

A Change in Circumstance

Individual Responses to Colonial Life

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree
of Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in History
University of Sydney

October, 2006

All precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth,
For love in sequel works with Fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.

Lord Alfred Tennyson

'The Day Dream'.

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Abbreviations

In the footnotes the following abbreviations have been used.

E. Macarthur	Elizabeth Macarthur (1766-1850)
HRA	<i>Historical Records of Australia</i>
HRNSW	<i>Historical Records of New South Wales</i>
J. Macarthur	John Macarthur (1767-1834)
MP	Macarthur Papers
ML	Mitchell Library
NLA	National Library of Australia

Cover: Robert Havell, engraver, after James Taylor, *Part of the Harbour of Port Jackson, and the Country between Sydney and the Blue Mountains, New South Wales* (detail), (London: Colnaghi & Co.: 1823), Hand-coloured aquatint; part three of a three part panorama, 47.8 x 65 cm S1974.

Introduction

The proposal of investigating the lives of five people who lived in colonial New South Wales during its early years is often received with an upraised eyebrow. Why would I wish to base my thesis upon such an investigation? Why not examine the life of just one person? Or why not closely consider just one aspect of the colonial experience, rather than a myriad of influences that comprised colonial relations? The answer to such questions is two-fold.

Old Government House, Parramatta, offers an education program called ‘Whispers, Tales and Gossip’. Through this program, primary-school aged children pretend to be newspaper-reporters taken back in time to 1819. The children are guided through the house by a ‘butler’ into various rooms where volunteers in period costume await them. The ‘reporters’ ask the ‘chambermaid’, ‘sergeant’, ‘governor’s-wife’ and others various questions, which the characters answer to their best ability based on a minimum of supplied documentation, and their own part-time research into the character they are role-playing.

This program, whilst enjoyable and imaginative, has little guarantee of historical accuracy. Such a failing inspired my research. There was a need for relevant research into this rather ordinary, but often neglected, everyday experience of individuals during the Macquarie period.

Also lacking in the sphere of historical research, was a comparison of the experiences of British men and women from various social standings, uprooted from a known world and placed within a land without visible signs of cultivation, a recognisable social hierarchy, pre-existing European housing or landscaping, or a definite monetary system.

The five people I have chosen to examine comparatively through the above experiences in this thesis are convict woman Margaret Catchpole, Ensign John Macarthur, free-settler Mary Rouse, the wife of the Governor, Elizabeth Macquarie and Commissioner John Bigge.

Margaret Catchpole rose from the degradation of transportation as a twice convicted felon to a position of financially independent self-worth. To Australia she brought her life skills of nursing, midwifery, housekeeping and farming which enabled her to overcome the personal challenges convict status awarded, and become a more successful, independent woman than her social status in England would ever have allowed her to make claim to.¹

John Macarthur wished to exclude such emancipists as Margaret Catchpole, from the privileged society in NSW, of which he was the self declared epitome.. Nevertheless, upon the pronouncement of his state of lunacy in 1832, the *Sydney Gazette* noted, ‘He is now mad in law tho not more crackbrained now than he was thought to be years

¹ Her invaluable eyewitness accounts of the complexity of colonial society were written in phonetic English, but are cited here with conventional English spelling for ease of reading.

ago.² For Macarthur had arrived in NSW an officer of the NSW Corps in 1792, yet was forced to resign his commission in England during one of two periods of exile, so that he might return to NSW where he was forming the conclusion that he, along with other colonial exclusives, constituted a social hierarchy to which political power in NSW ought ultimately to belong. This conclusion was based upon his ownership of extensive tracts of land, his influence as a wealthy free-settler, and his position of patriarch to one of the oldest families in the colony.

Many of Macarthur's declarations of his own eminence within colonial society influenced the findings of Commissioner John Thomas Bigge. Bigge saw Macarthur as an upright man and considered the colony in need of purification, which he felt would be achieved by exalting the respectable members of society and discouraging the licentious and corrupt.³ Bigge was selected by the Colonial Office in 1818 as Commissioner of Inquiry to write a report on the State of the colony of NSW, and as an afterthought, upon the legal institutions and state of agriculture and trade. Published as three separate reports in 1822 and 1823,⁴ Bigge's reports were not the objective documents which had been requested by the British Colonial Office and they were influential in turning public opinion against Macquarie's policies.⁵ William

² *Sydney Gazette*, Aug 10, 1832. MAV/FM4/4242; roll 10. ML.

³ J. Bigge to James Macarthur, Dec 12, 1827, MP, 26, pp. 18-21, A2922; J. Bigge to Edward Macarthur, Jun 15, 1831, MP 21, p. 61. ML.

⁴ John T. Bigge, *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales* (London: House of Commons, Aug 5, 1822); J. T. Bigge, *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry on the Judicial Establishments of New South Wales and Van Diemens Land* (London: House of Commons, Feb 21, 1823); J. T. Bigge, *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry on the State of Agriculture and Trade in the Colony of New South Wales* (London: House of Commons, Mar 13, 1823).

⁵ E. Macarthur to Eliza Kingdon, Sep 4, 1822, MP 12. ML.

Charles Wentworth, in 1824, argued this was due to the manner in which ‘Mr Bigge adopted implicitly the views of the aristocratic party.’⁶

I have attempted to find the man behind these reports by examining the letters of those who met and accommodated Bigge during his appointment in NSW. Elizabeth Macquarie is most useful in this capacity. The wife of Lachlan Macquarie, the first military Governor sent to administer the Colonial Offices wishes in Australia, Elizabeth Macquarie was hostess to innumerable gatherings held by Lachlan Macquarie in his official capacity. A singularly talented woman, mother and devoted wife, Elizabeth did not shrink from her duty. Rather, she used her husband’s position to implement many projects for the beautification of colonial NSW. This undoubtedly helped to change the atmosphere of the built environment from one of a crude penal settlement to prosperous, well-established towns.

Elizabeth’s influence had a lasting effect upon Mary Rouse, who worked under her as a nursemaid and governess to her only son. Mary Rouse emigrated from England with her parents shortly before her third birthday. Never to return to her native land, Mary was bound by many inherited, conventional constraints, yet revelled in the remarkable fluidity NSW social structure provided in contrast to British society.⁷

Guiding the understanding and appreciation of the challenges Margaret Catchpole, John Macarthur, John Bigge, Elizabeth Macquarie and Mary Rouse faced within colonial NSW during the Macquarie period, this thesis will explore the value each

⁶ William C. Wentworth, *A Statistical Account of the British Settlements in Australasia*, vol. I (London: Printed for Geo. B. Whittaker, 1824), p. 391.

⁷ Her prosperous father supported her throughout most of her life, therefore, in acknowledgement of his support and to avoid confusion, Mary Rouse will be referred to only by her maiden name.

individual placed upon the land, and how this affected the development of social hierarchies. This question is considered over four chapters, by looking into various aspects of life and how the lack of traditional hierarchical social structures resulted in vastly different experiences than these individuals might have experienced in England. Chapter One focuses on the manner by which the land was made to respond to preconceived ideals of agricultural production, and how success in this arena enabled economic and political influence. Chapter Two considers questions of upbringing, education and behavioural traits as factors behind the implementation of social hierarchies. Chapter Three examines the house and gardens of the individual lives being examined here as a means of demonstrating their claims to status. Finally, Chapter Four evaluates the importance of financial independence within the colonial setting as a means of securing social standing.

This study is made difficult by the fact that at no point in time did all five individuals considered throughout this paper reside simultaneously in NSW or England. Nor were any of these people of a similar age bracket. Therefore as their lives are tenuously entwined, I have delved slightly into the history of some before they arrived in NSW and into the period following the Macquarie's departure from NSW.

NSW rapidly developed from a penal settlement to a place which led Rose de Freycinet, the wife of the French explorer Louis de Freycinet, to conclude in 1820, 'I should not be surprised if...many were to take refuge here as soon as the country is better known.'⁸ Influential in initiating and developing such a society, let us

⁸ Rose de Freycinet, in Marnie Bassett, *Realms and Islands, The World Voyage of Rose De Freycinet in the Corvette Uranie 1817-1820* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 194.

commence our peek through the windows of the lives of Margaret Catchpole, John Bigge, Mary Rouse, John Macarthur and Elizabeth Macquarie.

*‘Property is too sacred to be taken away
Without form or process, and merely at
the will of the Governor, announced by
proclamation in a newspaper.’⁹*

⁹ George Johnston, *A charge of mutiny: the court-martial of Lieutenant Colonel George Johnston for deposing Governor William Bligh in the rebellion of 26 January 1808* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1988), pp. 386-7.

The institution of 'property', based on the ownership of land, was considered by the British as not only the source of wealth, livelihood and status; in sufficient quantity it could also be the source of political influence. Therefore, property must be guarded against the depredations of the property-less. It was this emphasis upon property that led to an increasingly harsh penal code and the overcrowding of prisons. To the Indigenous Australian people such a concept did not exist, as the land was regarded as an expression of the physical structure of ancestral spirits and so placed them not as owners of the land in the European sense of that term, but as responsible for maintaining their relationship with their ancestral ties within tribal territories.¹⁰ Upon the point of settlement, this land was made to answer to European concepts of productivity and agricultural output. This resulted in the Indigenous people's right to the land being overridden. Therefore, in this thesis, the Indigenous claim and presence upon the land is not considered, just as it was not considered during the colonial period. Instead, the cultivation of the land to suit European purposes will be examined through individual attempts to further the progress of the colony of New South Wales (NSW) from penal colony to prospering settlement, in the quest for individual and collective fortunes.

Margaret Catchpole was born on March 14, 1762, the youngest of six children of Jonathan Catchpole, a head ploughman on *Denton Farm* which bred feather-hocked cart-horses.¹¹ Because Margaret's only sister, Susan, was of a sickly constitution, her brothers lavished their love and attention solely upon Margaret. They taught Margaret to work with horses and ride bare-backed. In 1775, Margaret rode into the local

¹⁰ Frank G. Clarke, *Australia. A concise political and social history* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1992), p. 5.

¹¹ Richard Barber, introduction to *The History of Margaret Catchpole*, by Richard Cobbold (Boydell Press, 1971, originally published 1847), p. ii.

village to get a doctor for her sick mistress. This heroic action was repeated almost twenty years later, but for another cause. Unable to reach her lover, William Laud, by any other means, Margaret stole a horse from John Cobbold and rode it to London. This action resulted in her capture and the death sentence. However, her ride for a doctor at the age of thirteen became known and the sentence was commuted to transportation to NSW. Before this sentence was carried out, Margaret escaped from gaol in another attempt to be with Laud. Again she was captured and sentenced to transportation and sailed aboard the *Nile* in 1799.¹² The transfer of sentence from death to transportation upon this second capture was doubtlessly due to the powerful influence of her former mistress Elizabeth Cobbold, who was renowned for her ‘exalted talents and unwearied exertion in the cause of benevolence and charity’.¹³

Carpenter and cabinet maker, Richard Rouse may have been in a desperate financial situation when he made the decision to sail aboard the *Nile* with his heavily pregnant wife and two year old daughter, Mary, in 1801 to NSW.¹⁴ Such a proposition is based on the fact that Under-Secretary King had found that several of the persons who had decided to settle in NSW, travelling on the *Nile*, were ‘utterly unable to provide themselves with the necessary clothing for the voyage’. King therefore directed the Transport Commissioners to ‘provide forthwith for *each respective family*...some small articles to the value...of 5 pounds for *each family*’.¹⁵

¹² Public notice, Mar 26, 1800, ZAC 108 (CY2340). Photograph of original; Trial, Jul 31, 1800, L. Macquarie, Despatch 1820, A1192, p. 823. ML.

¹³ Clement Shorter, introduction to, *The History of Margaret Catchpole*, by Richard Cobbold (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. xiii; Memorial cited in Richard Cobbold, Supplement, *The History of Margaret Catchpole* (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. 423.

¹⁴ Caroline Rouse Thornton, *Rouse Hill House and the Rouses* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1988), p. 15

¹⁵ Secretary King to Commissioners, Apr 1801, Whitehall, cited in F. M. Bladen, ed., *HRNSW*, vol. iv (Sydney: Government Printer, 1901), pp. 346-47. Original Emphasis.

Upon their arrival, the Rouse family, with baby John, who had been born during the voyage, took up residence in tents in the parkland which Governor Macquarie would later name Hyde Park.¹⁶ By March 1802, Governor King wrote to the Duke of Portland, that some of the settlers who had arrived in NSW aboard the *Nile* were settled, while situations for the rest were being searched for. The Rouse family were among the settlers who King listed as receiving a grant; 100 acres at North Richmond on the Hawkesbury River, which Richard Rouse named *Oxford Farm*.¹⁷

In the same despatch King noted that the indents for the convict which had sailed aboard the *Nile* had not been sent with the ships, so he was attempting to make as correct a list as possible.¹⁸ This oversight made the assignment of convicts challenging. Luckily for Margaret Catchpole, her good behaviour onboard ship had been noted, resulting in her assignment after only two days on the stores.¹⁹

Richard Rouse held 130 acres by August 1805. Yet, of his three convicts, two were victualled by Government, as was he, his wife and three children.²⁰ By this time, Elizabeth Rouse had given birth to four children, but sadly, one of them, George, drowned in the Hawkesbury River in 1804.²¹

In July 1805, King appointed Rouse to the government position of Superintendent of Public Works at Parramatta, thus initiating a possible ambition of Rouse to attain

¹⁶ Rouse Thornton, *Rouse Hill House*, p. 18; Macquarie titled the area Hyde Park in 1810, Sydney Cricket Ground, Aussie Stadium, History of the Sydney Cricket Ground and Aussie Stadium, http://www.sydneycricketground.com.au/Fact_File/History.asp, viewed May 27, 2006.

¹⁷ 'Grants & Leases of Land', Lands Title Office, 3c Feb 1800 – Apr 1809, p. 90. ML.

¹⁸ P. G. King to Duke of Portland, Mar 1, 1802, Sydney, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, IV, p. 719.

¹⁹ M. Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, May 2, 1803, letter, 1116. NLA.

²⁰ P. G. King, Returns of 1805 Muster, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, V, pp. 686-67.

²¹ See *Inquest report of James Nugent*, Sept, 24 1809, Reel 6021; 4/1819 p.613. ML.

great wealth in the colony.²² His appointment enabled the Rouse family to move out of rural isolation, and into a house opposite the gates of Government House Parramatta, from where he oversaw public works within Parramatta, Sydney and occasionally the Hawkesbury.²³ This placed the family in close contact with a succession of Governors in their vice-regal residence. Undoubtedly, the change in scene and society was appreciated by all members of the family, especially Mary who was now entering her teenage years.

Despite Rouse's government appointment, all but one child from the Rouse family continued to be victualled by Government stores.²⁴ This child was presumably supplied with food from their Hawkesbury property, which they had vacated to the care of now ticket-of-leave holder Margaret Catchpole, and had been further extended by a grant of a further 50 acres in 1807.²⁵ Eventually the isolation of *Oxford Farm* forced Margaret to leave the property.²⁶ Yet this was not the end of Margaret's relationship with the Rouses. 'Mr Rouse [kept her stock of] four ewes and nine breeding goats, 3 wethers and seven young ones' free of charge whilst Margaret assisted various women of the Hawkesbury Region through their confinements.²⁷ In March 1806 and November 1809, Margaret witnessed the destructive effects of the Hawkesbury River flooding.²⁸ Crops and cattle were swept away by the flood, with

²² P. G. King, 'Present State of His Majesty's Settlements on the East Coast of New Holland called New South Wales', cited in Bladen, ed., *HRNSW*, VI, p. 140.

²³ P. G. King, 'Present State of His Majesty's Settlements on the East Coast of New Holland called New South Wales', cited in Bladen, ed., *HRNSW*, VI, p. 140.

²⁴ W. Bligh, Dec 31, 1807, 'Returns of the numbers of acres of land sown, etc', in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. vi, p. 303.

²⁵ M. Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, Oct 8, 1806, MS 1116, NLA; W. Bligh, Dec 31, 1807, 'Returns of the numbers of acres of land sown', in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. vi, p. 303.

²⁶ M. Catchpole, Oct 8, 1806, MS 1116, NLA. Whilst the letter is dated such, it is reasonable to presume the events she described happened some time earlier.

²⁷ M. Catchpole, Oct 8, 1806, MS 1116, NLA.

²⁸ M. Catchpole, Oct 8, 1806, MS 1116, NLA.

losses from the 1806 flood estimated in excess of £30,000.²⁹ Some settlers were completely ruined and left indebted to the Government due to the failure of the wheat crop which was exchanged at the Commissariat for foods and goods.³⁰

As a result of the inundation of the Hawkesbury region, Lachlan Macquarie upon his appointment to the position of Governor of NSW, found public stores to be almost entirely empty. Macquarie wrote to Viscount Castlereagh of his immediate decision to put 300 acres of Government Farm under cultivation for an early crop of potatoes and wheat, and his intention to place all troops and other persons victualled by the Crown on half rations. Fortunately a store ship arrived before he had to act upon his second option. Thereafter Macquarie recommended, for the protection of the settlers upon the Hawkesbury, that they remove their houses, stock and farmyards to high ground in the neighbourhood of their farms, so that in the case of another flood, only their crops would be impacted.³¹ But very few settlers consented to move – presumably as they were afraid to leave their crops unprotected below.³²

Margaret Catchpole did not enter into agriculture as a means of securing her livelihood, and so remained independent of serious pecuniary difficulties, despite the flooding of the Hawkesbury River. By 1811, Margaret, who was aged almost fifty years old, rented ‘a little farm about fifteen acres, but half of it standing in timber and the cleared ground... I have got 30 sheep and forty goats and 30 pigs and 2 dogs they take care of me for I live alone, not one in the house.’³³ Despite receiving a full

²⁹ S. Marsden to Governor King, Mar 28, 1806, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. xi, p. 53-4.

³⁰ *Sydney Gazette*, March 30, 1806, p. 2. MAV/FM4/4242; roll 3. ML.

³¹ All from L. Macquarie to Viscount Castlereagh, Mar 8, 1810, Sydney, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. vii, p. 303.

³² Government and General Orders, Dec 15, 1810, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. vii, p. 468.

³³ M. Catchpole, Sept 30, 1811, MS 1116. NLA

pardon from Governor Macquarie in 1814,³⁴ Margaret does not appear to have attempted to receive a grant for herself.

If Margaret had petitioned for a grant of land, it would have not have exceeded 10 acres. Reporting on the State of NSW, Commissioner John Bigge recommendation that no emancipist settler receive a grant larger than 10 acres,³⁵ as he thought it unlikely an emancipist would be able to cope with the costs of clearing and cultivating the land without exhausting it.³⁶ Such a recommendation was quite valid considering Kentish farmer, James Atkinson's comment of 1826,

Even on the best cultivated farms, very little has been done towards introducing a proper rotation of crops; the same destructive recurrence of wheat year after year is too generally practised, without the intervention of green crops, and with little aid from manure to recruit the fertility of the soil.³⁷

Mary Rouse's father-in-law, like her own father, was not bred to the land. However, Rowland Hassall was a successful manager,³⁸ and so was given the power of attorney over many absentee property owners' land grants in NSW, including the extensive properties of both Reverend Marsden, and Mrs Parker King.³⁹ In 1826, Jonathan,

³⁴ L. Macquarie, Despatch, 1820, 1192, p. 823.

³⁵ Bathurst to Brisbane, Sep 9, 1822, in Fredrick Watson, ed., *HRA*, ser. 1, vol. x (Sydney: Government Printer, 1914), p. 790.

³⁶ Bigge, *Agriculture and Trade*, p. 48.

³⁷ James Atkinson, *An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in New South Wales* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1975, first published 1826), p. 37.

³⁸ Rowland Hassall to J. T. Bigge, in Bigge, *Appendix, Report*, B. T. Box 20, p. 3463. ML.

³⁹ Marsden to Stokes, Nov 26, 1811, George Mackaness, ed., *Some Private Correspondence of the Marsden Family: 1794-1824* (Sydney: G. Mackaness, 1942), p. 43; Dorothy Walsh, *The Admiral's Wife* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1967), p. 59. See also the letters of Mrs Phillip Parker King, from Mar 20, 1827 – Nov 3, 1828, Detailing life on Dunheved farm, quoted in Walsh, *The Admiral's Wife*, pp. 60-103.

Mary's husband, began to manage his brother-in-law, absentee property-owner Reverend Walter Lawry's concerns within the colony.⁴⁰ However, unlike his managerial focused father, Jonathan had to be requested by Lawry to provide information about his stock,⁴¹ and by October 1828, Jonathan's brother, James, felt that Jonathan was incapable of managing Lawry's affairs, and requested he sign over the power-of-attorney to him instead.⁴²

In fact, Jonathan Hassall simply lacked the managerial skills which his father possessed. Jonathan had received a grant of 200 acres at Cooke, on October 8, 1816, which he called *Matavai*, and later consolidated by a second grant of 230 acres.⁴³ He, with his three brothers, received further grants in 1823, Jonathan's grant alone amounted to 800 acres, which became known as *Newberry Farm*.⁴⁴ By 1828, Jonathan's *Matavai* holding totalled 700 acres; he also owned an additional 1100 acres at Bathurst known as *Junction Farm*.⁴⁵ What sort of agricultural venture Jonathan operated on his grants is lost to history, but we know that his attempts at making his family's fortune off the land were unsuccessful. The result of his efforts will be examined in Chapter IV. Needless to say, Mary and her six surviving children became financially dependant upon her father to provide for them. Fortunately, Richard Rouse was more than economically capable of handling such a situation.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Hassall, Oct 9, 1826, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 3, A1677, pp. 675-6. ML.

⁴¹ Rev. W. Lawry to Jonathan Hassall, May 4, 1827, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 2, A1677-2, pp. 825-6. ML.

⁴² James Hassall to Jonathan Hassall, Oct 22, 1828, Hassall Correspondence, vol 4, A1667-4, pp. 205-6. ML.

⁴³ J. T. Bigge, *A Return of Grants Made in NSW between 25 August 1812 and 25 March 1821* (Britain: House of Commons, Jun 25, 1822), p. 70.

⁴⁴ Malcolm R. Sainty and Keith A Johnson, eds., *Census of New South Wales, November 1828* (Sydney: Library of Australian History, 1980), p. 182.

⁴⁵ Sainty, *Census of New South Wales*, p. 182.

In 1804 there were approximately 400 horses in the colony.⁴⁶ Richard Rouse realised the importance of quality bloodlines and so began to increase his stud holdings upon his second grant, *Rouse Hill Estate*. The first sire known to stand at his fledgling bloodhorse stud, *Syntax*, was active until 1820.⁴⁷ Complementing this stud property, Mary's brothers developed extensive horse stables at Mudgee/Gulong. By Rouse's retirement, in 1828, he owned over 10,000 acres. Mary's brother, Edwin, initially continued this passion for horse breeding, one which 'Banjo' Paterson enthusiastically shared with him.⁴⁸ In fact, Rouse's 'Crooked R' brand, which became a recognised sign of highest quality horses, was still in use four generations later, by his great-grandson.⁴⁹

It is most likely that Margaret Catchpole spent her twilight years upon *Rouse Hill Estate*.⁵⁰ This is a most positive conjuncture as Margaret's love of horses, which saw her initial conviction to transportation, would have been vastly appeased by her residence on Rouse's property where his horse-stud program had initiated.⁵¹

John Macarthur, like Richard Rouse appreciated the value of quality bloodline stock. Macarthur arrived in NSW, a Lieutenant of the NSW Corps, with little knowledge of farming, but a familiarity with the varying qualities of fine-woollen cloth, which

⁴⁶ Agriculture and Stock Report, Aug 14, 1804, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. v, pp. 433-35.

⁴⁷ Keith Robert Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier 1788-1900 and the Serpents Legacy* (Neutral Bay: Volcanic Publications, 2005), p. 209.

⁴⁸ See 'The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses', *The Bulletin*, Oct 20, 1895. The breeding and training talent was apparently inherited by a descendant, Rodney Rouse Dangar, who bred Peter Pan, winner of the Melbourne Cup in 1932 and 1934. Melbourne Cup Winners, <http://au.geocities.com/melbournecups/1930-39.html>, viewed Jun 2, 2006.

⁴⁹ Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, p. 213.

⁵⁰ Nina Terry statement, cited in William J. Pickard, *Kathleen Rouse of Rouse Hill. The Road to Harbin* (William J. Pickard: Sydney, 1992), p. 4.

⁵¹ Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, p. 209.

perhaps motivated this ambition to produce fine-wool. Macarthur was the second son of Alexander Macarthur a linen draper of Plymouth Dockyard.⁵² Alexander was described by Sir Joseph Banks as a tailor and mercer, and nothing better than a seller of slops. Despite the implied insult, Alexander was a wealthy man, because most men of the navy wore slop clothing.⁵³ Whilst working as an assistant teacher at Kilkhampton, England,⁵⁴ he learnt some farming skills and met Elizabeth Veale, whom he married in October 1788.⁵⁵ Elizabeth Macarthur's father, Richard Veale, was a yeoman farmer who owned *Lodgeworthy*, a mixed-farm of some ninety-four acres in Bridgerule near Kilkhampton.⁵⁶ Arguably, it was Elizabeth's practical onsite knowledge of farming principals which really made Macarthur's ventures successful.

Officers were initially not permitted grants, the situation changing only in 1792, when Grose became governor, and thereafter permitted a grant of 100 acres to Macarthur upon which *Elizabeth Farm* was built.⁵⁷ By 1794, Macarthur wrote to his brother of the 3 acres that had been made into a vineyard and garden surrounding the house, where 'most excellent' vegetables abound.⁵⁸ In 1797, when supplies for the settlement were purchased from the Cape of Good Hope, twenty-six Spanish merinos were also purchased,⁵⁹ some of which were sold to Macarthur.⁶⁰ A year later, Macarthur's

⁵² *Bailey's Western and Midland Directory*, 1783, cited in Hazel King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980), p. 5.

⁵³ Joseph Banks, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol vi, p. 698.

⁵⁴ One of Rev. John Kingdon's sons, Thomas, attended Kilkhampton Grammar School, some eight miles from Bridgerule. Macarthur would not have been a schoolfellow but perhaps a young teacher. E. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, March 1816, MP 12. ML.

⁵⁵ *Bridgerule Marriage Register*, Oct 6, 1788, cited in King, *Elizabeth Macarthur*, p. 29.

⁵⁶ King, *Elizabeth Macarthur*, pp. 3-5.

⁵⁷ E. Macarthur to her mother, August 22, 1794, MP 12. ML.

⁵⁸ J. Macarthur to his brother cited in E. Macarthur to B. Kingdon, Aug 23, 1794, in Sibella Macarthur-Onslow, ed., *Some Early Records of the Macarthurs of Camden* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1973), p. 46.

⁵⁹ Waterhouse to Joseph Banks, Jul 16, 1806, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol vi, pp. 110-11.

⁶⁰ See J. Macarthur's statement as recounted by his son, William, that his long, silky fleeced sheep were originally imported from the Cape of Good Hope. *Australasian*, 25 August 1877. See also W. Campbell to Sir W. Macarthur, Sep 3, 1877, MP 68. ML.

original grant swelled to 500 acres, bound by water on three sides, of which 120 acres were under cultivation for wheat, vegetables, orchards and extensive gardens.⁶¹

Macarthur was not alone in his successes, for by 1800, thirty-four officer-farmers had accumulated 14,584 acres of land, 6,295 head of stock, and held 1,528 acres under cultivation.⁶²

In 1801, Macarthur was sent to England to be court-martialled, due to his 'endeavours to create dissension between [Governor King] and Lieutenant-Colonel Paterson, Commanding officer of the NSW Corps',⁶³ an event Macarthur turned into an opportunity. The political disruption of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon had cast doubt upon the British textile industry's continued access to Spanish super-fine wool. Therefore, textile manufacturers sought access to an abundant supply of wool within the Empire to satisfy this need. Macarthur was not able to immediately satisfy this need, but instead stated that the wool industry in NSW had the potential to expand in the same way the cotton industry had done in America,⁶⁴ which had developed into an enormously lucrative industry.⁶⁵ Consequently, Macarthur sold his commission and returned to the colony in June 1805 a free-settler,⁶⁶ with a promise from Lord Camden of 10,000 acres in whatever

⁶¹ E. Macarthur to B. Kingdon, Sep 1, 1798, MP 12. ML.

⁶² Figures cited in Ross Fitzgerald & Mark Hearn, *Bligh, Macarthur and the Rum Rebellion* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1988), p. 30.

⁶³ P. G. King to Duke of Portland, Sep 25, 1801, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, p. 532.

⁶⁴ J. Macarthur to Lord Hobart, Jul 26, 1803, 'Statement of the Improvement and Progress of the Woolled Sheep Industry in NSW', Photostat of original document, Am32; J. Macarthur to Nicolas Vansittart, Feb 2, 1804, MP vol 68, pp. 19-27. A2964. Copy of original. ML.

⁶⁵ Julia de Lacy Mann, *The Cloth Industry in the West of England from 1640 to 1880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 145.

⁶⁶ A. G. L. Shaw, 'Some Aspects of the History of New South Wales 1788-1810', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 57, pt 2, Jun 1971, p. 106.

area of NSW he considered most suited for wool production,⁶⁷ and seven rams and three ewes purchased from an auction of some of King George III's merino flocks.⁶⁸

As wool exports from NSW to England rose from 71,2991b in 1818 to 175,4331b in 1820, further interest developed in the cultivation of wool.⁶⁹ Governor Macquarie and Lord Bathurst actively discouraged the granting of large-estates, preferring such estates be purchased, thus increasing government revenue, but effectively discouraging sheep-farming. Therefore, despite the fact that Macarthur had acquired 9,600 acres by 1821, it was not all in the same place and he considered himself unable to add to his flocks, which then amounted to 7,000 head.⁷⁰

In response to agitation from such as settlers John Macarthur, on the above account and other issues, the Colonial Office arrived at the decision that they must send a Commissioner of Inquiry to NSW to enquire into the administration system of the colony. Selected for this responsibility was John Thomas Bigge. John Bigge was the fourth son of wealthy, untitled landholders from Northumberland, England.⁷¹ Bigge therefore inquired and recorded findings on the visible signs of cultivation in comparison with those he knew in Britain,⁷² while the administration system of that colony was measured against that of Trinidad, in the West Indies, where he had

⁶⁷ Lord Camden to P. G. King, Oct 31, 1804, MP, vol 68, pp. 62-3. A2964. ML.

⁶⁸ H. B. Carter, *His Majesty's Spanish Flock: Sir Joseph Banks and the Merinos* (1964), p. 181; Watson, *HRA*, ser. i, vol. v, p. 835.

⁶⁹ Alexander Riley, *Report of Committee on Gaols*, Parliamentary Papers, 1819.

⁷⁰ J. Macarthur to J. T. Bigge, September 18, 1821, Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B. T. Box 27, p. 6311. ML.

⁷¹ Perceval Serle, *Dictionary of Australian Biography* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1949), p. 264.

⁷² Bigge, *Agriculture and Trade*, pp. 46-8.

served as Chief Justice prior to his appointment as Commissioner.⁷³

In evidence before Bigge and in later correspondence, Macarthur asserted that agricultural labour and the care of sheep and cattle had a beneficial and reformatory effect upon convicts.⁷⁴ Macarthur also asserted that fine wool was the only commodity which had been exported advantageously from the colony; it was of great value to British manufacturers, and its production should therefore be encouraged and fostered.⁷⁵ Unsurprisingly, as a result of sycophantic attentions and flattery, Bigge and his secretary, Thomas Hobbes Scott came to regard Macarthur 'as the Key and Touchstone of the Truth of all they had heard',⁷⁶ which resulted in the findings being in favour of Macarthur's interests.⁷⁷ Bigge commended Macarthur's efforts to such an extent that in 1823, when on a similar commission of inquiry in the Cape of Good Hope, he lamented that there was no John Macarthur there to conduct experiments in breeding.⁷⁸

Macarthur's property, *Elizabeth Farm*, was not solely given over to the pasturage of wool-producing sheep. In fact, Elizabeth Macarthur wrote, they also grew wheat, barley, oats, kept a dairy, fed hogs, fattened beef and mutton and 'we make hay, at

⁷³ John Ritchie, *Punishment and Profit. The Reports of Commissioner John Bigge on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, 1822-1823; their origins, nature and significance* (Heinemann: Melbourne, 1970), pp.39-43, 51, 105.

⁷⁴ J. Macarthur to John Macarthur, Feb 20, 1820, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Early records of Macarthurs*, pp. 327-332, 324, 335, 337.

⁷⁵ J. Macarthur to John Macarthur, Feb 20, 1820, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Early records of Macarthurs*, pp. 335, 337.

⁷⁶ J. Macarthur to John Macarthur, Feb 20, 1820, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Early records of Macarthurs*, p. 324.

⁷⁷ Bigge, *Trade and Agriculture*, pp. 18, 48-9; John Macarthur to Elizabeth Macarthur, May 30 1821, MP, Vol 15, pp. 28, 34; John Macarthur to J. Macarthur, Jul 27 and Sep 22, 1821, MP 15, pp. 60, 111-15, 120. ML.

⁷⁸ Bigge to R. Wilmot, Sep 26, 1823, cited in Ritchie, *Punishment and Profit*, p. 253.

least I do, and so does Mrs Macquarie but the practice is not general'.⁷⁹ Elizabeth's reference to Elizabeth Macquarie's practice of making hay is a revealing one.

Elizabeth Macquarie, wife of Governor Macquarie of NSW, was an industrious, creative woman.⁸⁰ She greatly involved herself in the goings on about her within the colony, which will be considered further in the following chapters, and if James Mitchell is to be believed, she would have preferred the position of 'Governor than the Goverwife.'⁸¹ Elizabeth's participation in the public sphere saw her proud ownership of 119 head of cattle in the Liverpool district, in October 8, 1821.⁸² Indeed, upon departing the colony in 1822, the Macquaries took with them; Elizabeth's favourite cow 'Fortune', Macquarie's favourite horse 'Sultan' and Lachlan's pet rosellas and lorikeets.⁸³

Prior to Macquarie's recall, Elizabeth gave the power-of-attorney over her affairs in the colony to the Macquarie's 'intimate friend' Richard Fitzgerald and Henry Anthill.⁸⁴ Elizabeth left her livestock on Anthill's property in Picton, while Fitzgerald extracted from the new Governor, Brisbane, a promise of 2,000 acres of land for the use of her stock, subject to Lord Bathurst's approval. Unfortunately, nothing came of this request.⁸⁵

Several years later, Elizabeth herself requested a land grant in NSW but this was refused by the British Government. Her friends in Australia thus became active,

⁷⁹ E. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Mar 1816, MP 12. ML.

⁸⁰ Lysebeth Cohen, *The Governor's Wife* (Sydney: Wentworth Books, 1980), pp. 12-14.

⁸¹ James Mitchell, *Diary*, A2026, ML.

⁸² Macquarie Memoranda, A772, p. 173. ML.

⁸³ L. Macquarie, *Journal of a Voyage to England*, Feb 15-July 5, 1822, A775, ff. 18-110. ML.

⁸⁴ F. Drennan to G. Harrison, Mar 4, 1819, Bigge, *Report, Appendix*, B. T. Box 18, pp. 2478-9.

⁸⁵ Richard Fitzgerald, R. Bourke's Despatch, 1835, p. 549. 1313. ML.

recommending her to apply for 10,000 acres ‘on account of your late husband’s unbeatable services when Governor of this territory and also your son being a native of the colony.’⁸⁶ The land business was finally settled under Governor Burke, who secured approval from Downing Street in 1836 – but by that time Elizabeth had died and the land was registered in her son, Lachlan’s name.⁸⁷

The successful establishment of European ideals upon the natural landscape of the British colony of NSW was considered of utmost importance in the minds of the early arrivals. John Macarthur and Richard Rouse busily set about establishing themselves on the land in the hope of accumulating their family’s fortune. The benefits of their ambition were felt by their children, and in this context, we looked at Richard Rouse’s daughter, Mary. Mary’s mother was helped through many of her confinements by the convict woman Margaret Catchpole. Though brought to the colony under protest, Margaret steadfastly set herself to her self-appointed task as a midwife, accepting stock for payment of her services. The friend to emancipist women, such as Margaret Catchpole, Elizabeth Macquarie too embraced the land she was brought to as the wife of the Governor of NSW. Within her official capacity, Elizabeth enhanced the quality of the European ideals to which her more permanent fellow residents of NSW were so busily subscribing. John Bigge’s recordings and observations of the settlement to which Elizabeth Macquarie’s husband administered, only further magnify the extreme challenges these settlers combated in order to move the penal colony to a settlement which would become a wealthy pastoral society. Approaching an understanding of the influential actions of these five individuals will be continued in the next chapter

⁸⁶ Richard Fitzgerald to Bourke, R. Bourke’s Despatch, 1835, 1213, p. 549. ML.

⁸⁷ Bourke, Despatch, 1835, A1213, p. 545-6. ML.

through an examination of their involvement within the Formation of a Colonial Society.

*'I wish the good people at home knew a little better about the state of society here, at which I have been more surprised than at any other thing – it is excellent and the first people are so particular that you cannot get into their circle without first rate introductions and can only keep in it by first rate conduct. The smallest error in a man's conduct here, (which would scarcely be noticed at home) would send him out of the first immediately which is most proper in a country where there are so many different grades.'*¹

¹ Patrick Leslie, letter, 1835, cited in Joanna Gordon, ed., *Advice to a Young Lady in the Colonies Being a letter sent from Mrs E. of England to Maria Macarthur in the Colony of N. S. Wales in 1812* (Collinwood: Greenhouse Publications, 1979), pp. 5-6.

At the point of settlement, NSW was not regulated by the social hierarchies which had dominated British relations for centuries. Therefore, the society which developed was one where a convict could die profoundly respected for the aid she had given within that colony, a society where military officers and free settlers, of questionable familial background, could form the conclusion that they constituted a new aristocracy, and a place where a Governor's position could be undermined by a biased Colonial Commission of Inquiry. The influence people such as Elizabeth Macquarie, John Bigge, Mary Rouse, Margaret Catchpole and John Macarthur had upon the formation of colonial NSW is incalculable. However, by examining some of their shared experiences in relation to behavioural traits, happiness in marriage, children and their educational opportunities - their strength of character as they contended with the relative absence of traditional restraints and practices within the colony of NSW becomes evident.

John Macarthur instigated the movement of his young family to what had been initially established as a penal colony at NSW with a view to enhancing his military status and opportunity, in November 1789.² Macarthur's rapid accumulation of wealth and resultant influence over colonial society continued to escalate despite two extended periods of exile. Indeed, by 1822 Macarthur was observed to be 'the leading man in the colony...very clever, shrewd (sic) calculating man, with an extraordinary degree of perseverance and foresight, but a man of the most violent passions, his friendship strong and his hatred invincible.'³

² James Macarthur to Roger Therry, Feb 24, 1859, MP 1, p. 208; E. Macarthur to her mother, Oct 8, 1789, MP 12. ML.

³ R. Scott to his mother, 14 May 1822. Scott Papers, A2263. ML.

Macarthur's 'violent passions' and increased mental instability resulted in the declaration of lunacy in 1832,⁴ a possible conclusion to a lifetime of untreated bipolar disorder, or manic depression.⁵ Macarthur may have suffered either an endogenous type, perhaps of genetic origin (a possible explanation for his mother's early demise)⁶ or reactive depression (possibly reacting to the death of his mother and his placement in boarding school).⁷ Bipolar disorder involves cycles of depression and mania, or elation, and is often a chronic condition.⁸ This could offer an explanation for Macarthur's erratic behaviour which appears to have affected his thought processes, judgment, and social behaviour in ways that caused serious problems and embarrassment during his lifetime.⁹ Elizabeth Macarthur was only too aware of her husband's failing health and feared others would also comprehend the extent of his illness.¹⁰ To her credit Elizabeth continued to be respected by many of the leading colonial families,¹¹ even when Macarthur's psychosis developed, by June 1832, to the point that physical restraint was necessary.¹²

Elizabeth Macarthur enjoyed the intimacy of the steady stream of vice-regal couples which had been sent to govern NSW since Governor Arthur Phillip,¹³ and the

⁴ *Sydney Gazette*, Aug 10, 1832, MAV/FM4/4242; roll 10. ML.

⁵ 'Clinical and manic depression symptoms, treatments and medication', MedicineNet, <<http://www.medicinenet.com/depression/article.htm>>, viewed 14 June 2006. See also J. Macarthur to E. Macarthur, 4 March 1812, Macarthur Papers (MP) 2. J. Macarthur to E. Macarthur, 30 June, 8 December 1814, MP 2, J. Macarthur to W. Davidson, 3 December 1818, MP 1.

⁶ John Macarthur's mother died in 1777, when John was only ten years old.

⁷ Penny Russel, ed., *For Richer For Poorer* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994), p. 32.

⁸ 'Clinical and manic depression symptoms, treatments and medication', MedicineNet, <<http://www.medicinenet.com/depression/article.htm>>, viewed 14 June 2006.

⁹ The author would like to acknowledge that someone exhibiting these symptoms is not necessarily suffering from bipolar disorder.

¹⁰ E. Macarthur to Edward Macarthur, May 1832, MP 10. ML.

¹¹ Reverend James S. Hassall, *In Old Australia. Records and Reminiscences from 1794* (Brisbane: R.S. Hews & Co. Printers, 1902), p. 140.

¹² E. Macarthur to Edward Macarthur, 30 June 1832, MP 10. ML.

¹³ Anna Josepha King, *Journal*, cited in Marnie Bassett, *The Governor's Lady: Mrs Phillip Gidley King, an Australian Historical Narrative* (Parkville, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1961), p. 95.

Macquaries were no exception. The Macquaries met Elizabeth Macarthur living in a ‘miserable hut’ on Macarthur’s property on the Cowpastures in 1810.¹⁴ Elizabeths Macarthur and Elizabeth Macquarie who shared mutual friendships from Holdsworthy, England, did much to further their relationship despite their husbands’ early mistrust of one another.¹⁵ Both Elizabeths valued the constant support of their steadfast friendship, especially when Macquarie’s public measures were ‘severely reprobated...even his bounties have been forgotten by many on whom he bestowed them with profusion’.¹⁶

Elizabeth Macquarie moved in genteel circles before her marriage,¹⁷ which saw her in vogue with the latest trends of her duties as a hostess, and was therefore most aptly qualified for the responsibilities which befell her as the wife of the Governor of NSW. Yet Elizabeth was described as lacking the ability to make her guests feel comfortable and was intolerant of any who crossed her,¹⁸ while her dinners were described ‘as much too small as the dinners usually given in the colony are too profuse.’¹⁹ The key to such reports filtering home may have been the delay in fashion pervading the colony. In a letter from Mrs E. to Maria Macarthur in NSW, Mrs E. detailed advice for Maria’s table settings. Mrs E. announced:

It is not the fashion now, to cram the guests, and force them eat, but to let every one act as they please – indeed the custom of asking you 50 times what

¹⁴ L. Macquarie, *Journal*, Nov 16-18, 1810, pp. 12-18, A778. ML.

¹⁵ Viscount Castlereagh to L. Macquarie, Downing Street, May 14, 1809, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. vii, pp. 143-4.

¹⁶ E. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, 4 Sept 1822, MP 12. ML.

¹⁷ See Lysbeth Cohen, *The Governor’s Wife* (Sydney: Wentworth Books, 1980).

¹⁸ Rev. Samuel Marsden, 1815, *Journal*, Marsden Papers, vol 6. A1997. ML.

¹⁹ Ellis Bent to his mother, 27 April 1810, Bent Papers. Ab162. ML.

you will eat, is so much out, that in many great families the guests are not asked to eat at all...²⁰

As such, Elizabeth may have presided over her table as was fashionable, and thereby earned the censure of those less up to date. Mrs E. further advised that there was nothing more offensive as a young woman ‘seeming to teach her elders – in a confined society of females.’²¹ Yet Elizabeth was thirty years of age when she arrived in the colony, and would therefore hardly have been subject to the prejudices that faced a younger bride. Elizabeth was seen by her female neighbours and friends, as plain, sensible, amiable, benevolent and good,²² while foreign visitors felt immediately at ease and understood her to be ‘a woman of conspicuous ability’.²³ Indeed, whilst under Elizabeth Macquarie,²⁴ Government House was considered the apex of social life in Parramatta, where large assemblies and more intimate parties were held.²⁵ The neighbourhood thus consisted of ‘a sufficiency of pleasant,

²⁰ Interesting to note that Mrs E. offer’s a disclaimer by stating that if it is not the fashion to do so in NSW, better not adopt this new custom at the risk of seeming uncivil to one’s guests. Gordon, *Advice to a Young Lady*, p. 24.

²¹ Gordon, *Advice to a Young Lady*, pp. 24-5.

²² E. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Mar 1816, MP 12; J. M. Cox, *Reminiscences, 1818-55*, A 1603, f. 9. ML.

²³ Rose and Louis de Freycienet, in Marnie Bassett, *Realms and Islands, The World Voyage of Rose De Freycinet in the Corvette Uranie 1817-1820* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 183, 189.

²⁴ L. Macquarie was replaced by Brisbane, whose wife and daughters cared not for mixing in society and giving the large parties Elizabeth Macquarie gave. E. Macarthur to Eliza Kingdon, Sep 4, 1822, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Records of the Macarthurs*, p. 374.

²⁵ L. Macquarie to C. Macquarie, 12 letters between 10 March 1810 and 2 July 1815, Macquarie Papers, MS 202, ff. 38-113, NLA; List of names to be invited to a private function at Government house, Macquarie Papers, circa 1818, AM13. ML.

agreeable persons to visit and be visited by, to satisfy one who is not ambitious to have a very numerous visiting acquaintance.²⁶

The women of NSW who presented as genteel understood Elizabeth Macquarie's actions as an attempt to appear 'more English than English'.²⁷ Often, such women asserted a demeanour in conformity with English standards; despite the many hardships and trials they faced in their everyday life, in the hope of retaining what they recollected to be the correct social status quo prevalent in England. Often these attempts were developed upon an assertion of social status which they had not experienced, but made claim to hold in NSW.²⁸ Alternatively, some colonial women aspired to the following of colonial Indian fashions rather than that of English fashions, as a means by which an inter-colonial social hierarchy might be maintained. Such an ambition was advertised in the *Sydney Gazette* by Mrs Plomer in September 1820, with her statement that she had in 'her Possession the newest Fashions from India', which she could make up 'on the most reasonable terms'.²⁹ The advertisement suggests 'that Australian colonial society could aspire to Anglo-Indian society, that colonial officer's wives in Sydney or Hobart could be as recherché in their costume as

²⁶ All above from Elizabeth Macarthur to Eliza Kingdon, March 1816, MP 2. ML. Interesting to note in 1791, Elizabeth recorded the smallness of society felt the impact of the loss of some of its members. See E. Macarthur to Bridget Kingdon, 7 March 1791, MP vol. 10, ML A2906, Mfm CY940. Her desire for female company was not matched by John Macarthur's desire for male, as there were a select number of officers who were attentive to the couple. E. Macarthur to Mrs Leach, 18 March 1791, MP 12. ML.

²⁷ See Frances Louisa Bussell, *Journal*, MN 586 Acc/Nos 294A 12. SLWA.

²⁸ See Harriet L. King, *The Admiral's Wife: Mrs Phillip Parker King* (Sydney: 1967), Macarthur-Onslow, *Early records of the Macarthurs*, and H. S. Payne, 'A Statistical Study of Female Convicts in Tasmania, 1843-53', PTHRA, vol. 9, no. 2, 1961, pp. 56-69.

²⁹ *Sydney Gazette*, Sept 1820. MAV/FM4/4233A; roll 9. ML.

the wives of officers in Madras or Calcutta.³⁰ This attitude dominated throughout the late Macquarie period.

Efforts to maintain standards of fashion tolerated no variation in the consideration of the appropriate female career, marriage and family formation. The female career was dependant upon the husband fulfilling his supportive role within an economic function. Mary Rouse and Elizabeth Macarthur shared feelings of frustration at their respective husbands' inability to meet their responsibilities, which disabled their families from achieving their potential position within society. After eighteen years of marriage, Mary Rouse joined her sister-in-law, Lucy Lawry, in the position of widow, while Elizabeth Macarthur celebrated forty-six years of marriage with her husband John, but was pitied for her husband's inappropriate behaviour within the colony, from the time of their arrival.³¹

Mary Rouse, daughter of free-settler Richard Rouse, was married to Jonathan Hassall, son of Rowland and Elizabeth Hassall, on November 22, 1819 by Reverend Marsden at, the newly renovated,³² Saint John's Church in Parramatta.³³ Jonathan Hassall was born on January 31, 1798 in Venus Point, Tahiti,³⁴ where his parents had been working since 1796 as missionaries for the London Missionary Society, until they

³⁰ James Broadbent, Suzanne Rickard & Margaret Steven, *India, China, Australia Trade and Society 1788-1850* (NSW: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 2003), p. 155.

³¹ P. King to C. Lethbridge, June 30, 1802, cited in Dorothy Walsh, *The Admiral's Wife* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1967), pp.130-32.

³² Elizabeth Macquarie provided sketches for the adornment of St Johns Church based on Reculeurs, Kent. E. Macquarie to J. Watts, 18-, Macquarie Papers, AP41. ML.

³³ Mary Cover Lawry to J. Hassall, Feb 21. 1820, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 3, A1677-3, p. 8267. ML; Bigge, 'Returns of births, deaths and marriages, Nov 22, 1819, 1816-1821', *Report, Appendix*, A2130, p. 139; Jean E. Stewart, *Parramatta Pioneer Register Supplement to 1920* (Marrickville: Southwood Press, 2003), p. 110.

³⁴ Stewart, *Parramatta Pioneer Register*, p. 110.

were ‘driven off the island by the natives’.³⁵ Married at the same ceremony were Jonathan’s brother Samuel Hassall, to Lucy Mileham, and his sister Mary Cover Hassall, to Methodist missionary Reverend Walter Lawry.³⁶

Due to financial difficulties, Jonathan took his life just days before the birth of his eighth child. The emotional impact the loss of her husband had upon Mary can only be guessed at. Mary tenaciously lived-on for fifty years after her husbands’ death. Despite her increasing fragility, Mary Rouse continued to entertain at her home of *Berkshire House* at the age of seventy-six.³⁷ Mary’s ‘mind went many years before her death’, in 1883, yet she was long remembered as ‘dear Aunt Hassall’.³⁸

Like Mary, Elizabeth Macarthur long outlived her husband, whose own life was plagued by his unstable mental health. Nevertheless, the mutual love and affection John and Elizabeth Macarthur shared during the birth and growth of their nine children later inclined their children to be more particular in their own choice of spouse.³⁹ As Macarthur wrote in December 1818, ‘Elizabeth and Mary... remain unmarried, and the prospect is indeed very small of their obtaining any eligible settlement. They are too sensitive and too well principled for this society.’⁴⁰ John Oxley sought Macarthur’s permission to marry his daughter Elizabeth, but was rejected, as was a proposal from William Charles Wentworth, surely due to

³⁵ Hassall, *In Old Australia*, p. 1.

³⁶ W. Lawry was a Methodist Missionary, who built the first Methodist Church at Parramatta in 1821 at his own expense. See *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 2 (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press), p. 95.

³⁷ Bessie Buchanan Rouse, Diary, May 9, 1878, Private Collection, cited in Rouse-Thornton, *Rouse Hill House*, p. 149.

³⁸ Lizzie Rouse, Jan 30 1879, Private Collection, cited in Rouse-Thornton, *Rouse Hill House*, pp. 152, 157.

³⁹ R. Kingdon to E. Macquarie, Sep 15, 1799, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Early Records of the Macarthurs*, pp. 54-5.

⁴⁰ J. Macarthur to Walter Davidson, Dec 3, 1818, MP 1. ML.

Macarthur's disdain for his parentage.⁴¹ Mary married in 1823, while brothers John and William never married. John and Elizabeth Macarthur's marriage was based on 'rational fellowship instead of slavish disobedience',⁴² as evident in Elizabeth's comment, 'In Mr Macarthur's society I experience the tenderest affections of a husband, who is cheerful and instructive as a companion.'⁴³

The sharing of mutual affection in marriage also characterised the Macquarie's marriage. As the second wife of Lachlan Macquarie, Elizabeth Macquarie, may not have enjoyed the same youthful passion which he had shared with Jane Jarvis (Macquarie's first wife, who had died in 1796), yet after their wedding, in Holsworthy, Devonshire on November 3, 1807,⁴⁴ Lachlan and Elizabeth employed the plural when describing events at which they were both involved, and inscribed their books 'L. E. Macquarie', a clear affirmation of their union.⁴⁵ John Mitchell wrote of the vice-regal couple; 'The Governor and his Lady seem to be extremely happy together and are a perfect pattern of domestic tranquillity.'⁴⁶

Such nuptial happiness was never partaken of by Margaret Catchpole, either prior to her arrest or during her years in NSW, as Margaret never married. Margaret was initially convicted to transportation from a failed attempt to reach her lover, William Laud, in 1797. In doing so Margaret daringly escaped the confines of feminine

⁴¹ Judge-Advocate Wylde to J. T. Bigge, 1820, in Watson, *HRA*, series I, vol iv, p. 789.

⁴² Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1792), Ch. 9.

⁴³ E. Macarthur to B. Kingdon, Sep 1, 1798, MP, A2908. ML.

⁴⁴ Certified copy of entry of marriage of L. & E. Macquarie, Nov 3, 1807, AM 17.28b. ML.

⁴⁵ L. & E. Macquarie, *Holy Bible*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1803), B1686-1 and L. & E. Macquarie, *Book of Common Prayer* (London, 1812), B1686-3. ML.

⁴⁶ John Mitchell, May, 1815, Journal. A295. ML.

apparel and cross-dressed.⁴⁷ Margaret stole a horse from her former employer, John Cobbold, and rode for over 70 miles from Ipswich to London in about ten hours, and there offered it for sale.⁴⁸ Margaret was detected and imprisoned. Again, disguised as a man,⁴⁹ Margaret escaped prison and made for the coast with Laud, yet they were discovered, Laud was shot dead by the awaiting coastguard, and Margaret was again sentenced to death, a sentence which was changed to transportation to NSW.⁵⁰ Margaret sailed aboard the *Nile* in 1801.⁵¹ Perhaps due to the tragic manner of Laud's death or the self-inflicted shame of the loss of her reputation,⁵² Margaret resolutely refused the offers of marriage she received whilst in NSW, which included the attentions of botanist George Caley.⁵³

Despite her resolution that 'I am not for marrying',⁵⁴ Margaret Catchpole's practical abilities as a midwife lent her an element of distinction within the colonial setting. In 1806, Margaret wrote, to her English relatives, of the assistance she had provided Mary Rouse's mother, Elizabeth, during the birth of her second son, Edwin Otto. Without Margaret's aid Elizabeth Rouse could have died.⁵⁵ Margaret also skilfully aided Mrs Skinner, Mrs Dight, Mrs Wood and Mrs Pitt through many of their confinements.⁵⁶ Her assistance at the birth of so many colonial children resulted in her

⁴⁷ For photographic evidence of such actions being taken by women from the 19th century see Catherine Smith and Cynthia Greig, *Women in Pants* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003).

⁴⁸ Sydney Morning Herald, October 27, 1844. ML.

⁴⁹ Sydney Morning Herald, October 27, 1844. ML.

⁵⁰ Public notice, Mar 26, 1800, ZAC 108 (CY2340). Photograph of original; Trial, Jul 31, 1800, L. Macquarie, Despatch 1820, A1192, p. 823. ML.

⁵¹ Henry Fulton, Register of Burials, cited in Barton, *True story of Margaret Catchpole*, p. 174.

⁵² Contemporary novels highlight the beautiful and brittle nature of a woman's reputation. See Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (London: Maximillian Society, 1982), p. 255, and Fanny Burney, *Evelina* (London: J. M. Dent & sons), p. 58.

⁵³ Margaret Catchpole, Letter, May 2, 1803, MS 1116, NLA; M. Bladen wrote of Margaret Catchpole's and G. Caley's alleged affair, letter, M. Bladen to J. C. H. Maiden, Feb 2, 1900, AC49.

⁵⁴ M. Catchpole, Postscript, May 2, 1803, MS 1116. NLA.

⁵⁵ M. Catchpole, Letter, Oct 8, 1806, MS 1116. NLA.

⁵⁶ M. Catchpole, Letter, Oct 8, 1806, MS 1116. NLA.

observation; 'It is a wonderful country to have children, even very old women have them that never had none before.'⁵⁷

Margaret hoped to one day return to England, and so conscientiously saved the little money she was paid for her aid as a midwife.⁵⁸ When she received a pardon from Macquarie, on January 3, 1814, Margaret was free to do so.⁵⁹ However, she remained in Sydney to assist Mrs Skinner through another confinement. A year later, Margaret still resided in NSW, as she went to nurse Mary Pitt of Richmond through an illness, from which she died in November 1815.⁶⁰ One of her daughters asked Margaret to stay as her children's nurse and cook, but she refused. Speculatively, Margaret's decision to remain in NSW was based upon the reputation she had built as a midwife, or concern that once she returned to England she would lose her independence as she would not be able to self-support herself as she had in NSW, or be judged for her decision not to marry. In any case, she remained in the colony and died in Richmond on May 13, 1819.⁶¹

Margaret's talent as a midwife is further appreciated when considering the condition of the hospital at Parramatta, upon which Commissioner Bigge recorded statements from Richard Rouse and Major West, the Assistant Surgeon at Parramatta. The hospital was in a deplorable condition, lacking doors, kitchens and outhouses, the roof

⁵⁷ M. Catchpole, Letter, Jan 28, 1807, MS 1116. NLA.

⁵⁸ M. Catchpole, Letter, Sep 2, 1811, MS 1116. NLA.

⁵⁹ L. Macquarie, Despatch, 1820, 1192, p. 823.

⁶⁰ NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, < <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/>>, viewed June 2, 2006.

⁶¹ Rev. Henry Fulton, cited in Barton, *The True Story of Margaret Catchpole*, pp. 143-4.

leaked; windows were shattered and wood rotten, while insufficient stores for the operation of the hospital were sent from Sydney.⁶² The offensive smells of the overcrowded hospital deterred even Rouse from entering.⁶³ Indeed, former Principal Surgeon D'Arcy Wentworth, related to Bigge in his evidence, the fact that doors into the wards were not locked, and the hospital authorities relied on the general knowledge that all the women patients were syphilitics in order to deter the males in the hospital from having sexual intercourse with them.⁶⁴

The thought of giving birth within such conditions not only deterred women in their confinement from seeking aid within a hospital. Reportedly convicts had to be coerced into the hospital rather than enter by choice.⁶⁵ In a period where giving birth dominated a woman's sphere, the radical contemporary thinker, Mary Wollstonecraft encouraged women to aid all 'childing women', regardless of their class. Advising that it is better to assist these women rather than providing them with money, Wollstonecraft further advised young ladies to accompany their mothers in their visits to 'lying in women' as it was an opportunity by which they could make observations useful in the later management of their own children.⁶⁶ Since Margaret Catchpole's own mother died giving birth to her, it is unclear where Margaret learnt her skills as a midwife. Mary Rouse undoubtedly learnt many of these life skills from her own mother's confinements, which aided her during the birth of her own children.

⁶² Evidence of Richard Rouse, Sep 19, 1820, B. T. Box 1, pp. 329-332; Evidence of West, Sep 26, 1820, B. T. Box 6, pp. 2557-81. ML.

⁶³ Evidence of Richard Rouse, Sep 19, 1820, B. T. Box 1, pp. 329-332. ML.

⁶⁴ Evidence of D'Arcy Wentworth, n.d. 1820, B. T. Box 6, pp. 2510-31. ML.

⁶⁵ Evidence of Richard Rouse, Sep 19, 1820, B. T. Box 1, pp. 329-332. ML.

⁶⁶ All from Mary Wollstonecraft, ed., *The Female Reader* (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1980, originally printed in 1789), pp.68-70.

Like her mother, Mary Rouse had difficulty during childbirth.⁶⁷ Her first confinement took place exactly nine months after the triple Hassall wedding of 1819 – in fact, at this time all three brides gave birth to their first children. Tragically, in late August 1820, within a period of five days, an epidemic carried off Mary's father-in-law and Superintendent of Government Stock,⁶⁸ Rowland Hassall,⁶⁹ and the first child of both Walter and Lucy Lawry, and Samuel and Lucy Hassall. Mary and Jonathan's first son, Rowland, survived.⁷⁰

The death of a child shortly after birth was an experience with which Elizabeth Macquarie was sadly familiar. The Macquarie first child, Jane Jarvis, was born in September 15, 1808, and died in December.⁷¹ Elizabeth Macquarie preferred to live in Parramatta on account of her delicate state of health,⁷² which had sadly resulted in six miscarriages over three and a half years before an only son, Lachlan, was born to the vice-regal couple on March 28, 1814.⁷³ Lachlan junior spent his childhood playing with Macquarie's bodyguard's son, Charlie Whalan.⁷⁴ Within two years of his birth, Elizabeth Macarthur wondered whether a child so ardently desired, so anxiously cherished, so surrounded with attendants and so rarely permitted out of his

⁶⁷ Jonathan Hassall to Rev. Thomas Hassall, circa Sep, 1822, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 3, A1677-3, p. 507. ML.

⁶⁸ Wentworth, *Description of The Colony of New South Wales*, p. 434.

⁶⁹ Anne Marsden to Mr & Mrs Stokes, Aug 20, 1820, in Mackaness, *Private Correspondence of the Reverend Samuel Marsden*, p. 75.

⁷⁰ See Appendix II, Rouse Genealogy Table.

⁷¹ L. Macquarie, Memoranda, Dec 22, 1808, A772, f. 4. ML.

⁷² L. Macquarie to Rev. W. Henry, Dec 1, 1820, AM 17/14, pp. 1-3. ML.

⁷³ L. Macquarie, Memoranda, A772, ff. 68, 74-83, 87; L. Macquarie to George Jarvis, Jun 1, 1814, Jarvis Papers, V/A/3/26. ML.

⁷⁴ Notes on the Whalan Family, see Whalan Papers, MSS 6/2, ff. 10 & 12, ML and E. Macquarie to C. Whalan, 18 August 1823, Whalan Papers, MSS 6/1. ML.

mother's sight would be likely to prove a blessing.⁷⁵ Her doubts would prove to be well founded, as the thoroughly spoilt Lachlan junior drank himself into an early grave.⁷⁶

Elizabeth and John Macarthur's own first child was born just five months after their marriage.⁷⁷ Of their nine children, seven survived infancy and only two ever had children of their own. Their family would never be gathered together at one time.⁷⁸ Edward left the colony at the age of eight,⁷⁹ returning to NSW only for two brief visits during his parent's lifetime, while Macarthur's second son John, who departed the colony at the age of seven, in 1801,⁸⁰ was never again seen by his mother. His death in 1831, led Macarthur into a frenzy of erratic building schemes and deep depression. John Macarthur had an understanding sympathiser in Elizabeth Macquarie, who wrote to their friend Dr Wentworth when his son, John, died:

The Governor and I have hitherto abstained from enquiring after you or proposing to see you, because we are unwilling to intrude on your sorrows. We know what it is to lose a child, and that agony of mind such privation occasions is beyond the reach of human aid.⁸¹

⁷⁵ E. Macarthur to J. Drummond, March 1816, MP Papers, A2908. ML.

⁷⁶ Annon to George Jarvis, 11 March 1835, Jarvis Papers, V/A/7/3. ML.

⁷⁷ Until 1753 a verbal contract of marriage was deemed a valid marriage for many purposes. William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 1 (London: Cavendish, 1825), p. 438.

⁷⁸ Edward eerily prophesised this as early as 1815, see Edward Macarthur to E. Macarthur, Dec 9, 1815, MP 16. ML.

⁷⁹ See E. Macarthur to B. Kingdon, Sep 1, 1798, MP 12. ML. Wrongly dated 1795, yet ML notes evidence for dating it 1798.

⁸⁰ Hazel King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World* (Sydney: University of Sydney Press, 1980), p. 30.

⁸¹ E. Macquarie to D'Arcy Wentworth, Oct 5, 1820, Wentworth Papers, Supplementary, A754-2, pp. 395-8. ML.

While John Bigge never married or had children, his elder brother, Charles, married in 1813 and had six children within the first ten years of his marriage. Bigge's parents, Thomas Charles and Jemima Bigge, were wealthy, yet untitled gentry. As their heir, Charles entertained the upper levels of society in an attempted effort to enhance his family's social standing. However, by the time of his marriage, Charles realised he was not really accepted by those whose rank he aspired, and thus devoted his attention to local affairs.⁸² Charles' involvement in this sphere led to an offer of a baronetcy in 1838, yet he declined the honour.⁸³

Like Charles, John Bigge received a university level education, at Christ Church, Oxford, from where he graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1801: Masters in 1804, and became a barrister-at-law of the Inner Temple in 1806.⁸⁴ a lucky break saw Bigge made chief-justice of Trinidad in the West Indies in 1813. Upon his return to England in 1818 Bigge was appointed Commissioner of Inquiry into the administration of NSW. As the fourth son of Thomas Charles Bigge, Bigge's education may have been overseen by his uncle John Hanway, who bequeathed his substantial properties to Bigge, thus making him financially independent, upon his death.⁸⁵

Bigge went to visit Charles during the eight months that lapsed between his appointment as Commissioner and his departure to NSW in 1818. Here, he found Charles little altered despite the many years which had elapsed since their last

⁸² John Ritchie, *Punishment and Profit* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1970), pp. 34-5.

⁸³ *Newcastle Courant*, Aug 10, 1838, Non-Parochial Records, <http://www.original-indexes.demon.co.uk/NBL/MOR/MOR-LHS.htm#describe>, viewed Jul 2, 2006.

⁸⁴ Ritchie, *Punishment and Profit*, pp. 34-8.

⁸⁵ This was not an unusual occurrence, as Jane Austen's own brother Edward was 'given' as a teenager, to his father's childless second cousin, Thomas Knight, and his wife in 1783. He adopted the surname of Knight in 1812.

meeting.⁸⁶ The brothers met again in April 1819 during a brief visit to London, just prior to Bigge boarding the *John Barry* at Portsmouth.⁸⁷ Bigge spent very little time with his family and their offspring in latter life, as upon his return to England in 1822; he received another appointment, as joint-chief of Inquiries upon the Cape Colony, Ceylon and Mauritius, an appointment which was not completed until 1831.

After completing his Commission, Bigge never returned to NSW, perhaps a wise decision considering the response the publication of his reports had upon the permanent members of NSW society. However, his appointed secretary for the NSW Inquiry and brother-in-law, Thomas Hobbes Scott, returned to NSW in 1825 as an Archdeacon.⁸⁸ His residence was fixed in Parramatta from where he was to regulate the clergy and organise the public schools. Elizabeth Macarthur noted this to be an arduous task, yet his 'previous knowledge of the Country and Colonial Youth, together with his own energetic mind, admirably qualify him for this undertaking.'⁸⁹ Scott resided in a cottage built on the grounds of *Elizabeth Farm*, rent free.⁹⁰ Scott was an unpopular Archdeacon due to his connection with Bigge and his close association with the Macarthurs, and was never, in Governor Darling's view, esteemed as the head of the Church ought to be.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Ritchie, *Punishment and Profit*, p. 57.

⁸⁷ Ritchie, *Punishment and Profit*, p.104.

⁸⁸ Earl Bathurst to Sir Thomas Brisbane, Dec21, 1824, in Fletcher, *HRA*, vol xi, pp. 419-221.

⁸⁹ E. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Jun 28, 1825, Macarthur-Onslow, *Early Records of the Macarthurs*, p. 454.

⁹⁰ E. Macarthur to Eliza Kingdon, Jun 28, 1825, Macarthur-Onslow, *Early Records of the Macarthurs*, p. 454.

⁹¹ Darling to Hay, May 1, 1826, and Oct 10, 1826, in Fletcher, *HRA*, vol xii, pp. 256, 645.

Unlike Scott, Margaret Catchpole enjoyed her position within colonial NSW as a respected cook, trusted overseer and life-saving midwife.⁹² Writing in 1803, with pardonable pride;

I am well beloved by all that know me and that is a comfort for I always was going into better company than myself that is amongst free people where they make as much of me as if I was a lady...⁹³

Margaret's tenuous claim to respectability, may possibly have been linked to a knowledge of the immense improvements taking place in England regarding the position of women, lead by Elizabeth Montagu of 'The Bluestocking Circle'.⁹⁴ In 1750, Montagu began making valiant attempts for the freedom and recognition of her sex, which resulted in the gradual recognition that women not only had sense, but had minds worthy of cultivation despite the plethora of theoretical fictions purporting that they did not.⁹⁵ As such, Margaret's disinterest in entering the marriage state could be interpreted as an early feminist stance. This is clearly evidenced in Margaret's admission that; 'I have lived all alone... here is not one woman in the colony live like myself'.⁹⁶

⁹² See M. Catchpole, Letters, May 2, 1803, October 8, 1806, October 8, 1809 and September 2, 1811, MS 1116. NLA.

⁹³ M. Catchpole, Letter, May 2, 1803, MS 1116. NLA.

⁹⁴ The Blue Stocking Circle was an informal literary club that flourished in London in the second half of the 18th century. The name comes from member Benjamin Stillingfleet's blue worsted stockings; he was too poor to afford the customary black silk stockings suitable for evening wear. The group was run by educated, conservative women who tried to raise the moral, intellectual and cultural standards of their time. Members took turns hosting evenings of entertainment in which the literary figures of London took the spotlight. Members included Elizabeth Montagu and Hannah Moore, who are referred to in this paper.

⁹⁵ Emily J. Climensson, *Elizabeth Montagu: The Queen of the Blue-Stockings, Her Correspondence from 1720 to 1761* (London: E. P Dupton & Co., 1906).

⁹⁶ M. Catchpole, Letter, September 2, 1811, MS 1116, NLA.

As a self-educated convict woman, Margaret Catchpole wrote in an original phonetic script, which she may have learnt whilst in service under Elizabeth Cobbold. Her eagerness for letters from the Cobbold family and from her relations can be interpreted as the actions of a woman attempting to broaden her mind or at least attempting to stay connected with news from England.

John Macarthur's access to an education, at a private school, was granted by his wealthy father who worked in trade. The comparably negative implications of his familial background and lower middle class social standing in Britain did not prevent him from attaining for his own family a position within the higher ranks of NSW society, with the distinction of being one of the oldest colonial families and the wealthiest. As the new aristocracy he desired his children also gain a solid education.⁹⁷ Therefore, he sent his eldest child, Edward to England for his education in 1797, and sons, John and William along with daughter Elizabeth accompanied him to England in 1801.⁹⁸ Upon her sons, James' and William's return to Australia with their father in October 1817, their mother recorded, 'They are delighted to return to their native land, and breathe not regret for the gay scenes of the English Metropolis.'⁹⁹ Macarthur's hopes for his family resulted in observations that they were amongst 'the best educated and keep themselves more clear of the mob than any family in the colony.'¹⁰⁰ Upon Macarthur's death, Edward wrote to Prime Minister Robert Peel, detailing his father's services to his adopted land and enclosing a petition

⁹⁷ John Manning Ward, *James Macarthur: Colonial Conservative 1798-1867* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1981), p. 16

⁹⁸ See King, *Elizabeth Macarthur*, p. 36.

⁹⁹ E. Macarthur to Eliza Kingdon, Dec 11, 1817, MP 12. ML.

¹⁰⁰ Helenus Scott to his mother, August 1824, Scott Papers, A2264. ML.

to the King asking for recognition of his father's services as well as requesting that a baronetcy be bestowed upon him, Edward, as the eldest son.¹⁰¹ Peel did not encourage such a hope,¹⁰² and despite Bigge's support for the claim, no hereditary title was ever bestowed.¹⁰³

Elizabeth Macquarie furthered her education during the two and a half year engagement she held with Lachlan Macquarie.¹⁰⁴ At the age of twenty-eight, she took up music and drawing lessons, skills she did not fully conquer.¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth read extensively, including William Blake's mystic poems, Wordsworth's romantic verse, and Jane Austen's novels, as well as the thrillers that were in vogue. To NSW she brought her needlework, sketching materials, a small-leather-covered notebook to use as a diary and at least one book on architecture. A small book of poems by Mrs Opie, *Boswell's Journey to the Hebrides* and *Dr Porteous' Lectures on the Gospel of St Matthew* would also make their way out with them to NSW.

Mary Rouse worked as an assistant to Thomas Hassall at the first Sunday school established in Australia within the Hassall's family home at Parramatta.¹⁰⁶ This was where she met her future husband, Thomas's younger brother, Jonathan Hassall. The school quickly moved to the more spacious setting of Marsden's St. John's Church, which had been built in 1803. By December 1815, the Sunday school was so

¹⁰¹ Edward Macarthur to Sir Robert Peel, Jan 17, 1835, with enclosed petition to the King. Peel Papers, cited in Hazel King, *Colonial Expatiates: Edward and John Macarthur Juniors* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1989), p. 45.

¹⁰² Pencil Scribble reply from Peel to Edward Macarthur, Peel Papers, cited in King, *Colonial Expatiates*, p. 45.

¹⁰³ J. T. Bigge to Edward Macarthur, Nov 18, 1835, MP, 21. ML.

¹⁰⁴ L. Macquarie, Mar 26, 1805, Journal, A770, pp. 558-61; Certified copy of entry of marriage of L. & E. Macquarie, Nov 3, 1807, AM 17.28b. ML.

¹⁰⁵ See J. Lewin to A. Huey, Nov 7, 1812, Lewin Papers, A1214. ML.

¹⁰⁶ Mary Hassall to Thomas Hassall, Sep 18, 1818, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 3, p. 514. A1677. ML.

successful, that the NSW Sunday School Institution was formed with Thomas as both Superintendent and secretary.¹⁰⁷ By 1820, about 110 children regularly attended the Sunday school.¹⁰⁸

In 1817 Mary Rouse's position turned from that of assistant teacher, to nursemaid of Lachlan Macquarie. The motivation behind Mary's change of position possibly lay in her parent's hope that she would marry a young man by the name of Mr. Chisholm. Mary's previous occupation followed into her role of nursemaid as she tutored Lachlan in his first lessons, which drew motherly pride from Elizabeth Macquarie that her 3 year old son 'has this moment come from school and delighted me more than you can think by pointing out a great many of his letters...'¹⁰⁹

After Mary's departure, a tutor was employed for a short period,¹¹⁰ before Lachlan was sent to the Reverend Thomas Reddall's School at Castle Meehan in Macquarie Fields.¹¹¹ To make his first weeks at the new school easier, Elizabeth Macquarie chose to reside there with Lachlan for some time.¹¹²

While Mary was home-schooled, other young ladies attended 'seminaries' advertised in the *Sydney Gazette*. These schools existed as early as 1806 and steadily increased in number. They were conducted by genteel ladies to 'instruct young members of

¹⁰⁷ Rev. R. Mansfield to Rev T. Hassall, Dec 24, 1822, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 2, p. 519. A1677. ML.

¹⁰⁸ Anne Marsden to Mr & Mrs Stokes, Aug 20, 1820, in Mackaness, *Private Correspondence of the Reverend Samuel Marsden*, p. 76.

¹⁰⁹ E. Macquarie to M. Maclaine, Apr 17, 1817, Macquarie Papers. NLA.

¹¹⁰ According to Ritchie, Theodore Bartley held this position, but this evidence is not referenced nor could I find any information to confirm this assertion. John Ritchie, *Lachlan Macquarie, A biography* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1986), p. 164.

¹¹¹ L. Macquarie, 1821, A423, pp. 379-80. ML.

¹¹² L. Macquarie, Aug 2, 1821, Journal, A774, pp. 223-25. ML.

[their] own sex in matters pertaining to morals, deportment, manners and education'.¹¹³ By the 1820s social commentators were beginning to remark on the restricted nature of female education among the bourgeoisie within the colony,¹¹⁴ yet given the absence of an institutionalised system of teacher training, the education requirements of female teachers were rather vague.¹¹⁵ Interestingly, Bigge collected evidence which showed that in 1820, 1,032 children, of whom 415 were girls attended schools in NSW, and that 16 of the 28 districts in the colony had no school.¹¹⁶ He was especially alarmed by Cowper's intimation that the total number of children attending schools at Sydney was less in the year 1821 than it had been in 1813.¹¹⁷

Adaptability to changes in circumstances is a common human trait. What is intriguing in the colonial context is examining how these selected individuals reacted to these changes. Commissioner Bigge observed Mary Rouse's, John Macarthur's, Margaret Catchpole's, and Elizabeth Macquarie's endeavours to recreate a familiar social hierarchy based upon ownership of property and wealth and the challenges they overcame to do this. Perhaps it was easier for the wealthier positioned to adhere to the standard social norms of 'home' than the less affluent members of society, due to easier access to those fashions available to them from 'civilised' England.¹¹⁸ Despite this, the attempts of the permanent and transient members of colonial NSW's society to reconstruct a lifestyle which resembles, as much as was possible, that which they

¹¹³ *Sydney Gazette*, 1 June 1806, advertisement by Mrs Perfect, August 10, 1806, Mrs Williams, August 6, 1807, Mrs Merchant, March 26, 1809, Mrs Perfect., April 1809, Mrs Hodges. ML.

¹¹⁴ P. Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales* (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1966, first published in 1827), p. 242.

¹¹⁵ Male colonial education received a lift with the opening of the Kings School in Parramatta, in January 1832. Mary's youngest sibling, George, was the second pupil to enrol in King's School, classmates included Edwin Suttor, Joseph Thompson, Charles Lockyer, George Macarthur, Arthur Blaxland, John Oxley, John Antill and others. See Reverend Hassall, *In Old Australia*, pp. 13-14.

¹¹⁶ - to J. T. Bigge, Jan 22, 1821, Bigge, *Report, Appendix*, B. T. Box 20, pp. 3525-31. ML.

¹¹⁷ Cowper to J. T. Bigge, Jan 23, 1821, Bigge, *Report, Appendix*, B. T. Box 8, p. 3368. ML.

¹¹⁸ E. Macarthur to Bridget Kingdom, Sep 1, 1798, MP vol. 12. ML.

had known and the lengths they went to to implement a familiar life-style are key features to understanding the colonial experience in NSW, an understanding we will further cultivate in Chapter III, 'A Colonial Home'.

A Colonial Home

'Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;

No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,

No waste so vacant, but may well employ

Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart

Awake to Love and Beauty!'¹

¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from 'Lime Tree Bower my Prison', *The Annual Anthology* (London: T. N. Longman & O. Rees, 1800), p. 147.

The establishment of a place called home in the colonial setting was a laborious process, requiring a three pronged response to the surrounding land. Firstly, the climatic conditions of NSW allowed for a very different planting schema of the house garden from that seen in England. Upon attaining a level of comprehension, the formation of both utilitarian and aesthetic garden beds could begin. Secondly, the use of convict or emancipist labour in NSW by most members of the colonial society was a necessity, and therefore performed an integral part in the smooth functioning of a home. Finally, the house itself must be considered. Its positioning and construction were essential factors in the establishment of a person's home. By examining these three factors the formation of social relations within NSW as experienced by Margaret Catchpole, John Macarthur, Mary Rouse and Elizabeth Macquarie and observed and commented upon by John Bigge from his bureaucratic position, can be further understood.

The settlement at Port Jackson was quickly relieved from the vital role of agricultural food production with the success of agriculture in Parramatta and the Hawkesbury region.² To many newly arrived residents, both convict and free, the colony of NSW became an idealised place of hope and wonder, where imagined possibilities for the creation of a new society based upon nature's abundance could be explored, used and catalogued.³ Despite this new hope, considerable shipments of seeds were utilised to

² This site was originally named Rose Hill, but was changed to Parramatta in Jun 2, 1791, by order of Governor Phillip after the native name for it. Watkins Tench, *Sydney's First Four Years* (Melbourne: Angus and Robertson, 1961), p. 239.

³ See John Gould, *The Birds of Australia. Handbook* (Melbourne: Lansdowne, 1972, first published in 2 volumes in 1862); Christine E. Jackson, ed., *Sarah Stone: Natural Curiosities from the New Worlds* (London: Natural History Museum, 1988); John Lewin, *A Natural History of the Birds of New South Wales. Collected, engraved and faithfully painted after nature by John William Lewin* (London: J. H. Bohte, 1822).

such an extent that by March 1803 Governor King compiled a 'List of Plants in the Colony of NSW that are not Indigenous', which indicated many imported varieties to be 'common', 'in plenty', or 'in abundance'.⁴ Indeed, upon Margaret Catchpole's arrival, she described Port Jackson, in January 1802, to be 'so much like my native home' as to put her in great spirits, as 'it is a great deal more like England than ever I could expect to have seen, for here is garden stuff of all kinds, except gooseberries and currants and apples.'⁵

Margaret Catchpole received her ticket-of-leave in 1804. Margaret thereafter began renting a small cottage at Richmond Hill, where she made good use of the farming skills she had learnt as a girl from her father, the head stockman at *Denton's Farm*, Suffolk.⁶ Her stock, whose number steadily increased as payment for her services as a midwife, were kept by Richard Rouse on his Hawkesbury property, *Oxford Farm*, whilst Margaret attended confined women.⁷

The gardens at *Oxford Farm* supplemented the Government Stores upon which the Rouse family remained until June 1805,⁸ after which time Richard Rouse had secured himself a Government position and could purchase stores.⁹ Rouse's appointment to Superintendent of public works allowed the Rouse family to move into the town which had developed in Parramatta. Whilst residing in Parramatta,

⁴ P. G. King, 'List of Plants in the Colony of NSW that are not Indigenous', Kings Papers, Further Papers, vol. 8, pp. 76-8. A1980. ML.

⁵ M. Catchpole to Aunt and Uncle, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. iii, pp. 746-7.

⁶ M. Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, Oct 8, 1806, Letter, 1116. NLA.

⁷ M. Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, Oct 8, 1806, Letter, 1116. NLA.

⁸ Kings Papers, vol. 1, p. 109. ML.

⁹ Phillip G. King, Aug 12, 1806, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. vi, p. 140.

Richard Rouse received many government commissions for building projects, thus becoming economically able to commence work on establishing his own estate at Castle Hill. Rouse sought the free-draining rise above Second Ponds Creek as ideal land for his sheep and horse interests. The open woodland was dominated by grey box and forest red gum, with some narrow-leafed ironbark on ridges, which were used for early slab buildings and fences upon his new estate.¹⁰

The proposed site for the building of a house at Castle Hill was on the top of a hill, overlooking the road to Parramatta in one direction, and in sight of the Blue Mountains in the distance. Any protection this site may have held from the elements was immediately lost by intensive clearing and stumping of natural vegetation. As a result, the garden which was established there upon the Rouse family taking up residence there was a dry one, with plant damage from climatic conditions prevalent. Despite the ill-practice of extensive clearing, the garden was paid notable attention as was due to a country estate. Quickly acquiring basic decorative elements, the garden's square form and gravelled paths were ordered in the vernacular forerunner to the Gardenesque style. The spectacular vistas from the hill top were accentuated by paths extending from the newly-defined carriage sweep. Stone pines, and at least two oaks raised from acorns (reputedly from Governor Macquarie), were planted along the Windsor Road frontage.¹¹ Richard developed a citrus orchard, bordered by paths in

¹⁰ *Rouse Hill Estate 1818, Guidebook* (Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales: Glebe, NSW, 1999), pp. 1-3.

¹¹ All from Miriam Hamilton & Deborah Malor, *Rouse Hill Estate, The Garden* (Glebe: Historic Houses Trust, 1999) p. 1.

the furthest section to the east of the house, presumably obtained from stock from George Suttor's Baulkham Hills nursery.¹²

Before Rouse began work on his own country estate, Governor Macquarie decided to reclaim the Government Domain at Parramatta for his private usage as a country estate, and made regulations restricting indiscriminate public entry in 1811. Prior to the enforcement of these regulations the inhabitants of Parramatta had been busy stripping the Domain of its trees for firewood.¹³ A more detailed and direct notice was published in 1815, stating that no one should enter the domain without express permission, which they might receive from Richard Rouse, who was 'authorised to grant Permission at his Discretion to any respectable Free Persons who may wish to see the Grounds, taking care that the Gardener shall be on such Occasion in Attendance on them.'¹⁴ Macquarie declared these heightened restrictions of access to the Domain due to his determination that he should enlarge Government House in the Parramatta Domain for his own and his family's more frequent use. By 1817, the Domain had to be fenced to prevent its use as a common.¹⁵

Reporting on his Governorship, Macquarie noted he had partially cleared the 500 acres of the Government Domain at Parramatta of old timber and stumps.¹⁶ Of this cleared land, Elizabeth Macarthur noted in 1826, '[Mrs Macquarie] has left many memorials in the Government Grounds which she had caused to be laid out, and

¹² Percieval Serle, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol ii (Sydney: Angus & Roberson, 1949), pp. 396-98.

¹³ *Sydney Gazette*, 22 September 1810, MAV/FM4/4233A; roll 2. ML.

¹⁴ *Sydney Gazette*, 19 August 1815, MAV/FM4/4233A; roll 3. ML.

¹⁵ L. Macquarie to J. T. Bigge, n.d., Bigge, *Report, Appendix*, B. T. Box 1. ML.

¹⁶ L. Macquarie, *Appendix A to the Report of Major General L. Macquarie on the State of the Colony of NSW* (London, July 1822).

planted and relished. The trees thrive and are very ornamental.’¹⁷ These trees included ‘an alley of lemon trees...recently planted and pruned. Along the hedge surrounding the yellow masses of yellow downy Mimosa flowers ... [which] contribute greatly to the beauty of the garden’ recorded visiting Captain Bellinghausen of the Russian Navy. Elizabeth Macquarie’s fine character was noted in the Sydney Herald of May 14, 1832, in a testimonial stating:

Elizabeth Macquarie, spread abroad everywhere, during her long residence, the marks of her taste and beneficence. The Government Domain exhibits proof of her ability in Landscape Gardening... The Botanic Gardens was her frequent place of resort, and owes much of its efficiency to her patronage.¹⁸

Like the work of Elizabeth Macquarie within the Domain, the gardens of *Elizabeth Farm* became renowned for their variety of plants cultivated from other prominent settlers, the government gardens and by Macarthur’s cuttings and seeds from England, Europe and China.¹⁹ Upon Macarthur’s return from his second period of exile in 1817, he brought with him vine cuttings and olive tree plants, which he held in high hopes of cultivating in the colony.²⁰ Despite his long periods of absence from NSW, Macarthur had come to consider NSW as his home, as he wrote upon returning

¹⁷ E. Macarthur to Eliza Kingdon, Feb 4, 1826, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Early Records of the Macarthurs*, p. 456. In the same letter, Elizabeth notes that the next Governor-wife did not have any involvement in the laying out of the gardens, ‘her nursery was her occupation and delight.’

¹⁸ *Sydney Herald*, May 14, 1832.

¹⁹ Holly Kerr Forsyth, ‘Our Earliest Gardeners, The Macarthurs of Elizabeth Farm and Camden Park’ in Rosiland Stirling, ed., *Australian Heritage*, Summer 2005, p. 59.

²⁰ J. Macarthur to E. Macarthur, Sep 24, 1814, MP, A2898. ML.

from exile, ‘how many dear associations does the word Home create!’²¹ and later, ‘this is my cherished Native land- I have ever cherished a strong attachment to it.’²²

The garden at *Elizabeth Farm* grew an abundance of peaches, apricots and melons to such profusion that the pigs were fed upon them when they were in season; while loquats, which had been brought from China also did well.²³ By the time Macarthur’s eldest, Edward, returned to NSW in 1824, *Elizabeth Farm* had an air of settlement about it. European trees, olive, oak, mulberry, horse-chestnut and others, planted in the early days of settlement, were well established. Flower beds, in which a great variety of roses proliferated, lay around the house.²⁴

From such an environment, it is little surprise that William, John Macarthur’s fifth son, joined collectors Busby, William Woolls, Robert Fitzgerald and the Macleays, in stimulating interest in horticulture in Australia during the middle decades of the century.²⁵ Extensive catalogues of the *Camden Park* nurseries, published in the 1840s, indicated they housed over 3,000 plants, more than 70 varieties of roses and an extensive orchid collection.²⁶ Travellers to NSW often remarked on the differences between the Australian garden and its English counterpart. For instance, John Gould Veitch of the leading British nursery, *Veitch and Sons*, upon visiting the garden of Sir William Macarthur of Camden Park, was agog at the planting combinations he saw. At Camden oleanders from the West Indies grew in the open ground beside Chinese

²¹ J. Macarthur to E. Macarthur, Sep 30, 1817, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Records of the Macarthurs*, p. 294.

²² J. Macarthur to John Macarthur, May 17, 1827, MP, A2931. ML.

²³ E. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, March 1816, MP 12. ML.

²⁴ Sir Thomas Mitchell, Journal, Nov, 1831, A295, Pt 3. ML.

²⁵ Sir William Macarthur, Horticulture Note Books, Collection, Feb 1831 to Mar 1881, MP, vol 52.

²⁶ Forsyth, ‘Our Earliest Gardeners’, p. 61.

elms, *Magnolia grandiflora* from the southern United States, the variegated *Arundo* from the Mediterranean and plumbago from the Cape of Good Hope.²⁷

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Within colonial NSW, convict and emancipist labour held a place of utmost importance. The Macquaries placed enormous trust in the emancipist and good friend, Charles Whalan, who was sentenced to transportation and arrived in NSW in 1791.²⁸ Within sixteen months of his arrival in the colony, Whalan joined the 102nd regiment of the NSW Corps as a corporal.²⁹ In March 1803, Whalan married Elizabeth Berry, the convict maid of Governor King.³⁰ After transferring to the 73rd Regiment, Macquarie appointed Whalan Sergeant as his bodyguard.³¹ Elizabeth Macquarie implemented Macquarie's emancipist policy, by also becoming intimate friends with the emancipist couple.³² One of the Whalan's seven children, Charles Junior, born May 17, 1811, became a close companion to Lachlan Macquarie Junior.³³ Even after Elizabeth Macquarie's return to Scotland she retained cordial relations with her husband's ex-aide-de-camp.³⁴

²⁷ J. G. Veitch, 'Extracts from the Journal of Mr John Gould Veitch during a Trip to the Australian Colonies and the South Sea Islands', *Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette*, Jan 27, 1866, p. 76.

²⁸ L. Macquarie, Journals, A7774, Dec 23, 1820, p. 186 & A775, Feb 12, 1822. ML.

²⁹ NSW Corps Pay lists, Jan 25, 1798 to Dec 31, 1799, MP, vol. 102A, p. 6. A2998. ML.

³⁰ See Whalan Papers, MSS 6/12, ff. 2-5 & 8. ML.

³¹ L. Macquarie, Journal of a voyage to Port Macquarie and Newcastle, 1821, p. 3. A785. ML.

³² L. Macquarie, Memoranda, Mar 17, 1810, A772, f. 28. ML.

³³ L. Macquarie, Journals, A775, Feb 12, 1822; E. Macquarie to Charles Whalan, Aug 18, 1823, Whalan Papers, MSS 6/1. ML..

³⁴ E. Macquarie to Charles Whalan, Aug 18, 1823, Whalan Papers, MSS 6/1; E. Macquarie to Charles Whalan, Feb 13, 1831, Whalan Papers, MSS 6/1, ff. 29-32. ML.

The vice-regal couple were not unaccustomed to being cared for by servants,³⁵ and quickly established control over their workers. Amongst the servants that served the Macquaries at Parramatta was the chambermaid Mary Jelly. Her workmates included the servants who the Macquaries brought with them from Scotland - the Indian manservant George Jarvis, coachman Joseph Big, and cook Mrs Ovens.³⁶ Amongst the fifty listed servants, nursemaid Mary Rouse, butler Robert Fopp and housekeeper Mrs Fisher, often made life difficult for the lowly ranked Mary Jelly.³⁷ On March 22, 1820, Mary married George Jarvis, who had been with Macquarie for twenty-five years, and was considered an important and respected member of the household.³⁸ Mary and George accompanied the Macquaries back to Scotland in 1822, along with many other provisions and legacies from their time in NSW.³⁹

The relatively short term work commitment Mary Jelly gave to the Macquaries before her marriage to George Jarvis was similar to the experience of Lachlan's governess Mary Rouse who married Jonathan Hassall only two years after being taken into the Macquarie's employ.⁴⁰ As with maids, governess positions experienced high turnovers in NSW, principally due to the availability of husbands.⁴¹ In later life, it was recalled that Mary had been fond of calling one of her own servants 'a very loving

³⁵ Lysbeth Cohen, *Elizabeth Macquarie. Her Life and Times* (Sydney: Wentworth Books, 1979), p. 18.

³⁶ L. Macquarie to G. Jarvis, 17 February 1809, Jarvis Papers, V/A/2/B/51. ML.

³⁷ L. Macquarie also found life difficult with Mr Fopp, see L. Macquarie, *Diary*, A773, ff. 352-3. ML.

³⁸ L. Macquarie to Charles Macquarie, May 7, 1820, MS 202, ff. 126-43. NLA.

³⁹ L. Macquarie, *Journal of a Voyage to England*, Feb 15-July 5, 1822, A775, ff. 18-110. ML.

⁴⁰ M. Hassall to T. Hassall, Hassall papers, A1677, p.514; Mary Cover Lawry to J. Hassall, Feb 21. 1820, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 3, A1677-3, p. 8267. ML; Bigge, 'Returns of births, deaths and marriages', *Reports, Appendix*, , Nov 22, 1819, 1816-1821, A2130, p. 139. ML; Jean E. Stewart, *Parramatta Pioneer Register Supplement to 1920* (Marrickville: Southwood Press, 2003), p. 110.

⁴¹ R. Therry, *Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in NSW and Victoria* (London: Sampson Low, 1863), p. 423.

woman'. This title remained until the day Mary discovered that both her servant and her silver had disappeared!⁴²

The position, to which Margaret Catchpole was assigned upon her arrival in NSW, might have easily concluded with marriage, yet Margaret chose a single life. In December 1801, the Sydney Commissary, John Palmer, was assigned the services of the newly arrived convict, Margaret Catchpole.⁴³ Margaret remained with the Palmers for two years, during which time she happily wrote home of the treatment she received as their cook, 'they treat me quite as though I am a lady myself, so it makes me feel like a lady and not a convict woman'.⁴⁴ Many of her skills in the kitchen were presumably learnt whilst in service to Elizabeth Cobbold, in Ipswich.⁴⁵ The Palmer house was a large, newly built and handsomely furnished place, upon a 100 acre grant in Woolloomooloo. The wide gardens were fringed with forest and the house was considered one of the best in Sydney. Her assignment was a fortunate one, as Margaret well understood.⁴⁶

In 1795, only five of the approximately forty servants at *Elizabeth Farm* were female.⁴⁷ By 1822, only two of the workers at *Elizabeth Farm* were female.⁴⁸ Due to the scarcity and uneven distribution of female domestic servants, together with the uneven sex balance, female domestic servants were paid relatively high wages. The

⁴² Reminiscences of Gerald George Rouse, cited in Rouse-Thornton, notes, *Rouse Hill House*, p. 157.

⁴³ M. Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, Letter, May 2, 1803, Letter, 1116, MS. NLA.

⁴⁴ M. Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, Letter, May 2, 1803, Letter, 1116, MS. NLA.

⁴⁵ Laetitia Jermyn, memoir of the author, Elizabeth Cobbold, *Poems by Elizabeth Cobbold* (Ipswich: Printed and sold by J. Raw in the Butter Market, 1825), cited in Clement Shorter, introduction, Richard Cobbold, *The History of Margaret Catchpole* (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. vii.

⁴⁶ Margaret Catchpole, Letter, Jan 21, 1802, Letter, 1116, MS. NLA.

⁴⁷ E. Macarthur to B. Kingdom, Sep 1, 1798, MP, A2908. ML.

⁴⁸ E. Macarthur to Eliza Kingdom, Sep 4, 1822, MP, A2908. ML.

tasks they were required to perform were rarely specified and so domestic service required speedy adaptability to the requirements of household functioning.

John Macarthur often spoke contemptuously of his workforce, writing once, ‘I can suggest nothing to stimulate most of the convicts to exertion but coercion or a promise of speedy liberation from servitude... Nor do I believe that it is possible by any means to induce them to consider their interests combined with that of their Master.’⁴⁹ In giving evidence to Bigge, Macarthur extended his bad opinion of the convict also to the ex-convict.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Macarthur’s treatment of his own workforce was noted as being especially humane in his obituary.⁵¹

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In 1804, Mrs Richard Rouse wrote to Margaret Catchpole, from the Hawkesbury region, requesting her aid during the birth of another child.⁵² Before leaving Sydney, Margaret petitioned Governor King for a full-pardon, which he denied, despite excellent reports from the Messrs Palmer and Skinner. Whilst in Richmond, Margaret resided independently in a plain, cheaply built cottage. Many such cottages and their surrounding estates of five to twenty acres were let by their owners on leases of seven and fourteen years at rents of 20 shillings. an acre if paid in money, and 30 shillings. if paid in grain.⁵³

⁴⁹ J. Macarthur, in, Macarthur Onslow, *Records of the Macarthurs*, p. 359.

⁵⁰ Evidence of John Macarthur to J. T. Bigge, n.d., Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B. T. Box 20. ML.

⁵¹ *Sydney Gazette*, April 15, 1834, MAV/FM4/4233A; roll 11. ML.

⁵² M. Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, Letter, Oct 8, 1806, Letter, 1116, MS. NLA.

⁵³ William Cox to J. T. Bigge, May 7, 1820, Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B. T. Box 22, p. 4225. ML.

Due to the flooding of the Hawkesbury in 1809, the Dights family home and harvest was devastated. In response to this devastation, Margaret Catchpole selflessly offered the family her tiny cottage in which she had previously resided. Mrs Dight went to Parramatta, accompanied by Margaret, to give birth to another child while renovations and enlargements of the existing cottage were undertaken to make it suitable as their new home.⁵⁴ The original cottage, which was constructed in 1804 from sandstock brick with mud/shell mortar and plaster, was extended in the early Colonial Georgian style, proudly overlooking the surrounding Richmond Lowlands.⁵⁵ By 1809, Margaret had re-established herself upon the land within another independent cottage,⁵⁶ possibly upon the as yet unofficial grant of Richard Rouse at Castle Hill.

On October 8, 1816, Richard Rouse was granted 450 acres on the road to Windsor at Castle Hill, near the unofficially known site of the second 'Battle of Vinegar Hill'.⁵⁷ In March 1804, Irish political prisoners (who had been involved in the original Battle of Vinegar Hill in Wexford County Ireland in 1798, as a response to the British occupation of Ireland), rebelled against British authority with the hope of appropriating boats and sailing for freedom. As in 1798, the uprising was quashed by British authorities and accounts of the battle suppressed to prevent further uprisings.⁵⁸ In order to avoid the negative connotations the unofficial title of Vinegar Hill implied to British authority, Macquarie recommended Rouse name his grant near this site of rebellion, *Rouse Hill*. The construction of *Rouse Hill House* was begun in 1813 and

⁵⁴ NSW Heritage Office, Mountain View, <<http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au>>, viewed June, 3 2006.

⁵⁵ Contract for construction witnessed by Margaret Catchpole, NSW Heritage Office, Mountain View, Statement of Significance, <http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_02_2.cfm?itemid=%095045229>, viewed 2 June 2006.

⁵⁶ Catchpole, Oct 8, 1809, MS 1116. NLA.

⁵⁷ R. Rouse, May 1820, 'NSW Returns, 1819-20', Bigge, *Appendix, Reports*, p. 116. A2131. ML.

⁵⁸ See Lynette Ramsay Silver, *The Battle of Vinegar Hill* (Sydney: Doubleday, 1989).

finished in 1818.⁵⁹ As the Superintendent of Public Works at Parramatta, it seems likely that Rouse's personal building projects followed the lead of his official building works. As he was enlarging Government House at Parramatta into a double-piled house with wings for the Macquaries, Rouse appears to have been influenced into building a larger house for himself than he had originally planned. Rouse sited his new house prominently and possibly with an eye to its use as an inn, on the hilltop adjacent to the toll house on the Parramatta to Windsor Turnpike.⁶⁰

Mary Rouse's residence in *Rouse Hill House* was limited since she married Jonathan Hassall in 1819. During their first years of marriage Mary and Jonathan resided on the Hassall family property *Macquarie Grove* at Camden, on the eastern bank of the Nepean River, which Governor Macquarie described as a 'very finely situated and beautiful farm.'⁶¹ However, upon Jonathan's premature demise, Mary moved to *Berkshire Park House*, which had been constructed upon 320 acres Richard Rouse had purchased in 1819 at the junction of South Creek and the Richmond-Blacktown Road – quite close to *Rouse Hill House*.⁶² *Berkshire House*, named after the English county in which Mary's parents were married,⁶³ was a 10-roomed house built to replace the previous wooden house on that site. Rouse also built a house upon a 347 acre grant for his son George, which he named *Jericho*, after the family home in England.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Letter from Gerald Terry to the Acting Director of National Trust of Australia (NSW), 13 August 1973. Rouse Hill File cited by James Broadbent, *The Australian Colonial House*, p. 53

⁶⁰ Rouse Thornton, *Rouse Hill House*, pp. 41-47.

⁶¹ L. Macquarie, Journal, Oct 7, 1815, A774. ML.

⁶² Rouse Thornton, *Rouse Hill House*, pp. 59-61.

⁶³ Rouse Thornton, *Rouse Hill House*, p. 77.

⁶⁴ Both Berkshire and Jericho House were burnt down in 1944. D. G. Bowd, *Hawkesbury Journey* (Sydney: Library of Australian History, 1986), p. 39.

Unlike Richard Rouse, who established two homes before creating his country manor, John Macarthur installed his family within a country estate shortly after their arrival. In February 1793 Macarthur received from Grose the grant of one hundred acres of ‘some of the best ground that has been discovered’⁶⁵ within a half-urban, half-rural setting near the town of Parramatta, which he named *Elizabeth Farm* in honour of his wife. With ample access to convict labour, Macarthur cleared and cultivated fifty acres of virgin land, thus earning a further hundred acres grant, and, with unrestricted access to convict craftsmen, built his house. The result was a ‘very excellent brick building’ measuring 68 feet by 18 ft exclusive of kitchen and servants’ apartments.⁶⁶ Like the Lieutenant-Governor’s house, it consisted of four rooms and a hall. With the addition of a verandah, it too became a double-pitched hipped-roof bungalow, into which the family moved in August 1794.⁶⁷

In August 1813, during his second period of exile, Macarthur wrote to Elizabeth of his hope that she might leave the colony and join him in Portsmouth, England, from where he could escort her to their dream home upon 142 acres of land in the English countryside with agricultural implements, a fully furnished house and servants’ quarters, where she could spend her days ‘in the society of the most affectionate and grateful of husbands’.⁶⁸ Such a hope never came to fruition, which led Macarthur, upon his return to NSW, to commence vigorous schemes of house building and house planning. The remodelling of *Elizabeth Farm* and his house in Sydney, the building of *Hambledon* to supplement the accommodation at Parramatta and the replacement of

⁶⁵ E. Macarthur, letter, 21 Dec. 1793, MP, A2908. ML.

⁶⁶ E. Macarthur to Bridget Kingdon, Aug 23, 1794, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Records of the Macarthurs*, pp. 45-6.

⁶⁷ E. Macarthur to Bridget Kingdon, Aug 23, 1794, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Records of the Macarthurs*, pp. 45-6.

⁶⁸ J. Macarthur to E. Macarthur, 31 August 1813, MP 2. ML.

the old hut with a new cottage at Camden were followed by further unrealised schemes for the construction of ‘family mansions’ at Sydney and Camden. In 1826 Macarthur began the final, ambitious, almost total remodelling of *Elizabeth Farm*, which was left, still unfinished, at his death in 1834.⁶⁹ His enthusiasm for building and optimistic planning were closely followed by periods of depression when plans and schemes were abandoned.⁷⁰ Elizabeth Macarthur was ordered from the house and instructed not to return until renovations were completed.⁷¹

In September 1831, Macarthur received the news of his son John’s sudden death in London and his condition seemed to worsen.⁷² Macarthur sought solace in reading with pride the tributes to his son in letters of condolence. During the years he had spent in England, Macarthur had been in the role of single parent to John as he grew into a man. The news thus had a more devastating effect upon Macarthur than Elizabeth who had last seen her son when he had departed the colony for a European education at the age of seven.⁷³ Amongst the letters Macarthur received, a letter from Bigge stands out. The fact that he had continued relations with the Macarthur family after he had left NSW shows the esteem in which he held them. Bigge wrote that he did not doubt that had John’s life been spared, he would have speedily acquired both fame and fortune.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ James Macarthur to John Macarthur, 17 May 1827, MP, A2931. ML.

⁷⁰ Governor Darling noted, Macarthur had become ‘like a wayward child and remains at home brooding, but I expect not altogether idle.’ Darling to Hay, 24 May 1826, in Fletcher, *HRA*, series i, vol. xii, p. 327. See also E. Macarthur to Edward Macarthur, March 1827, MP, MLA2. ML.

⁷¹ J. Macarthur to Edward Macarthur, 12 September 1826. MP, A2899. ML.

⁷² Edward Macarthur to Hannibal Macarthur, Apr 30, 1831, MP 17. It has been suggested that John’s indications of illness and death were the result of either hypertension culminating in a stroke or a brain tumour.

⁷³ King, *Elizabeth Macarthur*, p. 30; Lady Darling to E. Macarthur, Oct 14, 1831, MP vol. 4, p. 306. A2900.

⁷⁴ J. T. Bigge to James Macarthur, Apr 25, 1831, MP, 17. ML.

During his last years of his life, Macarthur was confined to his room at *Elizabeth Farm*. This country retreat just beyond the perimeter of the town of Parramatta lost its sense of grand isolation in 1813, when Governor Macquarie laid the foundation for the audacious building scheme which was to become the *Female Orphan School*, directly across the river from Macarthur's estate. Macquarie's decision to construct the first three-storey building in the colony upon such a site may have been based on the hope that such a building-scheme would reveal his strength and resolution as a military governor. Presumably, this would serve to discourage the high-handed behaviour Macarthur had previously exhibited. The school was modelled after Elizabeth Macquarie's family home, *Airds*, a large old stone house, built circa 1745, by her grandfather Donald Campbell at Appin, on the west coast of Scotland.⁷⁵

The Macquarie's did not reside in the Governor's residence in Parramatta for more than two or three days at a time prior to the extensive repairs and renovations that were undertaken from February 1811, under Richard Rouse. In October 1816, Francis Greenway completed the renovations with a front portico.⁷⁶ Elizabeth and Lachlan then took up residence at Parramatta on a more permanent basis, while Macquarie travelled about the colony.⁷⁷ As a result of its extension, Government House regained its position as one of the colony's most distinguished buildings,⁷⁸ retaining 'the elegance that the English know so well how to create wherever they are.'⁷⁹ French

⁷⁵ L. Macquarie, Sep 24, 1813, *Macquarie Memoranda*, p. 63. A772. ML.

⁷⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, Feb 4, 1810, p. 2a; Mar 31, 1810, p. 2a; Evidence of Richard Rouse to J. T. Bigge, Jan 27, 1821, Bigge, *Report, Appendix*, B.T., Box 1, p. 334; L. Macquarie, *Diary*, Oct 2, 1816. A773; Bigge, *Report Appendix*, B.T., Box 20, vol. 133, p. 3317. ML.

⁷⁷ L. Macquarie, *Diary*, Oct 2, 1816. A773. ML.

⁷⁸ John Slater, *A Description of Sydney, Parramatta, Newcastle Settlement in New South Wales* (Bridlesmith Gate: Sutton & Son, 1819), p. 5.

⁷⁹ Louis de Freycienet, *Voyage autour du monde, entrepris par ordre du roi...exécuté sur les corvettes de S.M. l'Oranie et la Physicienne, pendant les années 1817...1820* (Paris: Pillet Aîné, 1824-390, p. 844.

visitor, Rose de Freycienet, found the situation of Government House Parramatta to ‘lend itself naturally to the adornments that were made’⁸⁰ about it, yet Macquarie felt that its position could have been better, preferring the situation of the Bark Hut that had been built for Elizabeth upon a hill within the Parramatta Domain.⁸¹

Macquarie was declared responsible for providing suitable accommodation for Bigge as he visited various parts on the settlements, and to provide means of transport for his trips to maritime settlements and return to England, meat for his table from government flocks and herds as well as providing Bigge and Scott’s salaries from the funds of the NSW Civil Establishment.

When Bigge attended the Parramatta Muster with Macquarie, in 1819, he was unfavourably impressed by the need for the completion of a new Female Factory.⁸² This was due to the fact that without a factory the female convicts were forced to find their own accommodation in Parramatta. Such an impression brooded ill for the Macquarie’s considering their extravagant building schemes for their own country residence.⁸³ Indeed, architect Henry Kitchen wrote to Bigge, that he calculated public works to have cost the government £992,858 for the period 1810-1820. Such an expense, he argued had allowed government officials, such as Richard Rouse, who supervised the work to establish their fortune, implying that they were pocketing some of the costs.⁸⁴ Bigge also took evidence of Francis Greenway and Edward

⁸⁰ Rose de Freycienet, in Bassett, *Realms and Islands*, p. 184.

⁸¹ Lachlan Macquarie, Journal, Dec 25, 1820, A774, pp. 187-88. ML.

⁸² Bigge to Bathurst, Oct 18, 1819, cited in Sue Rosen, *Government House Parramatta, 1788-2000* (Sydney: Caroline Simpson, 2003), p. 36.

⁸³ Bigge to Macquarie, Jun 11, 1820, B. T. Box 22, p. 4387; Bigge to Macquarie, Jun 6, 1820, B. T. Box 24, pp. 4966, 4971-2. ML.

⁸⁴ Henry Kitchen to J. T. Bigge, Jan 29, 1821, Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B. T. Box 26, pp. 5947-60. ML.

Cureton, who blamed Elizabeth Macquarie for interfering in the planning of buildings and for ordering the fountain in Macquarie Place be demolished, despite the amount of construction which had already been undertaken and built in a different design.⁸⁵ Whilst noting that Elizabeth did on occasion reject sketches by Greenway which she regarded as too extravagant,⁸⁶ emancipist Hutchison noted in his evidence to Bigge that many settlers were discontent because they were unable to obtain the services of mechanics as so many were assigned to the Government.⁸⁷ Bigge pursued defects in Macquarie's convict system, highlighting Francis Greenway's estimates of the expense and labour incurred on Government buildings erected under his supervision,⁸⁸ and Oxley's conclusion that the regulated wage of £10 per annum was too exorbitant a price for small farmers to be able to pay for mechanics.⁸⁹ Macquarie's response to these criticisms presented by Bigge noted;

All Buildings and improvements have been too large or too small; too late in their commencement or too early. If I had ever tempted to consult all these wise and accomplished gentlemen I fear I should have been in no better predicament than I now find myself in regard to them...⁹⁰

The desire to retain European standards of the home was transported to NSW with the First Fleet. Subsequent arrivals did not challenge these standards during the early

⁸⁵ Evidence of F. Greenway to J. T. Bigge, Jan 23, 1821, Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B. T. Box 1, pp. 382-96, Evidence of Cureton to J. T. Bigge, Jan 24, 1821, Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B. T. Box 1, pp. 411-19. ML.

⁸⁶ Bigge, *Report, Appendix*, Jan 25, 1821, B. T. Box 26, p. 5900. ML.

⁸⁷ Evidence of Hutchinson to J. T. Bigge, Nov 10, 1819, Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B.T. Box 1, pp. 100-49. ML.

⁸⁸ Francis Greenway to J. T. Bigge, Dec 6, 1819, Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B. T. Box 20, pp. 3311-31. ML.

⁸⁹ Evidence of John Oxley to J. T. Bigge, Dec 8, 1819, Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B. T. Box 5, pp. 1912-22. ML.

⁹⁰ L. Macquarie to J. Bigge, Jan 18, 1821, Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B. T. Box 26, p. 5733. ML.

Colonial period, but further impressed the importance of upholding, often inappropriate, conventions. John Macarthur immediately set about creating for his family the sort of home he had aspired, but was unlikely to have ever retained, in England.⁹¹ Mary Rouse continued her fathers' ideal of the 'home' from what he presented to her from his memory of hierarchical structures in England within the house, garden and matter of servants. While Margaret Catchpole established for herself a home best suited to her humble social aspirations based on her former life in Suffolk. Elizabeth Macquarie saw these early attempts at retaining European standards of the home, and steadfastly enhanced these ideals along updated lines of fashion. Whereas Commissioner Bigge arrived in NSW twenty-nine years after the first of these individuals, and subsequently developed an opinion - without reviewing the evidence he gathered for his reports - of the colonial homes established there. Bigge's opinion thus lacked the perspective a longer resident of the colony could have given. To what extent these occurrences were based upon the individuals financial status is considered in the following chapter, 'Money'.

⁹¹ E. Macarthur to Bridget Kingdon, Sept 1, 1798, MP, A2908. ML.

*'...A shop was opened at a hut on shore
for the sale of various articles brought out in the Pitt...
notwithstanding the different orders which have since been sent to Bengal and the
high price at which every thing was sold,
the avidity with which all descriptions of people gasped at what was to be purchased
was extraordinary.'*¹

¹ David Collins, Feb 29, 1792, *An account of the English colony in New South Wales: with remarks on the dispositions, customs, manners, &c. of the native inhabitants of that country, to which are added, some particulars of New Zealand* (Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, 1971), p. 373.

The American Revolution (1763-1789), the French Revolution (1789-1799) and the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815) were severely detrimental to the stability of the British system of currency. Therefore, upon first settlement in NSW the establishment of a stable monetary system was not a device that could be transported to Australia with the other fundamental elements of a cultured societal infrastructure. Consequently the monopolisation of goods for sale by those who received regular wages of universal monetary value – such as Officers of the NSW Corps - should not be perceived as a remarkable development. Power relations within the colony were initially based upon such encounters, thus giving form to societal relations between the people of NSW. Such structures are evident in the state by which individuals left their property upon their death. In an earlier chapter we considered the importance of the ownership of land in Britain and subsequently in Australia, and realised that ownership of the land was not just an ornament amongst a family's possessions, but a powerful part of establishing the family's position as aristocracy or gentry. Therefore, the construction of individual economic status, by self-promotion, entrepreneurial efforts or the unselfish giving of assistance, can be seen as an attempt to re-establish a previously known way of life within a new land devoid of recognisable, hierarchical social boundaries.

Officers became involved in trade in 1792, when the captain of the American trading ship, *Hope*, refused to sell the food he carried onboard unless the rum it carried was also purchased.² Governor Francis Grose allowed this, and the officers of the NSW Corps used their pay – treasury bills drawn from a London account – to access the

² The term 'rum' has been used to refer to all alcoholic spirits except for beer, which was difficult to transport to the Colony of NSW.

market.³ NCOs, civil officers and convicts were not paid, but received goods from the government store. Consequently, the colony became dependant upon the officers for many goods,⁴ as promissory notes could only be redeemed in England. The Corps officers virtually became the new aristocracy. Their initiative brought great economic benefit to both individuals and the colony, and undoubtedly launched 'Australian commerce, [which] if they had not done so there might very well have been little wholesale importing, indeed little commerce above the level of the crudest barter, for some years'.⁵ Their power to monopolise the sale of goods and spirits in the colony did not necessarily mean they personally sold all imported spirits, as John Palmer, former Commissary and Magistrate explained; 'The officers did not exactly sell it themselves, but they kept women, and those women used to dispose of it, which was the same thing. Immense quantities have been sold in this way.'⁶

Upon his arrival in NSW, Governor King determinedly set about sorting out the prevailing state of economic shambles. Various coins from across the globe circulated at values related to their metal content, which led to continual disputes. On November 19, 1800, Governor King proclaimed the arrival of a quantity of copper coins aboard HMS *Porpoise*.⁷ These coins were to be circulated as payment for grain

³ S. J. Butlin, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System, 1788-1851* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1953), pp. 34-5. See also Reverend R. Johnson to Governor Hunter, Jul 5, 1798, in Fletcher, *HRA*, p. 178, William Foster, 'Francis Grose and the Officers', *JRAHS*, Vol 51, pt 3, Sept 1965, p. 179.

⁴ See Grose, cited in M. H. Ellis, *John Macarthur* (Angus and Robertson, 1955), p. 64.

⁵ D. R. Hainsworth, *The Sydney Traders* (Cassell Australia, 1972), p. 30. See also King to the Undersecretary, Home Office, 8 November 1801, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. iv (Sydney: Government Printers, 1925), pp. 611-12.

⁶ J. Palmer, *Report of Select Committee on Transportation*, 1812, p. 22. For confirmation of quantity of alcohol consumed see Jeremy Bentham, 'Plea for a Constitution', 1803, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. iv, vol i, p. 890.

⁷ The First Australian coins to be received in Australia were also the first English coins to be struck using steam power. The new power source enabled 50 large 'cartwheels' or 150 smaller coins to be struck each minute, a result of the Industrial Revolution and the genius of Matthew Boulton and James Watt.

and animal food supplied to HMS stores.⁸ Such a declaration was likely to have been the result of directions which accompanied the arrival of the coins from the British Colonial Office, in an attempt to rectify the unsatisfactory situation of varying exchange rates for the various coins then circulating in the colony. Upon the same occasion, King proclaimed the official values of those coins within the colony at up to double their nominal value, in an attempt to retain those coins within the settlements.⁹ The action was rationalised by the hope that few traders would want the coins at such inflated values. Yet such an action did not succeed as visiting sea captains simply increased their prices accordingly.

Back in England, the twice convicted felon,¹⁰ Margaret Catchpole wrote to her former mistress Elizabeth Cobbold, on May 25, 1801, requesting some financial assistance prior to her imminent transportation to NSW.¹¹ Elizabeth's husband, John Cobbold owned a brewery in Ipswich where business was profitable enough to allow him to send even his youngest son to university, and buy for him a church living worth £1,000 a year.¹² Elizabeth therefore undoubtedly gave Margaret some money prior to her departure, for as well as being financially comfortable, Elizabeth was a charitable

⁸ P. G. King, Government and General Order, Nov 19, 1800, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol iv, p. 256.

⁹ P. G. King, Government and General Order, Nov 19, 1800, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol iv, pp. 256-57. King's Proclamation of 1800 also resulted in the reinforcement of the division between 'sterling' and 'currency'. The English called early Australian's "Currency lads and lasses", as an expression of inferiority. Meaning that the people of the Colony were not as good as those who were English-born, just as the Colonial currency was not worth as much as English sterling currency.

¹⁰ Public notice, Mar 26, 1800, ZAC 108 (CY2340). Photograph of original; Trial, Jul 31, 1800, L. Macquarie, Despatch 1820, A1192, p. 823. ML.

¹¹ Margaret Catchpole to Elizabeth Cobbold, May 28, 1801, ZAC 108 (CY2340). Photograph of original. ML.

¹² What makes Cobbold's economic status all the more noteworthy is the fact that his youngest son was his twenty-second. Dr Spencer Cobbold, of Batheston, Somerset, a grandson of Richard Cobbold, cited in Clement Shorter, introduction, Richard Cobbold, *The History of Margaret Catchpole* (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. ix.

woman, with a great kindness of heart, and was zealous in her efforts to help the poor.¹³

Upon her arrival in NSW, Margaret Catchpole was kindly considered by Governor King due to her exemplary behaviour during the voyage to NSW, and assigned her as Commissary's cook.¹⁴ By the time of King's recall, in 1805, Richard Rouse had received the appointment of Superintendent of Public Works for the Commissariat at Parramatta,¹⁵ and so that requested Margaret Catchpole work as overseer at his vacated Hawkesbury property.¹⁶ By 1811, Rouse was receiving £50 per annum for his position.¹⁷

King was replaced by Governor Bligh, who quickly realised that his position in the colony would not be one of 'ease of comfort, but to do justice and relieve the poor settlers.'¹⁸ Bligh was greatly concerned about the plight of the Hawkesbury settlers who suffered disastrous floods in March 1806, (of which Margaret Catchpole recorded an eyewitness account)¹⁹ resulting in a dramatic increase in the price of wheat. This led farmers in other areas to benefit from the high prices.²⁰ Bligh promptly and effectively dealt with this problem by establishing a weekly ration for

¹³ Laetitia Jermyn, memoir of the author, Elizabeth Cobbold, *Poems by Elizabeth Cobbold* (Ipswich: Printed and sold by J. Raw in the Butter Market, 1825), cited in Clement Shorter, introduction, Richard Cobbold, *History of Margaret Catchpole*, p. viii.

¹⁴ M. Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, Letter, May 2, 1803, Letter, 1116, MS. NLA.

¹⁵ John Dight filled the position of Superintendent of Public Works at Parramatta in 1808, after the deposition of Bligh, which also resulted in Richard Rouse's dismissal from his official position until his re-instatement by Governor Macquarie in 1810.

¹⁶ See Margaret Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, Oct 8, 1806, Letter, MS 1116. NLA.

¹⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Gordon to Under-Secretary Harrison, May 18, 1811, Enclosure No. 1, 'List of Persons Belonging to the Commissariat Department of NSW', in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol vii, p. 533.

¹⁸ Bligh to Banks, Oct 10, 1807, Banks Papers, ser. 40.072. ML.

¹⁹ See Margaret Catchpole, Oct 8, 1806, Letter, 1116. NLA.

²⁰ B. Fletcher, 'The Hawkesbury Settlers and the Rum Rebellion', *JRAHS*, Vol 54, Pt 3, Sept 1968, pp. 218-9.

the Hawkesbury settlers.²¹ The circumstances imposed by the March 1806 floods and the need to maintain a sustainable agricultural industry thus dictated Bligh's administration policies.²² Bligh prohibited the use of spirits as payment for grain, food or labour, and reissued the order banning the use of private stills, because of the crippling effect the speculation of spirits was having on colonisers and the economy.²³

John Macarthur was initially keen to impress upon Bligh the importance of his sheep grazing upon the Cowpastures,²⁴ in order to implement the granting of another large tract of land – a priority King had perceived but stalled in allowing, despite Macarthur's earlier successful attempts at wool production.²⁵ Bligh however, was not overly convinced by Macarthur's prediction that such an industry would prove profitable.²⁶ This difference of opinion quickly escalated into a bitter feud with Macarthur attempting to tarnish Bligh's already precarious reputation.²⁷

In October 1807 Bligh wrote, '[The colony is now] in a very improved state, and the inhabitants contented, except for a very few who have been in the habit of turning everything to their own interest'.²⁸ In reality, many of his efforts had failed. The

²¹ B. Fletcher, *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976), p. 111.

²² Bligh to Windham, Oct 31, 1807, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. i, vol. vi, pp. 148-9.

²³ See Proclamation of Feb 7, 1807 and Feb 14, 1807, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol. vi, pp. 246-52, 253-54. See also Bligh to Windham, Feb 1807, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. I, vol vi, p. 125.

²⁴ Macarthur had tried to insure his grant at the Cowpastures from King, but King had been reluctant to do so. Thus, Macarthur was determined to persuade the next Governor, that was, Bligh. See King to Camden, Jul 20, 1805, in Fletcher, *HRA*, series i, vol. v, pp. 510-1 and Bligh to Windham, Oct 31, 1807, in Fletcher, *HRA*, series i, vol. vi, p. 154.

²⁵ King brought some of the first rams to NSW in 1797. See Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol, iv, p. 891. Further information on the economic impact of pastoral farming, see Brian Fitzpatrick, *The British Empire in Australia 1834-1939* (Melbourne: Macmillian of Australia, 1969), pp. 31-38, 71-101.

²⁶ Macarthur's Report, Oct 2. 1805, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. i, vol v, p. 568.

²⁷ See Bligh to Macarthur, Oct, 1806, cited in M. H. Ellis, *John Macarthur* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1955), pp. 269-70, E. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Jan 29, 1807, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Some Early Records of the Macarthurs*, p. 137.

²⁸ Bligh to Windham, Oct 21, 1807, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. i, vol. vi, p. 160.

Hawkesbury settlers were still impoverished, and Bligh's orders prohibiting spirits had been defied (just as Hunter and King's had been), and prices still remained very high for almost all goods.²⁹ Indeed, this state of affairs continued to dominate the next decade, as Commissioner Bigge found that the sale of wheat by small farmers directly to the Commissariat for other goods had not returned to the system which had predominated prior to the Hawkesbury floods of 1806 and 1809, rather they had to sell to the rich settlers who stored the wheat for themselves in the hope of raising its value to the Commissariat.³⁰

Following the overthrow of Governor Bligh, the leader of the coup, Major Johnston's explained his action as an attempt to restore peace to Sydney which was in a 'state of imminent insurrection'.³¹ Such an explanation was a self-serving lie, and so the British authorities determined to punish those involved in the coup. Bligh's replacement, Lachlan Macquarie, came as commanding officer of his own regiment, and sent the NSW Corps back to England in disgrace.

Macquarie took command of the 73rd Regiment in November, 1807, within a month of his marriage to Elizabeth Campbell.³² Macquarie was the Government's second choice for the appointment of Governor and as such was promised the relatively small pension of £500 per year. After reinstating Richard Rouse, who had been removed

²⁹ B. Fletcher, *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976), pp. 106-7.

³⁰ William Cordeaux to J. T. Bigge, n.d., in J. T. Bigge, *Reports, Appendix*, B.T. Box 9, pp. 3523-74.

ML.

³¹ For Bligh's contention that the NSW Corps were seduced into rebellion by John Macarthur see John Currey, ed., *William Bligh, Account of the Rebellion of the New South Wales Corps* (Malvern: Banks Society Publications, 2003), see also evidence of Macarthur and Johnston in Mr Barthum (short hand writer), *Proceedings of A General Court Marital* (London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1808), pp. 176-216.

³² L. Macquarie, *Memoranda*, Jan 20, 1809, A772. ML.

from his government position after supporting Governor Bligh, Macquarie then promoted him to superintendent of additions at Government House, Parramatta.³³

This was how Elizabeth Macquarie came to be acquainted with Richard Rouse's eldest child, Mary. Her position as a nursemaid to Lachlan junior placed her in a socially challenging position, as Mary was well-educated and from middle-upper-ranks of colonial society. She did not regard herself as plebeian, despite her official capacity within the Macquarie household.³⁴ Elizabeth Macquarie may well have been sympathetic to Mary's dilemma, for during her two and a half year long engagement to Macquarie, she too had taken work as a governess.³⁵ Elizabeth was well educated, and it may be reasonably assumed she enjoyed Mary Rouse's company, despite the difference in social status.

Macquarie recognised that an acceptable currency had to be established before wealth and power could be given to those worthy of this. First he devalued the currency value of rum,³⁶ established the Colonial Police Fund - the forerunner of a Colonial Treasury, and created unique coins, unofficially titled the 'ring' and 'dump', from 40,000 Spanish dollars in mid 1814.³⁷ By November 1816, Macquarie was still unable to regulate a stable currency,³⁸ and so he decided, without consulting the Home Office,

³³ L. Macquarie, 'A List of Persons Holding Civil and Military Employments in NSW', Apr 30, 1810, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, vol vii, p. 365.

³⁴ M. Hassall to T. Hassall, Hassall papers, A1677 p.514. ML.

³⁵ E. Macquarie, Journal, May 15-Dec 25, 1809, C126, ff. 1-104. ML.

³⁶ See Lachlan Macquarie, *Report on the Colony of New South Wales, to Earl Bathurst in July 1822* (Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 25 June 1828), p. 8.

³⁷ Liverpool to Macquarie, Jul 26, 1811, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. I, vol. vii, 365. The coins were initially received, from the *Samarange*, in November 1812. Silversmith William Henshall punched the centre out of each coin and counter-stamped with its nominal value. Delays ensued, so while the coins were dated 1813, the first coins were only received by the Commissary in early 1814. The entire exercise was completed by August 1814.

³⁸ See Government and General Orders, *Sydney Gazette*, Dec 7, 1816, p. 1. MAV/FM4/4233A; roll 4. ML.

to open a bank for ordinary business and for the issue of notes.³⁹ By 1820 it had a capital of £20,000 in shares of £100 each.⁴⁰ Elizabeth Macquarie is named as the second female shareholder, and owned three shares by June 1819. By June 1820 Elizabeth owned five shares and the names of seven other women appear in the books as shareholders.⁴¹ Through his *Agriculture and Trade Report*, Commissioner Bigge commented that the bank was a beneficial institution, ‘affording a convenient circulation medium’.⁴²

Macquarie received Commissioner John Bigge with every ‘attention, courtesy and respect due to the office with which he had been invested’.⁴³ However Bigge, in writing to Bathurst, found Macquarie to be so little accustomed to the discussion of ‘any subject wherein his opinions and feelings have been already engaged, that I nearly abandon the hope of being able to influence him with the adoption of any one of the changes that I am certain would meet with your Lordship’s approbation.’⁴⁴ After spending a year travelling about the colony and receiving dispositions, Bigge returned to England to compile his reports.

³⁹ This was a scheme which had long been advocated by Macquarie but opposed by the Colonial Office. See Macquarie to Castlereagh, April 30 1810, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. I, vol. vii, pp. 264-5, Macquarie to Liverpool, Oct 27, 1810, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. I, vol. vii, p. 343, Liverpool to Macquarie, July 26, 1811, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. I, vol. vii, p. 365, and Secretary Fawcner to Under-Secretary Peel, on behalf of Committee of Privy Council, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. I, vol. vii, p. 367. Macquarie waited for a further four months to pass before he communicated his actions. See Macquarie to Bathurst, Mar 29, 1817, in Fletcher, *HRA*, ser. I, vol. iv, pp. 215-21. Also, despite Macquarie having established the Bank of NSW, he did not interfere or attempt to do so, either by his authority or influence in the election of the directors or subordinate officers of the bank. Extract of a letter from Major General Macquarie, addressed to Earl Bathurst, London, Oct 10, 1823, cited in Macquarie, *Report on the Colony of New South Wales*, p. 36. In response to J. T. Bigge, *First Report*, pp. 150-51.

⁴⁰ For further detailed information on the formation of the Australian monetary system under Macquarie see Butlin, *Australian Monetary System*, pp. 75-142.

⁴¹ J. T. Bigge, Report, Appendix, B. T. Box 27, p. 6288. ML.

⁴² John Thomas Bigge, *Agriculture and Trade*, pp. 65-6.

⁴³ Extract of a letter from Major General Macquarie, addressed to Earl Bathurst, London, Oct 10, 1823, cited in Macquarie, *Report on the Colony of New South Wales*, p. 24.

⁴⁴ J. T. Bigge to Bathurst, Nov 20, 1819, B.T., Box 20, p. 3213. ML.

Upon their publication, Macquarie considered Bigge's principal object of his investigation 'to affix me, if possible, with neglect and mismanagement as Governor of the colony...'⁴⁵ Indeed, such seemed to be the case, as the reports were not the impartial and unbiased documents that Lord Bathurst had requested. If Bigge had acquainted himself with 'the real state of affairs' many of the regulations and courses of action he found objectionable, may have been determined justifiable.⁴⁶ The British Government was unaware that Bigge had refused to be sworn in as a magistrate and that none of the evidence submitted to him was under oath; nor had he included or even allowed evidence from officials, clergy and magistrates to whom Macquarie had written during the enquiry, evidence that had pointed to improvements in the social behaviour of the people and conditions in NSW during his term of office.⁴⁷ Macquarie also resented the fact that Bigge was nearly twenty years his junior, yet his salary was £1000 higher than that of the Governor.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Macquarie considered that Bigge had unnecessarily brought his wife's name into the public sphere through his reports. He condemned this action, yet wrote that Bigge, having done so might at least have given her the benevolent character she deserved.⁴⁹

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Bigge hoped that by encouraging,

⁴⁵ Extract of a letter from Macquarie to Bathurst, Oct 10, 1823, cited in Macquarie, *Report on the Colony of New South Wales*, p. 25.

⁴⁶ Extract of a letter from Macquarie to Bathurst, Oct 10, 1823, cited in Macquarie, *Report on the Colony of New South Wales*, p. 30. Response to J. T. Bigge, Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the state of the Colony of New South Wales (London: House of Commons, 1822), pp. 63-66.

⁴⁷ See Extract of a letter from Macquarie to Bathurst, London, Oct 10, 1823, cited in Macquarie, *Report on the Colony of New South Wales*, p. 24.

⁴⁸ Dennis, 'Bigge versus Macquarie', in *JRAHS*, vol. 23, part 6, 1937, pp. 411-72.

⁴⁹ See Extract of a letter from Macquarie to Bathurst, London, Oct 10, 1823, cited in Macquarie, *Report on the Colony of New South Wales*, p. 33.

...the development of the resources of the colony, the expenses incurred for the support of the convicts might ultimately be transferred from the hands of the Government to those of individuals, and articles of export might be found by which the real prosperity of the inhabitants might be promoted.⁵⁰

This was not an unreasonable hope considering the British Government paid for most goods produced in and for NSW and Van Dieman's land, with expenditure from 1786 to 1836 totalling £6 million, of which £5 million was paid for bills drawn by Governors and commissaries in the colonies.⁵¹

The Commissaries held the privileged position of issuing Store Receipts in return for goods and produce delivered to the Commissariat. These receipts were to be redeemed periodically for Bills of Exchange on the English Treasury. This was the first opportunity by which settlers were able to sell their farm produce which was thereafter issued as rations to convicts and others living off government stores. However, when these limited markets were fully supplied, there was no further outlet for surplus produce and prices fell sharply. Conversely, the periodic ravages of floods, drought and pests, or the sudden arrival of large numbers of convicts, led to temporary shortages and sudden increases in prices, as seen in the case of the Hawkesbury floods. When Governor King set out to improve the Commissariat in an attempt to rid it of those officials who were exploiting their positions, Reverend Marsden recommended the newly arrived missionary Rowland Hassall for the position of storekeeper at Parramatta and Toongabbie.⁵² Hassall soon became a retailer of

⁵⁰ Bigge, *Agriculture and Trade*, p. 53.

⁵¹ K. M. Dallas, 'Transportation and Colonial Income', *HSANZ*, 3, no. 12 (Feb 1949), p. 301.

⁵² Rowland Hassall to J. T. Bigge, Bigge, *Report, Appendix*, B. T. Box 20, p. 3463. ML.

imported goods, an agent managing properties for people absent from the colony, including previous governors-wife, Anna Josepha King and later Marsden himself.⁵³

The Commissariat did not run to the supply of 'consumer goods', which created further opportunity for monopolistic access and sale by the Officers of the NSW Corps of such goods which arrived aboard trading ships. However, even with their involvement, the supply of articles in Sydney, beyond the mere necessities of life, continued to be uncertain for many years.⁵⁴

John Macarthur, engaged in private trading, increased his landholdings through both grants and purchase, and became a successful, innovative farmer.⁵⁵ One notion for self-promotion Macarthur nurtured was a bold plan for the establishment of South Pacific/South-East Asian Trading – a venture in clear defiance of the East India trading Company. Despite this scheme never amounting to much, Macarthur did use both the *Harrington* and *Parramatta* for South Pacific trading activities in 1807.⁵⁶ By the time his second son, John, was called to the Bar in 1818, Macarthur had become affluent enough to be able to support him as he began the process of establishing himself in practice.⁵⁷ In gratitude for the allowance, John junior became his family's agent in London, sending to them most of their clothes, clothing for their servants and convicts, their household goods, books, stationary, and other articles of everyday

⁵³ Marnie Bassett, *The Governor's Lady* (Parkville: Melbourne University Press, 1961), p. 101.

⁵⁴ E. Macarthur to B. Kingdom, September 1, 1798, MP 12. ML.

⁵⁵ However, such attempts were rather backward at first, leaving him in considerable debt. See J. Macarthur to E. Macarthur, Dec 8, 1814, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Records of Macarthurs*, p. 247.

⁵⁶ D. R. Hainsworth, *The Sydney Traders* (Sydney: Cassell Australia, 1972), pp. 67-9, 164.

⁵⁷ Edward Macarthur to E. Macarthur, Sep 30, 1808, MP, vol. I-3C; John Macarthur to E. Macarthur, Mar 5, 1818; copy of certificate of his admission to the Bar, Jun 6, 1818, MP, 15. For further detail on the lives of Edward and James Macarthur see, Hazel King, *Colonial Expatriates, Edward and John Macarthur Junior* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1989).

use.⁵⁸ When Macarthur had again taken up residence in NSW, John, assisted by his brother Edward,⁵⁹ on one occasion selected large quantities of haberdashery and other goods for Macarthur to sell in Sydney.⁶⁰

Margaret Catchpole attended one such sale of goods, whilst visiting friends in Sydney, where she purchased a pair of Spanish shoes and stockings. The price must have been greatly inflated, as it inspired Margaret to create a little shop of her own in her cottage upon the Hawkesbury.⁶¹ Her aunt and uncle sent her a box from England which contained handkerchiefs, cotton cloths for dresses, aprons and shirts, shoe-laces, combs, cottons, thimbles, needles, pins scissors and knives.⁶² A convict labourer was hired from the Rouse's to assemble shelves and a counter for her shop. These goods were speedily sold to settlers' wives upon the Hawkesbury, and perhaps created a point at which local women could gather for some female company prior to the expansion of Richmond. Emancipist Andrew Thompson also retained a store, upon the Hawkesbury, which appeared to have had considerable stock levels and turnover going by his advertisement of December 1809.⁶³ however, the general lack of availability of consumer goods in this period was evidenced by Margaret's old employer, John Palmer's vain efforts, to obtain a pair of boots which Jonathan Hassall had informed him were on sale. 'Jonathan informed [me] the other day that there was at Mr Jone's for sale a small pair of Boots which he thought would fit me...I will be

⁵⁸ John Macarthur to J. Macarthur, Jun 1, 1821 and Aug 18, 1821, MP 15. ML.

⁵⁹ Edward Macarthur to John Macarthur, Mar 14, 1822, MP 17. ML.

⁶⁰ E. Macarthur to John Macarthur, Jun 7, 1824, MP 15; E. Macarthur to John Macarthur, Jun 24, 1824, MP 10. ML.

⁶¹ Margaret Catchpole, Oct 18, 1807, Letter, MS 1116. NLA.

⁶² Margaret Catchpole to her Aunt and Uncle, Oct 8, 1806, Letter, MS 1116. NLA.

⁶³ *Sydney Gazette*, Dec 3, 1809, p. 3. MAV/FM4/4233A; roll 2. ML.

very much obliged if you send them up...'.⁶⁴ The negative response must have been read with keen disappointment.

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Macquarie's resignation in 1822 was followed by unprecedented prices for Macarthur's fine-wool in London, which finally saw him receive the further grant of five thousand acres in 1825 which had been promised him twenty years earlier.⁶⁵ Unquestionably, the wool industry in NSW would have developed without Macarthur's keen, self-interested endeavours, yet presumably less speedily. At the time of his declared lunacy,⁶⁶ Macarthur possessed 24,380 acres of land, held mortgages on a further 13,000 acres, possessed stock valued at £30,000, and household plate, furniture and books valued at £1750. It seems extraordinary then, that his death was scarcely noted, with his only obituary in the *Sydney Gazette* of April 15, 1834, noting; 'It is much to be regretted that strong political prejudices should have so much sullied the otherwise excellent disposition of such a man.'⁶⁷

Edward Macarthur initially returned to Australia in 1806, after being sent to England to gain an education. Macarthur wanted him to retire from the army on half-pay, marry and settle down as a country gentleman.⁶⁸ Yet Edward doubted he could adapt himself to colonial life, and preferring a military career, he left the colony again in 1808. By 1828 Macarthur was still not resigned to the fact that Edward did

⁶⁴ John Palmer to James Hassall, Oct 11, 1813, cited in Reverend James S. Hassall, *In Old Australia. Records and Reminiscences from 1794* (Brisbane: R.S. Hews & Co. Printers, 1902), pp. 175-6.

⁶⁵ J. Macarthur to Brisbane, 1825, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Early Records of the Macarthurs*, pp. 376-388.

⁶⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, Aug 10, 1832. MAV/FM4/4242; roll 10. ML.

⁶⁷ *Sydney Gazette*, April 15, 1834. MAV/FM4/4242; roll 11. ML.

⁶⁸ J. Macarthur to E, Macarthur, Jul 26, 1814 & Dec 28, 1814, MP 2. ML.

not desire the life of a settler, and resolutely brought and stocked a 12,000 acre property for him in Argyle,⁶⁹ whilst continuing to supplement his half-pay with an allowance.⁷⁰ In his Will of 1828, John Macarthur bequeathed *Elizabeth Farm* and its contents to Edward by rule of primogeniture. The passing of all of Macarthur's estates to Edward was unfavourably received by his other sons, William and James, and resulted in a long and bitter family feud.⁷¹ Macarthur's Will gave Elizabeth the right of occupancy of *Elizabeth Farm* until she died, but never of ownership,⁷² a provision she either failed to realise or attempted to override by drawing-up a memorandum several years later, in which she left *Elizabeth Farm* to Edward on condition that he come to live in Australia, and if he did not do so, it was to go to William.⁷³ Under the terms of her husband's Will, she had no such right.⁷⁴

Reverend Marsden also followed the rule of primogeniture in his Will of October 18, 1836. Marsden's son, Charles, was irresponsible, failed to avail himself of the educational opportunity presented him and shirked his duty of superintending the family's land-holdings.⁷⁵ However, Marsden left his vast land holdings and family home to Charles, despite his apprehension, as his birth-right. When the Bank of Australia failed and sheep and cattle prices fell in the depression of the 1840s, Charles

⁶⁹ J. Macarthur to Edward Macarthur, Feb 5, 1826, MP 3. ML.

⁷⁰ J. Macarthur to John Macarthur, May 16, 1827, MP 3. ML.

⁷¹ Elizabeth Macarthur tried to repair relations between her sons by writing long letters, see for example E. Macarthur to Edward Macarthur, May 1849, MP 11. ML.

⁷² Will of John Macarthur, signed 11 April 1828, N.S.W. Registrar in Probate, Wills, Series I, No. 613.

⁷³ Memorandum regarding the disposal of her possessions, E. Macarthur to Dr Anderson, 23 December 1843, MP 11. ML.

⁷⁴ For further detail on the life of E. Macarthur and her descendants see, Lennard Bickel, *Australia's First Lady. The Story of Elizabeth Macarthur* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991); Jane de Falbe, *My dear Miss Macarthur. The Recollections of Emmeline Macarthur 1828-1911* (Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press, 1988).

⁷⁵ Charles Marsden's nephew Rev. James Hassall recalls many a happy day spent at Mamre. Charles's own spoilt youth saw him spending his money on indulging his nephew as well. See Hassall, *In Old Australia*, p. 29.

was forced to mortgage the property by demise to Richard Rouse who gave it to his daughter Elizabeth Henrietta when she married Robert Fitzgerald in March 1841.⁷⁶

Richard Rouse also provided for his eldest daughter, Mary, upon the demise of her husband in 1834. Mary Rouse and Jonathan Hassall were married in 1819. The young couple were immediately faced by financial troubles, as Jonathan was not a successful agriculturalist, despite his accumulated land holdings, and Mary became a mother. Mary's father-in-law died that same year after a brief illness,⁷⁷ thus denying the couple of any financial advice he might have been able to give. By 1827, Mary and Jonathan had five children to support as their financial problems increased. Jonathan's conduct within the colony was described as 'inappropriate' in response to the difficulties he was facing with his ventures into the shipping business.⁷⁸ Less than a year later, as the realisation of the heavy losses he had incurred in shipping sunk-in, Jonathan began to show real concern over his financial situation.⁷⁹ Such a situation was not aided by the birth of another daughter.⁸⁰ James, Jonathan's younger brother, tried to lessen the sorry state of Jonathan's financial affairs by reconciling a bill of £800 on his behalf.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Colin Maclarin, *JRAHS*, vol. 43, p. 313.

⁷⁷ Anne Marsden to Mr & Mrs Stokes, Aug 20, 1820, in George Mackaness, ed., *Some Private Correspondence of the Reverend Samuel Marsden and Family. 1794-1824* (Sydney: D. S. Ford, 1942), p. 75.

⁷⁸ Rev. Thomas Hassall to Rev. Walter Lawry, Oct 18, 1827, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 2, 1677-2, pp. 843-4. ML.

⁷⁹ Rev. Thomas Hassall to Rev. Walter Lawry, Feb 28, 1828, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 4, A1677-2, p. 181. ML.

⁸⁰ NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, < <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/>>, viewed June 2, 2006.

⁸¹ James Hassall to J. Walker, Sep 15, 1828, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 3, A1677-3. ML.

Every attempt was made to save Jonathan from his deepening state of depression.⁸² However, in 1829 his elder brother, Thomas, conceded that Jonathan was only a hairs breadth away from complete ruin. An application was written on Jonathan's behalf for Government assistance, yet he continued to delay its presentation. As a result, the only thing which could be done was to give him advice.⁸³ By 1834, Jonathan's death was expected⁸⁴ and was of little surprise when the *Sydney Gazette* published their conclusion that he had committed suicide by drowning.⁸⁵ Reverend Marsden concluded that such a fate was reasonably expected considering Jonathan's deranged state of mind.⁸⁶

Only one letter remains from this period by Mary's hand which records her anguish over her husband's steady decline in mental health. She recognised him to be very ill, and wrote to her brother-in-law, Reverend Thomas Hassall, to request him to come to Jonathan and provide him with pious comfort.⁸⁷ Shortly after Jonathan's death, Mary's eighth child was born and died shortly thereafter.⁸⁸ Mary and her fatherless children quickly fell back on her father's support, and moved into a large house he had built especially for them near the family estate at Rouse Hill.⁸⁹

⁸² James Hassall to J. Walker, Sep 15, 1828, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 3, A1677-3. ML.

⁸³ All from Rev. Thomas Hassall to J. Wlaker, June 19, 1829, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 3, A1677-3, p. 1969. ML.

⁸⁴ Rev. Thomas Hassall to R. M. Campbell, Dec 20, 1834, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 4, A16677-4, pp. 1251-3. ML.

⁸⁵ *Sydney Gazette*, December 16, 1834. MAV/FM4/4242; roll 11. ML.

⁸⁶ Rev. S. Marsden to Rev. Thomas Hassall, Dec 19, 1834, Hassall Correspondence, A1677-2, pp. 973-6. ML.

⁸⁷ Mary Hassall to Rev. Thomas Hassall, Hassall Correspondence, vol. 3, A1677-3, pp. 5047-8. ML.

⁸⁸ NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, < <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/>>, viewed June 2, 2006.

⁸⁹ Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, p. 211.

While Richard Rouse was not bred on the land this did not hinder his shrewd capability and careful acquisition of money and property. Upon his death in 1852, he left extensive holdings throughout the colony. His youngest son, George, inherited *Jericho House*, while second son Edwin inherited *Rouse Hill*.⁹⁰ The road between the three houses 'was very bad', yet visits continued until 'old Mrs Hassalls' death in 1883.⁹¹

The importance of landholdings was a tradition which had been carried to the colony with the first European arrivals. A landed estate conferred status in society, not just on one person for one generation, but on the family so long as it lasted. In order to appreciate the inherited traditions which were re-enacted upon in NSW, Commissioner Bigge's family estate will be considered here. John Bigge's family had enjoyed their status upon the land his great-grandfather, William Bigge, had received upon his marriage settlement. John's brother, Charles, inherited the family home, *Benton House*, at Long Benton, Northumberland, England upon their father's death in 1794, and all other family properties. Successfully established as a partner of the 'Old Bank' by July 1806, Charles commenced the building of another mansion for his rapidly expanding family, which he would call *Linden Hall*.

Upon his death in December 1849, Charles left all his estates to his youngest surviving son Matthew Robert. Matthew had become the director of the District Bank. Unfortunately when one of the Bank's largest creditors went into liquidation most of the Bank's capital was lost. As a result, Matthew had to guarantee the *Linden estates* to the Bank to raise money for depositors, which eventually led to the sale of *Linden*

⁹⁰ For information on Edwin Stephen Rouse's daughters see William J. Pickard, *Kathleen Rouse of Rouse Hill. The Road to Harbin* (William J. Pickard: Sydney, 1992).

⁹¹ Rouse Thornton, *Rouse Hill House*, p. 139.

Hall and all its freehold estates, by public auction on 6th August 1861. Matthew's nephew, Charles Selby Bigge strongly contested his uncle's right to sell off his rightful inheritance to settle such debts, no doubt realising that with the dissipation of the Bigge estates by sale the entire family would sink into obscurity, which indeed happened.⁹²

Lachlan Macquarie, like Charles Selby Bigge, was determined that his descendants should rightfully have access to their inheritance. Macquarie named twenty-five people to whom he wished his estate to be entailed. Despite his hope that he and Elizabeth might have more children, Lachlan was his sole heir.⁹³ On 30 March 1816, Macquarie authorised his brother Charles to commit up to £21000 in buying farming lands upon the Island of Mull, Scotland, which he planned to rename 'Port Macquarie'.⁹⁴ Elizabeth resigned herself to Macquarie's bad investment with the belief that the properties would be desirable for her son if he lived long enough to enjoy them.⁹⁵ Under her husband's Will, Elizabeth was provided with an income of £300 per annum for as long as she might live, from the rent of Macquarie's prosperous estate of *Javisfield*.⁹⁶ Elizabeth's son, to whom she was ever dutiful,⁹⁷ took a military career, and kept racehorses, drank and spent his money.⁹⁸ Just nine years after marrying Isabella Hamilton Dundas Campbell, Lachlan tumbled down the

⁹² See The Bigge Family, Macdonald Linden Hall,

<http://www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/lindenhall/history/thebiggefamly.htm>, viewed Jun 20, 2006.

⁹³ L. Macquarie, Last Will and Testament, May 13, 1825, Scotland's People. Connecting Generations, <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/content/images/famousscots/fstranscript50.htm>, viewed Jun 20, 2006.

⁹⁴ L. Macquarie to C. Macquarie, 30 March and 6 November 1816, Macquarie Papers, MS 3833, ff. 108-10 and 111-12. ML.

⁹⁵ E. Macquarie to J. Drummond, 12 December 1817, Letterbook, A797, f.250. ML.

⁹⁶ Macquarie, L., Last Will and Testament, May 13, 1825, Scotland's People. Connecting Generations, <<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/content/images/famousscots/fstranscript50.htm>>, viewed Jun 20, 2006.

⁹⁷ E. Macquarie to R. Fitzgerald, Dec 7, 1825, Fitzgerald Papers, DOC 1684/3. ML.

⁹⁸ Annon to George Jarvis, 11 March 1835, Javis Papers, V/A/7/3. ML.

stairs of Craig Castle and died, childless.⁹⁹

Prior to their return to England, the Macquarie's gave Power of Attorney to Henry Antill and Richard Fitzgerald to act in NSW on their behalf.¹⁰⁰ A Return of Accounts made out for her by Antill showed Elizabeth that he had sold her shares in February 1823 for £300. Initial indignation soon gave way to understanding when she learned that the Bank had suffered some difficulties. In 1827, Richard Fitzgerald sent her £300, the first money she had received from NSW since her departure, after which she received approximately £145 per annum.¹⁰¹

After settling on his estate on the Isle of Mull, Macquarie went to London, in April 1824, with the hope of publishing his defence against the claims made in Bigge's report. He frequently wrote to Elizabeth of his attempts, but was unable to extract any promise of his Reply to Bigge being publicised. Whilst still in London, Macquarie suffered an attack of strangury and died in July 1824.¹⁰² Elizabeth Macquarie was finally granted a pension of £400 per annum in 1826 in retrospect to the date of her husband's death.¹⁰³ However, when writing to Lord Bathurst, thanking him for offering her the Pension, she requested permission to publish her husband's Reply to Bigge's Report, in an attempt to have the matter rectified. She received no answer from Bathurst. As a form of protest at this injustice, she refused to accept the

⁹⁹ Ritchie, *Lachlan Macquarie*, pp. 220-22.

¹⁰⁰ F. Drennan to G. Harrison, Mar 4, 1819, J. T. Bigge, *Report, Appendix*, B. T. Box 18, pp. 2478-9. ML.

¹⁰¹ Lysbeth Cohen, *Elizabeth Macquarie: Her Life and Times* (Sydney: Wentworth Books, 1979), pp. 204-5.

¹⁰² E. Macquarie to R. Fitzgerald, copy by Rev. J. Macquarie, Memorandum book, C254, 1825. ML.

¹⁰³ R. Darling to E. Barnard, 1826, A1267, pt. 4, p. 126. ML.

Government pension.¹⁰⁴ Finally, in 1827, Macquarie's Reply was publicised and Elizabeth began to draw the promised pension.¹⁰⁵

After the hardship of securing her pension was concluded, Elizabeth Macquarie lived out her final years in a state of financial independence – a state that greatly contrasted with those of Margaret Catchpole. The circumstances which lead to Margaret Catchpole's death were related by the grandson of 'Old Mrs Pitt' in a letter to the Evening News in 1890. George Matchen Pitt recalled;

She was a nurse to my mother previous to her death.¹⁰⁶ My father had a flock of sheep at Bronte, Shepherded by a man named Tom, who died, through catching a heavy cold, from diarrhoea. Margaret attended him, and she caught the same complaint, and it carried her off.¹⁰⁷

There was no mention of Catchpole's death in the *Sydney Gazette*, or official notices, thereby implying her lowly status at her time of death. Margaret left no will and no subsequent steps were taken as regards the administration of her estate. As Margaret rented a small cottage from *Rouse Hill Estate*, it is likely that the property and her livestock became property of the Estate.

The different responses to a lack of a stable monetary system within colonial NSW by the five people being considered here were based upon personal values. John Bigge

¹⁰⁴ Despite Elizabeth Macquarie's private decision not to begin withdrawing her pension, the news reached NSW that she had begun to receive it. See E. Macarthur to E. Kingdon, Feb 4, 1826, in Macarthur-Onslow, *Early Records of Macarthurs*, p. 456.

¹⁰⁵ Regarding pension see typed copies of letters of E. Macquarie, 1824-1827, AM15. ML.

¹⁰⁶ Matchon Pitt is referring to Margaret Catchpole's death, not that of his grandmother. Margaret nursed Pitt's grandmother through her confinements.

¹⁰⁷ George Matchen Pitt, Holbrook, Dec 2, 1890, reprinted in Barton, *The True Story of Margaret Catchpole*, pp. 175-6.

retained a level of financial independence as a result of the estates his uncle had left him and the revenue they produced throughout his life. Whilst in NSW, Bigge enjoyed the aloofness his bureaucratic position allowed, from which he decreed his opinion based upon biased evidence. Mary Rouse spent her childhood in an abysmal state of financial poverty, her situation only improving with her father's appointment to a government position. Mary's dependence upon her father for financial security was recommenced after her brief period of happiness within the marriage state was ended by her husband's suicide. John Macarthur's financial situation rapidly exceeded his expectations as he turned events into opportunities within the colonial setting. Macarthur's arrogant, self-centred actions promoted the accumulation of his family fortune. Elizabeth Macquarie came from a wealthy family, and as the Governor's wife pecuniary difficulties were uncommon. Yet, Elizabeth came to feel such problems upon her return to England due to her refusal to accept a pension before her late-husband's name was cleared of the slander Bigge had cast upon it. Margaret Catchpole's financial situation during her years spent in NSW were not based upon the accumulation of wealth but rather in giving aid and support to those with a greater need than herself. This aid was repaid with varying levels of financial and practical compensation which enabled Margaret to provide for her living costs. It is this variety of experiences which make Australia's colonial period so vibrant and noteworthy, and gives impetus for further comparative research in the arena of colonial Australian history.

Conclusion

Uniting the five people considered within this thesis is the self-motivation they had to make the most of the opportunities which presented themselves in a society tenuously replicating an old order. What set them apart were the differences in their situations – including those factors which motivated them to come to the fledgling colony, the importance they placed on land ownership, social status, their home and their economic independence. Due to their vastly different social claims and aspirations, the value placed upon personal status by the colonists of NSW, both convict and free, permanent and transient, was the result of the cultural baggage which each individual carried with them at the point of sailing. The individual perception of personal status by John Bigge, Margaret Catchpole, Elizabeth Macquarie, Mary Rouse and John Macarthur is representational of their understanding of the concept of land value in NSW. Thus this thesis examined how each character responded to a change in circumstance.

In 1768, Captain James Cook was authorised by secret instructions to take possession of ‘a Continent or Land of great extent’¹ thought to exist in the southern latitudes ‘in the Name of the King of Great Britain’.² The established doctrine at this point remained that of Van Diemen – if a region was uninhabited, or not under the control of a recognisable sovereign it was “terra nullius”, and could therefore be appropriated by any civilised nation – or any country with the will and power to enforce such a

¹ Secret Instructions to Captain Cook, June 30, 1768, in Bladen, *HRNSW*, 2, pt 2.

² Secret Instructions, *HRNSW*, 2, pt 2.

claim. As Cook ‘never saw one inch of cultivated land in the whole country’,³ he did not bother to gain the consent of the Indigenous people. This claim was to prove indicative of the manner in which the settlers of the colony perceived the land and brought it to respond to European farming methods.

As the land came under cultivation a pattern emerged, whereby more affluent people turned to livestock grazing, while the labour intensive, time consuming occupation of arable farming was undertaken by the less affluent. This pattern is evident when considering ex-officer John Macarthur took to the extensive pasturing of sheep and free-settler Richard Rouse bred horses, while emancipist Margaret Catchpole kept some stock and held only fifteen acres in wheat at any one time. This pattern and the individual uses of the land covered in this thesis provide a cross-section of the experiences the different members of the colonial society had in relation to the land. Therefore, I will conclude by highlighting some aspects of the value of the land as seen by John Macarthur, John Bigge, Elizabeth Macquarie, Mary Rouse and Margaret Catchpole.

John Macarthur’s claim to respectability based upon his self-promotion in NSW and opportunistic presence in Britain, during long periods of self-inflicted exile, aided the establishment of Australia’s fine wool industry. However, Macarthur was mentally unstable – a state which was evident as early as 1790 – yet made apparent in later years through his erratic behaviour in many colonial interests. Nor did Macarthur come from a family of social rank or political influence in Britain, but conferred the status of aristocracy upon himself, a virtuous, independent landholder in contrast to

³ Cook’s Journal, Aug 23, 1770, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 396.

the social outcasts and criminals transported to NSW from Britain. Macarthur especially pressed upon Bigge his hopes as a landed aristocracy and made Bigge's secretary, Thomas Hobbes Scott, a family friend. Wool was the only export from Australia to England capable of any notable growth. Unsurprisingly, Bigge recommended the expansion of the wool industry, thus he favoured land grants to settlers who would grow wool and employ convicts.

Large grants of land were required for the pasturage of sheep, as was an extensive workforce highly comprised of convict and emancipist labour. As Macarthur's influence grew within the political sphere due to his endeavours, and the growing support and interest of fellow free-settlers, Governor Macquarie's administration, which did not encourage the granting of large tracts of land or the use of convict labour for projects other than his public building schemes (many of which were more extravagant than necessary due to Elizabeth Macquarie's architectural input), began to be seriously criticised. Unable to ignore the political leverage the settlers had gained for themselves, the Colonial Office commissioned John Thomas Bigge to report on the state of affairs for their appraisal.

The reports which Bigge issued based upon his findings during his period of residence in NSW and Van Dieman's Land, were not the objective reports which Goulbourn and Bathurst had requested. One of the first questions Bigge asked of the individuals from whom he took evidence was, 'Do you have any complaints to make against the Governor?' Unsurprisingly, Bigge was soon receiving the testimonies of many of the free-settlers who disliked the manner in which Macquarie was administering the colony. As the son of a country gentleman, John Bigge was wealthy, well read and

well informed. Conversely, he never married or settled down, but moved from place to place throughout his life. And, like Macarthur, his family were in commerce, thus he had ‘the snobbery of those who rise in the world through commerce and seek to stimulate the social position and habits of gentlemen whose birth had granted them influence and authority.’⁴

Bigge, in keeping with Macarthur’s opinions, thought emancipists and small settlers should be kept low on the social scale, be restricted with the size of their land grants, not be permitted to practice law within the courts, nor be eligible for public appointments outside of the most minor role.⁵ The convict, and later emancipist, woman studied in this thesis, Margaret Catchpole, had died before the publication of the Bigge Reports, and therefore did not feel their impact. However, her invaluable assistance during the confinements of many colonial mothers insured her legacy through others memory of her unfailing aid. Margaret was the daughter of a ploughman, and was convicted for theft and transported for escaping prison. It is highly unlikely that Margaret would have attained the high level of acclaim that is still accorded her name today if she had not been transported. Her self-appointed duty as midwife within the colony of NSW was realised whilst still onboard ship, where she assisted to Mrs Richard Rouse during the birth of her first son. Margaret established herself upon the land, retaining holdings of 15-20 acres, and a small cottage. Her hope of returning to England, though an unrealistic one considering her lowly social aspirations and age, were forfeited in exchange for a level of independence which would have been denied her in England.

⁴ Ritchie, *Punishment and Profit*, p. 36.

⁵ See T. G. Parsons, ‘Does the Bigge Report follow from the Evidence?’, *HS*, vol. xv, 1972, pp. 268-75.

Margaret Catchpole was fondly remembered as ‘grandmother’ to many colonial children as a sign of respect and affection - amongst their number, were the children of free-settler Richard Rouse. Rouse secured his families fortune through his government position as the Superintendent of Public Works and his horse breeding program. Elizabeth Macquarie instigated many of the projects Rouse superintended, as a result of her upbringing, during which time her creativity had been allowed to flourish. Given her husband’s official position in NSW, Elizabeth had a unique opportunity to realise her beautification projects upon the land she was brought to. The building schemes Elizabeth suggested utilised many of the Governments skilled workers, which led to a scarcity of mechanics for the use of private enterprise. Such schemes were therefore most unhappily perceived by many.

As the Superintendent of Public Works, Richard Rouse found these schemes economically beneficial to the accumulation of his private wealth, as seen in his receipt of £200 ‘for building a toll-house and erecting a turnpike gate at Parramatta.’⁶ With a strong reliance upon her father’s actions throughout her life, Mary Rouse was financially dependant upon the projects which had initiated the growth of her father’s fortune and secured her social standing among the better levels of colonial society for the autonomy they gave her. Her marriage lasted fifteen years and gave her eight children, six of whom survived infancy. Mary had considerable influence in the sphere in which she moved as her actions where guided by her love of children, both those she taught and her own. Their correct upbringing despite the shortcomings life in a limited social stratum presented was of paramount importance to Mary.

⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, Jul 7, 1811. MAV/FM4/4242; roll 2. ML.

Through the actions and influence of John Macarthur, John Bigge, Elizabeth Macarthur, Mary Rouse and Margaret Catchpole, whose diversity in experience and contributions are a microcosm of the fledgling society of NSW, the colony developed into a country which, the French voyager, Louis de Freycinet encapsulated with the words:

[Without a doubt] it would be difficult to imagine a colony composed of more corrupt elements than that of Port Jackson, and that has had to struggle, since its beginning, with a greater number of obstacles; but it was reserved to British genius to conquer them all, and to transform a vicious population into industrious colonists, destined one day to change the face of the land.⁷

The ‘British genius’ of which de Freycinet wrote, in 1820, was the private conviction that each of the five people who have been considered throughout this thesis held, which included the belief that NSW could become a place of success and achievement for the establishment of a family fortune, their career, their families’ health and their hopes based upon the land. That all ambition within the colony of NSW was inexplicably tangled with the accumulation of land holdings is not so unreasonable when considering the position of Britain at the point of first settlement. Settlement allowed for an increase in product flow – a flow which had created the British Empire as this mercantilist policy worked towards a ‘dependant’ relationship between Britain and the antipodeans colonies, an empire based on the supply of low-cost produce in exchange for relatively high-cost manufactured goods.⁸ Therefore, from the very

⁷ Louis de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du monde, entrepris par ordre du roi...exécuté sur les corvettes de S.M. l’Oranie et la Physicienne, pendant les années 1817...1820* (Paris: Pillet Aîné, 1824-390, p. 98.

⁸ M. Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1946), p. 210.

outset of settlement in NSW, conquest, dispossession and control of the land was the priority – a predictable response to the increased demand of an insatiable Empire at its pinnacle of importance.

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