neighbour and to follow in the steps of the Good Samaritan".<sup>13</sup>

The first annual report of the Benevolent Society commenced with the words, "Blessed is he that Considereth the Poor" and stated that "in porportion to the outward prosperity around us, there is an increasing undercurrent of poverty, and wretchedness permeating our midst, which can only be stemmed by the efforts of the Committee."<sup>14</sup>

Relief was taking on a two fold character, administration of outdoor relief and the running of the asylum. In administering outdoor relief, the Society divided the district which it served (including Stockton, Bullock Island, Wickham, Minmi, Charlestown, Catherine Hill Bay) into areas, in each of which the relief was administered by two lady visitors. Once a case of destitution was brought to their notice, they made a full investigation and forwarded their report to the General Committee. This committee decided on the amount of relief to be given, either in the form of clothing, blankets, tools to help obtain employment or food tickets which could be redeemed at the local general shop in each area. There was no fixed allowance, the society being governed by the circumstances of the applicant, "in practice it is usual to give 2/6 a week to a single applicant, 4/6 a week to a married couple".<sup>15</sup> However, in keeping with the underlying ethos of the society the Honorary Treasurer stated, "we do not profess to give relief that will fully support, as we do not believe in doing that which will do away with their self reliance".<sup>16</sup>

A total of 1231 individuals were helped in the first year of the society's existence and the Committee expended £245/19/8 in cash for outdoor relief. "Within the first twelve months the original asylum was insufficient to meet the needs of the Society so a new building had been erected which provided extra accommodation and allowed for the separation of the sexes. Nearly one hundred people passed through the asylum in the first year with many aged and infirm becoming permanent inmates".<sup>17</sup>

The second Annual Report presented in March 1887, showed the beginnings of the depression which was pervading the colony, with a corresponding increase in the numbers applying for relief. Nearly one hundred people found temporary relief and shelter in the asylum, and some 1,900 people were afforded outdoor relief. Mrs Ellis in presenting the report implored the ladies "to be true women, and show their sympathy to young and old, sick and poor, as well as the merely poor and needy. We know upon higher authority that it is more blessed to give than to receive".<sup>18</sup>

The attitude of the Newcastle people towards the distress in the district was summed up in an editorial in the Newcastle Morning Herald, 12th March 1887. While the editor agreed "there were genuine cases of poverty, ... that are deservous of charity, [he observed] that charity does not apply to able-bodied single men who can shoulder their blanket and make for districts where labour is not at a premium".<sup>19</sup>

An historical sketch on the Newcastle Benevolent Society published in the Newcastle Morning Herald 15th March 1889 characterized the prevailing attitudes towards the poor and the charities that dispensed charity than any number of individuals. The Benevolent Society is such a society, and one important feature of this society is the carefulness with which its funds are distributed and expended".<sup>20</sup>

Also in the Newcastle Morning Herald 18th May 1889 was an editorial which suggested "that a great stimulus could be given to public benevolence in Newcastle if the two main relief agencies, the Benevolent Society and the Relief Society, whose objects are identical, whose manner of working is similar, were united into one single body, irrespective of class, opinion, or belief. The union of these two bodies would be a holy alliance that could only result in good".<sup>21</sup> However the ladies of both societies ignored this plea, and continued to assist the poor in their own separate ways. In fact the records of the Benevolent Society show little cooperation with any other society, church or hospital in the district.

The quarterly meeting of the Society conducted in November 1889 showed the increasing use of the asylum as a lying-in hospital for the poor women of the district. The report stresses however "that in cases where the young women 'have loved not wisely but too well' they have subsequently been led back to respectable lives through the efforts of the ladies of the Society."<sup>22</sup>

By 1892 "great and terrible distress abounded in the district".<sup>23</sup> Mrs Ellis lamented the lack of support from the Colonial Government to the Newcastle Benevolent Society. "The Sydney Benevolent Society received a grant of £7,500 compared to £1,500 to Newcastle".<sup>24</sup> In giving her report Mrs Ellis acknowledged the gratitude of the Committee "to the almighty for his abundant blessing on the Society, in making them the honoured instruments of conveying help and support to the poor and needy."<sup>25</sup>

The Annual Report of March 1893 continued to "show the effects of the great depression on the Society".<sup>26</sup> "The past year has been a momentous one in the annals of outdoor relief by this society with upwards of one hundred families receiving a weekly allowance; as well as receiving blankets, food and clothing".<sup>27</sup> By 1893 the society had ceased to issue annual totals of people helped by outdoor relief and issued the figures by the month, with an average of 120 families being helped each month.

August 1893 saw Mr. Creer visiting Newcastle urging all able bodied men to go to the country to mine for gold". He offered the men railway passes, miners' rights, and a fortnight's rations (to be repaid when they made good) as well as the incentive that under their miners' rights they could fence in a fair sized portion of land to grow vegetables as well as fossicking for minerals. He had no doubts the men could make a living in this way, rather than to be relieved by charity, and pauperized by the government".<sup>28</sup>

TABLE I

Figures for the first seven years of the Benevolent Society show the large increase in outdoor and casual relief given by the Society. They show how the Benevolent Society "acted as a barometer upon the social conditions of the colony".<sup>26a</sup>

Year	Outdoor Relief			Casual Relief				
	Families	Male	Female	Total	Meals	Bed	Passes	
							Steamer	Rail
1886	266	472	759	1231	x	x	29	x
1887	405	-	-	1863	600	x	105	35
1888	571	848	1293	2141	1269	456	210	23
1889	857	1610	2268	3878	1047	359	268	57
1890	1766	2372	3634	6006	1136	381	217	45
1891	2136	2820	4248	7068	735	248	58	-
1892	2523	3276	5572	9848	725	308	143	26

\* No explanation was given why in the years 1891 and 1892 when demands for outdoor relief increased dramatically, there was a corresponding decrease in the demand for casual relief. One explanation is that able bodied men had left in search of work in the country leaving their wives and children dependent on the Benevolent Society.

This move by the government "of offering the traditional Australian panacea of putting men on the land"<sup>29</sup> is ironic in view of the Benevolent Society's quarterly meeting in November 1893 which "stressed the continuing depression and the disastrous effect it was having on the working classes and the friends of the Society".<sup>29</sup> Not only was the society helping 207 families, "many of whom were deserted wives with children, whose husbands were away scouring the country for work";<sup>30</sup> but as well it had to cope with the fact that "scores of hardworking men driven out from the interior through want of work, have forced their way into Newcastle in the hope of obtaining employment, and when it is not forthcoming they are falling back on the helping hand of the Society".<sup>31</sup>

Even as the depression increased in severity in 1894, Mr. Arnott could eulogize, "what would the poor of this city have done without a society such as this in their midst? It was a matter of thankfulness that God had put into the hearts of the ladies present to engage in such noble work, and all the good done could be traced to the hand of God himself".<sup>33</sup>

This moralizing and patronizing attitude toward the poor still prevailed even in times of massive shutdowns in industry and the mines causing wide-spread unemployment. The Newcastle Benevolent Society still saw its role "as stimulating community concern for the poor, and to organize the necessary care for them".<sup>34</sup> Charity, to the Society, was still regarded "as a minor adjustment to the machinery of society, rather than a radical reformation of it".<sup>35</sup> Poverty was still believed to be in most cases self inflicted and the subject of condescending charity designed to discourage pauperism.

This attitude was not confined to the Benevolent Society. The Newcastle Morning Herald 20/9/1894, called attention to the increase in the numbers applying for relief, which had doubled since 1888. "Poverty is either increasing at an alarming rate, or the springs of private benevolence are drying up, or there is a greater disposition than formerly on the part of the people to throw the burden of their sickness and poverty upon the State".<sup>36</sup> The editor called for "effective legislation before the increase of distress is out of all proportion to the growth in population".<sup>37</sup>

By November 1895 the Society was £1100 in debt, with increasing demands being placed on the Society's funds. One bright spot in the year 1895 was the erection of two cottages for aged married couples on the asylum site at Waratah. In 1896 the Society's first meeting reiterated its first main aim, "to discourage pauperism, and to induce and foster industry and self reliance".<sup>38</sup> The Society's records for 1896 show "that poverty and distress had in no way decreased, if possible it had assumed a sterner aspect. Innumerable cases of total destitution and distress had been brought to the attention of the Committee".<sup>39</sup> An application was made to the Government for further funds as £2606 was spent on relief, £500 more than in 1895. The request was refused even though the Sydney Benevolent Society was given £2000 "to deal better with the additional distress existing in the city".<sup>40</sup>

Arrangements were proceeding for the erection of the new asylum at Waratah, with Mr. Arnott offering to sign a cash credit for the £2000 still needed to complete the building. The Reverend Seth Jones at the Annual Meeting in March 1896 felt compelled to move a vote of thanks to the Committee, whom he saw as being "engaged in the most honourable and Godlike work, guided by the noblest, purest motives. It was a labour of love and their reward was from God who had ordained that the poor should be helped by the rich, and the weak by the strong."<sup>41</sup> A special vote of thanks was also given to Mrs Ellis "whose wisdom and love had enabled her to lead the Committee in accomplishing so much self denying and self sacrificing work".<sup>42</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Ellis and Mr. and Mrs. Arnott were the leading members of the Newcastle Benevolent Society. Mr. Ellis M.L.A. for Newcastle represented the Society's interests in Parliament and in deputations to the Premier for increased funds. Mrs. Ellis was President of the Society for twelve years, with Mrs. Arnott as senior Vice President and head of the Dorcas Committee; both were leading spirits in the Society, and provided the much valued leadership and incentive to the ladies of the Committee. These two couples were wealthy well-respected leaders in the colony of N.S.W., being prominent at all kinds of religious and philanthropic meetings. Public support for Christian activities was important for social standing in the nineteenth century, and membership of the Benevolent Society meant social success in N.S.W.<sup>43</sup> Status could be gained from doing good works, especially with pillars of society, the presence of the Arnotts and the Ellis' to a certain extent guaranteed the continued support of the Benevolent Society, and gave status and prestige to the Society's social events and activities.

By November 1896, changes were slowly occurring within the colony of N.S.W. in attitudes towards the poor, in particular to the aged. The Newcastle Morning Herald 8th December 1896 acknowledged that "many conditions of society which a few years ago were considered to be admirable in their workings are now considered antiquated and barbarous".<sup>44</sup> It called for a system of state pensions for the aged, it acknowledged that the system in operation was but "an elaboration of the poorhouse method in England of dealing with the aged poor".<sup>45</sup> Private benevolence was no longer seen as sufficient to meet the enormous demands being placed on it as the colony battled the continuing depression. However, the Herald stressed that whatever system was adopted it would have to "inculcate principles of thrift and self reliance among the people".<sup>46</sup> Changes in ideas on social welfare were certainly occurring, but they still perpetuated the ideas of self help and independence that the Victorian Era had nurtured.

The Annual Meeting of 1897 saw the Society change its name to the Newcastle and Northumberland Benevolent Society. The Annual report showed that "while the depression might have been abating in other parts of the continent, the Newcastle Society had seen no decrease in the demands for casual relief".<sup>47</sup> However Mr. Arnott felt that "the members of the Society had good reason to thank God for the progress of this grand and noble work of benevolence. The ladies had indeed worked nobly in the cause of charity".<sup>48</sup>

In May 1897 Lord Hampden opened the new asylum at Waratah. He made comparisons between the way in which poverty was dealt with in this colony, and the way it was done in the old country. Lord Hampden felt there was a growing need for a central agency, "to deal with the question of the unemployed, to cope with the problem of relieving poverty, with the accompanying question of the selection of deserving cases and the rejection of the undeserving, as well as to suppress mendicity".<sup>49</sup>

The 1898 annual report of the Benevolent Society recorded "no decline in poverty or distress in the district, with the expenditure of the Society exceeding income".<sup>50</sup> The Newcastle Morning Herald 17th March 1898, reported the lack of remunerative employment and the closing of many of the large collieries. "Something bordering on a state of chaos has been reached, and if the present system of distributing outdoor relief is to be continued, it will be necessary for the general public or the government to be more liberal in their aid".<sup>51</sup>

By 1899 the Society recorded a slight decline in the demands for relief; however a new reform had been instigated in the distribution of casual outdoor relief. "The Committee acting on the conviction that freely given relief gives premium to the idle and thriftless, devised a scheme which is operating with excellent results. All applicants for relief who are physically able must earn their meal, bed or pass working on a wood heap at the rear of the Secretary's office".<sup>52</sup> It is not known whether the calls on the society were really less, or whether each new case was being investigated more thoroughly to "protect the Society's funds against the impostures of the unworthy, to the detriment of the worthy".<sup>53</sup> The Society appeared more concerned with keeping down the calls on their funds than with the effectiveness of the relief.

However The Newcastle Morning Herald 21st May 1899 still felt that "the Society and its voluntary workers are doing a noble work of the purest philanthropy that is greatly needed in our midst".<sup>54</sup> The Royal

Commission on Public Charities published in 1899 also found "the system of management commendable and the methods adopted in administering relief more than efficient".<sup>55</sup>

The year 1900 saw the Newcastle Benevolent Society placed on the same footing as that of the Benevolent Society of N.S.W. Demands on outdoor relief funds were considerably less than in previous years. Table II shows the amount of relief given by the society in the years 1893-1900.

TABLE II

As well as distributing outdoor relief, the society distributed loaves of bread and bags of biscuits to the needy poor at the doors of the asylum.

Year	Outdoor Relief		Meals	Beds	Passes	
	Families Relieved Weekly	Total (Individual)			Rail	Steamer
1893	1397	4608	645	251	43	273
1894	2149	*	1525	392	53	462
1895	3025	*	2377	281	65	539
1896	3295	*	1431	411	44	618
1897	3605	*	1688	308	37	353
1898	3286	*	1304	311	40	447
1899	2811	8966	1816	316	29	647
1900	2759	8203	1310	275	28	484

\* While figures are not available for the total numbers of individuals helped in the years 1894-1898, the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Society dated 26th April 1895 indicate the extent of poverty and distress in the district.

"The ladies' out-door relief reports showed that 235 families comprising 1261 persons had been relieved in the month. They comprised 124 widows with families, 14 deserted wives, 32 families where heads of the house were incapacitated by sickness, 23 aged couples and 78 families where the breadwinner had been out of work for long periods". (from Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Society 26th April 1895 - published in the Newcastle Morning Herald.)

However whether the decrease corresponded with improved economic conditions is not known as the ladies were employing more careful supervision in dispensing relief, "each case being dealt with on its merits and relief being given only after an exhaustive enquiry and report by the lady visitor".<sup>56</sup>

The new century saw The Newcastle Morning Herald 1st December 1900 urging the public to support the Benevolent Society. "Although the expenditure of £400,000 by the State upon old Age Pensions may be a large contribution towards meeting the needs of the poor, it will leave a large circle of poverty untouched and unrelieved. The passing of the Old Age Pension Act may be regarded as a first step towards State



recognition of the obligation of the many to the few, but it cannot be a reason for withdrawing individual and from societies which aim at meeting larger needs".<sup>57</sup>

Many writers see the 1890's in Australia as a time when politics became the vehicle of coherent social and economic policies and social reform very much the concern of governments. Economic changes were supposedly causing a revision of the basic assumptions upon which charity was conducted. However the Newcastle and Northumberland Benevolent Society entered the twentieth century upholding the same Victorian attitudes towards the poor it had at its inception. The forty-sixth Annual Report published in The Newcastle Morning Herald 10th March 1931 contained "eulogistic references to the work of the Society".<sup>58</sup> The report stated that "the unfortunate should not be beggars, rather they should be sought out and aided. Every philanthropic worker knew how deserving people became under misfortune. The committee renewed the appeal to ladies who had the energy to make real contributions to the work of the ministering".<sup>59</sup>

Whatever the role of government in the provision of social services in this country, even in 1931 the ladies of the Newcastle Benevolent Society still felt they had a role to play in dispensing their own particular form of charitable relief.

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THE PNEUMONIC INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC OF 1919 IN  
NEW SOUTH WALES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NEWCASTLE

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BY

JENNIFER GREENWELL

SYNOPSIS:

In our modern society, with its reliance on medical technology and health science, influenza is seen as little more than an inconvenience. It is difficult to imagine a time when it was viewed in a much more serious light. Yet in 1919 a particularly virulent strain of pneumonic influenza swept through the world, taking with it the lives of millions.

Australia, though isolated, was not able to escape the visitation. For months, the lives of the entire population were regimented and disrupted to a remarkable degree and death came to many households. Yet today, the influenza epidemic has been virtually forgotten - a page in Australia's history which for many may as well never have been written.

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In 1919, when the world has just emerged from its first global conflict, an event occurred, which, although now virtually forgotten, was to take the lives of twenty-one million people, far in excess of the death toll in the hostilities so recently terminated. The pneumonic influenza epidemic swept with unprecedented speed through a world convalescing from war. No conflict in history, no famine, no disease had ever killed so many in so short a time.

Because of its geographical isolation, Australia was one of the last countries to be affected. Terrified by the high mortality rate of the other nations, officials implemented a series of restrictions which curbed and controlled the lives of individuals to an extent hitherto unimagined. Coupled with the death toll and the massive absenteeism from work through illness, government measures caused a disruption to business and the economy, and a dislocation of social life unparalleled in the history of the nation.

While the epidemic raged in Britain, American and New Zealand, Australia for a time succeeded in maintaining a healthy isolation. In November of 1918 State and Federal governments met to decide upon preventative action and the steps to be taken should this prove unsuccessful. All ships' passengers from overseas were subject to quarantine precautions on arrival and cases of pneumonic influenza in N.S.W. were taken to the quarantine station at North Head.

Boards and committees were established to deal with the situation should quarantine be broken, but such organisations often proved to be confused and chaotic when faced with the reality of a major epidemic. An extensive campaign of inoculation was begun, the value of which was the subject of considerable controversy. The vaccine had been used overseas but its effectiveness in guaranteeing immunity was debatable, the medical consensus being that it tended to minimize the effects of the disease rather than to prevent it altogether. Medical opinion in the 1970's suggests that the vaccine had no immunological value whatsoever, although it possibly had some significant impact upon the mass psychology.<sup>1</sup>

The campaign of inoculation was both vigorous and intense. Prominent citizens such as Governor and Lady Davidson and Archbishop Kelly submitted to much-publicized injections, while rumours were well circulated about the supposedly curative effects of the vaccine upon longstanding complaints such as rheumatism and neuritis. In the full-blown journalese of the period, the Sydney Morning Herald tells of a man whose asthma "disappeared as completely as the mist before the morning sun";<sup>2</sup> and of a sixty-eight year old woman to whom the vaccination restored "all the elasticity and the sparkle of happy youth".<sup>3</sup>

On January 25th., 1919, reports from Melbourne of an outbreak of pneumonic influenza were confirmed. The N.S.W. government was outraged, condemning the Victorian authorities for their laxity in tolerating "cases of influenza apparently in various forms of virulence, but with nobody reporting them".<sup>4</sup> Medical examinations of Victorian train passengers travelling to N.S.W. were conducted at Albury, while a host of holiday-makers rushed home from the stricken state, bringing with them the very illness from which they were fleeing. The hasty departure of a special ministerial train from the diseased capital did nothing to alleviate the prevailing mood of panic.

By January 28th., four cases of pneumonic influenza were reported in Sydney, each having been contracted in Melbourne. A parliamentarian declared that "Victoria, by its neglect to have itself declared an infected state by the Commonwealth, has allowed infection to become widely distributed amongst its population, and by its delay to act in terms of the agreement, has also brought about infection in this state".<sup>5</sup>

The N.S.W. Government exhibited none of Victoria's "incompetence", acting swiftly to impose preventative restrictions in Sydney and the County of Cumberland. The state, having been declared, infected, was surrounded by a cordon of inspectors and police. Traffic was stopped at the borders and a quarantine period of seven days was imposed on all travellers by land or sea. Over one thousand Queenslanders were stranded in N.S.W., many left quite destitute and without accommodation. The Government's decision to include Victoria, where the epidemic was flourishing, in the quarantine restrictions, was contrary to the November agreement, which provided for unhindered intercourse between infected states, and initiated an outraged and bitter debate between the N.S.W., the Victorian and the Federal Governments.

The N.S.W. representatives contended that the November agreement had been virtually renounced when Victoria had refused to observe it. Although both states had been declared infected, the relatively few cases in N.S.W. might, it was hoped, be controlled if contact was avoided with Victoria, where the disease was so widespread that control was no longer possible. Mr. Watt, the Acting Prime Minister, condemned the "unjustifiable inconvenience"<sup>6</sup> caused by the land quarantine and argued that since the disease had escaped the rigid measures imposed on overseas travellers, the haphazard methods employed by the N.S.W. Government could not hope to be effective.

As time passed, New South Wales was accused of causing serious trade and commercial dislocation and aggravating severe shortages of food and fuel. With the intensification of the epidemic, the discrimination between one state and the other became superfluous. Plans were made for the "observation, examination and supervision" of interstate travellers, but these were delayed in their implementation as the state and federal governments wrangled over their respective authorities.

Within New South Wales itself, a Medical Consultative Committee was established to advise the government and an Influenza Committee was formed to implement its regulations. In an endeavour to check the disease in its early stages, a number of restrictions was imposed in the Sydney area. All places of public entertainment, including picture shows and race meetings, were closed. Schools did not resume following the holiday break and church services and public meetings were prohibited. These closures caused considerable losses amongst proprietors and unemployment amongst workers.<sup>8</sup> It was estimated that between 5000 and 6000 cinema employees were out of work and the demand for a moratorium by those directly involved was both vocal and prolonged.

An uproar arose, especially among churchmen who were prohibited from conducting services, when no restrictions were at first imposed upon hotels. In response, a proclamation was issued restricting the number of people permitted in the bar areas of hotels, and a few days later such establishments were completely closed. While such restrictions did not apply to the as yet un-infected Newcastle, a notice was displayed outside the Health Department advising people to avoid places of indoor entertainment which might encourage the spread of disease.

In the initial panic a rush for inoculation occurred, with the result that the Newcastle supply of vaccine was temporarily exhausted. When the first case was reported in Newcastle, two thousand, three hundred inoculations took place in one day. Letters to the Editors of local newspapers recommending cures and preventatives were numerous, while the manufacturers of "wonder cures" were quick to jump on the bandwagon with their miraculous remedies. As the epidemic progressed, the unscrupulous did not hesitate to make capital from the fear and suffering of others and it was observed that the price of remedies had increased by as much as one shilling, a considerable sum in those days of low wages.

The wearing of masks in public places was made compulsory in the Sydney metropolitan area and later on trains and trams in Newcastle. In the heat of February such a proclamation was particularly onerous. Individuals, especially those engaged in heavy manual tasks, complained of "partial suffocation and intense heat".<sup>10</sup> After a few weeks, most people agreed that masks were "instruments of torture":<sup>11</sup> Smokers, especially, tended to flout the restrictions. A Sydney journalist on February 2nd., counted two hundred and sixty unmasked people in George Street in the space of ten minutes.<sup>12</sup> A few days later, the state government decided to enforce its regulations more strictly and summonses were issued against nine hundred and thirty two people for not wearing masks. In Newcastle, where there had been as yet no instances of the disease, the tendency to ignore the regulations was more pronounced.

At this time the government restrictions were causing considerably more dislocation and hardship than the disease itself. Business life was in general depressed. A scheme for the relief of those disadvantaged by government actions was implemented. Food supplies and rent payments were to be given and at "Distress Relief Depots" claims could be made for losses incurred because of the restrictions if the situation of the claimant met certain conditions. If these were established, the government would provide up to one third of the losses.

Some firms and shops introduced inhalation chambers in which fumes of a zinc solution were inhaled as throat sterilizers. Although restrictions were imposed on train travel from the Sydney area, the tourist areas of the Blue Mountains were crowded with those who sought protection in the healthy mountain air. Every case of sickness which was reported was investigated, and in this connection hundreds of cases, many bearing not the slightest resemblance to influenza, were the subject of inquiry.

The epidemic was not without its associated industrial disputes. In Newcastle wharf workers and coal trimmers refused to unload or work on ships unless given increased wages because of the risk allegedly associated with recently infected vessels.

For a time it seemed as if the New South Wales restrictions had indeed been successful in containing the epidemic. On February 10th., only one hundred and five cases and one death had been reported in comparison with Victoria, where few restrictions had been imposed and two thousand and seventy two cases and two hundred and ten deaths reported.

As the epidemic appeared to abate, or at least to get no worse, the state authorities, succumbing perhaps to intense pressure from business and public opinion, or simply because they sincerely believed the worst to be over, gradually lifted restrictions until by March 3rd., few regulations were in force.



At this time only one case of pneumonic influenza had been reported in Newcastle, and masking had been the only control imposed. On March 4th., a seaman who had been admitted to Newcastle Hospital from a Melbourne-based ship, died of pneumonic influenza. A number of the nursing staff had been infected and were swiftly evacuated to the Benevolent Hospital at Waratah (now Western Suburbs Maternity Hospital), which had already been prepared to serve as an isolation hospital. The disease quickly gained ground. Dr. Dick, the chief medical officer in Newcastle, complained, "It is remarkable that the cases which have been seen during the last two or three days have been seriously ill for at least a week and have been in small cottages free of access to neighbours and without isolation of any kind. In these circumstances it is hopeless to expect any limitation of the spread of disease".<sup>13</sup>

A refuge was established at the Junction for children whose parents had been hospitalised. The homes of victims were quarantined and the throats of contacts sprayed daily in an attempt to limit further infection. However, in Sydney as well as in Newcastle the reported cases began to soar with alarming speed. A record of twenty nine new cases were recorded on March 15th., with an increase to sixty three cases five days later, in Newcastle alone.

On March 21st., Dr. Dick said that it was "now practically impossible to trace the source of infection owing to the scattered nature of the cases".<sup>14</sup> Government assurances that there was no cause for alarm were belied by increasing cases and many began to wonder why restrictions were not tightened, especially as the dangerous winter period was approaching.

On March 27th., with medical and nursing staff "strained to the utmost",<sup>15</sup> masking was reinstituted on public transport. The Easter Show was abandoned and Sydney was organised into fifty two administrative districts, each under the control of a committee whose task was to arrange prompt medical aid and control the removal of patients to hospitals.

Newcastle, even in the worst days of the epidemic, was never subject to the coordinated government planning afforded to Sydney. The country areas were forced to rely on council or voluntary organisations, mainly church groups, to perform the nursing and patrolling functions which were administered by state officials in the metropolis. The Newcastle-Council-organised Influenza Executive Committee constantly laboured under the difficulty of securing sufficient funds from the state headquarters, and throughout the epidemic was forced to rely on credit.

In Sydney, temporary hospitals such as the Industrial Pavilion at the Showground came into being. With insufficient staff to attend to its maintenance, quarantine was abandoned. On April 2nd., all the earlier restrictions on public gatherings, with the exception of church services, were reimposed. The Premier warned that if the restrictions were not observed, they would have to be extended and the "inconvenience, losses and suffering which we are experiencing today will be protracted".<sup>16</sup>

Desperate calls were made for extra doctors and nurses to supplement an increasingly strained medical staff. Hospitals could now only admit the most seriously ill. Thus a problem developed which was to disrupt the statistical evaluation of the epidemic and prevent the general public from obtaining any direct information concerning its extent. With the hospitals overcrowded and an established preference for home nursing in any case, it was almost impossible to obtain an accurate idea of just how many had succumbed to the disease. The deaths reported represented only those who died in hospitals, but the optimistically low reported death rate was consistently

belied by the pages of funeral notices in the Sydney and the Newcastle Morning Herald.

On April 12th., restrictions similar to those in Sydney were imposed upon Newcastle. Nevertheless, many continued to flout them especially in regard to masking. At Newcastle Railway Station a sign appeared - "No masks, no tickets".<sup>16</sup> Yet many were sufficiently fearful to prefer to stay at home and avoid social and potentially infectious contacts. For such a time of distress, the Church suffered a curious reduction in numbers and the Dean of Newcastle felt compelled to observe that "It is the duty of Christian people to continue their religious observances and use their brains and see that there is far less likelihood of infection while sitting in a well-ventilated church than there is in doing many other things in the light of business and pleasure which still go on".<sup>17</sup>

The Church, indeed, found itself in the difficult position of justifying God's part in the epidemic. Eventually the "Newcastle Diocesan Churchman" concluded that "all disease is directly traceable to individual wrong-doing or social wrong-doing or to the effect of earlier generations. In particular, the influenza now rampant has arisen in the field of battle and is therefore due ultimately to the world's greatest corporate sin of war".<sup>18</sup> A dubious medical conclusion, perhaps, but comforting theologically!

By April 1st., seven hundred deaths had occurred and four thousand, nine hundred people had been hospitalised in New South Wales, making the accommodation situation critical. Throughout the country areas, committees were established to provide for those in distressed circumstances because of the epidemic, while in Newcastle, to relieve the increasing pressure on Waratah Hospital, Wallsend Public School was appropriated as a temporary infirmary.

On April 10th., it was decided that the inhalation chambers were to be discontinued as they had demonstrated no efficient results and there was evidence of their having produced injurious effects upon several individuals. This was to become a contentious issue in the debate which raged throughout, and indeed after, the epidemic, concerning the validity of government restrictions. In answer to criticism, the government argued that, in being faced with the new phenomenon of a baffling epidemic, it was compelled to rely almost entirely upon the judgement of the men of science who composed the medical consultative committees. Unfortunately, even the medical experts were uncertain about the methods to combat the disease and consequently many of their proposals (for example the inhalation chambers) were tentative and experimental. Although criticism was rife, particularly in regard to disruption of business life and the encroachment upon personal liberties, it is difficult to imagine how else a government could have reacted to an essentially medical problem, except by following the advice of the acknowledged experts.

The fact remains, however, that "the so-called experts really knew next-to-nothing about the epidemic and certainly they devised no means of effectively combating it".<sup>19</sup> Dr. Dick claimed a year later that "it will be judged that the enforcement of restrictions had no compensating advantages and indeed produced negative effects by inducing fear of the disease among the public so that many were forced to care for themselves as best they could in their illness".<sup>20</sup>

In the Parliamentary debates which followed the epidemic, the government was accused of making political capital from the measures adopted to prevent the spread of the disease. At the Petersham elections the National Party published a cartoon which was intended to convey to electors that, but for

the precautionary measures of the Government they would now all be dead. If the government took credit for what it did then, it was argued, by the Opposition, it must also bear the brunt of the discredit.

Cases decreased markedly in late April and great pressure was put upon the government to remove restrictions. Eventually the authorities succumbed to the persistent demands of the public and business although there was much evidence that the epidemic had only undergone a temporary respite. Indeed, some felt that the removal of the controls may have been premature and asserted that the minister "was tortured, ridiculed and abused in a most scandalous fashion till he was driven into doing what, if he was quite sincere in his earlier utterances on the subject, he must have felt was an unwise concession".<sup>21</sup>

For a time the epidemic was relegated to the second or third pages of the newspapers, although the news items themselves do not indicate a significant enough decrease in cases to warrant the unqualified optimism expressed by many people.

In Newcastle the disease had displayed no evidence of abatement whatsoever and on June 6th., a record seventy new cases were admitted to hospital. On June 12th., the Department of public Health reported a recrudescence of the disease, and once more the funeral columns grew in length and number. The increases in deaths and absenteeism were taking a remarkable toll on the functioning of the entire state. In Sydney it was reported "there is hardly a business in town with a full staff and certain public institutions have to notify an earlier closing hour because of short-handedness. The theatres which fought so hard for the removal of the masks are playing to half empty houses".<sup>22</sup>

A Sydney suburban paper reported that "the influenza epidemic is sweeping through this suburb like a cloud of poison gas. Very few households have escaped it".<sup>23</sup> On June 17th., three thousand four hundred and sixty three train and tram employees throughout the state were absent from work, together with four hundred policemen. While advertisements for household help had previously called for a "trained nurse", the employment situation was now so desperate that the requests were simply for "someone who has some knowledge of household duties".<sup>24</sup>

Maitland was subject to a "paralysis never experienced in the worst strike",<sup>25</sup> and public offices, shops and factories were at a virtual standstill. There were many calls for restrictions to be reimposed but the government argued that by now the public had been educated in how to deal with and avoid infection and the necessary action of avoidance and discipline lay in their own hands.<sup>25</sup> The Premier stated that there was "a real danger of doctors and nurses being overwhelmed if any additional cases occur",<sup>26</sup> but in a number of areas such a situation had already arisen.

In Newcastle, which lacked the governmental organisation afforded to Sydney, individual municipalities set about the task of securing relief and nursing for their citizens. Many councils arranged for women to visit the homes of the ill and render any necessary aid. The women of Hamilton established a kitchen where food such as beef tea, custard and jelly was prepared and distributed amongst the needy, and other councils soon followed its example. Three hundred people were provided for by the Hamilton depot alone. These kitchens relied on funds donated by the public or on gifts of foodstuffs. Most of the work fell on the women of the community, who indeed seemed indefatigable, as did members of service clubs and organisations.

At a local council meeting it was reported that "very few homes in Adamstown have not been visited by the influenza - mild or otherwise"<sup>27</sup> and the Mayor of Newcastle felt that "matters were becoming very serious".<sup>28</sup> In one street in Hamilton alone, fifteen families were ill.

From the week ended June 24th., the state mortality rate increased by 100%. Over six thousand rail and tramway employees were absent from work and department stores were suffering heavily from the depletion of staff and customers. Even food sales exhibited a pronounced decrease owing to the number of ill and bedridden people. Thousands of individuals were forced to rely upon the government for food, medicine and rent and by July authorities had paid a quarter of a million pounds in compensation and relief.

By late July, the situation had improved markedly throughout most of the state. In Newcastle, for the first time in months, no new cases were admitted to the Waratah Hospital. The disease, however, remained prevalent in the outlying districts of Belmont and Swansea. By the end of July the relief depot in Newcastle and the Wallsend Emergency Hospital were closed, and life was beginning to return to normal.

The pandemic had "caused more suffering than any scourge we have ever had, owing to the fact that so many people were affected".<sup>29</sup> In New South Wales a total of six thousand, three hundred and five deaths had occurred, although it is thought that large numbers died of related causes, but whose deaths were not recorded as being directly attributed to the influenza. In Newcastle medical practitioners notified two thousand, four hundred cases, with four hundred and ninety four registered deaths, i.e. death ratio of approximately .6% of the population, this in a period of less than half a year!

The government paid dearly for the measures it had felt compelled to introduce to combat the disease. For example, in Newcastle, with a population of 90,000, £13,000 was expended in running the hospitals, in food orders, blankets and medicine, with a large amount also subscribed privately. The government was also responsible for compensating, at least partially, those individuals disadvantaged by the restrictions imposed in the epidemic's early stages.

The influenza epidemic had claimed thousands of lives, caused massive financial losses and disrupted everyday life of the individual to an extent unprecedented. Yet today it is a virtually forgotten incident in our history. Perhaps this is because of the almost science-fictional speed with which the disease came and went. Except for those who had lost family members, life quickly returned to normal. There were no significant after-effects, no maimed or injured people left as a reminder of the horrors which had passed. The restrictions and dislocations were coupled in memory with the wartime prohibitions, until many came to think of the epidemic as merely an appendage of World War I. But although as an historical and even as a medical phenomenon the influenza epidemic tends to be ignored, the fact remains that for five months in 1919 a devastating illness swept the country, causing a greater loss in life and in economic and personal liberty than any single event in the history of our nation.

FOOTNOTES

- 1.
2. Sydney Morning Herald, 31 December, 1918.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, 21 January, 1919.
5. Ibid, 6 February, 1919.
6. Newcastle Morning Herald, 12 February, 1919.
7. Sydney Morning Herald, 1 April, 1919.
8. Ibid, 29 January, 1919.
9. Newcastle Morning Herald, 8 April, 1919.
10. Sydney Morning Herald, 4 February, 1919.
11. Ibid, 19 February, 1919.
12. Ibid, 2 February, 1919.
13. Newcastle Morning Herald, 12 March, 1919.
14. Ibid, 21 March, 1919.
15. Sydney Morning Herald, 3 April, 1919.
16. Ibid, 27 March, 1919.
17. Newcastle Morning Herald, 16 April, 1919.
18. "The Newcastle Diocesan Churchman", 1918-1919, Vol.III, p.7, 1 April, 1919.
19. N.S.W. Parliamentary Debates, Vol.75, p.2744.
20. Newcastle Morning Herald, 10 February, 1920.
21. Ibid, 9 June, 1919.
22. Ibid, 16 June, 1919.
23. Ibid, 16 June, 1919.
24. Ibid, 19 June, 1919.
25. Ibid, 15 May, 1919.
26. Ibid, 20 June, 1919.
27. Ibid, 21 June, 1919.
28. Ibid, 22 June, 1919.
29. Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates, Vol. LXXXIX, p.12161-9.

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THE GREAT LOCKOUT

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AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPACT OF  
THE SHUTDOWN OF NEWCASTLE STEELWORKS 1922/23

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BY

BRUCE JENKINS

SYNOPSIS

The economic ills that beset Australia in the inter-war years and which culminated in the 'Great Depression' began early in Newcastle. In 1921 a major recession occurred in this city when the B.H.P. Steelworks shut down for over a year to enable a rationalisation of plant to be effected. This paper attempts to analyse the effects of this "lock out" on the economic and social life of the Newcastle area.

## General Background

The Newcastle steelworks of Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. began steel production during 1915, just after the outbreak of World War 1. The timing and circumstances of B.H.P.'s entry into the steel production industry conferred immediate benefits upon the company. The war meant that the overseas suppliers, particularly Britain and Germany (who had up until this time provided the vast bulk of Australia's steel and pig iron needs) were totally committing their own output to their respective countries' burgeoning war requirements. The result was that Australian steel producers were faced with a market situation of relatively unlimited demand and any expansion in production that they could achieve could be easily soaked up by starved local consumers.

B.H.P. had opened its steelworks in 1915 with only one blast furnace and, prior to the outbreak of war, had no immediate plans to expand this capacity. However, by the early nineteen-twenties three blast furnaces were in operation, and understandable if short-sighted response to the wartime situation. Other countries, starting from a much greater industrial base than Australia, had also boosted their steel-making capacity to cope with the artificial demands of wartime to such an extent that when demand returned to lower peacetime levels, the world steel industry was faced with serious problems of overcapacity. The steel industries of Britain and Europe, America and Japan, operating with the economies of scale their vast home markets allowed and with significantly lower labour costs, were able to produce steel and export it to Australia at lower than B.H.P.'s production costs and that company's profits declined accordingly.

Essington Lewis, the then deputy general manager of B.H.P., presented a plan to his company's board aimed to reverse their fortunes in the steelmaking industry. It suggested a threefold solution to the company's problems - to reduce wage costs, to reduce the cost of that vital steel-making ingredient, coal, and to rationalise and streamline the operations of the steelmaking plant itself which, since its foundation, had tended to grow in an ad-hoc, ill-planned fashion. The plan was accepted, Essington Lewis was duly promoted to general manager, and, in 1922/3, a closedown of plant operations was put into effect.

Two days before Christmas, 1921, B.H.P.'s Melbourne head office announced that not only was the usual Christmas holiday break to be taken but work would not resume until late January, 1922 and that there was no guarantee of continuity of employment. The works partially reopened on 18th January, 1922 but only about 2,700 workers were employed for the next two months (compared with an average workforce exceeding 4600 during the preceding year). In early March it was announced that the plant would close completely for about 4-5 weeks. Between June, 1922 and March, 1923 an average of about 900 men, mainly skilled workers, was employed at the plant, primarily for rationalisation and improvement work and maintenance. No steel was produced during this time. Normal production was not resumed until March, 1923 when all of Lewis' initial goals had been achieved. Statistics concerning productivity levels of steel and pig iron per worker show significant improvement after the reopening of the works. Coal costs were reduced both by B.H.P.'s negotiations with the Northern colliery proprietors and the company's decision to enter the coal-mining industry itself (an early example of the vertical integration the company has pursued through its subsequent career). Wage costs were reduced by the



insistence that steel workers forsake the 44 hour week they had obtained during the war for the 48 hour week, more common in commerce and industry at that time, with no increase in pay.<sup>1</sup>

### Newcastle and New South Wales 1920-25

Before proceeding with an investigation of the Newcastle steelworks closure and its localised effects it is useful to review economic conditions in N.S.W. as a whole during the early 1920's and the relative performance of Newcastle within the state.

Table 1

Overseas Trade at ports of Sydney and Newcastle

Year Ended	SYDNEY		NEWCASTLE	
	Imports £	Exports £	Imports £	Exports £
30th June				
1920	43,682,873	53,429,511	1,007,726	1,550,197
1921	70,423,976	49,558,839	2,042,412	2,829,603
1922	41,753,947	46,042,014	1,567,531	1,915,624
1923	53,362,111	40,573,738	1,614,584	1,916,482
1924	56,691,214	40,917,170	1,496,109	2,124,501
1925	64,701,298	58,300,478	1,564,825	2,201,357

Source - Statistical Register of N.S.W. 1920/21 - 24/5

The most significant feature of the overseas trade figures for the two ports in the early 1920's is the comparison of the two years 1920/21 and 1921/22. A remarkably high level of trade activity was achieved in the former year with an equally remarkable slump in the latter. Certainly by 1924/25 the levels of overseas trade were only just reaching towards those of 1920/21. The levels of trade in both ports during the period runs closely parallel.

Table 2. Number and value of New Buildings - building permits granted during year ended 31st December

Year	Sydney Suburban		Newcastle and Suburbs	
	Number	Value £	Number	Value £
1921	8,524	7,853,682	961	788,851
1922	8,445	7,172,977	756	547,740
1923	10,825	9,022,038	1,156	771,313
1924	9,873	7,787,814	1,191	808,969
1925	10,673	8,133,738	1,537	989,886

Source - Statistical Register of N.S.W. 1921/22 - 1925/26

Building activity has traditionally been a valuable indicator of economic activity and well-being particularly in Australia where the desire for home ownership of detached dwellings means such construction activities tend to highlight the relative levels of prosperity across a wider perspective of society than perhaps is the case in some other countries. To show the relative state of health of construction activity in Newcastle compared to elsewhere in N.S.W. the closest comparable area of sufficiently

large sample size for which statistics are available is the Sydney Suburban region. Undoubtedly there were differences in the demographic makeup of the two areas but they represent the only two large urbanised regions within which there was a broad range of industrial, commercial and residential sectors. The figures for Sydney City are deliberately excluded as much of the building there was commercial development which makes it a less valid comparative study than the smaller scale commercial, industrial, and residential constructions in the Newcastle and Sydney suburban regions.

For the purpose of this study there are two significant results which emerge from the figures of the early 1920's. First there was the severity of decline in the Newcastle figure in 1922 compared to that of suburban Sydney. Newcastle suffered a 21% decrease in the number of applications and a 31% decrease in their value compared to the Sydney suburban figures of 1% and 9% decreases respectively. The other interesting point is the rate of recovery and growth in the two regions. By the end of 1925 Newcastle had achieved a growth of 60% in application numbers and 25% in their value on the 1920 base figures compared to increases of 25% and 4% respectively in Suburban Sydney. Newcastle suffered by far the greater setback in 1922 but nevertheless still enjoyed by far the greater growth rate over the half-decade.

#### Illness and Recovery - Newcastle 1920-25

If N.S.W. and Australian economic development can be described as progressing according to the "boom or bust" model then there can be little doubt that 1922 could be classified under the "bust" heading. The most immediate consequence of any economic "bust" on the bulk of the population is the level of unemployment and the concomitant economic and social penalties that this entails. As there were no unemployment relief payments by governments in that era in Australia, accurate statistics of unemployment levels at that time are not available. However, information on employment levels within major industries in Newcastle, and examination of some available union records of that time, paint a graphic picture of the dismal employment situation in the latter half of 1922 and early 1923.

A perusal of the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce annual reports for the years ending 30th June, 1921 through to 1924 gives both some information on employment within large manufacturers in Newcastle and some insight into the ostrich-like mentality of the organisation. The figures for June 1921 for the eight largest manufacturing concerns (Steelworks, Walsh Island, Rylands, Sulphide Corp., Morrison & Bearby, Goninans, Commonwealth Steel and Lysaghts) show a total figure of 7959 employees (probably understated by 500 or more due to a strike at Rylands that month). The comparable section in the 1922 report fails to give any figures except for the delightfully obfuscatory note that there are 'usually' approximately 8,500 men employed in these industries. The June, 1923 report is a little less delusive and states that approximately 6,000 men are employed in these concerns and that this number will increase substantially during the coming year. By June, 1924 it was apparently felt safe to publish detailed, firm by firm figures which totalled 7141.<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately not all sources were so reticent with their information. F.R.E. Mauldon notes that there was "...a reduction of the employed personnel of the six largest firms (Steelworks, Rylands, Walsh Island, Goninans, Commonwealth Steel and Sulphide Corp.) of the district from 7953 in October 1921 to 2343 by August, 1922".<sup>3</sup> The date of August 1923

would appear to be close to the nadir of employment levels during the Steelworks closure. At this time levels for the major employers had dropped to around a quarter of the October 1921 level. It is a logical assumption that the heaviest burden fell on the unskilled labour from these industries and, indeed, some union employment figures of that time tend to confirm this.

Table 3. Employment levels of Skilled and Unskilled Unionists

Year	Newcastle Branch A.E.U. mean average		Unionists Australia-wide %age unemp. for lack of work	
	Unemployed	Members	A.E.U.(skilled)	All engineer. metal works
1920	2	956	1.5	3.8
1921	18	1021	4.4	8.9
1922	177	1091	4.9	15.3
1923	32	985	2.6	8.4
1924	15	1055	2.1	8.3
1925	12	1112	2.1	10.6

Sources - Forster, Colin, Industrial Development in Australia 1920-30, Canberra, 1964  
 Mauldon, F.R.E., A Study in Social Economies - The Hunter River Valley, Melbourne, 1927

The figures for the Newcastle branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, whose membership comprised tradesmen and skilled workers, show an unemployment rate of 16% during 1922 when the overall rate in the metal industries, where the bulk of their membership worked, was something nearer 75%. The Australia-wide figures for the A.E.U. versus total union labour in the metal industries confirm the significantly higher unemployment rate amongst unskilled as opposed to skilled labour. Obviously the decimation of wage-earners from the ranks of the district's major employers must also have had effects on the employment levels within those firms, large and small, providing goods and services to both employees and employers. There is a lack of sufficient data, however, to enable accurate estimations of the level these problems had reached before the local economy revived during 1923.

How did Newcastle cope with the results of the year of unemployment and how severe were its effects upon the community as a whole? The lack of any system of government social security and unemployment relief systems meant no amelioration of hardship by these now traditional methods so other methods, often Darwinian and almost always difficult to quantify, resulted. One easily identifiable method by which Newcastle responded to its excess of unemployed was simply to shed population. Between the year ending 31st December, 1921 and the 31st December, 1922 Newcastle suffered a nett population loss of almost 1200 people whereas during the other years of that first half decade the city had recorded nett increases averaging over 3,000.<sup>4</sup> This bland statistical fact takes no account of what suffering and deprivation those forced to leave may have endured but it shows a forcible wastage of population in real terms of probably some 4,000 people. If it can be conjectured that a high proportion of these were single wage earners (or former wage earners) a high probability since his group were the most mobile being untrammelled by the difficulties of uprooting families, then this in itself must have

considerably eased the unemployment problems of the city.

The lack of formalised social structures for alleviating hardship also meant that the deprived sections of the city's population had to rely on less formal structures. The degree to which intra-family support, in days when the family was a much larger unit, eased deprivation is impossible to measure but it is worthwhile to keep in mind that social support systems were then derived from family, church and workplace in a society lacking today's institutionalised surrogates. One semi-official organisation which did then exist to assist the needy was the Newcastle and Northumberland Benevolent Society which appears to have been the sort of middle-class charitable organisation operated by genteel ladies which has almost disappeared today when government patronage is vastly preferred to the private variety. The records of "handouts" by the Society during the early 1920's are illuminating when assessing the impact of the steelworks closure.

Table 4. Newcastle and Northumberland Benevolent Society  
Outdoor relief payments 1920-25

Year to 31 Dec.	Total annual payments to needy £	Mean monthly average number of recipients
1920	989/-/6	83
1921	724/18/5	64
1922	1304/14/7	75
1923	837/-/5	62
1925	930/13/10	80

Source 6 - Outdoor relief journal Newcastle and Northumberland  
Benevolent Society

It comes as no surprise to see a considerable increase in the payout figure for 1922. What is perhaps surprising, though, is the relatively small increase in the number of recipients compared to the subsequent and preceding years. It is not wise to draw too many conclusions from these statistics but it is fair to conjecture that they do indicate that the number of the society's recipients remained remarkably constant in the years 1920-25 while the need of those recipients was considerably greater during 1922. An inference may be that the 'hard-core' needy became needier during that period when money was particularly scarce but that the increase in the number of "hard-core" needy was slight.

Another extremely important field to investigate when assessing the levels of hardship endured by the Newcastle population is the sales of food and groceries during the period. Here the records of the Newcastle and Suburban Cooperative Society (The Store) are invaluable. Its membership represents a sufficiently large proportion of the population to allow useful extrapolation of statistical results and it had traditionally, since its inception, catered primarily for the working class and unionists.

Table 5. "The Store" membership and sales 1920-26

Year ending early Feb.	Membership Nett total	Sales to members £	Avge purchase per member £	Newcastle grocery index.*
1921	3106	209,393	67.4	2146
1922	3362	225,405	67	1936
1923	3501	212,663	60.7	1706
1924	3680	232,771	63.2	1838
1925	3892	258,365	66.4	1747
1926	4403	333,606	75.8	1801

Sources - Docherty, J., Newcastle 1900-29, Ph.D. Thesis  
Newcastle and Suburban Cooperative Society Half-yearly reports 1920-26.

The figures in this table show a very muted effect on the buying habits of the Store's members of the 1922 slump. Whilst during the year February 1922 to February 1923 the average purchases by a Store member dropped by a little less than 10% in monetary value because of lower food and grocery prices during that period his effective purchase of goods remained constant. This suggests certainly that a considerable proportion of the working class in Newcastle survived 1922/23 without any great change in their food intake.

### Conclusion

1922 was a year of economic downturn in New South Wales and the closure of the Newcastle B.H.P. Steelworks and its inevitable effects on dependent industries within the region ensured that Newcastle suffered a greater slump than elsewhere in the state. While the city suffered for a little over a year from extremely high unemployment levels it is nevertheless apparent that, economically at least, the city coped remarkably well with its problems and that its speed of recovery was extremely rapid. It is dangerous to place faith in isolated sets of statistics but those available suggest that Newcastle adjusted well to its straitened circumstances. The loss of population was one reaction (though quickly recovered) but the others are less easily identifiable. Nevertheless indicators of the community and its inhabitants' physical well-being such as food sales, charity payments, hospital admission<sup>5</sup> and death rates<sup>6</sup> suggest that the average Newcastle inhabitant survived reasonably adequately. Certainly the economic well-being of the region suffered no long-term damage as shown by the subsequent rate of growth.

Perhaps the major historical effect on the city of Newcastle and its inhabitants was a psychological one. While the Broken Hill Pty. Co. Ltd. was the largest employer in the region by 1922 it was also a relative newcomer, the steelworks having been in operation only some seven years. Yet its actions in closing the works and the degree of success it attained in achieving its financial objectives planted it firmly and unequivocally as the dominant economic power in the region. It indelibly imprinted upon the collective psyche of Newcastle the fact that the security of the region was directly dependent upon the fortunes of the company. It is an awareness which has remained to this day.

FOOTNOTES

1. Docherty, J., Newcastle 1900-29; H. Hughes, Australian Iron and Steel Industry.
2. Newcastle Chamber of Commerce, Annual Reports 1920/1-1925/6.
3. Maunder, F.R.E., A Study in Social Economics - The Hunter River Valley.
4. See Appendix Table 9.
5. See Appendix Table 8.
6. Statistical Register of N.S.W., Editions 1920/1-1925/6.

## APPENDIX

Table 6 Employment and productivity Newcastle Steelworks

Year ending 31st May	Average Employment	Output (per worker)	
		Steel (tons)	Pig Iron (tons)
1921	4,674	44.7	48.8
1922	3,512	62.6	66.9
1923	1,583	33.5	39.1
1924	4,235	67.3	72.2
1925	4,675	70.8	76.8

Source - Hughes, Australian Iron and Steel Industry, pp195, 197  
Docherty, Newcastle 1900-29, p76.

Table 7 B.H.P. Co.Ltd. Financial results 1920-25

Year ending 31st May	Gross Profit £	Nett Profit/Loss £
1920	650,508	517,663
1921	589,478	351,332
1922	388,684	103,300
1923	180,445	-106,086 (loss)
1924	600,003	279,339
1925	897,583	372,307

Source - Mauldon, A Study in Social Economics - The Hunter River Valley, p86.

Table 8 Royal Newcastle Hospital - Patients Admitted during year ended 31st December

Year	Males Admitted	Females Admitted
1920	1,717	1,480
1921	1,934	1,565
1922	1,779	1,553
1923	1,688	1,572
1924	1,847	1,496
1925	1,899	1,531

Source - Statistical Register of N.S.W. 1920/21-25/26

Table 9      Population Newcastle and Suburbs 1920-25

Year ending 31st December	Population
1920	85,645
1921	88,640
1922	87,470
1923	90,350
1924	95,070
1925	98,050

Source - Statistical Register of New South Wales 1920/1-1925/6





SMALL TOWN CINEMA:  
AN ENTERTAINMENT MONOPOLY

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BY

CATHY GRAHAM

SYNOPSIS:

The popularity of the motion picture was at its height in Australia in the interwar years. As a result, the cinema occupied an influential position in the community, especially in small towns such as Swansea where it maintained a virtual monopoly on organized social entertainment. The nature of the monopoly exercised by the Graceson Theatre in Swansea is examined for the period 1920-1940 against the larger background of developments in the national film industry and social attitudes of the time.

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Popular culture in Australia has been dominated for the greater part of the twentieth century by the power of the motion pictures. Although such popularity is by no means as apparent today, the cinema, especially between the two world wars, "was the best attended, most criticised, liveliest and most influential component of our popular culture".<sup>1</sup> Probably the greatest attraction of the cinema was its easy accessibility. Almost every small town and suburb boasted, if not a "picture palace", then at least a venue where films were screened regularly.<sup>2</sup> As the local cinema afforded not only cheap entertainment but also, quite often, the only form of entertainment, attendance was well-nigh mandatory. The small coastal town of Swansea was no exception and the fortunes of the Graceson Theatre demonstrate the influence exerted by the cinema in its interwar heyday.

By 1920 cinema had firmly established itself as a feature of Australian society. The average weekly cinema attendance was estimated at slightly over one million (out of a population of ca. five and a quarter million) and the number of cinemas in Australia at eight hundred and eight.<sup>3</sup> One of these eight hundred and eight cinemas was a small, wooden hall in Swansea, bought in 1920 by T.J. Dobinson, a newcomer to the town.<sup>4</sup> A builder by trade, Dobinson visualized a great future for the small, coastal village whose two hundred inhabitants relied mainly on the mining and fishing industries for their livelihood.<sup>5</sup> Whilst still maintaining his building firm, Dobinson established the first permanent cinema in Swansea, naming it the Graceson Theatre in honour of his daughter, Grace.

The cinema was very much a family concern. The roles of projectionist, ticket-seller, usherettes, "bouncers" and cleaners were all filled by members of Dobinson's family as the turnover was not sufficient to warrant employing paid help.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the cinema thrived. The twenties was the era of the silent movies and the townspeople queued at the door of the tiny, tin-roofed building each Saturday night to witness the wonders of the moving pictures. Films featuring well-known actors were certain of attracting large audiences.<sup>7</sup> The antics of such stars as Charlie Chaplin could be viewed from the comfort of hard, wooden benches and were accompanied by the melodramatic strains of the pianola, interspersed with the wrangling of irate adults and excited children.<sup>8</sup> It was a far cry from the luxury of the newly-appearing city picture palaces which boasted Wurlitzer organs and orchestras and often featured theatrical acts such as singers, jugglers, magicians and tank divers.<sup>9</sup>

The obvious crudity of the Graceson Theatre, however, was unlikely to deter its patrons once the novelty of film-going wore off, for the simple reason that there was very little else in the town in the way of organized social entertainment. For several years the hotel was the only other building of any size so that most social functions had to be held in the cinema building. "Travelling shows, magicians, concerts, boxing matches, bazaar shows and even a lion act" were among the features staged in the Graceson Theatre.<sup>10</sup> It even doubled as a roller-skating rink until a special building was constructed in later years.<sup>11</sup> Dances were a common event and often followed the Saturday night screening, although on numerous occasions the only musical accompaniment would be a single accordion.<sup>12</sup>

Dobinson was thus enjoying sufficient success in 1923 to confide to the film trade journal Everyones that he was "having plans prepared for the erection of a new theatre to take the place of the present building". According to the journal, Dobinson anticipated that "with the big additions in Newcastle at the ironworks...quite a number of workers" would move to the town.<sup>13</sup> The population boom did not occur but Dobinson continued to extend and renovate the building until 1928 when he began the construction of a new concrete cinema over the existing structure.<sup>14</sup>

By this time, the Graceson Theatre had established itself as the social hub of the town. Film screenings were advertised in the Newcastle Morning Herald, especially during the summer months when the population was swelled by holidaymakers - most of them miners. The influence of the mining community was apparent at the time of the 1923 Bellbird Colliery disaster when several benefit nights were organized in the theatre to raise funds for the victims' families.<sup>15</sup>

Other charity performances and concerts were also held in the Graceson, particularly in aid of the Red Cross and the Ambulance Fund.<sup>16</sup> The flavour of this small town venture was apparent in other ways. The residing policeman sat free-of-charge in the back row on cinema nights, not only as a mark of deference to him but also as a precautionary measure in the event of trouble arising.<sup>17</sup> The town's postmistress and newsagent, Mrs. Boon, spent Saturday afternoons in winter baking meat pies to sell to the cinema patrons who would flock to her shop during intermission on cold Saturday nights.<sup>18</sup> A bus was often chartered to convey the residents of ten kilometre distant Catherine Hill Bay to the Saturday night screenings.<sup>19</sup>

The physical isolation of small communities such as Swansea and Catherine Hill Bay was one of the main factors in ensuring the success of the local cinema. Few people owned cars and a private bus company constituted Swansea's only public transport system. The closest township of any size was eight kilometre distant Belmont and it offered little more than did Swansea in the way of entertainment. As a result, self-sufficiency was the key-note of organized entertainment. The Graceson Theatre both catered for this need and operated according to the principle. T.J. Dobinson was owner, manager and even builder of his theatre, and, in the later days of the "talking pictures" he became chief technician when he designed his own equipment to cope with the added dimension of sound.<sup>20</sup>

While film trade journals "buzzed with pep talks from American producers and distributors, innumerable advertising hints" and stories of "street stunts and ballyhoo",<sup>21</sup> T.J. Dobinson employed less subtle means of attracting patrons. One typical advertisement in the Newcastle Morning Herald ran as follows:-<sup>22</sup>

#### SWANSEA PICTURES

Hoot Gibson in Chips of the Flying U  
 Madge Bellamy in The Shamrock Handicap  
 Also, The Charleston

Every person paying admission To-night will  
 be presented with an Envelope, and the  
 lucky person will receive 10s.

DANCE AFTER THE PICTURES

Dobinson was equally as blunt in discouraging unruly patrons. A poster in the theatre advised them as to the propriety of cinema etiquette with such maxims as:-

"If you have seen a picture before, don't make a nuisance of yourself by telling in a loud voice what is coming on the screen," and;  
 "If you must kiss your girl in the dark, for heaven's sake do it quietly, not like a horse pulling his foot out of a mud hole".<sup>23</sup>

The confident mood of these times ended abruptly with the coincidence, at the turn of the decade, of the "talking pictures" and a nation-wide depression, both of which had repercussions on the small cinema in Swansea. While the advent of the "talkies" provided a much-needed boost for the film industry as a whole, the technical innovations involved in screening them proved too costly and complex for many small shows which, consequently, were forced to close down.<sup>24</sup> Dobinson seemed likely to share their fate as early problems with sound equipment, particularly in synchronizing the sound with the picture, exasperated many patrons.<sup>25</sup> A decline in patronage due to the economic recession of the times eventually forced him to close the cinema for six months at the height of the depression.<sup>26</sup>

However, Dobinson recovered from these setbacks to improve his sound equipment and complete the building of the new, much larger theatre which had a seating capacity of nine hundred and eighty.<sup>27</sup> By the end of the thirties the cinema boasted six sessions a week and was screening virtually all the films entering the country.<sup>28</sup> The advent of the "talkies" had also marked the introduction of the standard cinema programme of that decade. It consisted of two newsreels, a support film followed by an interval, the feature film and then a concluding two reel cartoon.<sup>29</sup> All this was offered at a charge of one shilling for adults and sixpence for children.<sup>30</sup>

Dobinson weathered these bad times with seemingly better success than Australian film makers whose complaints gained a hearing when a Royal Commission was set up in 1927 to investigate the motion picture industry.<sup>31</sup> Their main targets were the American film distributing companies whom they accused of maintaining a monopoly on the industry through the systems of "blind" and "book" bookings. Exhibitors hired films through these agencies either without having seen the films or by booking large blocks of American films, making it "almost impossible for Australian films made by independent producers to get release on reasonable terms".<sup>32</sup> By this stage, more than ninety per cent of the films shown in Australia were American.<sup>33</sup> In order to protect the Australian film industry, the Australian Motion Picture Producing Association recommended to the government that New South Wales exhibitors should be compelled to exhibit "a percentage of up to 25% of British films, of which at least 15% are to be Australian-made Moving Picture productions".<sup>34</sup>

The issue of protection of the Australian and Empire film industry was re-examined in another Royal Commission investigation in 1933-34, but this time the quota recommendations were enforced. The Film Quota Bill was passed by the New South Wales Parliament on April 13, 1935 and required exhibitors to screen not less than two and a half percent of Australian feature films in their programmes, with provision for an

annually increasing percentage.<sup>36</sup> The import tax on foreign films was also retained while British films remained duty free.<sup>37</sup> While empire loyalists, women's groups, clerics and Australian film makers applauded this opposition to "American economic and cultural imperialism", film exhibitors were far less enthusiastic.<sup>38</sup> As the protests of the President of the Federated Picture Showmen's Association of Australia, Mr. W. Howe, had been explained in 1927:-

...the pictures are the cheapest form of amusement, and his [Howe's] Association rely [sic] mostly on the working class for support. The Association supplies what the public require, and to be a successful exhibitor you must give what they demand".<sup>39</sup>

"What the public required" seemed not to accord with what the government required, if T.J. Dobinson's experiences provide any indication. Dobinson hired the specified percentage of quota films but rarely screened them because they usually attracted only sparse audiences. He found it more profitable to hire, in addition, a more popular American film and screen it in place of the quota film.<sup>40</sup> This prejudice was also apparent towards British films and seems not to have been peculiar to Swansea audiences if the report of the British magazine, Bioscope, is accurate:-

In Australia, the exhibition of British films is said not be [sic] have met with universal success in recent years. Exhibitors have stated that there is a distinct apathy towards them on the part of the audiences, owing to lack of merit, which, in turn, has meant diminished box-office returns.<sup>41</sup>

Yet, in the same issue, the magazine expressed its opinion that:-

Despite the fact that it has been nourished chiefly on American films, Australian taste has not really been Americanised, but remains British in fundamentals.<sup>42</sup>

Such discussions of the influence of the films on the public character were common throughout the interwar period and reflect the degree of power attributed to the cinema in society.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, as late as 1943, the influence of the cinema was deemed so great by one writer that he could commend the cinema:-

...not only as a place of wholesome entertainment, but also as a place to go for inspiration, guidance and assistance in all things pertaining to civic administration and the causes of charity and patriotism.<sup>44</sup>

Patriotic zeal may well account for this extravagant estimation of the role of the cinema but, after twenty years of cinema management, T.J. Dobinson's milder opinion is essentially the same:-

To my mind a picture theatre proprietor carries a tremendous responsibility to the public, who quite rightly regard their theatres as not only places of entertainment, but also as centres of social intercourse.<sup>45</sup>

Dobinson's statement provides an accurate representation of the role of the Graceson Theatre in the small town of Swansea in the two decades between 1920 and 1940. The cinema was the "centre of social intercourse" and herein lies the answer to its universal appeal. In a small and relatively isolated community with minimal facilities for social functions, the cinema offered an inexpensive and easily accessible opportunity for social intercourse. The age of television, drive-in theatres, clubs and improved transportation had not yet arrived, so the cinema had little competition with which to contend. The attraction of the films themselves is undeniable but it is doubtful that aesthetic considerations were uppermost in the minds of Swansea citizens, particularly in view of the habits of one regular patron who invariably slept through the main section of the programme but asked fellow patrons to "wake me up when the comics come"!<sup>46</sup> Paradoxically, the extent to which the Graceson Theatre became an integral and commonplace feature of the community is illustrated by the difficulty experienced by long-term residents of Swansea in remembering details associated with it. Very few can recall specifics yet they invariably comment:-

You just went; everybody went because there was nowhere else to go.<sup>47</sup>

FOOTNOTES

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2. Murray, Robert, The Confident Years: Australia in the Twenties, Victoria, 1978, pp.184-5.
3. Megaw, Ruth, "The American Image: Influence on Australian Theatre Management, 1896-1923", J.R.A.H.S., Vol.54, Pt.2, June, 1968, p.200.
4. Interview with Ken Dobinson, 12 May, 1980.
5. Dobinson, Brian, "Thomas J. Dobinson - Public Servant", May, 1978, p.2.
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8. Interviews with Miss L. Boon, 30 May, 1980 and Mrs C. Cowmeadow, 17 May, 1980.
9. Murray, op.cit., p.185.
10. Dobinson, Brian, op.cit., p.3.
11. Ken Dobinson interview.
12. Interview with Mrs Ham, 17 May, 1980.
13. Everyones, 9 May, 1923, p.144.
14. Dobinson, Brian, op.cit., p.2.
15. Ken Dobinson interview.
16. Ibid.
17. Dobinson, Brian, op.cit.
18. Miss Boon interview.
19. Ken Dobinson interview.
20. Dobinson, Brian, op.cit., p.3.
21. Collins, op.cit., p.104.
22. Newcastle Morning Herald, 4 December, 1926.
23. Newcastle University Archives, A5428.
24. "Silent Pictures Boasted Big Screens Too", Newcastle Morning Herald, 10 January, 1955, p.5.
25. Dobinson, Brian, op.cit., p.3.
26. Ken Dobinson interview.
27. Film Weekly - Motion Picture Directory 1949-50, p.74.
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29. Interviews with Ken Dobinson and Miss L. Boon.
30. Ken Dobinson interview.
31. Megaw, op.cit., p.199.
32. Reade, Eric, The Australian Screen, Melbourne, 1975, p.139.
33. Murray, op.cit., p.184.
34. "Statement for Cabinet", 31/1/1927, p.1, State Archives, 5412.
35. Murray, op.cit., p.188.
36. Reade, op.cit., p.178; Ina Bertrand, Film Censorship in Australia, Qld., 1978, p.31.
37. Ibid., p.176.
38. Collins, op.cit., p.107.
39. "Statement for Cabinet", op.cit.
40. Ken Dobinson interview.
41. The British Bioscope Film Number, 1929, p.63.
42. Ibid., p.67.
43. Diane Collins' article in Popular Culture provides many examples of the attitudes of various social groups, particularly women's groups, to the influence of the movies in this period.



44. Ernest Turnbull, "Too Much Done By Too Few" in Film Weekly, 16 December, 1943, p.19.
45. Extract from a policy letter written by Dobinson on 24 April, 1940, notifying Merriwa residents of his purchase of the Astros Theatre, Merriwa. Newcastle University Archives, "Graceson Theatre Collection", A5355.
46. Interview with Miss L. Boon.
47. Interviews with such residents as Mesdames Cowmeadow, Boland, Ham, and Chalmers, Miss Boon and Mr. Dobinson, all yielded this typical statement.

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Mrs. C. Cowmeadow, 17 May, 1980: Swansea resident during 1920-40

Mrs. Ham " " " " " " " "

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A PRELIMINARY SKETCH OF  
ITALIAN IMMIGRATION TO THE HUNTER REGION

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BY

MAUREEN STRAZZARI

SYNOPSIS:

The Hunter Region has never attracted many of the Italians who have migrated to Australia. This is particularly true of the outer region. Except for some fishermen in the Tuncurry area, those Italians who did settle in the Hunter Region before the Second World War were mostly from only a few provinces in northern Italy. Many of these pre-war migrants settled in areas offering employment opportunities, such as Minmi, Kurri Kurri, Cessnock and Boolaroo, where there were coal mines, or around the B.H.P. Others set up market gardens near Raymond Terrace or Warners Bay. Some established their own businesses, particularly in the retail liquor trade. The descendents of many of these pioneer migrants, some of whom settled in the region as early as 1881, are still living in the region, although they have been absorbed into the community through marriage. After the Second World War most Italian migrants came from the south of Italy. They still come from particular villages or provinces, however, such as Lettopallena, Caccuri and Venezia-Giulia.

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This paper is intended only as a background study to a history of Italian migration to the Hunter Region. It therefore focuses, for the most part, on pre-World War II migration. Firstly, there is a short, general look at the Hunter Region, within the broader context of Italian migration to Australia as a whole. The paper then concentrates on the area around Newcastle-Cessnock where most pre-war Italians in the Hunter settled. Finally, there is a brief glimpse at several diverse groups of Italian migrants who were part of the much greater post-war influx.

With some justification, Italian migration to Australia may be thought to have occurred after the Second World War, as such migration before that period was quite insignificant, by 1947 being only 0.44 per cent of the total Australian population.<sup>1</sup> Even so, by 1933 Italians had become the largest non-British overseas-born group,<sup>2</sup> a position they still retain.<sup>3</sup>

The Hunter Region, it seems, has always been under-representative of the national trend in this regard. Throughout the pre-war years there was a light sprinkling of Italians scattered around the region, but of that small number, many may have been working there temporarily.<sup>4</sup> There were a few Italian fishermen around Tuncurry,<sup>5</sup> a very few Italians at Wingham,<sup>6</sup> and even fewer at both Gloucester<sup>7</sup> and Stroud. As well, some were to be found at Merriwa and one or two at Scone.<sup>8</sup> The rest, and most numerous, were to be found in the Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Minmi and Newcastle city and suburbs areas. By 1947, however, the local government region of Greater Newcastle contained only about two hundred Southern Europeans, most of them Greek,<sup>9</sup> and in 1976 there were far more German and Yugoslav migrants in the Hunter Region than Italian migrants.<sup>10</sup>

A partial explanation for this under-representation is to be found in the phenomenon of chain-migration, which has resulted in concentrated areas of settlement in Australia of Italians from specific villages and regions in Italy.<sup>11</sup> There are a couple of explanations for this type of migration. An important factor, no doubt, is the fact that very few Italian migrants have received assisted passage to Australia and this was true at least to 1966.<sup>12</sup> From the early 1920s chain migration by Italians had been encouraged by the Australian Government through the system of landing permits and the necessity of personal nominations, involving a guarantee that the nominee would not become a charge on the Government.<sup>13</sup> (This policy, incidentally, has recently been reactivated through the Numas selection process, introduced last year, according to reports.<sup>14</sup>) Another influential factor in chain migration, however, was the social structure in Italy which was, at that time, at least, based on village life.

Usually chain migration began as a result of a wanderer who became established in Australia and then would write home and suggest that a relation, such as a brother, join him. Over the years a number of young men from that village or nearby villages to which the news spread would come over, and frequently receive his help with jobs and accommodation. Later, when more securely established, they would feel able to bring over their wives and children, or if not married to British-Australian girls, re-migrate home and choose a bride to bring back.<sup>15</sup> A local example of such a chain will be presented later in the paper.

The early Italian migrants to Australia, particularly those who arrived during the period 1876-1899, contained an extremely high proportion from North Italy, mostly from Lombardia and Piemonte, and in fact almost half came from one small province of Sondrio.<sup>16</sup> The only Southern Italians coming in any numbers were Sicilians from the Lipari Islands (Messina).<sup>17</sup> This narrow territorial base of origin was reflected in the Hunter Region<sup>18</sup> which, along with the national trend, although only to a slight degree, saw in the early twentieth century, a broadening of that base to include other northern provinces such as Veneto.<sup>19</sup> It was between the wars that the Southern Italians began to overtake their northern compatriots as migrants to Australia, a trend which has continued. By 1950 only a little more than a quarter of the Italian migrants were from the north.<sup>20</sup> The predominance of Southern Italians was, however, a post-Second World War phenomenon in the Hunter Region, where, until then, except for the Tuncurry area, the provinces of origin appear overwhelmingly to have been Lombardia, Friuli, Veneto and Piemonte.<sup>21</sup>

This tendency to regional or village concentrations of settlement did not lead to static communities in pre-war Australia. Rather, fluctuating regional employment opportunities during the economic depression, and later, prejudice generated, or in some cases, exacerbated, by the Second World War, led to fluid Italian communities, especially among the large proportion of unattached Italian-born males.<sup>22</sup> Thus during this period quite a number of Italians who had been working in the Hunter Region either left Australia,<sup>23</sup> or drifted away to other areas, especially Queensland and the Riverina. Some left permanently, others temporarily, when they were unable to obtain work during the depression, or when they were put off from places of employment, such as the B.H.P., and Stockton Borehole Colliery, during the war years.<sup>24</sup> Others escaped economic competition by becoming self-employed, often as market gardeners.<sup>25</sup> Several in the local region, who had land in Raymond Terrace, and later, Warners Bay, were in this way able to offer assistance to their unemployed fellow-countrymen.<sup>26</sup>

The origin of Italian settlement in the Hunter Region dates back at least to 1881, and the Marquis de Rays' ill-fated and fraudulent attempt to colonise New Ireland, which resulted in about 200 Italians being rescued by the New South Wales Government. Sir Henry Parkes made it clear to them on arrival that there would be no approval of their setting up "a colony within a colony" and that they must all accept any fair offer of employment.<sup>27</sup> Mr. Carlo Marina from Murrumburrah made arrangements for some of these people to be employed at various parts of the colony, including Cessnock.<sup>28</sup> During the following two years, however, most of these Italians followed Rocco Caminati in forming a settlement on the North Coast of New South Wales, which came to be known as New Italy.<sup>29</sup> Prominent among them was the Nardi family.<sup>30</sup> Not all the settlers in New Italy had been on the Marquis de Rays' expedition; there were some Italians who had heard about New Italy and travelled there from other areas. One such was Mr. Innocente Talamini, who subsequently married one of the Nardi daughters, Annetta. The Talaminis left New Italy in 1914 for Sydney. A little later they came to the Hunter Region, to the Hunter River Hotel in East Maitland, and in December 1924 they opened up their wine shop in Boolaroo.<sup>31</sup>

Not all the survivors of the Marquis de Rays' expedition went to New Italy. The three Scala brothers, for instance, settled immediately in the Hunter Region, at Minmi, and Raymond Terrace.<sup>32</sup> Adella, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Angelo Scala, who had acquired a property in Stroud Road, Euralong, near Raymond Terrace, married Faustino Chiarelli. The Chiarellis lived at Wallsend, and Mr. Chiarelli worked as a coal miner at Minmi. Later, when the mine opened at Cessnock, they settled there.<sup>33</sup>

Another family from the famed expedition was the Ros family.<sup>34</sup> This family settled in the Guildford area in Sydney, and when Vito Loscocco, a sailor working on coastal ships, went to Sydney in 1883 to be presented with a gold medal for his part in a rescue on the Clarence River<sup>35</sup> he met Miss Virginia Ros, whom he later married. Mr. Loscocco became a pilot boatman in Newcastle and was involved in another rescue, that of the 'Adolphe', at the entrance to Newcastle Harbour, in 1904. He lived at the Pilot Terrace, Parnell Place, Newcastle, with his family, until his death in 1916.<sup>36</sup>

From these beginnings, there was by the late 1920s, a permanent nucleus of Italian settlers in the Newcastle-Cessnock region. Some had settled in small groups around places of employment. For example, the Filipuzzi, Pirona and Movigliatti families were in the Maryville, Mayfield areas. Others, like the Morellos, lived at Boolaroo, near the Stockton Borehole Colliery, while the Pilatti, Toneguzzi and Negri families had land for market gardening in Bayview Street, Warners Bay (now Mount Hutton). Although there were exceptions, for example, the Cardenzanas, who arrived in 1921, it was generally the very early Italians who settled at Minmi, Kurri Kurri and Cessnock. Some of the early settlers had, by the late 1920s, established businesses. The Talaminis, as mentioned above, had a wine shop in Boolaroo, Mr. Giovanni Ruggero (and later, his widow) was a fruit and wine retailer in Newcastle, and the Bonomini, Ruggeri and Cardenzana families had successfully entered the hotel business.<sup>37</sup> To administer to their medical needs was Dr. Giuseppe Marolli, whose practice was in Denison Street, Hamilton. Dr. Marolli had arrived in Australia as a young man in 1906<sup>38</sup> and had served as a Major in the Australian Army in the first World War.<sup>39</sup> Many Italians vividly recall helping to build his "villa" at Kilaben Bay (which is still standing).<sup>40</sup>

Mr. Frank Bonofiglio of Kahibah retains links with these pre-war years by living next door (and on the same plot of land) to the family house which his pioneering father built from mud bricks. The house has been extended and is now occupied by a third generation of Bonofiglios, and their children.<sup>41</sup> Also, Mrs. Filipuzzi of Maryville has remained in the same house which her late husband occupied when he first arrived in Australia in 1924. The home of her daughter, Mrs. Maria Pirona, backs on to the Fillipuzzi home.<sup>42</sup>

The history of the Filipuzzi-Pirona families is an interesting local example of a pre-war migration chain to Australia, and its reactivation after the Second World War. It also demonstrates the supportive and cohesive relations which prevailed between members of the chain, in spite of the necessity for geographic dispersion during the pre-war years of economic depression.

The chain began with Mr. Dominico Filipuzzi from the province of Udine, who had already been to South America before the First World War,<sup>43</sup> and had returned to Italy where he served in the Italian Army, before deciding to come to Australia. A young man who lived in the adjoining village, and who had heard of Mr. Filipuzzi and his departure, went over the bridge to the neighbouring village to call on Mr. Filipuzzi's wife, to enquire how her husband was faring and also to ask for his address. When Mrs. Filipuzzi arrived in Australia the following year with her three children (a fourth was born in Australia), the young man,

Mr. Giobatta Pirona, was living in the Filipuzzi home at Maryville. Two years later, Giobatta acted as guarantor for his brother, Aldo, to come to Australia, and from then on quite a number of paesani (fellow villagers) arrived. Because of the lack of employment opportunities in the Hunter Region, this group of men, including Aldo Pirona, left Newcastle to work in Queensland, but they used to return to the Filipuzzi home each Christmas, and stay for several weeks. Typically, these men, who had arrived from Italy unattached, gradually sent for their wives and family, or returned to their village in Italy to marry. One, Mr. Leonarduzzi, had been left a widower with four children, including a son, Neil. In the meantime, in 1938, Mr. Giobatta Pirona had married one of the Filipuzzi daughters, Maria. After the war, in 1948, his brother, Aldo, returned to Italy to be married. The following year, when his wife came to Australia, she brought with her her sister, who, it had been arranged, was to go to Queensland to marry the widower, Mr. Leonarduzzi. (The couple were known to one another, being paesani.) On the same ship to Australia was Angelo, another Pirona brother, whom Giobatta had sponsored, and who went to live in Sydney with Aldo, who by that time had found work there with a firm owned by Italians, The Malocco Brothers.<sup>44</sup> Also on the ship was Mr. Carlo Narboni, who had been nominated by Mr. Filipuzzi. Mr. Narboni had been in Australia since 1941 as a prisoner-of-war.<sup>45</sup> He was sent to Fort Scratchley in 1945, along with other Italian prisoners-of-war and it was while he was there that he met the Filipuzzi and Pirona families, and used to visit their homes. He was shipped back to Italy at the end of 1946 but a year later he returned to Australia and in 1950 he married Mrs. Maria Pirona's younger sister, Caterina Filipuzzi, and the couple settled at Raymond Terrace. Eventually, their daughter married Neil Leonarduzzi from Queensland. This couple also settled at Raymond Terrace, but their name has been changed to Leonard.<sup>46</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Narboni's daughter is an exception in the Newcastle-Cessnock region. Almost invariably the descendents of the pre-war Italian migrants have been absorbed by intermarriage into the Australian community. While many of their names, e.g. Chiarelli, Bonomini, Toneguzzi, Ruggeri, Ruggero, Filipuzzi, Pirona, Morello, Omodei, Movigliatti, Talamini, Bonofiglio, Sedran, Scala, Cardenzana, have been retained through the male members of the families, the female members, with married names like Wakley, Ritchie, Sweet, are indistinguishable from their sisters of British origin. Some Italian names such as Loscoco, Negri and Conti will die out, as others have already, because there are no male heirs, and there are the occasional names, like Leonarduzzi, which have been changed.<sup>47</sup>

It is not possible, within the limits of this essay, to look at the post-war migration in the Hunter Region in any depth, but it seems desirable to include in this background study a very brief introduction to some interesting aspects which could be expanded in any future, more comprehensive history.

One interesting aspect concerns the migration chain to Australia from the village of Lettopalena, Abruzzi, which dates back to the 1920s in Queensland, but which did not gain momentum, or take root in Newcastle, until after the Second World War, and it did so then as the result of the village being destroyed by German bombs in 1943.<sup>48</sup> The first Lettesi arrived in Newcastle in 1947 and by 1962 the number had risen to 86,<sup>49</sup> while the community at the present time comprises some 100 families.<sup>50</sup>



The Lettesi community is a cohesive group and has retained its links with the parent village in Italy (which has been rebuilt). Each year there are celebrations in honour of the patron saint of Lettopalena, and money is sent to the parish priest of that village in Italy for celebrations there.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Lettesi in Newcastle, however, is their organisation. They have established an association which is a fully constituted body, with elected office bearers. It has been formed as both a sickness benefit fund, and as a social and cultural club. In this way the community has been able to gain access to welfare support.<sup>52</sup>

Another Italian-born group in Newcastle, again a village concentration, is peculiar in its isolation from the rest of the Italian community, and in the fact that this group has its own ethnic church, which is not Catholic. These people are Calabresi, and are all from the village of Caccuri, in the province of Catanzaro, and they did not arrive in Australia until 1955-6. After the war they went to Belgium, and there they were converted to the Pentacostal religion, under the influence of their first pastor and fellow village, Vittorio Campisi. The Chiesa Evangelica Italiana (Italian Evangelical Church) is situated in Anderton Street, Islington, as an independent branch of the Assembly of God.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, there are the Italian immigrants from Venezia-Giulia, who began arriving in Australia from early 1950 as refugees under the International Refugee Organization (I.R.O.) scheme. These people were among about 125,000 who left their homeland, in some cases whole towns being evacuated (e.g. 30,000 from Fiume) when the major part of Venezia-Giulia was handed to Yugoslavia by the Peace Treaty with Italy of 1947.<sup>54</sup> (Most, about 100,000, had in fact left before then.)<sup>55</sup> Towards the end of 1950 those Venezia-Giulians who were unable to prove they were Italian citizens, but who were not Yugoslavs, about 24,500 of them, were given refugee status under the auspices of the I.R.O. resettlement scheme, and, we are told, about half of them were resettled by the end of 1951.<sup>56</sup> According to official I.R.O. figures, however, only 3,000 Venezia-Giulians (i.e. those designated Venezia-Giulians) were resettled by the time I.R.O. was disbanded, including nearly 2,000 to the U.S.A. and 275 to Australia,<sup>57</sup> while no Italian nationals received I.R.O. assistance under the I.R.O. scheme.<sup>58</sup> A number of Italian migrants from Venezia-Giulia, however, were brought out to Australia as Yugoslavians, even though they were unable to speak the language, and they are therefore incorrectly classified in the immigration statistics in Australia as being Yugoslav.<sup>59</sup> The history of these Venezia-Giulians, however, is very complicated, and requires much more research.

The number of Italian migrants who settled in the Hunter Region before the Second World War was small. Even so, it has been possible to focus only on certain areas and aspects of these pioneer migrants. There has been only a brief look at the much larger post-war influx, the story of which is yet to be written.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, it seems clear that there is a feature common to both periods, and that is that the history of Italian migration to the Hunter Region is inexorably linked with the individual histories of migration from specific villages and regions.

## FOOTNOTES

1. F. Lancaster Jones, "The Territorial Composition of Italian Emigration to Australia 1876 to 1962", International Migration, Vol.2, No.4, 1964, p.260.
2. Jerzy Zubrzycki, Immigration in Australia, Melbourne, 1960, p.44.
3. F. Lancaster Jones, op.cit., p.26.
4. Dr. Charles A. Price, of the Department of Demography, Australian National University, has kindly allowed me access to application for naturalization cards he has collected for the years 1903-1947, and which he has classified into regions. Dr. Price estimates the cards would cover three-quarters of the Italian settlers in Australia during that time, and would therefore be representative of them: The Method and Statistics of "Southern Europeans in Australia", Canberra, 1963, p.2. These naturalization cards are very informative, being in fact short biographies, and indicate a very high degree of mobility among these early Italian migrants, especially during their first years in Australia.
5. They were from Sicilia (Lipari Islanders): Naturalization card. This was the only concentration of Southern Italians in the Hunter Region, if such a small number can be called a concentration. One was Mr. Giovanni Fazio, who arrived in Australia in 1906: Naturalization card. There are a number of Fazios in the current telephone book for the area.
6. They were all from Sondrio, Lombardia. Three of them were brothers, Pietro and Agostino Borserio, who arrived in 1924 (naturalization cards), and a third brother, Luigi, who came over shortly afterwards. Agostino, who had a small dairy farm at Mt. George, near Wingham, is now dead, but the other two brothers are still living at Mt. George (interview with Mr. N.F. Borserio of Charlestown, son of Luigi).
7. Mr. Testorelli, who arrived in 1914 from Brescia, Lombardia (naturalization card) continued to live at Gloucester (interview with his widow).
8. Naturalization cards. According to Mr. E. Penzo, Italian Consular agent in Newcastle, there were also some Italians at Taree, mainly farmers from Udine.
9. Charles A. Price, Southern Europeans in Australia, Melbourne, 1963, p.154.
10. 1976 Census, Australian Bureau of Statistics: This Census shows 1,825 Italian-born persons in the Hunter Statistical Division, including only 47 in the outer Hunter region, while German-born and Yugoslavian-born for the Hunter numbered 2,819 and 2,929 respectively.
11. Charles A. Price, op.cit., p.109. For areas of concentration in Australia, see p.154. Dr. Price suggests that between 1890-1940 only seven per cent of Southern European settlers came to Australia outside the chain process (p.109).
12. F. Lancaster Jones, "Sociological Aspects of Italian Migration to Australia", Quaderni dell' Instituto Italiano di Cultura, 4, Melbourne, 1971, p.138.
13. F. Lancaster Jones, 1964, op.cit., p.261.
14. Newcastle Morning Herald, 17 June 1980, p.3.
15. Charles A. Price, op.cit., pp.112-113.
16. F. Lancaster Jones, 1964, op.cit., p.255.
17. Ibid., p.256.
18. Naturalization cards.
19. F. Lancaster Jones, 1964, op.cit., p.261.

20. Ibid., p.260.
21. Naturalization cards.
22. That is, large in comparison with the number of females or even married males: Charles A. Price, op.cit., p.104.
23. In the years up to the war, following the economic depression, there was a considerable decline in migration to Australia, and between 1931-36 there was, in fact, a net emigration of Italian males from Australia. Lancaster Jones, 1964, op.cit., pp.259-260.
24. Interviews with Mrs. Maria Pirona of Maryville, Mrs. Morello of Charlestown, and Mr. Romano Toneguzzi of Nelson Bay.
25. Charles A. Price, op.cit., p.157.
26. Interviews with Mrs. Morello, Mr. R. Toneguzzi and Mrs. Wakley of Nelson Bay.
27. The Maitland Mercury, 26 April, 1881.
28. Ibid.
29. Marina R.B. Hennessy, "The Last of the South Sea Bubbles", Armidale & District Historical Society Journal and Proceedings, Nos.15-19, 1971-76.
30. Ibid., p.115.
31. Interview with Mrs. N. Sweet of Speers Point, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Innocente Talamini. Also naturalization certificate of Mr. Talamini, marriage certificate of Mr. and Mrs. Talamini, and birth certificate of Mrs. Sweet (born in New Italy).
32. Naturalization cards.
33. Interviews with Mrs. M. Ritchie of Gateshead and Mrs. Wakley of Nelson Bay, the two surviving children.
34. Our Italian Heritage 1880-1980, compiled by H.T. de Stefani and S.M. Craven, Brisbane, for the centennial celebration of the departure from Italy of the early settlers, 1980.
35. National Wreck Release Society of New South Wales, Sixth Annual Report, 1883, published by W.E. Smith, pp.21-23.
36. Interview with his granddaughter, Miss Mary Loscocco of Tighes Hill.
37. Various documents, especially naturalization certificates and interviews with various family members; also naturalization cards.
38. Naturalization card.
39. Interview with Mrs. L. Filipuzzi who informed me that Dr. Marolli's name is engraved on the cenotaph in Gregson Park, Hamilton. This has been sited.
40. Various interviews.
41. Interview with Mr. Frank Bonofiglio. Also certificate of naturalization, and other documents of his father, Mr. Pietro Bonofiglio.
42. Naturalization cards, and interview with Mrs. Maria Pirona.
43. Charles A. Price, op.cit., p.105, gives examples of the number of early Southern European settlers who had been to other countries before arriving in Australia.
44. This firm employed Italian terrazzo workers, some of whom came to Newcastle and stayed with the Filipuzzis while working on a new block of the Royal Newcastle Hospital: see The Newcastle Morning Herald, 6 May, 1949, p.1.
45. There were 18,432 Italians transported to Australia as prisoners-of-war. Their repatriation was complete by 1947, but some were allowed to remain in Australia, while many others returned: Address by the Minister for Immigration, the Hon. H.F. Opperman, to the Italian Society for International Organization, Rome, 27 April, 1965, p.5.

46. Interview with Mrs. Maria Pirona. Also certificates of naturalization and other documents.
47. Newcastle telephone directory and interviews.
48. Judy Galvin, "Origin and Destination: Two Ends of a Chain", Newcastle Studies in Geography, Dept. of Geography, The University of Newcastle, 1979, edited by J.C.R. Camm & R.J. Loughran,
49. Ibid., p.66.
50. Newcastle Morning Herald, 28 June 1980.
51. Interview with Mr. Emilip Penzo, Italian Consular agent in Newcastle.
52. Newcastle Morning Herald, op.cit.
53. Interview with Mr. Penzo, who has details. The church has been sited.
54. Louise W. Holborn, Refugees: A Problem of Our Time, N.J., 1975, p.342.
55. Jacques Vernant, The Refugees in the Post-War World, London, 1953, p.91.
56. Louise W. Holborne, The International Refugee Organization, London, 1956, p.185. Also Jacques Vernant, ibid., p.92.
57. Louise W. Holborn, ibid., p.439.
58. Ibid.
59. Italian citizens were not eligible for assisted migration to Australia, it seems, until some time in 1951: Australian Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1788-1978 Australian Immigration, Australian Government Publication, 1978.  
My husband, Silvano Strazzari, who arrived in Australia, along with about 50 fellow Venezia-Giulians in December 1950 and Mrs. E. Giacarri of New Lambton, who arrived the following year, are examples of Italians who had been granted permanent residence in Italy, but who were designated as Yugoslavian under the I.R.O. assisted migration scheme. Dr. Charles A. Price has agreed that the immigration statistics would be affected by people such as the writer's husband, as some Italians would be counted as Yugoslav: Letter from Dr. Price, 2 June 1980.  
Also, F. Lancaster Jones, 1964, op.cit., p.253, includes in his statistics of Italian migrants to Australia for the period 1950-62 only those Venezia Giulians who came from that part which was retained by Italy after the Second World War.  
Mrs. Giaccari maintains that during her stay in the Bagnoli I.R.O. Transit Camp (near Naples) of the approximately 2000 Italian Venezia-Giulians there at the time, nearly all were labelled Yugoslavian for migration purposes. As these camps were only short-stay camps for immigration processing purposes, presumably the numbers could have been much larger over time. For further research, the Refugee Cards, which are housed in the Commonwealth Archives, may be helpful.
60. If application for naturalization papers are to be used as a basis for such a study, it will be some years before enough useful information is available, as there is a 30 year ban on access to these papers, and it would have been the mid-1950s before even the earliest post-war Italian migrants were eligible to apply for naturalization.

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 Cardenzana, Filippo Giacomo  
 Conti, Andrea Frederico  
 Filipuzzi, Dominico  
 Loscocco, Vito (to be sited)  
 Morello, Sebastiano  
 Nardi, Annetta  
 Negri, Prospero  
 Pirona, Giobatta  
 Strazzari, Silvano  
 Talamini, Innocente

Newspapers

Newcastle Morning Herald, 6 May 1949  
 17 June 1980  
 28 June 1980  
The Maitland Mercury, 26 April 1881

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Manning  
 Wingham  
 Taree (nil)  
 Gloucester  
 Stroud  
 Hunter-Merriwa  
 Scone  
 Singleton (nil)  
 Muswellbrook (nil)  
 Kearsley  
 Cessnock  
 West Maitland (nil)  
 Tarro  
 Greta  
 Port Stephens (nil)  
 Raymond Terrace  
 Newcastle City  
 Newcastle Suburbs

These cards are transcriptions from the original official application forms and were collected by Dr. Charles A. Price, Department of Demography, Australian National University for research purposes, and who were very kindly allowed me access to them.

Letter to the writer from Dr. Charles A. Price, 2 June 1980.

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