A HISTORY OF

PORT MACQUARIE AND

THE HASTINGS RIVER DISTRICT

by

M.M. Ramsay B.A., Dip. Ed.

A Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts

Presented to Professor John M. Ward

University of Sydney

1961
This work is an investigation of the conditions prevailing in Port Macquarie and the Hastings River District during the convict period. From the time when Oxley discovered this region, to the cessation of penal activities in 1847, almost thirty years elapsed. Due to the length of the period under review, it was considered necessary to confine this report to rather strict lines, omitting much information of a general nature. Character studies are brief, and interesting background stories are used only where their telling is significant to the development of the thesis. Much of the excluded material is available in the body of information on Port Macquarie which has been accumulated over the years.

Largely, the thesis deals with the important social, economic and political trends of the period, whose interpretation and significance could be found only in close examination of original source material. An endeavour was made to cover all official correspondence and reports relative to the period under consideration. Research revealed few private documents concerning Port Macquarie in the penal era, therefore, to obtain some balance against the weight of purely official material, it was necessary to resort to wide and careful reading of contemporary newspapers. Here great discrimination was required to obtain a true picture. Need for such discrimination became the more evident where reports and opinions expressed in the government paper, "The Gazette", differed widely from those of the free press.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Colonial Secretary's Correspondence (Inwards and outwards), Mitchell Library, Sydney.

This material has been classified in the Library under the heading Port Macquarie. The bundles contain all correspondence and reports relating to the settlement.

Historical Records of Australia. Mitchell Library Sydney.

Contained in these are records of correspondence between the Governor in N.S.W. and the Home Government.


Sir Thomas Brisbane's Letter Book (A559-5)

Mitchell Library, Sydney.


"Old Port Macquarie" The history of Port Macquarie as told by T. Dick and serialized in "The Port Macquarie News". Cuttings obtained from Library and Museum of Hastings River District Historical Society, Port Macquarie.


Some Recollections of My Early Days. by A. Boswell

Australia from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay.


Inscriptions on Headstones in old Port Macquarie Cemetery. Prepared by E.A. Mowle in 1940.

Copy from Library and Museum of Hastings River District Historical Society, Port Macquarie.


Minutes of Evidence taken before Select Committee on Secondary Punishments, 1832.

In "Selected Speeches of Sir William Malesworth" Mitchell Library, Sydney.


Reports on Fort Macquarie, 1819 and 1820 by John Oxley.

Historical Records of Australia, Series 1, Vol. 10, PP. 180-2, 379.

Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Oxley's assessment of the value of Port Macquarie and the Hastings River District for settlement purposes.

Report of John Gyles on - Port Macquarie.

Historical Records of Australia, Series 1, Vol. 10, P260.

Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Gyles' account of the suitability of the Hastings River District for growing sugar cane.

Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry, 1818 by J. Morisset and James Busby.

A statement on conditions at Port Macquarie.

Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, Mitchell Library, Sydney.


Contains information on the geography of the Hastings River District.

Report of the Bureau of Meteorology Sydney N.S.W.

Details of climatic conditions in the Hastings River District.
SECONDARY SOURCES

Voice of the North "History of St. Thomas' Church."


Story of St. Thomas' Church, Port Macquarie by

St. Thomas' Port Macquarie. by F.A.Fitzpatrick.


"Thomas Alison Scott and the Genesis of the Sugar Industry" Vol. XXVI. Pt. V. 1940.


The History of the Church of the Presbyterian Church

Copy from publishers, "The Port Macquarie News".


ORIGINAL MAPS

1. A Plan of Port Macquarie including a sketch of Part of Hastings River on the East Coast of New South Wales. (F861/W)


2. An untitled map - about 1825.

Presented by Department of Lands to Mitchell Library, Sydney. F14/37. (Also see similar map F14/29) Shows location of settlements and agricultural establishments in the early penal period.


Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Mainly shows course of Hastings River with soundings from bar to limit of navigation at a point two miles West of present site of Wauchope.

Also shows route taken by Oxley's expedition in October 1818.

Presented by Lands Department. 4 October 1921.


Shows early stations on Hastings River and on New England.
6. **Plan of Port Macquarie - 1831.**
   Shows Mitchell's new survey of the township.

7. **Illustrative Plan of Port Macquarie**
   by E.A. Mowle, 1938. Original in Library and Museum of Hastings River District Historical Society, Port Macquarie. Mowle has taken Mitchell's 1831 plan of Port Macquarie town and superimposed on a copy the main present day buildings in Port Macquarie. This gives a very accurate picture of where former penal structures stood.

8. **District of Port Macquarie.**
   Shows sites of agricultural establishments and early land grants on the Hastings River.
CONTENTS.

Volume 1.

Geography........................................Page 1
Background of Discovery......................Page 6
Proposals for Settlement.......................Page 12
First Settlement................................Page 20
Extension of Settlement.......................Page 27
Penal System....................................Page 39
Timber............................................Page 84
Ship Building....................................Page 88
Natives...........................................Page 91
Churches.........................................Page 96
Education.........................................Page 107
Agriculture......................................Page 115
Development since Free Settlement...........Page 143

Volume 2.

Appendix.
GEORAPHY.

The success or failure of early convict settlements depended largely upon the natural resources of the area settled. Amongst the inhabitants of the penal colonies there was a noticeable lack of farming ability and experience and, even in those instances where one or other of these advantages was evident, it did not follow that methods applied with success in Europe would be equally efficient in the entirely different geographical environment found in New South Wales. So we could assess the agricultural development in the colony as being dependent primarily on geographical resources. If these were favourable, the type of labour available, and the methods applied could make a success of the enterprise. On the other hand, lack of incentive, ability and adaptable methods could cause failure in a promising area.

It is important in studying the convict period at Port Macquarie and in the Hastings River Valley to determine the geographical conditions under which the penal settlement operated.

Topography - Typical of the coastal river regions of New South Wales, the Hastings River Valley extends from coastal sandy flats and flood-plains, through an intermediate stage of increasing relief and elevation to the New England Plateau. The river has its source

Acknowledgment is made of the valuable assistance obtained from "The Oxley Region". This work, called a Preliminary Survey of Resources, is to be published by authority of the Government of New South Wales. A typed copy was obtained, on loan, and most of the geographical material in this thesis was obtained from that source.
in the Eastern Highlands near Yarrowitch. The broad river plain extends westward, some few miles to the inland of Wauchope, but from this point to the source there is a considerable narrowing of both channel and river plain. From the more elevated regions flow many small streams and the river itself is hardly discernible in size and volume from these many tributaries.

Land use to-day in the narrow strip of sandy plain is limited to pastoral pursuits and some cash crops, while from much of the area timber is obtained. The Hastings River Valley is a clearly defined geographical unit and may be considered as a coastal region embraced on the Northern, Southern and Western extremities by limiting topographic features. To the South the Plateaux of Comboyne and Bulga form the watershed for the Hastings River and Manning River. Westward the New England Plateau marks clearly the line of demarcation between the rapidly flowing coastal streams, among which we may include the Hastings River, and the more sluggish inland flowing rivers of the Murray-Darling system. Less accurately defined than the boundaries to South and West is that comparatively low-lying division to the North, which separates the drainage system of the Hastings River from that of the Macleay River.

Maximum limits of the region are from East to West 58 miles and from North to South 36 miles, and the
approximate area of the geographical unit is 1344 square miles.

**Area of Generalised Land Slope within the Hastings Shire and the Municipality of Port Macquarie** - an area of 1,447 square miles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage of Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mostly flat.</td>
<td>Not more than 3% slope or 1 in 20.</td>
<td>168 square miles.</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Undulating to hilly.</td>
<td>More than 3% and not more than 8%. i.e. more than 1 in 20 and not more than 1 in 7.</td>
<td>276 square miles.</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hilly to steep.</td>
<td>More than 8% and not more than 15%. i.e. more than 1 in 7 and not more than 1 in 4.</td>
<td>166 square miles.</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rugged.</td>
<td>Over 15% or more than 1 in 4.</td>
<td>784 square miles.</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Hastings River region has about 2.5% of its area, that is 35 square miles, covered with water.

**Climate** - There is a marked uniformity of climate within the Hastings River Valley. The climate is "...fairly equable, moist and warm, with cool winters and a fairly uniform average occurrence of rainfall throughout the year." Thus the region experiences a mean annual rainfall from 40-60 inches; the mean temperature of the hottest month is greater than 72 degrees
Fahrenheit and mean temperature of the coldest month is between 46 degrees and 55 degrees Fahrenheit. "The region's climate is essentially maritime with high rainfall and humidity and warm temperatures but no large seasonal or daily contrasts except in the rugged uplands." Hours of sunshine per day are given as about 7.5 for this region. Spring has slightly more hours of sunshine than any other season. Cloud distribution and rainfall are at a minimum in Winter and Spring. The yearly rainfall curve shows a maximum in late Summer and Autumn and a minimum in late Winter and Spring. The driest month is usually August while the wettest is March. As yet there are no pluviometers (self-recording rain gauges) in the region from which data on rainfall intensity over short periods may be obtained. Rarely does snow fall on the higher western regions and then it is very slight.

Soil - It has been difficult to obtain a detailed and clear picture of the soil types in the Hastings River Valley as little investigation has been made. "The soils in the Hastings Valley are mostly shallow, light brown and podsollized." The natural vegetation has stabilized the banks of the streams in the region and minimized soil loss.

Vegetation - Rain forest and mixed eucalyptus (sclerophyll) forest comprise most of the natural vegetation. Eucalyptus forest generally develops on soils derived

All quotations from "The Oxley Region".
from sedimentary or granite rocks. "This forest occupies the major part of the region on undulating to rugged country." The rain forest is located in the west of the region in the higher areas. In this region the "brush" type of timbers are found. The natural forests of the region are evidence of the abundant and reliable rainfall.

Port Macquarie is located in latitude 31 degrees 35 minutes South and longitude 153 degrees 43 minutes East. Mean annual rainfall is 60 inches. The mean temperature of the coldest month is 54.1 degrees Fahrenheit and the mean temperature of the hottest month 74.8 degrees Fahrenheit. The high temperatures and humidities on the coast during summer favour rapid growth, but are conducive to disease and the rapid spread of pests so that only the most resistant species thrive. Conditions are satisfactory for plant growth throughout the year, although it would be somewhat slower in the winter, especially in the higher districts.

The Hastings River is tidal to Beechwood, above Wauchope. The river never ceases to flow and its "tributaries are never less than a string of good waterholes".
BACKGROUND OF DISCOVERY.

In the early years of the nineteenth century there were few conditions so irksome to the settlers on and about the Sydney Plain as the topographic barrier to the West which we call to-day the Blue Mountains. Governor Phillip had expressed a lively interest in what lay beyond the uplands so clearly visible to the inhabitants of New South Wales and thus, from the period of initial settlement, attempts were made to locate a path to the West. All early ventures, numerous as they were, failed. Eventually, in 1813, the persistence of the Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth expedition bore fruit when, having crossed the divide, the party sighted the fertile western slopes and plains.

The solution of one problem gave rise to others. Of primary concern to the active and resourceful Governor Macquarie was the extension, within administrative capacity, of the youthful settlement. New land would serve to assist the expanding pastoral and agricultural industries in the colony. Again it was natural for the Governor, and others, to be extremely curious concerning the extent of this new found region, and this desire for additional information could be satisfied only by exploration.

Those who first saw the western territory were intrigued by that portion of the drainage pattern which was visible to them. The streams, which had their source in the slopes, moved in a westerly direction, and many were the ideas propounded regarding their destination. Did they flow to an inland sea; or was the land mass divided by a sea which Flinders had overlooked in his circumnavigation of the continent; or did the streams expire in an arid inland region? Those speculations, and many
others, whetted the imagination of numerous citizens. To Governor Macquarie, in particular, there came a desire to solve "the problem of the Western rivers".

Thus it was that in 1817 Macquarie commissioned Surveyor-General John Oxley to explore the line of flow of the recently discovered streams. The Governor's choice fell upon a man who, having been given a task of considerable responsibility, was to prove himself an intrepid, resourceful and painstaking explorer. Fortunately for posterity, Oxley demonstrated an uncanny accuracy in map making in a period when this virtue was possessed by few.

Oxley's journey, which commenced on 28 April 1817, took himself and party in a south-westerly direction along the Lachlan River. The explorers were hindered by reeds which blocked the course of the river and this factor, eventually, caused their return to Bathurst. When Oxley made his report to Macquarie he told a story of vast areas of land spreading to the West. Thus, in the following year, Oxley was instructed by the Governor to continue his investigation of the westward flowing streams. The explorer departed on his second journey on 28 May 1818, and, on this occasion, he followed the Macquarie River which flowed in a North-westerly direction. Again progress was delayed by reeds in the river channels and it appeared that a return to base without any major result would be inevitable. However, Oxley struck towards the East and eventually reached the Hastings River and Port Macquarie.

Knowing that this journey of exploration led to the discovery of Port Macquarie we find that the background to the
discovery of the new region lay in the early desire of Governor Macquarie to determine the geography of the inland. The instructions given to Oxley, and his explorations, led to the finding of the Hastings River. It was the resolution of Oxley to continue his journey, when the Macquarie was no longer navigable and return to base could have been easily and safely accomplished, that was instrumental in finding the new port. Had Oxley returned to base the amount of work completed, and the discoveries already made on this journey, would have brought great credit to him. However, he determined to continue the venture instead of returning back along the Macquarie River.

Greatly in Oxley's favour, and of assistance in his journeys, was the navigating skill so firmly instilled in him during his days in the Royal Navy. Thus, when at a standstill, after being blocked by reeds on the Macquarie, as he had been stopped on the Lachlan in his first trip, Oxley had a fairly accurate idea of the distance to the coast. He possibly had in mind the notes made by Flinders concerning the coastal inlets directly East of his position. Therefore Oxley came to the momentous decision that took the party to the coast at the river entrance which he was to name Port Macquarie.

When the explorers had reached the limit of water passage on the Macquarie, Oxley established a camp at Mt. Harris and despatched Mr. Evans, on 8 July 1818, to the North-East to obtain a general picture of the terrain the party would have to traverse. On 20 July the entire party moved in an Easterly direction, crossing numerous rivers and finding the fertile Liverpool Plains.
Having encountered many difficulties, and ascended the uplands from the West, it was not until 23 September that the coast was sighted. On this date Oxley and Evans ascended a rugged mountain hoping for a view that would facilitate their progress. Oxley's journal records that "Bilboa's ecstasy at the first sight of the South Sea could not have been greater than ours, when on gaining the summit of this mountain, we beheld Old Ocean at our feet..."

"The country between us and the sea was broken into considerable forest hills and pleasing valleys, down the principal of which we could distinguish a small stream taking its course to the sea." Oxley promptly named the eminence from which he viewed this pleasing spectacle, Mt. Seaview, and the small stream he named the Hastings River, after Lord Hastings, the Governor of India at this time. On 28 September 1818 the exploration party met a Northern tributary of the Hastings River which was named the Forbes River by Oxley, in honour of a nephew of Lord Hastings. On the following day the party met another tributary on the South side of the Hastings and the journal says 2. "We crossed this, and named it Ellenborough River, in honour of the Chief Justice of England."

3. On 1 October Oxley wrote that "Near our halting place, a remarkable rocky range of hills was seen to the east-south-east of great height, and presenting nearly a perpendicular front to the north-west. This rugged range lies to the South of the Hastings River and is known to-day as Broken Bago. The journal 4. entry for 3 October stated "I returned to the peaked hill (Broken Bago). Certainly a more beautiful and interesting view is not


2. 29 September 1818.

3. 1 October 1818.

4. 3 October 1818.
often seen. (the river)... seemed after a winding course to enter nearly East, or in about the situation assigned by Captain Flinders to a lake across which there appears to be a bar."

Descending the mountain Oxley rejoined his party which proceeded in a northerly direction towards the river. This they reached at a spot where "A small island here divided the river into two branches; below the island the water appeared very deep, as did also the north side of the island." This island was about a half mile downstream from the present site of Wauchope. The party camped near this island, on the South side of the stream.

2. The next day, Oxley said, "I accompanied the men who had been appointed to cut the road along the banks of the river. We had performed about a mile when we were stopped by a large stream from the southward...I named King's River." in honour of Mr. King, the Surveyor. The party had considerable difficulty in crossing this stream but, eventually, this was accomplished with the assistance of a canoe obtained from a group of natives. The course pursued by the explorers now took them through comparatively easy terrain and, having traversed this last and easier part, the coast was reached, about a half mile to the south of the mouth of 3, the Hastings River, on 8 October 1818. Oxley wrote "I named this inlet Port Macquarie, in honour of His Excellency the Governor, the original promoter of these expeditions."

The explorers remained encamped at Port Macquarie until 12 October and, in this period, spent much time making sketches of the river entrance and determining the capacity of the port to receive small vessels. The party moved southwards to Port Stephens, from which place Oxley forwarded to Governor Macquarie an initial account of the explorations. This report was

"Journals of Two Expeditions into the Interior of New South Wales" by John Oxley. (Mitchell Library)

1.3 October 1818.
2.4 October 1818.
5.11 October 1818.
received by Macquarie with no small pleasure. Here was the very place he sought for the establishment of a penal settlement, in fertile country, and at a satisfactory distance from Sydney and Newcastle for the felons who were to be kept there. At a time when movement on land in the colony was tedious and often impossible, Macquarie now found that Port Macquarie, being on the coast and possessed of a navigable entrance, could be well served by shipping. So it is little wonder that, from the first word concerning the discovery of the new area, Macquarie put in motion the processes which led to the establishment of a penal colony there in 1821.
PROPOSALS FOR SETTLEMENT.

It is well to ascertain the factors which gave rise to the adoption of Port Macquarie as a Penal Settlement. More than thirty years had elapsed since the arrival of the first fleet in Port Jackson and, while England continued to pour convicted persons into the new colony, the Governor of New South Wales was finding it increasingly difficult to locate suitable land space and occupations for his numerous charges. During the greater part of his rule in New South Wales Macquarie encouraged exploration so that the discovery of new lands would release him from the geographic confines of the Sydney Plain. Therefore, it is not surprising that, within a few months of receiving Oxley's report on Port Macquarie, the Governor should propose to the Home Government the development of the Hastings River area as a convict settlement.

Very soon afterwards, actually on 6 December 1818, the "Nancy", under command of William Eckford, entered Port Macquarie and soundings of the harbour were made. With information from Eckford at his disposal, as well as that obtained from Oxley, Macquarie, on 3 March 1819, communicated to Earl Bathurst his intention to send Oxley to investigate Port Macquarie more closely with a view to a settlement being established there... On 18 May of the same year Bathurst was informed by Macquarie that the Port Macquarie region would be able to supply timber in vast quantities. This would be a great advantage as, in the opinion of the Governor, the Newcastle district forests were nearly exhausted. In this
respect it is well to note that forest exhaustion in the early days of the New South Wales colony consisted largely of elimination of softwoods, the most desirable of which, in the eyes of the first inhabitants, being red cedar.

Captain Phillip King in a report on his explorations on the Australian coast wrote "I proposed...to examine Port Macquarie and...Lieutenant Oxley, R.N. accompanied me in the 'Lady Nelson'..." The group reached Port Macquarie on 10 May 1819 and, in pursuance of the Governor's instructions, King and Oxley took a small boat to survey the Hastings River. They went up the river through the Ana branch at Rawdon Island and continued on for a distance of six miles above King's River, now known as King's Creek or the Narran River, which joins the main stream about one and a half miles East of the town of Wauchope.

In the last two miles four waterfalls were crossed, the last of which was very rapid. Present day navigation of the Hastings River ceases at Bain's Bridge, about two miles West of Wauchope, and here begin the slight rapids known as Cameron's Falls. No doubt it would be about this point that Oxley and King experienced waterfalls. King recorded in his report that he saw here some

2. large cedar trees, one of which measured ten feet in diameter at the base. At a later stage it was from this area that the convict timber gangs obtained much cedar, particularly from the part known as Koree Island. King noted also that the numerous small islands in the river were covered with swamp oak trees, a species conspicuous and plentiful there to-day.

The journal of King recorded much of interest concerning


2. See section entitled "Timber", P. 84.
the new district but Macquarie received a comprehensive report from the man he had actually allocated to the task of investigation, namely Oxley. In Oxley's report, dated 12 June 1819, a full review of the potentialities of the region was rendered. The document reported favourably on Fort Macquarie and the Hastings River Valley and placed considerable emphasis on certain factors which, no doubt, Oxley considered of paramount importance in assessing the region's capacity to maintain a colony. Oxley declared that the Port was navigable and safe (we shall see later that this was an error of judgment on Oxley's part and the bar has caused much loss of shipping since the inception of the settlement), the stream would take vessels of draught less than about six or eight feet for about sixteen to eighteen miles (that is to the falls some few miles above Wauchope), and that timber abounded, quoting as an example the presence of considerable quantities or rosewood. In addition Oxley was of the opinion that the quality of the soil was such that agricultural pursuits should prosper.

With Oxley's report to guide him Governor Macquarie lost no time in communicating with England, and on 17 July 1819 wrote to Earl Bathurst giving additional information and stated that Fort Macquarie "...will be of great advantage in the light of a place of Banishment from hence..." From Macquarie's correspondence it is clear at this stage that he had formulated in his mind a scheme for Fort Macquarie which envisaged it as a place to which offenders in the colony would be sent. As he was not being discouraged in this plan by the Home Government and, on

1. See section entitled "Agriculture" for details of later agricultural development. P. 113

the contrary, was expecting support from that quarter, the scheme was pressed on and tentative arrangements for settlement put in hand. John Gyles, who had formerly had experience in growing sugar cane in the West Indies proposed to Macquarie that Port Macquarie would be an ideal place for this industry to be developed. Therefore, at the Governor's behest, Gyles visited the Hastings River and on 7 February 1820 investigated the suitability of the region for growing sugar cane. He and eleven men took a boat to Blackman's Point, so named by Oxley after a member of his exploration party, and then proceeded some distance up the northern tributary. Gyles also sailed up the north branch of the Hastings River and was greatly taken by Rawdon Island, making particular mention in his report of the lagoon which exists in the centre of the island. Gyles saw the area as one capable of producing tropical and sub-tropical crops such as sugar cane, cotton, tobacco and coffee. We know that all these crops, with the exception of coffee, were tried and proved failures in the convict period, so we cannot but admire the perception of Governor Macquarie who wrote to 2, Earl Bathurst that "Mr. Gyles the missionary who was formerly a Sugar Planter in the West Indies visited Port Macquarie previous to his late return to England and reported that in his opinion the Country and Climate there would answer very well for the growth and cultivation of the Sugar Cane; but I confess I have great doubts as to the accuracy of his reports, as I do not think Port Macquarie sufficiently Tropical in Climate to produce the Sugar Cane in perfection." In this same letter to

2. Governor's Despatches. Port Macquarie. Macquarie to Earl Bathurst, 1 September 1820.
Earl Bathurst Macquarie enlarged on the problem of getting employment for felons and stated that if many more convicts arrived it would be necessary to settle Port Macquarie.

He expressed the intention to examine the area for himself or, failing this, to send Oxley once more.

In a letter dated 22 January 1821 the Governor informed Commissioner Bigge, formerly Chief Justice of Trinidad and at this period inquiring into the administration and general state of the Penal Settlement in New South Wales, that "It is my wish to settle Port Macquarie as soon as practicable."

Oxley having visited the Hastings River again and a very favourable report on the area being received from him, and obtaining Earl Bathhurst's authority, dated 7 February 1821, for the use of Port Macquarie as a new settlement, Macquarie resolved to establish a colony there as soon as six months salt provisions could be made available for the proposed settlers. Oxley's report encouraged Macquarie's high expectations. The Surveyor-General had arrived off Port Macquarie on 20 November 1820 and again made a survey of the potentialities of the district, having in mind particularly its capacity for adaptation as a place of punishment which could be self-supporting and as little burden as possible to the mother settlement in Sydney. Oxley mentioned the presence of coal at Camden Haven and the infertility of the northern side of the river near the mouth of the Hastings River.

From a perusal of the inward and outward correspondence of the Secretary of State it is evident that Governor Macquarie

1. See photostat of Macquarie's diary on Port Macquarie visit in appendix. 


found in Earl Bathurst a reliable and clear-sighted adviser. It says much for both Macquarie and Bathurst that their written communications to one another were accurate and clear. Macquarie had to convey to the Home Government a picture of the conditions in New South Wales and the needs of the colony, and Bathurst appears to have had both confidence in Macquarie and an ability to visualize the conditions in the colony. Thus Macquarie proceeded to settle the Hastings River region knowing that his motives were understood in England and that he had the support of the Home Government.

Having cleared the path for settlement Macquarie, with meticulous precision and clarity, proceeded to organize a project which required every attention. Certainly the new establishment would be the culmination of much investigation and consideration for, after Newcastle, this new venture was the most important coastal settlement to be made beyond the Sydney region in what is now New South Wales. Macquarie considered the Hastings River district as one capable of being developed as a relief valve for the rapidly overcrowding Port Jackson area but, at the same time, it would, by virtue of its natural resources, be capable of maintaining both convicts and military in a state of self-sufficiency. The very fact that the initial settlement at Port Macquarie depended on obtaining adequate supplies of salt beef for the new settlers was indicative of the precarious existence of the entire colony in New South Wales, even after having been established for so many years.

We can understand the problems peculiar to this convict
organization so many thousands of miles from England and in a vastly different climate, and are able to make some assessment of the capacity of both those in authority and those convicted to adapt themselves to the new environment. The only conclusion which may be made is that full utilisation of resources could be achieved with experience but, and this point embraces the main problem of penal organisation, the convicts were not free and anxious to work while those in power, being primarily a military and naval force were not trained in agricultural and pastoral pursuits. In addition, such knowledge as was available had necessarily to be adjusted to the entirely different geographic conditions which operated in New South Wales. Therefore it may be assumed that any new settlement could not be expected to differ from those already in operation in the colony. However it is readily apparent that a new venture, such as that at Port Macquarie, by virtue of having an entirely fresh start, would have the opportunity to profit from earlier mistakes and take advantage of accumulated experiences of the earlier settlers. The Government endeavoured to ensure that from inception the establishment at Port Macquarie would have every facility to assist the early development of an efficient and stable economy.

The first convicts to go to Port Macquarie, the Governor declared, should be a group of artificers and efficient labourers capable of making a successful start in the new area. Macquarie stipulated a military force of forty and a convict group of sixty for the initial party. In a letter
to Major Bruitt on 14 March 1821 the convict types required were enumerated. The Governor specifically asked for men from "...the best behaved convicts..." consisting of

- 3 Rough Carpenters, one of whom must be a good shingler.
- 2 Sawyers.
- 1 Blacksmith.
- 1 Tailor.
- 2 Shoemakers.
- 1 Medical Man.
- 50 Strong, healthy labourers."

It was hoped that a balanced nucleus of capable, energetic and reliable convicts would lead and assist the less worthy bend which was to follow in this virgin spot. Macquarie had at no time left any doubts as to the types of convicts destined for Port Macquarie, and in his instructions to Captain Allmen, the first Commandant, dated 16 March 1821 he enunciated clearly what may be called the aim of the colony. This was to have a place of punishment for the worst types of felons, particularly those who were convicted of crimes after their arrival in the New South Wales colony.

Allmen's instructions were given in minute detail, and explicit rules were issued concerning the powers of the Commandant, legal processes to be followed, management of agricultural pursuits, the care of produce and keeping of registers and books of account, so that the Commandant should be in the least possible doubt concerning his duties and responsibilities.


FIRST SETTLEMENT

Too often have ventures similar to that undertaken at Port Macquarie proved to be failures because of weaknesses in leadership and administration. It is clear that Governor Macquarie planned to land on the banks of the Hastings River a group which should be as well equipped as he could possibly make it in terms of sound administration and possessing the economic facilities for a stable beginning. Macquarie's instructions to the Commandant were given in minute detail.

It is desirable at this juncture to review briefly the early appointments; to note the men who were to lead, initially, the first settlers and who would do much to influence the future development of the colony. "The Sydney Gazette" of 10 March 1821 carried an official announcement of the appointment of Captain Francis Allman, of the 48th Regiment of Foot, as Commandant at Port Macquarie and therefore in charge of the first group to land in the new settlement. The appointment was made by Governor Macquarie on 1 March 1821. Allman's pay was set at 7/6 per day. Also on this date "The Gazette" recorded that Lt. William Wilson, also of the 48th Regiment, was to be Engineer and Inspector of Public Works at Port Macquarie at 5/- per day. Five days later "The Gazette" carried an announcement of Captain Allman's appointment as Magistrate and Justice of the Peace in the new establishment, and this same issue recorded the name of Mr. Stephen Partridge, appointed Superintendent of Convicts and Public Labour, at a salary of £50. These were the initial appointments and

Governor Macquarie must have felt reasonably content that the welfare of the new colony was in secure hands as all three men had proved their worth while at Fort Jackson. An additional appointment during 1821, though subsequent to the settlement being established, was that of Mr. Richard Neave, as Harbour Master and Pilot, at a salary of £50. Following the numerous disasters which occurred on the bar at the entrance to the Hastings River it was felt that the presence of a pilot would prove to be a most economical procedure. Mr. Neave's appointment was gazetted on 24 November 1821 following the Governor's return from Port Macquarie where he had undertaken a personal inspection of the new establishment.

The men who sailed for Port Macquarie in Allman's care totalled 101 and were in the following occupational categories:

- Lieutenant: 1
- Assistant Surgeon: 1
- Sergeants: 2
- Corporals: 2
- Drummer: 1
- Privates: 33
- Superintendent: 1
- Medical Hospital Assistant: 1
- Carpenters: 3
- Sawyers: 2
- Blacksmith: 1
- Tailor: 1

The first fleet to Port Macquarie consisted of three vessels, "Mermaid", "Prince Regent" and "Lady Nelson". The journey occupied almost a month and proved rather adventurous.

Leaving Port Jackson on 21 March 1821 the ships put into Port Stephens on the following day. On account of gales they were unable to clear this port until 5 April 1821. On 6 April the vessels arrived off Port Macquarie but the sea on the bar was so rough that landing was quite out of the question. For shelter the ships were taken North to Trial Bay, where boisterous weather kept them at anchor for more than a week.

When the seas calmed sufficiently the vessels left Trial Bay and "Prince Regent" and "Lady Nelson" attempted to enter Port Macquarie on 17 April 1821. "Mermaid" made a similar attempt on the following day. Both "Mermaid" and "Prince Regent" suffered damage in crossing the bar. "Mermaid" struck on the bar in the breakers and it appeared she would be lost. Fortunately, she broke clear and floated to safety inside the bar. "Prince Regent" hit a rock and lost her rudder in addition to receiving other minor damage.

Commandant Allman took immediate action to put "Lady Nelson" to sea so that she could return to Sydney for materials with which to repair the damaged vessels. However, misfortune continued and on 2 May 1821 "Lady Nelson" was caught on rocks when leaving Port Macquarie, and was feared lost. "Prince Regent" was then prepared for sea but rough seas on the bar
made a crossing impossible so that Allmen was forced to gather a row boat crew of eight men who were to proceed to Sydney with information of the Colony's plight. On 24 May 1821 the sloop "Betsey" arrived at Fort Macquarie and reported that the row boat had reached Fort Stephens.

Following the accidents to shipping on the Port Macquarie Bar, Oxley was sent to that place with instructions to inspect the bar and take steps necessary to avoid more mishaps. He arrived on 24 June 1821. As a result the channel was buoyed and Mr. Neaves appointed as Pilot.

From the moment of the first settlers' arrival the new colony gave promise of sound development. Having the benefit of careful planning, capable administration, adequate food and equipment, good soils and, for the first convicts, a promised reward for industry, there was immediate activity. In regard to this latter point it is desirable to note Macquarie's attitude towards the convicts. He regarded the colony not only as a goal but also as a place where the social reclamation of the human beings in his charge could be effected. Convicts in the first group were offered a Ticket-of-leave for good behaviour and industry and this could be obtained eighteen months after arrival in the colony at Fort Macquarie "... in case of steady Good conduct, sobriety and Industry..."

However, with the departure of Macquarie from the Governorship in 1821, there was a different attitude towards the penal settlements by his successors, who saw the New South Wales colony as a place of punishment alone, and little attention

1 Historical Records of Australia. Series I. Vol. X. P.481.
was paid to fitting the felons for their return to society.

It is worthy of note that the convicts at Port Macquarie were easily able to maintain sobriety as liquor was rigidly excluded from the settlement during the period up to the entry of free settlers, in 1830. Punishments for having "run" were severe. Thus Port Macquarie differed greatly from the Port Jackson area where, despite a large measure of success in removing the run traffic of earlier years, it was not difficult for convicts to come by intoxicants. Members of the 48 Regiment at Port Macquarie adopted many ruses to obtain liquor. For example Mr. Nicholson, Master Attendant at the Sydney Dock Yard, wrote to the Colonial Secretary reporting the discovery of a keg of rum concealed in a bag of sugar lodged at the Dock for despatch to Thomas Cosborn of the 48th regiment stationed at Port Macquarie. The rum was destroyed.

On 4 May, 1824 Commandant Rolland informed Colonial Secretary Goulburn that he had returned to Sydney a free woman, wife of one of the Port Macquarie convicts, for having a bottle of spirits in her possession. Goulburn replied, expressing his approval of this action, on 20 May 1824. Goulburn advised Rolland on 29 July 1824 that three crew members of the ship "Sally" had been dismissed for taking run to Port Macquarie.

Reports on the settlement during 1821 were favourable.

1. "The Sydney Gazette" said "Mr. Kent (Commander of 'Prince Regent') reports the settlement to be all bustle and activity; the town is forming; storehouses and dwellings are building; grounds are becoming cultivated; and the whole place bids fair in a


short time, from the indefatigable perseverance of the Worthy Commandant, to be in possession of comfort..." Already the Court in Sydney was taking advantage of this new place of punishment and "The Sydney Gazette" recorded on 23 June 1821 a typical sentence of punishment, "...that John Wilson be corporally punished in the market place on Friday next, by receiving 100 lashes; and that he afterwards be transported to the new settlement at Port Macquarie, there to remain and be wrought at hard labour for the residue of his sentence."

Governor Macquarie's very real interest in the settlement was climaxed in November 1821 when he made a personal inspection of Port Macquarie. "The Sydney Gazette" of 27 October 1821 reported the imminent departure of the Governor and party, the sailing date being given as 30 October. Macquarie actually sailed in the "Elizabeth Henrietta" on 1 November, accompanied by Lt. Robert Johnston, R.N., Mr. Nicholson, Master Attendant, and Mr. Meehan, Deputy Surveyor. The Governor was on this tour when his successor, Sir Thomas Brisbane, landed in Sydney on 7 November 1821. It is recorded that Sir Thomas went ashore the following day and assumed office on 1 December 1821.

Macquarie's comments on his trip, as recorded in his diary and elsewhere, gave unqualified praise to John Oxley for his accurate reports and advice, and to Allmen for his capable organization and administration. The Governor arrived back in Sydney on 21 November and "The Sydney Gazette" stated that Macquarie "...considers the Settlement...adapted...as a Place of Transportation, or secondary Punishment for Delinquents,

3. See photostat of page from Macquarie's Diary in Appendix. 18
who shall be convicted in the Colony." It was very fitting that one of Macquarie's last official duties should take him to the settlement he had planned so carefully. Having relinquished his post in December Macquarie sailed for England on 15 February 1822 in the "Surry", the same ship which carried New South Wales cedar to Europe.

The settlement at Port Macquarie soon became organised and its remoteness proved a deterrent to would be escapers, for the time being at least. Yet some convicts endeavoured to flee and in January 1822 one unfortunate felon was shot dead by his pursuers when he resisted apprehension. As the prisoners became more oriented geographically, attempts to escape were the more frequent, and thus it was that Governor Darling on 26 September 1825 was actuated to ask the Home Government for authority to discontinue the penal settlement at Port Macquarie and throw the area open to free settlers. It took another five years for this to come about but it is significant of the expansion of New South Wales generally that only four years after the inception of Port Macquarie settlement that area should come to be regarded as unsuitable for penal purposes due to its proximity to other settled parts.

By August 1827 "The Australian" wrote, "Port Macquarie, there is no doubt, will now be given up to free settlers, as soon as the prisoners can be removed to Moreton Bay. The Hastings River bids fair, next to the Hunter, to become the most important settlement in the Colony."

EXTENSION OF SETTLEMENT.

The colony at Port Macquarie having been established, it was inevitable that, as time went on, there should be an increasing awareness and interest by the settlers and the Government in the territory adjacent to the new establishment. However, certain factors tended to discourage geographical discovery in the Hastings River region. Foremost of these was the desire of the Government to dispel from the minds of the Port Macquarie felons the idea that escape was something which could be easily and successfully accomplished. As the convicts became the more cognisant of their immediate surrounds, and understood the exact degree of difficulty to be encountered in returning to the free areas to the South, so the number of escapes increased. Because free persons were rigidly excluded from the Hastings River region until 1830, and for some years there was little desire on the part of the Government to investigate neighbouring parts, no expansion of settlement beyond the areas delineated for convict purposes occurred. Entire Government policy was to restrict all contact between Port Macquarie and the outside world. Eventually, the failure to achieve complete isolation in this respect led to the abandonment of the area as a purely penal colony. If free settlers had been
present earlier there is no doubt that expansion of settlement would have occurred sooner but as it was, the opening of adjacent lands did not occur until after free settlement was allowed.

In the time prior to 1830 there was limited investigation by the Government of the immediate environment of the Hastings River to North, South and West. Settlement was rigidly confined to the lands on the banks of the Hastings and Wilson Rivers, and the restrictions imposed were so rigid that it took five years from the first landing at Port Macquarie for a party to be sent to investigate and report upon the river to the North, now known as the Macleay River.

1. "The Sydney Gazette" reported on 8 March 1826 that "Advices were received in town yesterday that a fine river has been discovered 8 or 10 miles to the Northward of Port Macquarie." thus giving the citizens of Sydney the first notification of the discovery of the Macleay River. In the following month "The Australian" gave more detailed comment on this matter and said "By a correspondent we are informed that in consequence of a native black having recently stated at Port Macquarie that there was a river about eight or ten miles distant from the Sydney establishment on the Hastings, a party was despatched under his guidance up the North-West arm of that river, and after carrying their boat about five or six hours found themselves on

2."The Australian" 15 April 1826. P.3.
the promised stream, in about so many miles. They immediately launched the boat, and proceeded across the river, which was 370 yards wide at this place, and its depth three fathoms. Next morning they pursued its course until they found that it disembogued itself into the sea at Trial Bay where the channel narrows itself to about forty yards...Mr. Oxley entered... this river some time ago, but it seems he made a very imperfect survey of it. The next day they returned to the place where they first found the river, thirty seven miles from the sea, and...proceeded towards its source, about twenty miles, through a most fertile country." The report continues and states that, having reached the head of navigation of the river the explorers ascended a mountain from the summit of which they could see Port Macquarie and Trial Bay.

However little notice was taken by the Government of the new discovery and it was not until two years later that "The Australian" advised that 1."Mr. Ralph (Ralle), one of the Government Assistant Surveyors, is about to be despatched to Port Macquarie for the purpose of making a survey of part of the country adjacent to the settlement, and also of the rivers lately fallen in with there, which has been as yet but imperfectly explored." 2.

On 3 April 1828 Colonial Secretary McIsay informed Commandant Crotty of the imminent departure

2.Colonial Secretary's Letters. (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McIsay to Crotty. 3 April 1828.
for Port Macquarie of Mr. Ralfe, Assistant Surveyor, on the "Lucy Ann", to survey the Port Macquarie district as instructed. Crotty was asked to supply Ralfe with a boat and eight men as helpers, but one week later these instructions were amended and the Commandant was informed that Ralfe would take his own boat and eight experienced men to assist him in the work.

By this time settlement to the southward of Port Macquarie on the Manning River had commenced. Settlers in these parts found their communication with Sydney to be through Port Macquarie. The Colonial Secretary wrote to Commandant Crotty and said "It is not desirable to facilitate intercourse with the Manning..." as private settlers were located there, and, as Port Macquarie was an exclusive penal establishment, it was not good that convicts should think that with expanding settlement it would be easier for them to escape to the South. These early settlers on the Manning River were rather privileged in being given access to their holdings through the port on the Hastings River. Mr. Guilding, the first Manning River settler, and those who had established themselves there shortly afterwards soon found that many others sought grants on neighbouring land.

2. Commandant Smyth was advised by letter on 21 August 1829 that Mr. William Wynter, formerly of the Royal Navy, and family were to sail to Port

Macquarie in the "Mary Elizabeth", the vessel built on the Hastings, and were bound for Mr. Wynter's grant on the Manning River. They would be accompanied by one female and five male servants. Wynter occupied land on the North bank of the river, between the present townships of Tinonee and Taree, known as Taree Estate. His name is perpetuated by being given to a street in Taree. Mr. Wynter's descendants are numerous and many live in the vicinity of the land originally granted to him.

In early 1830 Major A.C. Innes arrived at Port Macquarie. Innes, the former Commandant at the Hastings River colony, returned to build up an extensive collection of estates and much wealth in the form of cattle, sheep and horses, together with the agricultural produce of his lands. He exerted a considerable influence on the development of the Hastings River and New England Districts in the ensuing years and, it is probable, no name is so closely linked with history, in the minds of local inhabitants to-day as that of Major Innes. Colonial Secretary McIseay, who was the father-in-law of Innes, informed 1. Commandant Smyth in March 1830 that "By the present opportunity (the 'Mary Elizabeth') Major Innes, two servants and personal baggage proceed to Port Macquarie..." To say the least, Innes in his prime was spectacular, and soon dominated Port Macquarie life in

all spheres. His marriage to the daughter of Colonial Secretary McLeay brought him prestige and a graceful wife who richly endowed the Innes mansion at Lake Innes with a genteel social life that was the joy and envy of all who experienced it. Innes was closely associated with the development of the road linking New England and the coast at Port Macquarie. No step was of so great economic significance to the Hastings River district as this vital connection. The terrain which the road traversed was not the easiest for the road builders and its eventual completion was a triumph for those responsible.

Major Innes had property on the Hastings River at Lake Innes and at Yarras (then known as "Yarrows") and at Rollands Plains on the Wilson River. In addition he owned stations on New England at Glen Innes and Kentucky. It was to ensure serviceable communications for these holdings that Innes worked for the formation of the New England - Port Macquarie road. Wool was one commodity which was important to the economy of New England, and the establishment of a road to the coast at Port Macquarie would have lessened the distance the drays had to cart wool to the seaport. Common practice was to take the wool to the Hunter River though Port Macquarie was much nearer.

Sydney newspapers took up the agitation for the building of this road and in an editorial on
1. 14 March 1840 "The Australian" outlined the advantages to New South Wales of the proposed road. It stated that drays had to cover three hundred miles with wool to Maitland but by the new route, recently surveyed by Mr. Ralph, it was only eighty miles to the sea at Port Macquarie from New England. "The Australian" strongly advised Port Macquarie residents to agitate for the early completion of the road. Also about this time the same newspaper was pressing for the introduction of an overland mail service from Port Macquarie to Port Stephens on a schedule which would do away with the need to use unreliable sea transport for mails.

2. By 28 March 1840 "The Australian" was able to report that the convict gangs had accomplished much on the section of road between Yarras and New England. The same issue of this paper also stated that the General Steam Navigation Company had sent a steamer to Port Macquarie but the joy of the inhabitants at the reception of this modern means of sea transport was tempered by the fact that many harbour improvements were required to admit, and accommodate safely, this and other vessels. A major problem in the early days of free settlement was the provision of adequate and regular shipping facilities between Port Jackson and Port Macquarie. At all times the shipping companies were loath to send their vessels to Port Macquarie.

because of the dangerous nature of the entrance to the harbour. On 30 March 1841 "The Australian" reported that, as a result of the failure of the Port Macquarie Steam Navigation Company to afford a steam service to Sydney, individual merchants were planning a service. Earlier in this same month the Port Macquarie correspondent of "The Australian" lamented that the Port Macquarie Steam Navigation Company had made no progress, and emphasized that the life of the settlement depended upon the establishment of regular sea communications with Sydney.

A regular service was greatly desired by the citizens on the Hastings River and with very good reason. They wished to be able to count on the arrival of ships carrying their goods and, at the same time, being primary producers, they desired to despatch produce which would arrive at Sydney in reasonable order and condition. Perishable commodities were often lost by delay in the arrival of shipping. On the other hand, not having prior advice of the arrival at Port Macquarie of ships, there was not time to prepare goods for despatch to Sydney between the time of arrival and the time of departure of the ships.

The infrequent arrival and despatch of mails was another factor which caused uneasiness and produced many complaints from the inhabitants. Some advocated the development of an overland mail service.

to the Hunter River which would ensure a reasonable degree of regularity, but, at the same time, overland mail services in the colony were invariably more expensive than those by sea. From the earliest days in New South Wales this had been so, as a perusal of the charges laid down in a Governmental notice in "The Sydney Gazette" in 1825 will show. The postal rates given were:

1. Sydney to Port Macquarie 4d.
   Sydney to Windsor 8d.
   Sydney to Campbelltown 8d.
   Sydney to Newcastle 4d.
   Sydney to Bathurst 12d.

Thus it is evident that the rates to places close to Sydney such as Windsor and Campbelltown were twice the cost of the sea service to Port Macquarie. Therefore, the matter of cost was a good reason why the regular sea service should be preferred by the settlers to the overland service which would be much slower.

"The Australian" in 1840 recorded the establishment of a postal service to the North of Port Macquarie as follows: "A regular overland line of communication between Port Macquarie and the Macleay District, has been established; a messenger leaving Port Macquarie with the letter bags every Monday and returning from Kempsey on Thursday." The route of the

l. postman followed the Hastings River to the Blackmans Point ferry, thence to Ballengarra and along the Wilson River to the site of the former convict agricultural establishment, on what is William Warler's property to-day. It crossed the stream there and proceeded northwards to meet the Macleay River tributaries a few miles distant. "The Australian" gave credit for the organisation of this service, and many others which benefitted the Port Macquarie and adjoining districts, to Mr. Horatio Tozer. At this time Tozer was the proprietor of prosperous and expanding business interests in Port Macquarie. He erected a building in Horton Street which is to-day in a state of good preservation and in its restored condition is used by the Commonwealth Bank.

It was natural that for a long time the main road to the North should go through Rollands Plains. From the time in 1826 when the exploration party from Port Macquarie located the Macleay River, the entrance to which had been charted formerly by Oxley, this route had been developed, not only to join the settlements on the two rivers, but also to serve the inhabitants who lived between Port Macquarie and the Macleay River.

3. In the "Historical Records of Australia", there is a copy of a letter from Governor Gipps to Lord John Russell informing the Home Government that

1. See map. APPENDICES. 1, 9, 10, 13 and 16

2. See appended photographs for picture of Tozer's building (now Commonwealth Bank building), Horton Street, Port Macquarie. 40, 48, 51 and 54, of APPENDIX.

roads were being established in New South Wales to connect the grazing areas of the West with coastal towns at Port Macquarie, the Clarence River and Moreton Bay. It is quite clear that the authorities in New South Wales saw the value of these links with the inland in development of the colony. Consequently, they were anxious they should be constructed as early as possible. On 13 April 1841 "The Australian" reported that additional convict labour was to be placed on the New England - Port Macquarie road and, on 220 May 1841 advised that a good bush road, about ninety five miles long, would be opened in about six months. Before the road was officially declared open in 1842 "The Australian" proudly announced that the road construction progress between New England and Port Macquarie enabled a special supplement of its newspaper, printed on 23 December 1841, to be delivered at New England on the morning of 26 December 1841 via Port Macquarie. Frequent editorials in all the Sydney newspapers at this period acclaimed the great advantages which would follow the development of the new road.

Although it was not until September 1842 that "The Sydney Gazette" printed an announcement that the New England road from Port Macquarie was open to carry all produce, "The Australian" reported in March 1842 that its Port Macquarie correspondent had written saying "We have, at last, the pleasure of announcing

the safe arrival at Port Macquarie of the first bales of the 'golden fleece' of the table land. Yesterday evening (March 10) two drays with sixteen bales of wool from Kentucky, Major Innes's chief station at New England, arrived in town..." The wool was immediately shipped on the "Maitland", and left on 11 March 1842 for Sydney.

Thus the first effective transport link between New England and Port Macquarie was created, and the interest of the energetic Major Innes in this work was very obvious. He was a leader among many who had advocated this development, and it was a fortunate day for both regions when the new route was opened.
There is need for close investigation of the penal system at Port Macquarie for it was in this system of control that we find the main reasons why the settlement, begun there as a place of secondary punishment for the worst offenders in New South Wales, should have been abandoned so early as being unsuitable for this purpose. Although it took five years after 1821 for an official declaration of the proposed withdrawal of convicts from Port Macquarie, it was apparent to the authorities, within a much lesser period, that the colony would not develop as Governor Macquarie had planned. However, certain external factors contributed to the abandonment at Port Macquarie of the purely penal colony, and both of these were associated with the general expansion of population and settlement in New South Wales. These points will be considered at a later stage. Primarily we have to study the domestic policy at Port Macquarie in the early convict period.

We have seen that the aim of Governor Macquarie was to establish there a place of secondary, or greater punishment and, in the instructions for the administration of the new sphere, there is ample evidence that this aim was to be adhered to closely. The convicts despatched to the new settlement were largely those who, being under sentence in New South Wales, were convicted of additional crimes in the colony and consequently were forwarded immediately to Port Macquarie.

The new settlement differed from that made at Port Jackson in 1788 in that, while the first convicts to arrive in New South Wales were convinced, with minor exceptions, that the isolation of their new abode was sufficient to make attempts at escape impracticable, those who were landed at Port Macquarie were well aware that to the South lay the Hunter River and Port Jackson regions to which they could attempt escape,
So the military force at Port Macquarie found itself in a predicament which had not been encountered formerly in New South Wales. It was now necessary not only to supervise the activities of the convicts, and keep them at work, but also there was the need to prevent their escape. We may inquire what should be so difficult in maintaining the security of the convicts at Port Macquarie, and find the answer in several factors. Firstly there was the incentive to escape which has been mentioned above. Secondly, and most important, was the fact that in instructions to the Commandant it was emphasized clearly that the Port Macquarie colony should achieve self-sufficiency as soon as possible. Therefore the military had to obtain from the convicts a better result, in terms of achievement at government works, than was either expected or achieved in other parts of New South Wales. Absolute slave-driving techniques were soon found to be unserviceable at Port Macquarie and so there developed a mild form of rewards - something unheard of in this new land - but vitally essential in the conditions peculiar to Port Macquarie. Perhaps an extra food ration, some additional leisure, a less callous control, or some other small privilege, made life a little more bearable for the convicts. Thus something could be done, in absolute contravention of government policy, to get better results from the felons. Unfortunately, with many convicts the slightest leniency was construed as a lack of authority and power to control. So attempts at escape were made by convicts who assumed that advantage should be taken of all opportunities to flee from the place of punishment.

On the other hand, these prisoners should have been worked in irons, as prescribed punishment for most of those at Port Macquarie, and thus their escape would have been made difficult. However, to facilitate the operation of government enterprises at Port Macquarie, and the farming activities in particular, it was found desirable, and even necessary, to unfetter the convicts as much as possible. Finally, we have to
remember that the development of at least six government farms over a wide area meant the effectiveness of supervision was greatly diminished. The military force which operated at Port Macquarie would have been ample to control the number of prisoners in a confined area but, with the expansion of the Hastings River colony, this surveillance was reduced.

In these, and other factors lay the reasons why the settlement could not be managed in the strict fashion laid down in military regulations. The result was that while the majority of convicts benefited while continuing under these different conditions it was inevitable that others would capitalize on the opportunities afforded to escape. It soon became obvious to the authorities at Sydney that many felons were leaving Port Macquarie in an unauthorized fashion. The government realized that a penal colony, of the type earlier envisaged as able to operate successfully at Port Macquarie, must be located at a greater distance from Port Jackson so that its very remoteness would hinder escape.

We have a measure of information regarding the settlement at Port Macquarie and the treatment of felons in that place from which our own conclusions may be drawn. One of the major problems in gaining an accurate picture of the happenings at Port Macquarie is the absence of any but official accounts of events there. Certainly "The Australian" and "The Monitor", from their inception, reported on, and criticised, the administration, but, from a rigidly controlled and exclusive government settlement, it was extremely difficult to obtain accurate reports. Our suppositions are that Port Macquarie followed in many respects the organisation of the penal settlement at Sydney though, if humanitarian treatment of convicts was little in evidence in Sydney, we need not assume that conditions, in this respect, were worse at Port Macquarie. In fact, one gains the impression that life at Port Macquarie was somewhat easier for convicts than elsewhere in New South Wales. The prisoner who conformed to regulations could expect some rewards.
Governor Macquarie would probably have looked with more favour on the administrative measures taken at Fort Macquarie than did his successors. To reform men was Macquarie's aim. Having visited the Hastings River colony in 1821 Macquarie wrote in his diary that he "... inspected all the convicts, 94 in number and found them all looking well and healthy - well clothed and without any complaint whatever." We suppose that for such an official visit the military control would have put on their best appearance and, it is probable, no convict dared express his real opinion of the regime - after all life could be made very awkward for him, to say the least, on Macquarie's departure.

However, we must not assume that convict life at Port Macquarie was pleasant. There is ample evidence to the contrary. Commandant Rolland wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 7 July 1824 saying "...I regret the necessity which has compelled me to resort to the frequent infliction of severe corporal punishment..." He added that the early completion of eight solitary cells could be expected to reduce the number of corporal punishments. The usual punishment, said Rolland, was fifty lashes.

But, despite everything, the Commandants found that a large number of their charges did not have it in their natures to respond to anything but the coarse treatment to which they had become accustomed. So we find that Captain Rolland, Allman's successor as Commandant, whose letter we have quoted above, soon became aware of the deficiencies of the system at Port Macquarie. Common offences of convicts, while serving their time there, were refusing work, malingering, destroying tools and equipment, assaulting fellow

1. Governor Macquarie's Diary (Mitchell Library) Entry 8 November 1821.
2. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie. Rolland to Goulburn - 7 July 1824.
convicts, threatening and offering violence to military guards, pilfering and the like. With these offences the punishment was hard and swift.

On some occasions at Port Macquarie justice was slow. We have the case of Patrick Malone, a hardened criminal, who was imprisoned at Port Macquarie for a murder he had committed there and for which he awaited trial. Yet he had to remain for three months before being despatched to Sydney for trial. From the correspondence we find that Malone was recommended to the Colonial Secretary by Commandant Gillman for immediate execution. This suggestion was refused and on 7 June Malone was ordered to Sydney. The prisoner had on several occasions deserted to the bush so Gillman wished to make an example of him in front of his fellows in order that the severity of the sentence imposed would act as a deterrent to others who had escape in mind. In March 1825 Malone deserted to the bush with two others, one of whose fingers he cut off. On being apprehended and returned to the gaol at Port Macquarie Malone demanded tobacco and when this was refused he hit the man, William Elliott, on the head with an axe thus killing him. Malone was asked what justification he had for this frightful deed, and he gave the laconic reply, "I want to be hanged." Gillman sought to oblige the murderer but the matter was taken from his hands. Gillman had always maintained that escaped convicts, on recapture and conviction, should be returned to Port Macquarie to serve the additional punishment where they would be an example to their fellows.

Often, it is quite apparent, offenders received immediate and severe punishment which would act as a deterrent to other convicts.

contemplating similar offences. For example, Allman reported I. to the Colonial Secretary, on 6 September 1822, the stealing of two boats at Port Macquarie and the escape in these boats of convicts. The execution of Till, the ringleader in this enterprise, and his companions was publicised in "The 2. Sydney Gazette" of 15 November 1822, as follows: "On Friday morning last was executed...Till for stealing the boat from Port Macquarie. The unhappy men seemed to entertain affecting views of their terrible situation, and it is hoped died in peace."

3. In late 1824 eight prisoners at Port Macquarie seized the sloop "Isabella" from that harbour and put to sea. Rolland immediately ordered that, in future, a guard should travel on ships from Sydney, or be put aboard on arrival at Port Macquarie. This piracy aroused considerable interest in Sydney and the Governor soon put an inquiry into operation to determine why a number of convicts should have the opportunity to take the vessel. Rolland died shortly afterwards but his acting successor, Lt. Carmac, reported to the Colonial Secretary that Rolland, to avoid a repetition of the offence, as a precautionary measure, had removed from the crew of the Pilot's boat all men whose sentences exceeded four years. The outcome of this move was that it eliminated most of the men who could be of use in the boat as, generally, the sentences of the men at Port Macquarie

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) - Port Macquarie - Allman to Goulburn - 3 September 1822.


3. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie - Rolland to Goulburn. 29 September 1824.
were much longer than four years. Therefore Carmac, on 1 January 1825, asked for permission to engage free persons in the boat. He wished to offer, also, indulgences for good behaviour and service to such long term prisoners who were so employed. The object of these moves was to secure safety for the Pilot Boat and visiting shipping. The case is an example of something which was unavoidable at Port Macquarie.

Government services had to be maintained and this meant felons had to be given positions of trust as there were few other persons to perform all the duties of this nature at the convict settlement. It was futile for instructions to be issued from Sydney debarring convicts from these tasks because an impasse would result.

By 1825 convicts were not only escaping from Port Macquarie but some who deserted from Moreton Bay were apprehended at Port Macquarie as they moved down the coast. In November 1825 the settlement was enlivened by the arrival on foot on the North bank of the Hastings River of four deserters from Moreton Bay, named Smith, Mills, Walsh and Longbottom. These men told a dramatic story of a journey lasting five weeks and made within a few miles of the coast. They reported the crossing of two large rivers and many smaller ones. Having interrogated these men Commandant Gillman came to the conclusion that they had not travelled on foot but had made use of a boat. He reported the matter to the Colonial Secretary advising that a constable had been sent as far North as Trial Bay to see if he could discover a boat. Another letter from Gillman to the Colonial Secretary on 25 November reported that the prisoner Longbottom had confessed the escape was made in a stolen barge which had been wrecked on the coast. After this the men continued southwards on foot, hiding


their stolen muskets and a bayonet. Having rendered this account
Longbottom accompanied the District Constable to Point Plomer where
the hidden weapons were recovered. Before deserting from the penal
settlement at Moreton Bay these men had been involved in murder.

The fact that convicts were now escaping from a place as
distant from Port Jackson as was Moreton Bay, indicates the comparative
closeness of Port Macquarie to the seat of government. It is little
wonder the authorities realised that only bars would hold many of
the more incorrigible felons in the Hastings River settlement.

In reading official correspondence one is impressed by
repeated complaints from Sydney to the Commandants at Port Macquarie
regarding increasing laxity in convict control. Attempts to escape,
many of them successful, continued and the Governor, in the early stages
of the settlement, emphasised the dire penalty which awaited the
recaptured convicts, particularly the "capital respite". The Colonial
Secretary wrote to Commandant Allman as follows: "It is the express
desire of His Excellency, Sir Thomas Brisbane, that you inform the
prisoners who have been sent to Port Macquarie under Commutation
Warrants to be worked in double irons for life that should they effect
their escape from the Settlement His Excellency has resolved that as
soon as they are again apprehended they shall be Executed."

"The Australian" printed on 24 February 1825 a report of the
parade for execution in Sydney of William Yems, sentenced to be shot
for desertion from His Majesty's Forces. This report indicates that
something about Port Macquarie did not appeal to the Port Jackson
felon. With formalities completed, and sentence about to be executed,
the unhappy Yems was informed of his reprieve and commutation of
sentence to transportation for life to Port Macquarie. The newspaper

Goulburn to Allman, 17 July 1822.
1. Reported that far from showing joy at this prospect Yems "On hearing this expressed his wish rather to be shot than sent to Port Macquarie." We do not know whether Yems sought death rather than life under the penal system then operating in New South Wales, or that he considered Port Macquarie, specifically, a place of such inhumanity as to be avoided even at the cost of his own life.

2. On 20 October 1824 Commandant Rolland sent to Goulburn what may be called a humane appeal regarding the conditions of the convicts at Port Macquarie. In a sound and thoughtful letter he expressed concern at the lack of future prospects for the felons. The advance party of skilled convicts who landed early and prepared the colony for the reception of those who were to follow were promised a reward for industry, but the majority of those who came afterwards were in a different category. For these Rolland suggested the development of a system of incentives so that the convicts who conformed to the demands of the penal colony and did not hinder the administration should be awarded some ameliorative conditions. He considered a better diet and mitigation of punishment suitable rewards for industry and good behaviour.

Correspondence and reports of the Surgeons at Port Macquarie indicate that these men were commonly very considerate and painstaking in their treatment of convicts. For example, on 23 March 1823, Mr Fenton, Surgeon, made an appeal to Commandant Allman for issues of fresh meat and lime juices to accelerate the recovery of ill and injured prisoners. It frequently occurred that military officers clashed with the Surgeons over treatment. The military often thought certain convicts were malingering and suspected that the Surgeons were too easily taken in by plausible pleas of illness. However the Governor always


2. Colonial Secretary’s Letters. (Inwards) Port Macquarie. Rolland to Goulburn. 20 October 1824.
made it clear that the hospital was the preserve of the Surgeons and, as they alone determined the state of health of the convicts, treatment prescribed by them must not be interfered with by the military. General practice at Fort Macquarie was for the prisoners to have an inspection by the Surgeon every Sunday.

The types of men sent to Fort Macquarie were varied though most had in common the fact that they had been convicted for serious offences. Many were capital respitees who had been transported to Fort Macquarie for life sentences. On 27 May 1823 Governor Brisbane reprieved eight men sentenced to death for felony and sent them to Port Macquarie to be worked in double irons for life. If this punishment were carried out as Brisbane wished it done it is apparent that these men could well have preferred death. However, as mentioned earlier, it was impracticable to work most of the convicts in irons, generally. They were expected to work hard and, as production was eagerly sought by the administration, it became necessary to feed the men well and give them a reasonable amount of comfort and convenience. Thus, most convicts at Port Macquarie who were industrious found their fetters freed to an extent, and life became rather more bearable within the limits which, of necessity, had to be imposed to ensure the maintenance of a type of convict control which would satisfy, to some degree, the requirements of military regulations.

The administration at Port Macquarie found itself confronted by three major problems which, throughout the entire penal period, restricted development of the settlement.

Firstly, as the vast majority of convicts were second offenders it is apparent that control was more difficult than elsewhere
in New South Wales. Port Macquarie was settled with primary aim of being a place of punishment for those who transgressed again while undergoing sentence. This factor, taken in conjunction with the two others which follow, meant that an extreme and oftentimes uncontrollable burden rested on the shoulders of the Port Macquarie Commandant.

The second administrative problem arose from the lack of supervision and control which followed upon the expansion of settlement on the Hastings River. There was diversification of activities, with each gang requiring supervision, that made co-operative control replace repressive control in many instances. There were timber gangs, boat building gangs and groups engaged on limeburning and brickmaking. On the numerous farms were many small parties spread over large areas. These, and other tasks, divided the convicts into numerous groups to the supervision of which only limited numbers of overseers could be appointed.

Thirdly, as we have mentioned earlier, the convicts realised how close they were to the Hunter River and Sydney, and they sought by escape to reach the comparatively bright lights of these places.

Generally, then, policy laid down for the Port Macquarie settlement followed traditional lines. In actual fact it is apparent that the penal policy had to be tempered locally to suit requirements, and this the Commandants did. Evidence of this relaxation of regulations is found in the repeated protests from the Governor, and in equally frequent demands for a hardening of control.

Activities which occupied the convicts at Port Macquarie
were as varied as one might expect in a settlement striving for economic independence. Evidence given before the Select Committee on Secondary Punishments casts a fairly clear light on the policy pursued in the early years at the colony. Typical information is the evidence of Lt-Col. Henry Gillman, former Commandant (1825-6), when he was before the Committee.

I."Q. In what description of work were they (the convicts) employed?"

"A. Some of them were mechanics; I had all sorts of work for them; the time I was there I built a church, I built a factory for women, and various other public works; I built a brig of 120 tons burden; I had a sugar plantation of perhaps 400 or 500 acres, and an agricultural establishment of 1,000 acres or more; an amazing number of establishments under me on the settlement." Gillman also outlined details of hours worked by the prisoners, types and quality of food provided, classes of punishment, and his own policy in administering the settlement.

It is worthy of mention that many convicts sent to Port Macquarie applied for, and received, delay in draft so that they could settle their affairs in Sydney. This situation applied particularly to those who had received some measure of freedom after serving a sentence at Port Jackson. These developed private interests but succumbed to the temptations of their previous dishonest modes of existence and, being apprehended and convicted, were summarily despatched to Port Macquarie. Another type was the free settler who offended in New South Wales as he too, under the law as it stood, had also to be sent to the new establishment. Most of the prisoners at Port Macquarie were of a class who were second offenders and had failed to rehabilitate themselves.

1. Minutes of Evidence taken before Select Committee on Secondary Punishments 1832. Question No. 125. p.34.
By early 1825 Governor Brisbane had proposed a graduated series of punishments for offences in New South Wales. He recommended that Port Macquarie should be the first place of punishment beyond Sydney. Runaways from there should not be returned to serve their punishment for escaping but would be sent to more remote place, namely the new establishment at Moreton Bay. The very worst offenders were to be despatched to the most hated place of all, as far as prisoners were concerned, Norfolk Island.

Brisbane, being aware of the deficiencies of the Hastings River region as a penal colony, developed this plan which he hoped would solve the problem of disposing of the worst offenders in New South Wales. He wrote to the Home Government in 1825 saying that "As Port Macquarie has become almost useless as a penal settlement from the many facilities afforded to the escape of prisoners by extension of Settlers along Hunter's River..." it was his intention to develop Moreton Bay as a penal settlement. He continued, "I have adopted this step with less diffidence as the establishment of Penal Depots is the best means of paving the way for the introduction of free population as the example of Port Macquarie abundantly testifies." Brisbane therefore pursued a definite policy and certainly the same had much to commend it. The proposal to break the soil and open the country by convict labour, which could then be withdrawn, would do much to attract settlers, because they would not have to experience the heartbreak and extreme toil commonly associated with development of new land in New South Wales at this period. The scheme was original and Brisbane hoped for much from it.

In 1825 Governor Brisbane informed the Home Government that in his first three years as Governor of New South Wales he had great

1. Transcript of Missing Letters in Governor's Despatches. (Mitchell Library) Governor Brisbane to Earl Bathurst. 21 May 1825.
difficulty to find employment for the convicts in his charge but now the demand for labour was considerable. This letter contained the information that at Port Macquarie were located 1,100 convicts and he regarded them as "...as Pioneers to the free Settlers..." as Port Macquarie might soon have free settlers. He continued to emphasise in letters the importance of his new scheme to open land in the colony.

Thus, Earl Bathurst was advised by Brisbane that Port Macquarie could be made available readily for free settlement if such was the desire of the Government. Removal of convicts to the more distant Moreton Bay area would eliminate much of the problem of escaping convicts which existed at Port Macquarie. Many of the convicts who escaped from the penal settlement at Port Macquarie met with disaster. One Sydney gentleman, Mr Francis Short of Phillip Street, claimed in a letter to the Colonial Secretary that of nine prisoners who escaped at one stage, one survived much injured, six were killed by aborigines and two drowned in attempting a river crossing.

The problem of escaping convicts became graver and so it was that the Governor decided in 1826 to clear the prisoners from the Hastings River region and to make way for free settlers. Having received approval from England for this transfer, steps were taken to effect the removal of convicts to other establishments.

In April 1826 "The Australian" commented forcibly on the change of policy regarding Port Macquarie and condemned the settlement for having made so little progress since its foundation. "The Australian" said, "The practice of sentencing prisoners to Port Macquarie is for the present discontinued, and it is expected that the place, if it remain a penal settlement will be used as such on a very limited scale. Most of the prisoners there will be removed forthwith to Sydney...The extent of

cultivation at Port Macquarie; the improvements affected there, and the progress made in every shape are so trifling in comparison with the number of hands that have been employed, that these facts alone are sufficient to render a change of system necessary... The heat of the climate, the unfitness of the soil... are... causes... The removal of the men... will do no harm in any respect." We cannot agree with this newspaper that soil and climate encountered there were limiting factors in the development of the colony as it is obvious that there is much fertile land in the area settled, and the climate is ideal for most agricultural activities.

1. "The Australian" reported on 12 April 1826 that "The Chairman of the Quarter Sessions and the Major of Brigade, proceed to Port Macquarie this day to select 500 men from among the prisoners now under sentence at that Settlement." We shall see that the plan to take the majority of convicts from the Hastings River area did not develop very rapidly and that, while many were removed, a great number were retained there for some years to come. With the arrival of Governor Darling the trend of administration, as developed by his predecessor, was changed to a certain extent and the plan to remove all convicts from the Port Macquarie area was abandoned. In addition we hear no more of Brisbane's scheme that convicts develop new areas prior to the introduction of free settlers.

To the time of Brisbane's departure from the colony many convicts had escaped from Port Macquarie and in 1826 Brisbane communicated to Earl Bathurst the fact that "... three Approvers and 98 Runaways..." had escaped at various times. He stated also that 138 of the worst convicts, who had been sentenced to servitude in Van Diemen's Land, were now at Port Macquarie and Newcastle. So the Port Macquarie problems became clearer. Desiring


a remote place in which to punish the worst types of prisoners, Port Macquarie had been selected but, within a few years, it became evident that the closeness of the Hastings River area to the Hunter River meant that escaping convicts could find their way back to the free settlements with very little trouble. So it was that Brisbane continued to use Norfolk Island for the extreme offenders, and developed Moreton Bay for those who could not be controlled satisfactorily at Port Macquarie.

Governor Darling, as we have seen, continued the penal settlement at Port Macquarie and proceeded to instil more efficiency into the administration at that place. By 1827 there were frequent protests from Sydney against the leniency shown to convicts on the Hastings River, and Darling condemned the Commandant’s measures at Port Macquarie where, he claimed, extra rations were given and the convicts kept quiet by "indulgences". He said "My own opinion is that every man at the Penal Settlements should be worked in irons..." As we learnt, there was some leniency shown to the convicts at Port Macquarie and we may deduce that the life of most there was not so unbearable as that suffered by many of their fellows elsewhere in New South Wales.

To return to 1826, and the proposed transfer of some prisoners to Moreton Bay, we find that most preparations for the development of that northern colony involved the collaboration of the Commandant at Port Macquarie, who was

I. Governor’s Despatches. (Mitchell Library) Darling to Earl Bathurst, IO February 1827.
required to provide labour for the expansion of this Northern establishment. In March 1826 the Colonial Secretary wrote to I. Commandant Wright "...that as it is probable a number of Prisoners will shortly be withdrawn...the additional wings of the prisoners' barracks would not be required. The same letter also stated that "...a portion of the military stationed at Port Macquarie will be withdrawn." On 11 April 1826 Wright was requested to select artisans to be held in readiness to proceed to Captain Logan at Moreton Bay. The men required were as follows:

- 4 Carpenters
- 2 Sawyers
- 1 Wheelwright
- 2 Bricklayers
- 1 Stonemason
- 1 Stonemasoner
- 1 Plasterer
- 1 Blacksmith.

Wright was instructed that all men selected were to be capable, and one of the carpenters was to be able to erect 2 plain buildings. It was two days later Wright received information to the effect that Mr. Carter and Captain Gillman would arrive shortly at Port Macquarie and, with Wright, would form a board to select those convicts best suited for return to Sydney or for disposal in some other fashion than to remain at Port Macquarie.

On 22 April 1826 Colonial Secretary McLeay complained again that indulgences were being granted to prisoners at

I. Colonial Secretary's Letters. Outwards. (Port Macquarie) McLeay to Wright. 31 March 1826.

Port Macquarie in the form of extra food and being allowed to be absent from public work one day in the week. The fact of the matter was that the Commandant did break the regulations concerning the administration of penal settlements, not so much on account of humanity, but for the expediency which has been mentioned earlier. We have seen that the local authorities were always prepared to grant concessions to those who worked well and gave no trouble.

With the announced withdrawal of certain convicts from Port Macquarie there was immediate action to put the transfer into operation. Commandant Wright was requested to send all available mechanics to Sydney, and was severely criticized by the Colonial Secretary when he tended to ignore these instructions. Wright sent labourers instead of skilled men because he was held responsible for the running of the establishment and to have lost all his capable tradesmen would have meant that efficiency would fall immediately. It appears that Wright was loathe to lose men as in July 1826, he was rebuked again by the Colonial Secretary for having sent only 45 convicts back to Sydney on the "Glory".

However, many convicts were withdrawn during 1826 and Governor Darling endeavoured to tighten the administration in the penal settlements at Port Macquarie, Moreton Bay and Norfolk Island. In its issue of 26 July "The Gazette" complimented the Government for having recalled more than 500 prisoners from Port Macquarie and there appeared a proclamation in this newspaper on 16 August 1826 under the signature of Darling which declared "Port Macquarie, Moreton Bay and Norfolk Island to be places within the said colony"

of New South Wales and its Dependencies to which the several
offenders convicted in New South Wales and being under
Sentence or Order of Transportation shall be sent or
transported." One week later Governor Darling followed this
up by ordering severe restriction upon contact with the
three penal settlements mentioned above.

Under the regulations the local offender, though it
was his first brush with the law, had to be sent to Port
Macquarie because that centre was the repository of all who
were convicted in the courts in New South Wales. "The Sydney
Gazette" of 3 March 1826 forcefully criticized this scheme
maintaining that while some of the most vicious criminals
from England were given to settlers, local offenders, no
matter how mild the offence, were sent to Port Macquarie
with the very worst offenders.

2. The first issue of the new Sydney paper, "The Monitor",
appeared on 19 May 1826. Immediately, the editor began a
policy of forthright criticism wherever he could find a
target for his pen. In this critical attitude he pursued
lines similar to those adopted by "The Australian" and, as
a result, soon experienced as much dislike and pronounced
opposition from the Government as did "The Australian".
Criticism of administrative activities was not welcomed in
the new colony and measures to repress the free newspapers
became harsh. At a later stage the introduction of these
two papers into the settlement at Port Macquarie was
expressly forbidden. A circular to Smyth forbade "...introduction of
the Australian and Monitor into the Settlement under your command."


3. Colonial Secretary's Letters. (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to
Smyth, 15 August 1829. Containing Government Circular No.29/42.
Reporting the transfer of prisoners to Sydney from Port Macquarie "The Monitor" mentions that well known English criminal, Bill Soames, who served part of his sentence at Port Macquarie. The newspaper said "46 persons have been drafted from Port Macquarie per the brig "Glory". Among them is the famous Bill Soames a character of more than ordinary notoriety. Bill had been sent to New South Wales and was allowed his liberty on condition he would never return to England. But weary of banishment he returned to his native soil, where he again resumed his former course of life, and was convicted of picking pockets in February 1825 at the Old Bailey. He was sentenced to transportation, arrived in the ship 'Henry', and was immediately removed to Port Macquarie, agreeably to regulations existing relative to returned convicts." Many felons found themselves in a similar position because they were not capable of grasping the opportunity offered them.

In March 1826 Governor Darling received a somewhat original suggestion from the Home Government whereby the worst offenders could be the more effectively disposed of. Earl Bathurst wrote that he agreed it was necessary to find a remote place for the incorrigible prisoners and recommended "...the West Coast of New Holland..." in the vicinity of Sharks Bay so that Moreton Bay could take the place of Port Macquarie and that Port Macquarie, as Governor Brisbane had suggested in his letter of 21 May 1825, be thrown open for settlement to the free persons in New South Wales.

1. "Monitor" 7 July 1826, P.4
Governor Darling gave much consideration to his responsibilities and appears to have devoted a great amount of time and thought to finding ways and means of fulfilling more satisfactorily his obligations to the colony. One of the most illuminating letters concerning Darling's policy is that of 31 August 1826 to the Home Government. Darling proposed to reduce the convict strength at Port Macquarie so that free settlement could commence eventually. Of over 1600 convicts at Port Macquarie 500 odd were to be removed to roadwork in chains elsewhere in New South Wales, to relieve better behaved convicts who thus would become available for allocation to free settlers. The remainder of the convicts at Port Macquarie were to be removed on the same basis at a later stage so that an equal number of more reliable convicts could be assigned. The total aim of Darling's policy was to make convicts of the best character available to work for free settlers, using felons from Port Macquarie on the roads and in other public works to replace these, and thus clear Port Macquarie for free settlement. The convicts who had worked well and not given trouble in New South Wales would receive, as a reward, an earlier step towards eventual freedom.

Most felons in New South Wales had a horror of being sent to Norfolk Island mainly because the administration there was harsh and uncompromising. In addition, escape was neither to be contemplated nor possible due to the isolation of this remote place. Human comforts were few and those convicts who served their time at Port Macquarie and Moreton Bay enjoyed conditions infinitely preferable to those suffered by their contemporaries at Norfolk Island. This was the only penal colony in New South Wales where the prisoners were not
I. as Commandant. One extract states that "...the one (settlement) to which you are now proceeding is the oldest except Newcastle, of those appropriated to Penal Purposes, and that from every testimony it is evident that a system of relaxation, petty traffic and abuse has crept in (and is now becoming inveterate) which will require your utmost vigilance and energy to detect and counteract." The letter informed Smyth, in no uncertain terms, that his clear duty was to restore Port Macquarie as a place of punishment in which the prisoners would be readily aware that they were there to undergo a penalty.

In the whole colony, morality of females was at a low ebb. Women convicts were generally depraved, and attempts at assisted immigration of unmarried females brought many to the colony who had been thieves and prostitutes in the towns of England. Those who were not corrupted on departure from England soon succumbed to the temptations offered on board ship and in New South Wales.

Some of these women found their way to Port Macquarie where their presence did not make the Commandant's task any easier. Elsewhere in this work attention is drawn to the fact that at one stage the Chaplain, Rev. John Cross, refused to minister to the inmates of the Female Factory at Port Macquarie because of persistent misbehaviour and unruliness.

Administrative practice was to allow wives to join their convict husbands at Port Macquarie and, with very few exceptions, these women constituted the majority of free persons if we do not consider the military personnel. Of course, many wives were themselves convicted persons.

I, Colonial Secretary's Letters. (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Captain Smyth. 7 November 1828.
In the collected "Petitions of Prisoners" (Mitchell Library) there are numerous letters from prisoners at Port Macquarie requesting that the Governor would favour them by allowing these wives to join them. A petition to Goulburn, dated 7 May 1823, from George Davie, requested that his de facto wife be sent to Port Macquarie as he had been banished to that place. The Colonial Secretary's reply was "...that he had better be sent to Newcastle and called in church." From the advice it is apparent that an effort was made by the authorities in New South Wales to ensure that something was done to meet the needs of the prisoners. Practically every request from a prisoner for an opportunity to have his wife with him was granted. Many convicts who had wives with them in New South Wales had trouble with them, mainly on account of immorality, a very common failing at this time. In the time of Macquarie it was estimated that there were about 1,000 illegitimate children in New South Wales. For example,

1. "Petitions of Prisoners" Davie to Goulburn, 7 May 1823. (Mitchell Library).
2. "Petitions of Prisoners" Colonial Secretary's Correspondence (Mitchell Library) Letter dated 7 May 1823.
allowed to have their wives with them. Even "The Sydney Gazette", commonly an unflagging supporter of Government policy, was moved in 1827 to pass severe condemnation on such a barbarous restriction. The paper mentioned particularly that Norfolk Island was the only place where this regulation operated.

I. On 21 August 1827 the Colonial Secretary queried the appointment of G.F. Jackson as Chief Constable at Port Macquarie. McLeay requested that Commandant Owen should explain how this appointment was made as Jackson had been convicted of wilful murder. Therefore it appears that many prisoners with capital convictions were still being given positions of responsibility in the penal settlement and, as usual, the Commandant, who was forced to use the man because no more suitable person was available, was called upon to explain his actions. Escaping convicts were a problem still

2. and, on 3 April 1828, Commandant Crotty was instructed by Colonial Secretary McLeay to ensure that recaptured escapees were to be returned to Sydney immediately for prompt despatch to Norfolk Island.

The Governor remained unconvinced that all possible was being done at Port Macquarie to ensure that the felons were being controlled in a manner that would make them suffer sufficiently for their misdeeds. So it is interesting to peruse Captain Smyth's instructions on his appointment

I. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Owen. 21 August 1828.

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Crotty. 3 April 1828.
have Clarke returned to Sydney immediately.

In the early days at Port Macquarie no provision was made for the control of women convicts. A start was made to construct a place of detention for women, similar to that which existed at Paramatta.

By 1825 the authorities had almost completed at Port Macquarie a log building to hold fifty female convicts, as officials in Sydney desired such because of the difficulty they had in classifying female convicts at the Parramatta Factory. At this time the Parramatta Factory was a centre of debauchery and, as it was desired to separate the hardened offenders from those who were more acceptable socially, some of this latter class were transferred to Port Macquarie.

Gillman asked for flax or wool for carding to be sent to keep these women occupied as he had no other employment for them. Until they were assigned to the wives of the free persons at Port Macquarie, the female convicts were held in the Factory and were supposed to occupy their time by following certain occupations similar to the carding mentioned above.

I. Commandant Gillman wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 30 October 1825 reporting that the Female Factory at Port Macquarie contained only five women and, as the cost of maintenance of the institution for so few inmates was excessive, it was desirable that he be given permission to assign these women to the wives of the overseers at the settlement. As an alternative he suggested that more women be sent from Sydney and sufficient wool for carding be provided to keep them occupied.

I. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie. Gillman to Goulburn, 30 October 1825.
After 1830 Female convicts were available for assignment to new settlers, who were themselves married. No female convict was permitted assignment to any man who did not have a wife. Assignment brought to many a release from the confines of the Female Factory. From information available it is evident that the institution for females at Port Macquarie was controlled somewhat better than that at Parramatta. Closer control ensured that Port Macquarie females were prevented from associating with males. There is no evidence of large scale promiscuity by the female section of the Port Macquarie penal colony and consequently illegitimate births were comparatively few.

With assignment and emancipation females were able, in many instances, to effect marriage with fellow convicts and free men. The dearth of women in New South Wales particularly in more remote and newly opened areas, gave many women matrimonial opportunities which would normally have passed them by. To live in the homes of free settlers took many women into an environment with which they had not met before. The wives of early free settlers at Port Macquarie set standards of morality, cleanliness, and general decency, which favourably influenced the lives of the assigned women.

It is mentioned elsewhere that after 1830 many old and invalid women were sent to the Female Factory at Port Macquarie. These people, being unsatisfactory types for assignment, required maintenance for some years to come. When Resident Magistrate Benjamin Sullivan, was appointed in 1832, he was instructed to assign the women convicts at Port Macquarie. As many as possible were assigned, and the remainder stayed in the Factory. Demand for female labour was such that it could not be met. Although the Governor
requested transfer of additional women from Parramatta to Port Macquarie for assignment, it was found in 1841, at least, that no women were available in Sydney.

We have noted that, except for Norfolk Island, it was government policy to permit convicts to have their wives with them at the penal settlements. Draped as many of the men and women were, this action did something to stabilise the existence of each party. In all probability the Government was not actuated solely by kindness in this matter. It is quite likely that one condition which influenced the decision was the degree of adultery and general promiscuity which so frequently led to brawls and murder. It is clear that many men at Port Macquarie were anxious to have their wives with them, and were apprehensive of misbehaviour on the part of absent spouses. Therefore, male convicts at Port Macquarie should have been happier in that environment when joined by their wives.

Women were despatched quite regularly to the Female Factory at Port Macquarie in the late 1820's. In January 1829 the Commandant was asked to search women due to arrive on the "Mary Elizabeth" as the Bank of Australia had been robbed recently and it was suspected that some portion of the loot might be in the possession of one of these women.

From the early 1830's it became general practice to send to the Female Factory at Port Macquarie those women in the colony who had become too old for assignment. For a number of years to come invalids, elderly persons and mental defectives of both sexes were despatched to the Asylum there. It was this trend, in the main, which gave Port Macquarie its penal character until 1847 when the last convicts were removed. Till that year a certain number of normal, healthy convicts were kept to maintain government services, but the number in government service diminished as the demands of settlers for labour increased, and the number of convicts
arriving in New South Wales decreased.

On 15 April 1830 Colonial Secretary McLeay wrote to Captain Smyth that "It being the intention of Government shortly to throw open the Settlement of Port Macquarie to persons wishing to receive grants of land at that place...it will be necessary to remove to Moreton Bay and Norfolk Island a certain number of persons under sentence...". Smyth was advised that the ship carrying this letter, the "Mary Elizabeth", also took to Port Macquarie Mr. Surveyor Ralfe and party to undertake surveys in that area relative to the free settlement of these parts. However, no immediate action was taken to remove many of the convicts, and the intention of the Government to retain and develop the Asylum became clearer as many more convicts arrived to occupy this building. Smyth was advised in June 1831 of the sailing to Port Macquarie of the "Governor Phillip" carrying "...50 Prisoners, Invalids and others." to that settlement. Later in the same month the Commandant received from Sydney 10 pairs of heavy irons and 20 pairs of working irons for convicts. There was still a great deal of activity in the convict establishment and it is obvious that the Government had no intention of removing all felons from the area. One particular occupation, for which much convict labour was required until the early 1840s, was the construction of the road which extended westwards to join the coast with New England, now known as the Oxley Highway.

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Smyth No. 30/5. 15 April 1830.

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Smyth No. 31/13. 8 June 1831.
I. On 8 June 1831 the Colonial Secretary ordered to Sydney, for investigation of the charge, a prisoner Charles Doyle, who had been reported by Captain Smyth for having seduced the daughter of Mr. Wilson, Superintendent of Convicts. This and other incidents serve to remind us of the changing conditions in which many convicts in New South Wales found themselves. It emphasizes the different circumstances in which the Port Macquarie convict found himself after free settlement began in 1830. Many assigned felons appear to have become very privileged persons in families to which they were attached. Most free settlers, while expecting hard and consistent work from the prisoners in their charge, were kind to them. Many of the assigned found great joy and hope for the future to have thus far broken from the rigid and often inhuman control of the convict gang. It was the duty of the convict’s master to see him properly fed, clothed and housed and it seems that the Port Macquarie standard in this regard was quite high, as most of the free settlers were reasonably humanitarian in outlook. Existing as they did, in a Christian community, many felt a sense of responsibility to the unfortunates under their control. Nevertheless there were frequent incidents where assigned convicts were reported for misdemeanours and the Bench at Port Macquarie, and Mr. Benjamin Sullivan, the Resident Magistrate, in particular, severely punished these offenders. We must understand that while many convicts were minor offenders the greater number of those at Port Macquarie even after the removal of the worst types, were hardened criminals, more embittered by their experiences since

I. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Smyth No. 31/I3 8 June 1831.
conviction in England. It was inevitable that many of them could not understand kindness and failed to co-operate when they were assigned. These kept the gaoler and the scourger at Port Macquarie well occupied.

In 1831 Comptrollers J. Drinkwater and W. C. Harris submitted a report on the penal system at Port Macquarie, and, in reference to the use of convicts by military personnel and other abuses of the convict system said, I. "...we beg leave to state that considering the depraved character and dissolute habits of these men, the employment of them in situations of Trust, such as inferior clerks, and in the issue of provisions from the Commissariat Magazines, and more particularly giving them unobstructed access to an article so alluring to the convict as Rum, and so scarce at Port Macquarie, appears to be a very dangerous system."

So the local administration was roundly criticised for its policy in managing the penal settlement and, in large part, unjustly because convicts had to be used in all occupations as little or no other labour was available. From inception a large part of the organisation of the penal establishment rested on felons who performed duties as clerks, storeman, boatmen and in many other ways. In the system, as it existed, the military governed and made as much use as possible of any technical or other skills or training possessed by the convicts.

The appointment in 1832 of Mr. Benjamin Sullivan as Resident Magistrate at Port Macquarie introduced a radical change in administration of the colony as the magistrate

took a great part of the responsibility which formerly
I. belonged to the Commandant. On June 9, 1832 Colonial
Secretary McLeay wrote to Sullivan notifying him of his
appointment to Port Macquarie at pay of ten shillings a
day. He was instructed to go to that place immediately, as
the settlement had been proclaimed open to free settlers
on 30 July 1830 and there was much for the new magistrate
to do. An outline of the instructions given to Sullivan
conveys an idea of the changes contemplated by the
Government at this time. Sullivan was advised that the only
government institutions which now required support were:

I. Male Convicts - returned by private individuals and
not readily assignable.

2. Female Convicts.

3. Cripples, Invalids and Idiots - being those who were
separated from the normal convicts and maintained
in the Asylum.

4. Farms.

5. Unoccupied government buildings.


7. Watch House.


All male convicts for whom request was made were to
be assigned and those not assigned were to be employed on
the roads or in public works. Women prisoners were to be
assigned and cripples given light work. The "Specials",
being not the common type of convict, and who were separate
from the other convicts, were not to be exempted from
labour but were not to be assigned without specific authority.

I. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie.
McLeay to Sullivan No. 32/66. 9 June 1832.
Free settlers who returned convicts must continue to feed and clothe these convicts just the same, if they could not be assigned elsewhere. If the convicts were returned to Sydney, the former employer had to be responsible for paying the full fare of the prisoner. No convicts victualled by the Government were to be employed by Sullivan or any individual. Government houses were to be rented but no maintenance expense was to be incurred by the authorities. No money was to be spent on repairs of occupied government buildings without the consent of the Governor. Meat supplies were to be obtained by contract and, except in emergency, no government beasts were to be slaughtered. Should Sullivan require troops for the preservation of order the military commander at Port Macquarie was instructed to supply same.

Generally, then, the authorities, in Sullivan's instructions, indicated a plan of decreasing responsibility for the Government as far as the settlement at Port Macquarie was concerned. The main factor, Convict labour, would be provided for free settlers but the Government itself desired that, with assignment, the convicts should become as little an official responsibility as possible. An extract from the instructions to Sullivan is as follows:

I. "You are to act as Superintendent of the Police of the District of Port Macquarie and as such you are to preside at the Bench of Magistrates, as well as discharge all the ordinary duties of a Justice of the Peace. You are not to be absent from your District without the special leave of the Governor."

So Sullivan arrived at Port Macquarie on 29 June 1832.

and assumed duty on 5 July 1832. Sullivan's appointment had been hastened as on 10 May of this year Captain Smyth, Commandant at Port Macquarie, requested to be allowed to leave his position so that he could proceed to India with his regiment. The Governor asked if Smyth would endeavour to carry on for a short time and his relief would be effected as early as possible. The Colonial Secretary notified Sullivan on 12 June 1832 of the appointment of Mr. William Nairn Gray to be Clerk to the Bench of Magistrates at Port Macquarie at £30 per annum.

In March 1833 Sullivan was informed by the Colonial Secretary that three new magistrates suggested as suitable by him would have their appointments gazetted shortly. They were William Geary, Matthew Mitchell and Edward Waterton. The appointments were made but in the same year Waterton quit Port Macquarie, and Mitchell was killed by a falling limb while clearing his farm at Redbank with the assistance of a convict gang. Sullivan then suggested that Dr. McIntyre be appointed a Justice of the Peace in view of these losses. The suggestion was refused by reason that Geary and Major A.C. Innes, appointed earlier, were sufficient for the work.

Since the Resident Magistrate, Sullivan, became the major government instrument at Port Macquarie there were repeated clashes between him and the military. Sullivan was a rather violent and impetuous character who suffered no imposition or reflection on his high office. His high-handed

attitude brought him many reprimands from the Colonial Secretary who pointed out that the military had a large measure of responsibility for the control and direction of the convict force and that the Resident Magistrate could not intrude on the preserves of the military.

1. For example, on 23 August 1832 the Colonial Secretary informed Sullivan that he could not issue military orders, and that he had no power to withdraw convicts from the Commissariat Stores and similar establishments. Exact and precise instructions concerning the scope of the powers and activities of the Resident Magistrate were conveyed to Sullivan in the Colonial Secretary's letter dated 23 August 1832.

The tempestuous Sullivan clashed violently with all and sundry and these people, in turn, complained to the Government. Thus a typical reprimand for Sullivan's use of intemperate language was conveyed to him in the first year of his appointment and said "...you will adopt more courteous language in your official correspondence at Port Macquarie than that contained in your letter to Captain Clarke...".

A considerable innovation in administrative policy occurred in August 1832 when the Colonial Secretary issued an order to the effect that prisoners of the Crown at Port Macquarie, who were deserving, were to be allowed Fridays


and Saturdays free each week in order to work on their own account for the free settlers. Such a ruling was the antithesis of all previous regulations which had meticulously, and often callously, maintained the assumption that the convicts were of no greater consequence than the animals they worked with, and that their subjection should be complete. This, then, was the first occasion on which any of the leniency and consideration shown to local convicts intermittently since the inception of the colony at Port Macquarie received official approval. This was the kind of practice, that of rewarding the best convicts, which had been so roundly criticised formerly when the Commandants at the Hastings River settlement had tried it.

In May 1833 the Commandant at Moreton Bay suggested to the Governor that four of his prisoners, who were hopelessly incapacitated, should be sent to the "...invalids' depot..." at Port Macquarie. The Governor approved the proposal and the four felons arrived at the Asylum in August of that year. Their ages and infirmities were listed as:

"1. Age 50 years - Irrecoverable paralysis of one side of the body.
2. Age 53 years - Total blindness.
3. Age 68 years - Decrepitude.
4. Age 31 years - Idiotism."

We may assume that many with similar afflictions occupied the wards of the Asylum.

In September 1833 the Colonial Secretary informed Sullivan he had heard that females at the Port Macquarie Factory were allowed their freedom for one day each week. If

I. this is so McLeay instructed "...you will put an immediate stop to a practice so highly improper." Ticket-of-leave women were appointed as matrons of the Female Factory and it frequently occurred that no suitable type of woman could be found to undertake this task.

Sullivan appeared to have had a considerable struggle to maintain his position at Port Macquarie as he had incurred the displeasure not only of the prisoners, who considered him unfeeling, but also of the military and free settlers who found that Sullivan was arrogant and overbearing, tending to treat free persons in the same manner as he acted towards the convicted. It must have hurt the feelings of the Resident Magistrate greatly to have had two prisoners in the dock before him suddenly produce bricks from their clothing and hurl the missiles at him. The men were named Eades and Shea. Also, when two women prisoners named Donahue and Cahill were despatched to Sydney with all haste for assaulting Sullivan in Court the Colonial Secretary informed Sullivan that the two women were being returned to Port Macquarie to stand trial there for having assaulted the Resident Magistrate.

Escapees from Moreton Bay, who frequently found their way down the coast to Port Macquarie, were given severe punishment by Sullivan who commonly flogged them, had them put in heavy irons, and then they were returned to Moreton Bay, there to suffer the increased penalty. In 1833 Sullivan


requested the appointment of two professional scourgers at Port Macquarie, as friendliness among the prisoners affected the degree of hurt imposed in floggings. Those due for punishment often had means of influencing the scourger in their favour, so that while the flogging appeared to be very severe the scourger was actually pulling his strokes. It seems that the one upon whom the lash was inflicted, by both actions and vociferation, conveyed the impression that his life was ending beneath the dreadful ordeal.

The Colonial Secretary heeded the request, and no longer did Sullivan have to use convicts to give the lash to their fellows as, on 12 November 1833, he was advised of the appointment of a scourger to the service at Port Macquarie. McLeay in his letter mentioned that Sullivan had the right, according to regulations, to order fifty lashes for any scourger who did not put his heart into the job, so bribery, in this direction should be eliminated readily. In October 1833 the Resident Magistrate was reprimanded by the Colonial Secretary for having failed to attend all punishments and was reminded that it was his duty to be present at such.

2. Sullivan replied that he had not failed to do his work in this direction, and remarked on the number of occasions on which the punishment inflicted had not been given with sufficient severity for his liking.

On 7 September 1833 the Resident Magistrate forwarded to the Colonial Secretary a copy of a letter written by a Port Macquarie prisoner and intended for publication in


"The Sydney Gazette". The writer actually drafted the letter on behalf of a disgruntled group of convicts at the Hastings River settlement, and made allegations against the three Justices at Port Macquarie, Major A.C. Innes, Lt. William Geary and Mr. Benjamin Sullivan. One extract from the letter I said that "The present prevalent Mania of Speculation in forming Shipping and other Companies occupies the sole attention of the Magisterial Bench..." Accusations against A.C. Innes, specifically mentioned as "...the son-in-law of Mr. McLeay...", the Colonial Secretary, referred to his profit on supply for the Government as fourpence per day per man, and claimed that the beef and flour supplied were of inferior quality. The letter accused Geary and Sullivan "...principal shareholders in the Cutter Company..." of keeping the best tradesmen in Port Macquarie without giving them tickets-of-leave. The opinion of the Attorney-General was solicited and he advised the Governor that the writer of the letter could be tried for libel. The Governor then ordered that the convict stand trial at Port Macquarie, but not before any of the three Justices to whom he had referred in the letter.

Dr. James McIntyre and Sullivan clashed over the treatment of prisoners, the Doctor thinking that Sullivan was altogether too harsh in some of his methods of disciplining convicts. During 1833 this antagonism became intense, and the Resident Magistrate, in customary manner in the face of opposition, poured recrimination on McIntyre's head and cast aspersions on his efficiency and sense of loyalty. It can be said that Sullivan did not appear to be the friend of any person during the term of his appointment.

I, Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. Sullivan to McLeay. 7 September 1833.
to Port Macquarie, and most persons with whom he came in contact there resented the overbearing attitude and smug complacency which he showed.

By early 1834 it became government policy that wives of convicts at Port Macquarie should be encouraged to earn their keep so we find in the correspondence of the Colonial Secretary one letter giving permission for a Mrs. Morgan, wife of a prisoner, to set up a retail shop in the township.

In March 1834 William N. Gray was replaced as Clerk to the Bench by Mr. Alfred Haddon. This change brought with it a severe reprimand to Sullivan as Gray had resigned his post because of an inability to work with the Resident Magistrate in any kind of harmony. However Gray was not forgotten and Sullivan must have been given much to think about when, in August 1836, Gray was selected to replace Sullivan as Resident Magistrate at Port Macquarie.

Meanwhile the settlement flourished considerably aided by the labour of the convict force which, in 1834, still exceeded 400. These supplied cheap labour when assigned, and when in the immediate charge of the Government worked on roads, public buildings, port facilities and government boats. The average settler in the district found it not difficult to establish a farm which could be described as successful, and enjoyed a fair amount of public amenities, because of the work done by convict labour. A major work by the prisoners was the development of the new road links, particularly that leading to New England. As the demand for communications increased, roads were constructed along the Wilson River to connect with the MacLeay River. Another led towards the South to the Manning and Hunter Rivers.
In November 1836 the Police Establishment at Port Macquarie consisted of the following personnel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Paid</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police Magistrate</td>
<td>£300 per annum.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk to the Bench</td>
<td>£150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Constable</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 District Constables</td>
<td>3/- per day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch House Keeper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matron - Female Factory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scourger</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These were required to maintain order in the rapidly increasing civil population and to control those of the convicts in their care. The military force at Port Macquarie still performed the guard duties at all convict establishments.

Captain G. Barney of the Royal Engineers wrote the Inspector General of Fortifications in September 1839 and advised "...the construction of Batteries and Permanent Block Houses immediately necessary to the defence of the Ports of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and Port Macquarie and Port Phillip." However Port Macquarie gained nothing from this recommendation and no fortifications were erected to protect the area.

In a letter to the Home Government on 9 September 1839 Governor Gipps mentioned the enormous expense involved in taking witnesses to Sydney from Port Macquarie for court cases, and emphasized the need for circuit courts, particularly at Port Macquarie. On 30 October 1839 Gipps followed this up with an announcement of the establishment of a "Court of Requests" at Port Macquarie, despite a remonstrance against


it by the judges in New South Wales. Gipps intimated, in addition, that shortly a Court of Quarter Sessions would be set up at Port Macquarie. As a result of these arrangements it could be expected that justice would be facilitated as no longer would litigants be deterred by the absence of a suitable local court, and government prosecutions could be dealt with expeditiously.

In May 1840 the end of transportation was indicated when an Order in Council revoked the Order which had authorised originally the despatch of felons to New South Wales, although the Authorities were still permitted to transport convicts to Van Diemen's Land and Norfolk Island. Thus, with the supply cut off, and the continued emancipation of prisoners, it was inevitable that Port Macquarie should be affected. In a place like the Hastings River colony where there was a strong demand for convict labour for governmental and free settlers' purposes it was natural that prisoners were not given their freedom so readily as in those parts where an excess of convict labour caused the authorities some embarrassment. Many of the Port Macquarie prisoners were engaged on the building of the road to New England, which we have mentioned earlier, and it was not till the completion of this venture, some few years after it was actually declared open to traffic in September 1842, that the demand for convict labour for public purposes in this region actually diminished, thus clearing the way for the emancipation of many more of these prisoners. As late as 1849 ships arrived in Sydney with convicts but public feeling was such that there was no prospect of the prisoners being allowed to land. Governor Fitz Roy directed that the vessels continue to Moreton Bay. Transportation to Van Diemen's Land ceased in 1853 and to Norfolk Island in 1855.
With the considerable development of New South Wales generally, and the expansion of settlement and population during the late 1830's, the Sydney newspapers gave less attention to Port Macquarie in their columns, but "The Australian" in 1840 stated that "Port Macquarie has been termed the nursery of villainy. We are afraid that it is but too often a refuge and asylum for the thoroughly matured in rascality." So, in the eyes of one newspaper at least, the establishment at Port Macquarie was still an objectionable set-up which brought little credit to the rapidly developing and increasingly self-conscious populace of the recently established colony in New South Wales. "The Australian" in its issue of 3 November 1840 gave the number of prisoners at Port Macquarie on 30 June 1840 as 747. In 1841 an official census was taken in New South Wales and the figures for the County of Macquarie revealed a total of 2,402 persons of whom no less than 1,238 were prisoners in government or private service. It is well to remember that the County embraces an area of land not geographically portion of the Hastings River Valley and not part of the area which we actually cover in our study of the penal colony at Port Macquarie and its environs.

To this stage all authorities in New South Wales had recognised that the effectiveness of the Hastings River area for penal purposes was greatly diminished by its closeness to the settlements adjacent to the Hunter River. To these the felon with a desire for freedom could make


his way with only a small amount of difficulty and danger to hinder him. The extension of settlement and increasing population, mentioned earlier in this chapter, aggravated the position. From 1829 settlers were allowed to occupy grants on the Manning River and, as these people required access to their holdings through Port Macquarie, the line of communications from the Hastings River to the Manning River became the more readily evident and more easily traversed by escaping felons. Settlers from the Hunter River, who had occupied lands near Raymond Terrace, began to extend their interests towards the North, gradually reducing the amount of unoccupied territory between Newcastle and Port Macquarie. So it was not only the factor of closeness which influenced the degree of escape from the Hastings River penal settlement, but in addition the expansion of settlement made escapees more confident of their ability to survive. Also, convict bushrangers attacked defenceless farms, particularly in the absence of menfolk, to obtain food, clothing and arms and ammunition. Therefore, most Governors sought to eliminate all the close penal colonies and to re-establish these in more remote parts. Consequently, it is interesting to read a letter from Governor Gipps written to the Home Government on 13 May 1840, in which he maintained that the penal settlements were too far from the centre of administration and for this reason were visited rarely by himself. Gipps mentioned specifically the establishments at Port Macquarie, Moreton Bay and Norfolk Island. However, there was probably some justification for this view on account of the change in circumstances in convict control.

Gipps to Lord Glenelg. 13 May 1840.
in New South Wales. By this time there was a great demand for labour from the free settlers and government policy tended more toward making the prisoners serve their time in assignment to the settlers. Thus, it was useless to have competent labour in some inaccessible place where it could not be utilised in the most profitable manner.

On 29 November 1842 the Colonial Secretary's Office in Sydney suggested to the Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals that expenses in New South Wales might be reduced by eliminating the Invalid Establishment at Port Macquarie. In the previous year an appeal had been made to the Colonial Secretary for more female labour from the Female Factory at Parramatta as some twenty to thirty women were wanted at Port Macquarie for assignment. On 22 January 1841 the Governor ordered the Master Attendant at the Parramatta Factory to despatch the required number to Port Macquarie, but was forced to cancel this instruction when advised that there were no females at Parramatta suitable for assignment.

Thus it was natural that when the supply of female labour at Port Macquarie became uncertain, and numbers at the Female Factory fell below the strength necessary for economical operation of the establishment, the authorities should give consideration to closing that institution.

In January 1843 Governor Gipps wrote as follows to the Home Government:

I. "The Invalid Establishment at Port Macquarie."

"I have it in contemplation to remove this Establishment to Sydney, or to Liverpool, at which latter place there is a large convict hospital."

It is evident therefore that the comparatively remote hospital for convicts was likely to be closed and Gipps made the point in his letter, that, while adequate buildings existed elsewhere for hospital purposes, Port Macquarie was too far from "...the eye of government." Earlier, in October 1841, Gipps had proposed that the convict hospital at Port Macquarie could be converted into a district hospital for the benefit of, and to be supported by, local settlers, aided by some government finance. However, at this stage, no persons at Port Macquarie showed any enthusiasm for the scheme and nothing came of it. Eventually the sole remnant of the once flourishing penal organisation at Port Macquarie was the Asylum. The military force, whose responsibility it was to supervise the inmates of this institution, became fewer in numbers. The firm intention to vacate the area, from a penal point of view, was obvious from the early 1840's but it was not until the early part of 1847 that the last persons connected with the convict establishment were removed.

In the depression of the 1840's demand for convict labour weakened at Port Macquarie. People like Major Innes, who employed many convicts and had large farms found that markets had vanished. However, despite the fact that other parts of New South Wales were in a similar position, it seems that Port Macquarie suffered more. To 1847 there was a gradual draining away of the convict force in transfer to other parts for assignment, or by emancipation. Over several years this decrease in numbers continued.

In April 1847 Governor Fitz Roy informed the Home Government that "The Detachments at Bathurst and Port Macquarie

I. Historical Records of Australia, Series I. Vol 25. P.535
Fitz Roy to Sir Maurice O'Connell. 14 April 1847.
can, without the slightest inconvenience, be forthwith dispensed with, as well perhaps as a portion of the Detachment at Newcastle." So having removed the remaining convicts Fitz Roy wrote again to Earl Grey on 30 April 1847, stating that "The Detachments hitherto stationed at Bathurst and Port Macquarie have been directed to be immediately withdrawn, that at the latter place being no longer required as the Convict Establishment there has been broken up."

Fitz Roy had been instructed to make some of the military available for transfer to New Zealand and so he reported to London on the availability of troops in New South Wales. Earl Grey responded to Fitz Roy's communication in October 1847 and in this letter foreshadowed the imminent conclusion of the penal system in New South Wales, and made it clear that, with the cessation of penal activities in the colony, military guards would be required no longer.

2. He said "At the time the arrangements which you now report were adopted there was further reason for departing in some degree from those which had been directed, in consequence of the demand which still continued on the Services of the Troops in New South Wales to keep the Convicts in subjection. This demand will, however, now cease, as orders have been given for breaking up of the Convict Establishment in that Colony."

Earlier, in May 1847, Earl Grey had written to 3. Governor Fitz Roy as follows: "Her Majesty's Government

have for some time past contemplated the reduction of the
whole of the Establishments which has hitherto been
maintained in New South Wales for the management and control
of the comparatively small number of Convicts remaining in
the Colony on the hands of the Government...by transferring
to that Colony (Van Diemen's Land) those of the Convicts to
whom Tickets-of-leave or conditional pardons cannot properly
be granted."

By this means the Government proposed to clear
all convicts, who could not be given their freedom in some
form, from New South Wales, and to concentrate the remaining
convict strength in Van Diemen's Land. It is worth noting
that public aversion to the transportation system led the
free persons in Van Diemen's Land to protest forcibly at this
proposal. Also, the authorities in Van Diemen's Land
considered it unwise to bring more felons to the island.

Another suggestion regarding the disposal of these convicts
came from Surgeon S. Hampton, who knew Norfolk Island well,
and considered that they could be congregated at that remote
place where their presence would not offend public opinion.

Governor Fitz Roy answered Earl Grey's letter of May
1847 on 23 October 1847. He informed Earl Grey of a
proposed scheme to shorten the period of time between the
granting of a Ticket of Leave to a convict and his
Conditional Pardon to twelve months in order to expedite
the removal of felons from direct government control. Fitz
Roy also notified the Home Government that the transfer of
prisoners to Van Diemen's Land had been organised, and that
the number of these would not exceed 125 men, 10 women and
350 lunatics and invalids. He stated he could see no reason
why the whole of the convict establishments in New South Wales should not be broken up by the end of 1847. Concerning Port Macquarie Fitz Roy wrote "The breaking up of the Convict Establishment at Port Macquarie, and the removal of the whole of the Invalids and Lunatics from that station to the Hospitals at Sydney and Liverpool, which I was able to effect previously to the receipt of Your Lordship's Despatch, will render it more easy to carry out Your Lordship's Instructions."

Thus the inhabitants of the Port Macquarie Asylum, the only survivors of the convict establishment begun in 1821, were transferred in 1847, mainly to Liverpool whence their removal to Van Diemen's Land was planned, and the convict period of 26 years' duration closed.

The vicissitudes through which the Port Macquarie settlement passed, and the ever-present administrative problems, have been discussed in detail. In reviewing the period, and in making an assessment of the effectiveness of the colony, one must make due allowance for the influence of certain external factors. A prime reason for numerous complaints from the Governor concerning laxity of control at Port Macquarie lay in the fact that the Colonial Secretary's office knew insufficient of the local conditions. There was a noticeable unawareness of the difficulties which confronted the Commandant and, consequently, little compromise was evident in the issuing of instructions from Sydney.

It is apparent that local administration maintained a reasonably efficient penal establishment of the Hastings River. The position of Commandant changed hands frequently and this denied the settlement continuity of policy. Commonly

the various Commandants had only sufficient time for adequate orientation before being transferred to another sphere. One cannot doubt the earnest intentions of a succession of hard-working Commandants and, if one point should be stressed above all others, it is that the system of administration which was proclaimed for Port Macquarie would not operate satisfactorily in the local environment. Human endeavour could not make the planned control operative because instructions from the Governor were made frequently, with insufficient knowledge of the problems which existed on the Hastings River.

In view of prevailing difficulties, and the indecision of the Colonial Secretary's office in particular, progress at Port Macquarie was considerable. In fact, control over convicts could not be described as lax, and economic progress was clearly in evidence. Farm development by convicts did much to show the way for and encourage free settlement, while expansion of public works, facilitated the establishment of new arrivals. It is no exaggeration to say that the successful free settlement which occurred from 1830 was based to a large extent on convict-laid foundations.

Progress in the township and in rural areas was rapid during the 1830's, only to be upset by the economic crisis of the 1840's. Following hard upon the depression came withdrawal of more convicts and the closing of all penal institutions by 1847. Just when local producers most needed the impetus of Government demand for their produce, this market faded and eventually disappeared. The shipping passage at the entrance to Port Macquarie, which had always been treacherous, discouraged shipowners who might otherwise have
traded to the settlement. With the end of the convict period, vessels no longer visited Port Macquarie under government charter. Thus, when New South Wales was slowly recovering from depression, the colonists on the Hastings River found themselves cast aside and even isolated. Markets for local production were almost non-existent.

With the opening of the New England - Port Macquarie road came the hope that the port would establish itself as a trading and commercial centre to serve New England. Theoretically practicable, the plan failed because there were no vessels for transhipment of goods to and from Sydney.

So Port Macquarie suffered a grievous decline, while the character of the inhabitants and the fertility of its resources warranted a much better state of affairs. Communications, the life line of the colony, having disappeared, the colonists felt that Sydney might just as well be in Europe. The district had depended largely on the convict establishment for supply of labour and as an outlet for produce so it is ironic that the removal of the penal institutions coincided with a period of economic stress. This unfortunate combination of factors reduced the Hastings River District to comparative insignificance in an otherwise expanding and developing New South Wales. This unhappy state was to be endured by Port Macquarie inhabitants for many years to come.

The penal system, as it operated at Port Macquarie, had considerable significance in several directions. Firstly, by trial and error, the Government found that an establishment such as that on the Hastings River was, by its organization, ineffective in providing sufficiently rigid control of convicts. In isolated parts of Van Diemen's Land and at Norfolk Island
geographical conditions made the prison secure, but with most mainland settlements the security of convicts provided a major problem. Secondly, the commencement of free settlement effectively removed the remaining vestiges of an outmoded penal system. Free population moved into the small Hastings River district at a considerable rate. These people occupied the more fertile soil, clamoured for convict-developed land and government buildings, demanded convict labour on assignment, and created in short time an economy in which the convict played a vital part. The early penal system with its isolation of convicts, rigorous control and hard labour, was forced, like the chain gang, from the picture. The government had either to co-operate in this new economy or withdraw the convicts. The fact that convicts remained at Port Macquarie for some fifteen years after free settlement commenced did much to facilitate development of the district. The economy of the region boomed until the early 1840’s.

Port Macquarie proved the ineffectiveness of the old penal system. The government learnt that in a young and virile community an outmoded institution must die. Certainly, there was conflict. Free settlers looked upon the disappearance of free convict labour with apprehension, yet the same people earnestly desired the removal of the ill-repute which, in any country, is associated with penal institutions.

So, in its own way the Hastings River District served as a vital experiment. The convict settlement had to flourish and die to prove that New South Wales had grown beyond the ideas of Lord Sydney and the House of Commons of 1786. Nothing was more incompatible in the 1840’s than the demands of the Emancipists, on the one hand for the establishment of free institutions in New South Wales and, on the other, retention of the remnants of the penal system.
At Port Macquarie in the early years there was little primary production. The colony had difficulty in making itself independent of the mother establishment at Port Jackson and there was no fruit of the soil available for despatch to Sydney. Consequently the ships which arrived at the Hastings River carrying stores and convicts were obliged to return to Sydney in ballast.

From the first days of the settlement it was clear to the authorities that suitable backloading for these vessels could be obtained from the plentiful forests of the region. Therefore, within a short time of the initial landing at Port Macquarie, ships began to load logs and, in some instances, sawn timber for transport to Port Jackson. The colonists had little inclination to work hardwoods, and so it was softwood, particularly red cedar, which became the staple building material. Cedar appealed because of its softness and the consequent ease with which it could be worked; it was light and could be easily handled in the forests and loaded on lighters and ships, while its appearance, particularly as a cabinet timber, left little to be desired.

So while many convicts toiled on roads and in the plantations, worked on public buildings or performed
clerical duties, a large number was engaged in the timber gangs which operated more in the areas about the head of navigation on the Hastings River and its tributaries.

As private vessels were soon hired to augment Government shipping on the run to Port Macquarie it became the practice to reimburse the owners of these ships by authorising them to collect a load of cedar at Port Macquarie. In some instances the cedar was not charged for and on other occasions a nominal charge was made. As early as 8 July 1822 Allman advised the Colonial Secretary that he had despatched a cargo of cedar and pine logs to Sydney in the "Newcastle".

On 30 August 1822 we find that Goulburn communicated with Allman advising the despatch of the "Lady Nelson" to Port Macquarie with prisoners, and requesting that she be returned with a load of cedar and pine logs.

The exploration of the Northwest tributaries of the Hastings River revealed the existence of vast quantities of red cedar. The Forestry Commission of New South Wales has informed the writer that investigations of the headwaters of the Wilson River have shown that there are available considerable stands of high class cedar in these regions, and that no richer area is known in the state as far as this timber is concerned. We can well imagine then the amount of timber which must have been available to the first settlers who


came to this unexploited land.

Simon Lord, trader and merchant in the early days of the colony, spread his commercial interests as far as Port Macquarie. Colonial Secretary Goulburn's letter of 16 September 1824 to Commandant Rolland stated that Lord was to be allowed to purchase three hundred tons of red cedar from Port Macquarie. In the following year, on 29 October, Goulburn advised Commandant Gillman that Simon Lord's brig "Fame" was to be allowed to take a cargo of cedar, the lowest price to be paid for same to be one penny a superficial foot. On 28 October, Lord had notified the Colonial Secretary that these terms were acceptable to him.

On 24 February 1826 Colonial Secretary McIsay informed the Commandant at Port Macquarie that the owner of the private cutter "Brisbane" was to get 4,600 superficial feet of cedar in return for conveying 16,000 bushels of lime to the settlement. In May 1826 Captain Clements of the brig "Glory" collected a return cargo of cedar at one and a half pence a superficial foot after he had delivered supplies to Port Macquarie.

Thus timber became increasingly important to the new settlement: and Colonial Secretary McIsay wrote to the Commandant as follows: "His Excellency desires me to strongly impress upon you the necessity of your using all your force to procure Timber..."


The importance of the industry was recognised then, and from that time the forests of the region have yielded an abundant return to those who have sought timber.
SHIP BUILDING.

It was inevitable that in and about the harbour at Port Macquarie certain shipbuilding should have been attempted, the more so as supplies of ideal timber were available for this purpose.

1. As early as 23 December 1825, only four years after the first settlement was made there, Commandant Gillman wrote to Colonial Secretary Goulburn reporting the completion of the first ship at Port Macquarie. This vessel was specially built to suit the conditions which prevailed on the Port Macquarie bar and in the harbour, and was named "Mary Elizabeth". In July 1825 the vessel was launched at Port Macquarie, and was ready to be launched in the course of three months.

On 1 December 1825 this paper told of the launching of the same ship, and said "A new brig...keel laid on 21st June last was...launched at Port Macquarie on 7th ult...Her burden is 86 tons...she was named by Master George Gillman, the son of the Commandant, the Mary Elizabeth in honor of Mrs Gillman and her daughter ...This is the first vessel of any magnitude built at any penal settlement in the Colony." She was launched with considerable pomp, and lengthy celebrations followed this event. It must have been a great day for the

inhabitants of Port Macquarie and we can imagine the pride which filled those who witnessed the spectacle. For that matter the Port Macquarie of to-day may remember with pride that the ship built there in 1825 was the largest to have been built in New South Wales up to that time.

1. "The Sydney Gazette" of 8 December 1825 also gave favourable mention to the ship building project recently completed at Port Macquarie, and emphasized that the period of construction occupied somewhat less than five months. This report gave the burden of the vessel as one hundred tons.

The industry did not cease with the one ship but others were soon commenced. We do not have details of all the ships which were built on the Hastings River but, in the newspapers of the time and in official correspondence, there are references to these activities. "The Australian" of 17 August 1827 reported that the "Regent Bird" was launched from a Port Macquarie dock on 30 July 1827. The paper commented also that the builders experienced difficulty in getting the "Regent Bird" into the water. The launching of this vessel earned for Commandant Owen the commendation of the Governor, and the Colonial Secretary informed Owen that the "Regent Bird" would be used for the Moreton Bay trade. Owen was instructed to commence the construction of a similar ship immediately.

With the arrival of free settlers in 1830 private enterprise took a hand in building ships. On 1.28 March 1835 Mr. Benjamin Sullivan, Resident Magistrate at Port Macquarie, reported to the Colonial Secretary the loss of the "Port Macquarie Packet", a vessel built by local persons and launched on 24 February 1835. The ship turned over outside the bar three days after the launching. Those on board were flung into the sea and clung to the hull of the ship. They were all rescued with the exception of an infant aged eighteen months.

THE NATIVES.

Generally relations between the aborigines and the local white population in the Hastings River District were reasonably amicable. There is no evidence that any but a very rare killing of an indiscriminate kind could be attributed to either group. While there was an occasional murder of an aborigine by a white, and sometimes the reverse, their co-existence was comparatively friendly.

At all times the authorities in Sydney emphasized the value of friendship with the native population, and the Commandants at Port Macquarie were instructed repeatedly that, in the event of depredations or attacks by aborigines, the natives were not to be judged only by the laws of the whites. Commonly the natives were of little assistance to the whites but, on the other hand, they rarely hindered. Those who helped were often accorded some small reward, and it did become general practice to give presents of blankets to those of the native population who were considered worthy.

It is noticeable that the authorities had a greater regard for the natives on the Hastings River than for many of their fellows in New South Wales. For example, it was proposed at one stage that a band of

Port Macquarie natives should be despatched to Van Diemen's Land, there to fight their coloured brethren in that island. The subject was entertained quite seriously and was the subject of correspondence between Governor Bourke and the Home Government. Fortunately this callous scheme never came to fruition. Again, the Commandant at Norfolk Island solicited in 1829 the despatch to his domain of two or three Port Macquarie aborigines to help in suppressing bushranging in that island. Colonial Secretary McLeay wrote to Captain Smyth, Commandant at Port Macquarie, and instructed Smyth to select "...if possible, intelligent volunteers from the natives in the vicinity of Port Macquarie", to proceed to Norfolk Island.

2. Commandant Wright was advised in a letter from Sydney, dated 20 May 1826, that he was to reward natives at Port Macquarie who were of help by giving them food or other suitable gifts as it was the desire of the government that good relations should be maintained between the white population and the natives.

When Innes assumed duty as Commandant it was recorded in his instructions, dated 28 February 1827, aborigines were to be encouraged to find those of their number who were supposed to have killed Dominick McIntyre at Port Macquarie.

An excellent tribute to the Hastings River aborigines appeared in "The Sydney Gazette" of 1 February


The Governor has been pleased to order Medals to be given to seven Natives at Port Macquarie, in Commemoration of an Event which His Excellency is gratified in thus publicly noticing, being highly creditable to the good Feeling and Humanity of these Individuals.

It appears that, on a late Occasion, a Pilot Boat belonging to Port Macquarie, was upset when returning, after having put a Vessel to Sea. From the boisterous State of the Weather, it was impossible to afford any Assistance from the Settlement, and the crew, consisting of seven Men, were in imminent Danger. At length, seven Natives plunged into the Sea; and after exerting themselves for some Time, succeeded in righting the Boat, placed four of the Crew in her, and brought the remaining three on Shore, the whole having thus been saved by their Exertions."

2. So on 9 February the Colonial Secretary wrote to Commandant Crotty advising that each of the natives concerned in the rescue was to receive a medal, a suit of clothes and a blanket.

3. Crotty was instructed on 17 May 1828 of the despatch to Port Macquarie of fifty rugs for "...the Black natives at the Settlement". Preference was to be given to those who had been best behaved and helpful.

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters. (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McIsay to Crotty. 9 February 1828.
It is quite evident therefore that the Government was mindful of the importance of good relationships being maintained between the natives in the colony and the Europeans, and, at the same time, the authorities were prepared to exert themselves considerably to maintain a continuity of amicable relations.

With the advent of free settlement at Port Macquarie, and the arrival of persons not directly under the control of the Government, who had experienced elsewhere the antagonism between natives and whites, it was inevitable that clashes between the two groups should develop. These new settlers were not aware of the methods of treatment used by the authorities at Port Macquarie during the closed penal period to obtain the co-operation of the aborigines, and they, on arrival, tended to view the natives with much distrust. Harsh means were used to keep the natives at a distance from their land holdings. The natives, who had previously tolerated the presence of Europeans on their tribal grounds soon became the opponents of the whites, regarded them as intruders, and the animosity became mutual. Fortunately this did not at any stage develop into open conflict of any consequence, and the Government was still anxious to keep the peace and to assist the natives to adjust themselves to the white environment.

But there was gradually a change in this
Government attitude and more and more the natives were forced to conform to European standards and laws. For example Matthew Mitchell of Redbank complained of the depredations of natives on his property and Magistrate Sullivan asked the Attorney-General how cattle-spearng aborigines could be best punished. The report of the Attorney-General stated that "...as aborigines are a free people living under the Protection of His Majesty's Government they are as a matter of right entitled to the benefits and protection of the English Laws and liable to the penalties of these laws for any violation thereof."

In March 1833 there is a record of Sullivan applying to Sydney for clothing for bushrangers who were taken naked in the bush and asking for authority to bestow adequate rewards upon those natives who apprehended these men.

A less savoury side of the relationship between natives and whites is indicated in the complaint of Edward Waterton, Justice of the Peace at Port Macquarie, who wrote to the Colonial Secretary that two whites kept "...a native black female..." chained in a hut "...for the purposes of prostitution."


THE CHURCHES

For the first three years after settlement at Port Macquarie there was no cleric in the area. The urgent need for such a person became the more evident as the settlement expanded and the convict population increased rapidly. However Port Macquarie was not the only port of New South Wales which found its inhabitants devoid of spiritual advice, as the church authorities in England did not find it easy to obtain clergy willing to proceed to the recently settled colony of New South Wales. It appears that in 1819, thirty one years after the landing of the first settlers at Port Jackson, only five clergymen were available to serve the vastly swollen population. These men were Marsden, Cowper, Cartwright, Fulton and Cross, the latter having very lately arrived.

The government authorities in Sydney were not unmindful of the spiritual needs of the many convicts committed to their care and sought to render some assistance to these unfortunate. Early in the life of the Port Macquarie settlement the Colonial Secretary advised Commandant Allman that the Rev. Mr. Hill had l.despatched from Sydney "...about Seventy Religious Tracts, Seven Homily's, Two Manuals of Instruction and Devotion for Prisoners, Two Bibles, Six Prayer Books and Six Psalters."

2. On 22 June 1824 Rev. Samuel Marsden again informed Governor Brisbane that there was no clergymen at Port Macquarie and recommended for the appointment one of the more recent arrivals in the colony, the Rev. Thomas Hassall. Events leading

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie, Goulburn to Allman, 26 July 1822.

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie, Marsden to Brisbane, 22 June 1824.
to Hassall's appointment did not proceed with any great speed and it was not until the month of August 1824 that Governor Brisbane conveyed to Marsden the Government's approval of the suggestion that Hassall be appointed to the Hastings River District. So Marsden was informed that Hassall was to go to the new settlement, and in the same letter the Governor informed that he had ordered the erection of a church at Port Macquarie

1. "...to hold six or seven hundred sitters..." This is the first mention of the building which was opened in 1828.

Rev. Marsden had more than ordinary reason for taking an interest in young Hassall because Hassall was his son-in-law.

2. "The Sydney Gazette" of 16 August 1822 reported the marriage of Rev. Thomas Hassall to the eldest daughter of Rev. Samuel Marsden, at Parramatta on Monday 12 August 1822. Hassall proceeded to Port Macquarie in April 1824 on the "Sally" but within twelve months was transferred to the new Penal Establishment at Moreton Bay.

Thus the promise of greater spiritual benefit for the inhabitants of Port Macquarie, in the form of a settled clergyman, was soon gone. However, under Brisbane's orders, the new church was rapidly taking shape. The Sydney newspapers commented freely on the lack of religious instruction for the felons at Port Macquarie, and both "The Australian" and "The Sydney Gazette" agitated for the appointment of a clergyman.

3. In December 1825 "The Sydney Gazette" stated "The Rev. Mr. Hassal is not returning to Port Macquarie, but some other clergyman will shortly be stationed at this promising settlement."

1. See photo of church in appendix. 9, 11 and 52.


1. In August 1826 "The Australian" reported that "The went of a clergyman, though not of a church which is now nearly completed, appears to be much felt at Port Macquarie. Its fluctuating population may at present be fixed at about 900 souls."

The Colonial Secretary wrote to the Commandant at Fort Macquarie in September 1826 that arrangements were in progress to station a clergyman at that place he desired to know if a residence for a family man was available. Again nothing eventuated, and over a year later Commandant Crotty was instructed to see that "...some Bibles and Tracts intended for the use of the Prisoners...", which had been forwarded from Sydney, should be distributed, cared for and read.

In 1827 Archdeacon Scott made a report on clergy and education in the colony of New South Wales. He claimed in the report of his investigations that among the outstanding requirements were the completion of a parsonage and church at Port Macquarie. The Archdeacon reported that a Parochial School was in operation there, and in 1826 had forty six children on the roll with an average attendance of thirty eight.

The new clergyman appointed to Port Macquarie was Rev. John Cross. Cross sailed for Port Macquarie from Port Jackson on 12 February 1828 in the "Lucy Ann" to commence a ministry which lasted without interruption until his death on 7 August 1858. Having arrived at the period when the church was just being completed Cross had more at his hand, in the form

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. Memo to Crotty. 24 November 1827.
3. See also section on "Education."
of a new and outstanding church, than was enjoyed by most of the inhabitants of New South Wales in this period.

Rev. John Cross was born in England on 10 June 1781 and commenced his working days as a schoolmaster. Having become a clergyman in 1818 Cross was attracted by an offer to go to New South Wales as a Chaplain. He sailed with his family in the "Baring" from London on 27 January 1819, and reached Sydney on 26 June 1819.

Cross's appointments in New South Wales, prior to that at Port Macquarie, were to Parramatta (temporary) on 24 July 1819 and to Windsor on 18 December 1819. Then, on 4 December 1827 Rev. Cross was notified of his transfer to Port Macquarie.

Cross must have been gratified to find such a fine and impressive church about to be opened. He it was who, on 24 February 1828, dedicated the church, the foundation stone of which had been laid on 8 December 1824 by Rev. Thomas Hassall. During his life John Cross had two curates, Rev. Woodward in 1844 and Rev. O'Reilly from 1846, O'Reilly remained at the church of St. Thomas until 1860.

"The Sydney Herald" of 20 December 1844 reported a public meeting at Port Macquarie concerning the erection of a parsonage at the Glebe, but inaccurately informed its readers that the same meeting conveyed its gratitude to Rev. John Cross, the retiring cleric, and welcomed his successor Rev. Woodward. Rev. Cross, though ill at this time, did not resign but remained in charge with Woodward as his assistant.

Cross accepted the position of chaplain in New South Wales on the express condition that, in addition to all else, he would get free quarters in which to reside. This was defined in May 1829 by Sir George Murray in a despatch to the Governor of New South Wales, as "a decent parsonage-house." The provision of a residence at Port Macquarie for Cross caused furious conflict in many quarters, and in the Colonial Secretary's correspondence are many pages regarding this particular problem. The original clergyman's house at Port Macquarie was condemned and abandoned with the concurrence of the Colonial Architect's Office.

This was one of eleven residences which had been built in New South Wales by the Government for clergy, but the Port Macquarie building decayed and became useless for its purpose.

As far as we know it was in 1837 that Cross was paid the sum of £60 per annum in lieu of residence. He found accommodation, with the consent of the Commandant, in a cottage belonging to the Surgeon's Quarters. In 1837 Henry Graham, Assistant Colonial Surgeon at Port Macquarie, claimed the use of these quarters for himself. Graham made a vigorous protest to the Colonial Secretary on 2 August 1839 as Cross showed no inclination to vacate. The result was that the Governor in February 1840 ordered Cross to vacate by 1 June 1840. Failing co-operation from Cross in this respect the Governor threatened to deduct from Cross's salary sufficient money to rent a cottage for the

Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie.
Mr. Lewis, Colonial Architect to Colonial Secretary 13 November 1839.
Surgeon.

Apparently there was no new house erected for the clergymen for some considerable time, and the arrangement whereby Cross received a monetary grant in lieu of quarters continued. On 3 February 1841 Cross protested to the Colonial Secretary that the rent of his residence was raised from £70 to £100 a year. However, the only reply received from the Colonial Secretary was a curt one, informing Cross that he was allowed money to provide a residence for himself. The problems associated with the occupancy by Cross of the quarters belonging to the Surgeons, and the matter of the rental paid by Cross, led to lengthy correspondence. There is more correspondence in the Colonial Secretary’s files on these issues than on any other. The Lord Bishop of Australia and many others communicated with the Governor.

Each chaplain in the colony was allowed a Glebe of four hundred acres, and two convicts, clothed and rationed by the Government, for the purpose of cultivating it. The arrangement for John Cross was that his remuneration should be £250 plus a horse plus £100 for accepting a Glebe of forty acres instead of four hundred acres. Cross cultivated his land most assiduously. The Glebe lay to the South of Wright’s Creek at Port Macquarie, and Cross used as much convict labour as he could obtain. This caused some trouble, for it appears that he endeavoured to have more than the regulation two convicts victualled by the Government.

1. Colonial Secretary’s Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie. John Cross to Colonial Secretary. 3 February 1841.
2. See in appendix map of Port Macquarie to show location of Glebe.
In October 1830 the Colonial Secretary wrote to Commandant Smyth stating that Cross could have assigned servants 
1. as anyone else but "...only two at the Public Expense for food and clothing."

2. In the correspondence of the Colonial Secretary is a letter dated 13 July 1829 which advises Henry Harding Parker that the Colonial Secretary had forwarded a licence for his marriage to Miss Mary Ann Cross, daughter of Rev. John Cross.

Cross appears to have been a strong-willed and industrious cleric with a well-developed sense of his responsibility to those committed to his care. His literary efforts, justifying his various actions or denouncing some imposition on him, are well worth reading. He did not hesitate to insist on what he considered right and necessary being carried out meticulously. A typical action, and one which aroused the ire of Magistrate Sullivan, occurred in October 1833 when Cross ceased holding Divine Service at the Female Factory because of the continued ill-behaviour of the inmates. Sullivan was greatly upset as Cross communicated his complaint direct to the Archdeacon with the result that Sullivan received a reminder from the Colonial Secretary, dated 15 November 1833, that it was his duty to see that the behaviour of those in the factory was all that could be desired by the visiting clergyman.

Also in the year 1833, Rev. Cross made application to the Colonial Secretary on behalf of Mr. Stephen Partridge requesting that Partridge be given permission to marry his assigned servant. Sullivan received a sharp note from the

Colonial Secretary as a result of this communication, and was asked to furnish an explanation of how regulations could be so broken as to allow a female convict to be assigned to Partridge, a widower.

Because of increasing population in the Wilson River area it was proposed in 1839 that a church should be built at Rollands Plains for the convenience of these settlers. The scheme was launched but did not come to fruition. "The Australian" wrote "We are sorry to hear that the idea of building a new church at Rollands Plains is for a season abandoned; the settlers in that part of the district not having subscribed sufficient funds to justify the excellent promoters of the design in commencing operations."

In September "The Australian" stated that the Church of St. Thomas at Port Macquarie was in a sorry condition, and claimed that Rev. Cross feared the ceiling of the building might come down on people and do no little harm because of its dilapidated state - the walls of the edifice crumbling away - the window sashes broken - the doors off their hinges."

The paper exhorted the Bishop of Australia and the parishioners to do all in their power to effect the restoration of the building.

It is worthy of note that one of the early Commandants is buried beneath the church at Port Macquarie. In November 1824 Lt. Carmac, who had assumed temporary command on the death of his superior, Commandant Rollands, advised Colonial Secretary Goulburn of the death of Captain Rollands. Carmac spoke highly

of Rollands and gave his death as being due to fever.

He said in the letter that "... on the morning of the 18th instant his (Rolland's) remains were interred with due ceremony within the area of the church now in progress." As the church had been but recently commenced the burial occurred at a time when the foundations of the building were being constructed.

When the Church of St. Thomas was planned for Port Macquarie, land set aside consisted of four acres for the church, three acres as a burial ground and forty acres for a glebe. However it was not possible in the early days of the settlement to make definite allocation of land. In 1831 Surveyor Mitchell made a plan of the township. This survey was made, in general, irrespective of existing buildings, as these had sprung up in a haphazard fashion and could not be made to fit in with any recognized survey. The old church, for example, is not in line with existing streets.

On 27 June 1847 Assistant Surveyor, F.V. Gorman made a survey of land required by the Church of England. This plan 2.123706 has a pencilled note on it stating that the church site, as finally surveyed, was promised on 30 June 1829 and the deed was issued on 20 January 1876. The area appropriated for church purposes in July 1845 consisted of 2 acres, 1 road, 10½ perches and was dedicated on 17 October 1859.

Additionally, section 7a, consisting of 1 acre, 21 perches, which contained the surgeon's quarters was sold to William Tyrrell, Bishop of Newcastle in July 1850. The price paid for this land was £9 per acre and buildings erected thereon.

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie, Guam to Coulburn, 19 November 1824.

2. Plan 123706 in Archives, Department of Lands Sydney.
were purchased for £150.

It is interesting to note that the first official survey of the town allowed for a street to run between the church and the surgeon's quarters. This street never actually existed as such, and was purchased from the Crown in 1847 by the Trustees of the Diocese of Grafton. By acquiring these three portions of ground, the church land, that on which the surgeons' quarters stood and the street, the church came by the block of ground which is the church holding to-day. On it still stands the church and surgeon's quarters, and the Rectory.

The Presbyterians were the next religion denomination to establish a church at Port Macquarie. It is apparent that many of the early settlers being Scots, were of the Presbyterian persuasion and these folk soon looked for a minister to serve their spiritual needs.

1. "The Australian" reported in 1840 that "Tamar" brought a clergyman of the Church of Scotland and (he)...had service in a store." The newspaper stated in the same article that on the following Monday morning £200 was subscribed for a church in one hour and this amount had since increased to £300.

2. In 1841 "The Australian" wrote "From our Port Macquarie correspondent we learn that a meeting has taken place in that town for the purpose of adopting immediate measures for the erection of a Scottish Church". In April of the same year an advertisement in "The Australian" called tenders for the erection of a Presbyterian church at Port Macquarie.

Having had a promising beginning progress towards

1."The Australian" 5 November 1840.
2."The Australian" 11 February 1841.
3."The Australian" 15 April 1841.
building the church was rapid and in the following year, 1842, the new building was opened. "The Sydney Herald" stated that this occurred on Sunday, 18 December 1842. The Rev. William McIntyre of Maitland was to have officiated but at the last moment was prevented from coming and his place was occupied by Rev. William Purves. The report added that the Church was designed to hold 250 people and provision was made to allow the addition of a gallery at a later date. In the same article it is mentioned that a Manse was in course of construction at this particular time. The Manse, which was completed in 1843, still stands in the Church grounds at Port Macquarie and has been used as the minister’s residence to this time.

1."The Sydney Herald" 29 December 1842.
EDUCATION.

It is rather difficult to trace the organisation of education of children at Port Macquarie throughout the period under review. However there are occasional references in official records and the newspapers to various individuals connected with the schools, and to educational activities in the area, during the penal era.

1. "The Sydney Gazette" recorded in December 1821
"...we are sorry to learn that two persons have been recently drowned. The name of one of the individuals who was lost from the pilot boat is Mr. McCabe, the schoolmaster; the other was a prisoner." This paragraph from "The Gazette", in one of its reports on activities from Port Macquarie, contains the first mention we have of the school there, and from it we know that such an institution was established at Port Macquarie in the first year of the settlement.

2. In the following year, it is gathered from the Colonial Secretary's outwards correspondence, in a letter dated 30 August 1822, the "Lady Nelson" took to Port Macquarie Charles Henry Hayward, alias Haywood, a school master by trade, formerly given seven years at Nottingham in 1819, and given an additional two years at Liverpool, New South Wales in July 1822. It has not been possible to determine that Hayward ever had any connection with his former profession during his stay at Port Macquarie.

As it was government practice to allow the convicts to have their wives join them at Port Macquarie, it was necessary to have some educational facilities for the offspring of these couples, as well as for the children of the free persons who were employed at the penal settlement.

Mary Rush, on the petition of her convict husband, Peter, was ordered by the Colonial Secretary on 3 February 1823 to join her husband at Port Macquarie. This she did and in the following April the couple requested the Governor to allow their daughter, Mary Ann Usher, aged six years, and attending the Orphan School at Parramatta, to be sent to them at Port Macquarie "...as there is likewise a school established here for the education of children."

Due to lack of church buildings within the colony the English system of association between Church and school had not been so fully developed as in England. Later, as New South Wales expanded, we find that the new churches became centres of day school education as happened at Port Macquarie after the Church of St. Thomas was opened in 1828. However, despite the absence of suitable facilities, education, generally, remained under the care of the clergy. As few clerics were ministering in New South Wales in the 1820's there was little that the available clergy could do towards organising day schools. The "Report of the Colony" for the year 1822 states that Reverend Thomas

Reddall was appointed as Assistant Chaplain at Liverpool on 19 December 1819 "With an appointment to introduce the National System of Education in the Colony." So it is evident that the authorities were not unmindful of the needs of the new colony, and had given some consideration to the desirability of organizing a satisfactory educational scheme in New South Wales.

In 1823 Colonial Secretary Goulburn informed Commandant Allman of the despatch to Port Macquarie of:

2. "...twelve leaves, each containing Six Lessons, together with the twenty four first pages of the spelling book printed for the Sunday School Union." On 23 August 1823 Allman advised the Colonial Secretary of the receipt of these. We note that it is the Sunday School Union which provided the material for the day school, clear evidence of the interest of church authorities in this sphere.

3. In 1825 one George Farrell was the teacher at Port Macquarie and the census figures for this year show attendance at the Port Macquarie school as a total of 37 children consisting of 17 males and 20 females.

4. In January 1826, according to the "Report of the Colony" for that year, Edward McRoberts was appointed schoolmaster at a salary of £40 per annum and was allowed a free house. An indication of the termination of McRobert's appointment is given in the Colonial Secretary's Outward Correspondence where we find a letter from Colonial Secretary McIay to Commandant Crotty,

dated 15 February 1828, instructing that McRoberts and his family be provided with a passage to Sydney from Port Macquarie. McRobert's next appointment was to the school of the Parish of St. Philip, Sydney. Average 1. Official attendance figures for the Port Macquarie school from 1 May 1826 to 31 December 1826 were given as:
Number on Roll - 46, Average Attendance - Boys 21, Girls 17; Total 38.

2. On 3 July 1827 McIeay communicated to Lt. Owen that the government approved of the girls at the Port Macquarie school making articles from materials supplied and selling them for the benefit of the scholars.

3. "The Sydney Gazette" of 7 September 1827 lists, among other schools in the colony, the Port Macquarie Free Day School for free education to the age of ten years, and thereafter a charge of threepence per day was made. Attendance figures to 30 June 1827 were given as 31 on the roll with an average attendance of 17 boys and 12 girls.

Succeeding McRoberts at the Port Macquarie school was Mr. Benjamin F. Reed, and also appointed officially to the school was Mrs. Reed. "The Return of the Colony", 1829, lists these appointments to the school of the Church of St. Thomas at salaries, respectively, of £40 and £10. Also recorded is the attendance at the school for 1829 as 23 scholars. By 1832 the official records show B.F. Reed receiving a salary of £50.

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters. (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McIeay to Owen. 3 July 1827.
(presumably including renumeration for his wife's services) and the total number of scholars on the roll as 24.

So from the opening of the new church in 1828 it appears that the building was used also as a school. Commandant Smyth was instructed to board portion of the 1st floor of the church and put in a fireplace "...complaints having been made of the unhealthiness of the present brick floor for the children attending school."

It is interesting to note that during Mr. Reed's early days at Port Macquarie there appears in local administration files a letter to the effect that "...the child of Mr. Reed, Schoolmaster, lately arrived at the Settlement, has the Hooping Cough..." thus causing the removal of the entire family to Settlement Farm to avoid spreading infection. By 23 September the child had recovered as Reed was ordered back to the main settlement to resume duties. Mr. Reed also held the position of Clerk of the Church as well as being Parish Schoolmaster during his stay at Port Macquarie. He was in these positions as late as 20 October 1832 but no later references to this gentleman have been discovered.

"The Return of the Colony" 1833 gives the school attendance for that year as 33 scholars.

In 1833 the managing educational authority, The Church and Schools Corporation was dissolved by an Order in Council dated 4 February 1833, and from 1 August 1833 the salaries and allowances of the clergy and

schools were paid direct from the Colonial Treasury. Thus came greater governmental control of education in New South Wales. No longer did the government contribute financial support indirectly through the Schools Corporation but, at this stage, undertook the direct renumeration of clergy and teachers.

"The Australian" of 14 January 1841 reported its correspondent, in a letter from Port Macquarie as saying that on "...the 24th ultimo the parochial school at Port Macquarie under the tuition of Mr. William McPherson underwent a public examination..." with flying colours.

The Research Officer of the New South Wales Department of Education in a letter dated 1957 stated that "An application for the establishment of a National (or public) School in the town was received by the Board of National Education in 1851. The school was established in the following year and lessons were held in the former Military Barracks. At the end of 1852 there were 16 boys and 13 girls on the school roll. By 1865 the total enrolment of pupils had risen to 63.

In 1902 a new school building was erected in the grounds in which the old barracks had stood."

2. Letter from Research Officer, Department of Education, in response to request for information on early education at Port Macquarie.
AGRICULTURE.

That the colony at Port Macquarie should be self-supporting as early as possible was contained in advice to the first Commandant at that place. Emphasis, then, had to be placed on production of grain for milling, and in the earliest agricultural enterprises at Port Macquarie grain crops were given the highest priority. Unfortunately, in the very early days of the settlement, frequent attempts were made to grow wheat, while maize, a crop better suited to the climate, received less attention. A measure of success was obtained from wheat, but there was no consistent return in a climatic environment which so readily encouraged rust disease. In investigating production figures for the Hastings River area it is quite clear that the Superintendents of Agriculture and Sugar Plantations sought to win favour by submitting inflated returns of production. They were prepared to falsify figures and furnish exaggerated reports of prosperity to justify retention in their respective positions. While operating under adverse conditions admittedly, the Superintendents appear to have been so careless that they permitted pests, thieving, or inefficient management in their subordinates, to mar the efforts made to achieve a high return from the Government farms.

From official correspondence it is quite clear that greater attention was given to the production of sugar cane than was warranted. Government opinion was that while sugar could be cultivated in New South Wales, and the expense

and delay in bringing supplies of this commodity from the West Indies were considerable, extensive experimentation in the development of the crop in the colony was fully justified.

Misconception concerning the climate at Port Macquarie made the authorities believe that the district there would be ideal for the growth of tropical and subtropical plants. Unfortunately, crops such as cotton, tobacco and sugar cane failed when their cultivation was attempted.

I. Mr. Gyles, who had considerable experience of sugar cane growing practices in the West Indies, inspected the area before settlement and considered that the cane would grow well. There is some justification for this assumption because his visit to Port Macquarie was made in February, the month in which the highest temperatures are recorded. Apparently, no consideration was given to winter temperatures and the incidence of frost. In a period of 50 years to 1957, the average maximum temperature for the month of February was 73.7 degrees Fahrenheit. It is apparent, then, that the impressions of Mr. Gyles regarding the climate at Port Macquarie were not based on any scientific fact. It may be that his desire to find a place in New South Wales where he could grow cane for the Government led to an over-estimation of the suitability of the area.

Some two years after the settlement of Port Macquarie the authorities saw fit to appoint specialists in agriculture to have charge of the Government farms on the Hastings River.


Thus, on 1 September 1823, Mr. W. S. Parker was given an appointment as Superintendent of Agriculture. In December of the same year T. A. Scott became Superintendent of Sugar Plantations, without any fixed rate of remuneration. He was promised, however, a percentage payment from the sale of sugar and tobacco.

In 1826 each of these men was given an Assistant Superintendent, as agricultural development had increased. The appointment of these Assistant Superintendents was important because it was recognised now that the agricultural pursuits of the new settlement demanded more attention and care than that afforded by the Superintendent of Convicts. Population had increased to an extent where supervision of convicts was as much as this officer could reasonably manage. That Scott should have been given a position commensurate in authority with that accorded Parker indicates the importance attached by the Government to the growing of sugar cane, first plantings of which had been made under Captain Allman's direction in 1821.

It was not long before there was bickering between Parker and Scott, eventually leading to open dissension and culminating in charges and counter-charges which were laid before the Commandant. Finally, this led to a Court of Inquiry. Each man sought to promote the desirability and importance of his particular enterprises. Soon, jealousy over production figures, and the degree to which each man's farming was appreciated by the Commandants and the Governors, caused dislike to flare into open and uncontrolled hatred on


2. See Appendix No.
each side.

In addition to feuding with the Superintendent of Sugar Plantations, Parker incurred early the displeasure of the Commandant. Captain Allman complained to the Colonial Secretary that Parker did not send into camp men he had been asked for. In return, Parker wrote to Goulburn stating that his work was being hindered by the attitude of the Commandant. Thus the pattern of relationships between Parker and the various Commandants became fixed at a very early stage of Parker's stay at the Port Macquarie settlement.

Parker's duties were to control all agricultural and pastoral activities except those specifically reserved for Scott, namely the growing of sugar cane and tobacco. So Parker grew maize and wheat and endeavoured to propagate the flocks, while at various stages of his work he experimented with other crops such as flax, cotton and the castor plant.

W.S. Parker was an assured and active correspondent, going to great lengths to state his opinions and desires on paper. Therefore, it is not surprising that his outward correspondence has been assembled as one unit in the collected papers of the Colonial Secretary in the Mitchell Library.

As mentioned earlier, it was during the period when Parker was manager of agricultural activities at Port Macquarie that serious discrepancies in grain stocks occurred. It appears that Parker was careless, to say the least, and, quite likely, somewhat unreliable and untrustworthy. None the less, he did grow much grain, finally producing an

I. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie. Allman to Goulburn. 2 March 1824.
I. Exportable surplus. On 29 October 1825, some two years after his appointment, Parker requested the Colonial Secretary to give him leave of absence as the wheat was practically harvested. In the letter Parker reported 200 acres of "uncommonly fine" wheat, but mentioned also that rust "has much injured" 500 acres of wheat. These details of expanding acreage, though conceding that frost was a problem, are indicative of rapid progress on the farms. It must be remembered that it was not until 24 December 1824 that the Colonial Secretary had ordered the Superintendent of Agriculture to commence development of farmlands in the new plains on the Wilson River. By 1825 the bulk of agricultural production was coming from this region, which was given the name of Rollands Plains.

In addition to his agricultural duties Parker had charge of Government livestock. He proposed to the authorities that, to obtain more cattle, herds could be driven overland from Bathurst to Port Macquarie. Such an undertaking would be bound to test the skill of the best drovers of the period.

We shall see later that a venture similar to the one proposed by Parker, and tried some years afterwards, involved the loss of many beasts from the herd while enroute for the Hastings River. Alexander McLeay, recently appointed to the office of Colonial Secretary, advised that "...as while the Settlement retains its penal Character it would not be proper to drive cattle thither." and that they would be sent by sea. This indicates that the Government was trying to maintain the theory that the penal establishment

1. Colonial Secretary’s Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie. Parker to Goulburn. 29 October 1825.

2. Colonial Secretary’s Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. Goulburn to Parker. 24 December 1824.

3. Colonial Secretary’s Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Parker. 1 February 1826.
at Port Macquarie was remote and inaccessible, and refused to suggest for one moment that any overland communication with the area should be permitted.

By 1826 the Sydney papers, "The Monitor" and "Australian", were reporting a famine on the Hastings River. However, "The Gazette" claimed that these assertions were inaccurate, and I wrote, "Mr. W. S. Parker, the Superintendent of Agriculture at Port Macquarie we are glad to say, has one of the finest crops of wheat this season, ever grown in any part of the country."

Each Commandant found cause for complaint against Parker, but none more so than Captain Wright who replaced Gillman in 1826. By May 1826 Parker became fully aware of this fact that Wright, also, was dissatisfied with his work.

Parker, in turn, protested to the Governor that Wright, having sold out of the army, now endeavoured to establish himself at Port Macquarie by purchasing flocks, and that Wright was only too eager to discredit the Superintendent's efforts. Wright despatched frequent memoranda to Parker, specifying in detail the duties appertaining to the position of Superintendent of Agriculture, and made it clear that he, as Commandant, considered it his responsibility to supervise Parker's work in detail. We can realise how a man with Parker's temperament must have reacted to Wright's letter of 23 August 1826 which stated that Parker must not absent himself from his duties without the consent of the Commandant. At this period, Parker was in the habit of making his rounds of the Farms on horseback and, at times, used a boat when such served his purpose. It seems that Wright referred to Parker's visits to

the settlement at Port Macquarie township as being absent from duty. No doubt Parker, being a free person, mainly in association with convicts and their guards, found a measure of relaxation in spending some days at the headquarters of the settlement.

To go back to the month of July 1824 we find Parker accused of boarding the ship "Lady Nelson" at Port Macquarie without a permit, while he complained, in turn, that the Sentinel on the beach, on this occasion, had insulted him.

1. Parker wrote to Captain Allman, "If you are to be a determined enemy of mine, pray do be a generous one, and infuse not such a spirit in the soldiers here...." Some few months prior to this incident Allman had refused Parker extra labour for the farms, and Parker's letter of protest to the Colonial Secretary referred to "...the marked and decided opposition which the Commandant holds forth to me."

It is hard in most instances to determine the extent to which blame may be apportioned in the numerous clashes between the Superintendent of Agriculture and the Commandants. In Parker's favour we can understand that a civilian would find it difficult to obtain acceptance in a settlement predominantly military in set-up. It may be presumed that Parker's methods of dealing with convicts and military, being those of a civilian, might be misunderstood by the soldiers and cause conflict. Also, as an agriculturist, Parker required seasonal labour, particularly during harvest. It is likely that the Commandants, at times, did not realise the need for speed

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters Port Macquarie. Correspondence of W. S. Parker. Parker to Allman. 23 July 1824.

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters Port Macquarie. Correspondence of W. S. Parker. Parker to Goulburn. 9 March 1823.
during harvesting to prevent damage to crops by rain and frequent floods. Yet, at certain times, probably, it would be impossible to meet all Parker's demands for labour. Undoubtedly, there were many occupations from which convicts could not be withdrawn readily for seasonal agricultural activities.

It is quite clear that the major hazard to agricultural progress on the river flats at Rollands Plains was flooding. It is noticeable to-day that farmers on the same areas have moved their homes back to the slopes adjacent to the flood plains, as it requires comparatively little rain to make the Wilson River break its banks at Rollands Plains. This flooding in the river regularly cut the line of communications between Rollands Plains and Port Macquarie, and prevented supplies getting through. Therefore, Parker communicated with the Colonial Secretary stating "...that nearly 300 men employed at Rollands Plains at Port Macquarie, are whenever a flood is in the river either irregularly supplied with rations, or entirely without them for some days..." Parker claimed that the problem could be solved by the establishment of a Commissariat store on Rollands Plains. In addition, this would save the labour and inconvenience of transporting produce of Rollands Plains to Port Macquarie and back again. In the same letter Parker suggested that a Medical Officer should visit Rollands Plains once or twice a week to attend sick convicts. Another letter to McLeay three days later requested a supply of red wheat for 2. sowing on the farms as "...it is better adapted for the

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters, Port Macquarie, Correspondence of W.S. Parker. Parker to McLeay 17 February 1826.

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters, Port Macquarie, Correspondence of W.S. Parker. Parker to McLeay 20 February 1826.
II. Climate of Port Macquarie and less likely to be attacked with rust and several other diseases which prevailed here last year. " So the Superintendent continued to fight the enemy rust at Port Macquarie and, as we know that the climate is entirely unsuitable for growing wheat, we must give Parker some credit for his persistence. In certain seasons he did obtain crops which were considered to be quite good in that period. Parker wrote to Lt. Owen, Commandant, in 1826 and stated "...I trust that your every co-operation will be directed to assisting in saving so luxuriant a wheat crop as has been grown this season."

But, during 1826, the problem of disagreement between Commandant Wright and the Superintendent caused upset in the Settlement. This was aggravated by the fact that the Colonial Secretary had become convinced that Parker should conform to the requirements of Government service. Wright complained in detail to McLeay that there was much maladministration in the agricultural establishments. For example, Wright was greatly disturbed by the fact that Parker was planting lands which had not been cleared entirely of stumps. He reported that, despite remonstrances, Parker continued to offend in this direction. On this point we cannot agree with the Commandant, and we understand that Parker, undoubtedly, was trying to increase production as quickly as possible. The Superintendent's action in planting lands before they were fully cleared showed a measure of ingenuity, but Wright insisted that the Government farms

I. Colonial Secretary's Letter, Port Macquarie. Correspondence of W.S. Parker. Parker to McLeay. 13 November 1826.
should show the orderliness of English estates in the wilderness of New South Wales. However, this is but one point, and it is apparent that Parker did leave himself open to much criticism which was fully warranted. McLeay wrote I, directly to Parker and communicated his displeasure at the manner in which Parker was managing the farms. He reprimanded Parker for not having cleared land fully before planting. The letter stated also that the convicts under the control of Parker were dissatisfied and had a squalid appearance which indicated ill-treatment. McLeay claimed that the barracks which housed these men were dark, and that the men were not receiving vegetables.

Parker complained frequently during the Summer of 1826-27 that he had insufficient labour for harvest, so it is clear that Government policy of reducing convict strength at the settlement was being felt on the farms. In July 1826 2, the Colonial Secretary wrote to Commandant Wright, answering a letter of complaint regarding agricultural matters, and sought Wright's opinion on obtaining new management for the farms and the desirability of reducing the amount of land under cultivation. Wright was requested to ensure that Parker did as he was told and cleared all land fully before planting. An interesting point in this letter from McLeay is that Wright was asked for verification of reports that crops had suffered greatly from frost. McLeay requested a record of thermometer readings at Port Macquarie over the preceding six weeks.

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Parker. 26 June 1826.

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Wright. 20 July 1826.
There is no doubt that in the farming areas away from the coast, such as Rollands Plains, Prospect, Saint Rocks (Sancrox) and Redbank, the farms suffered considerably from frost, particularly in relation to tropical and subtropical plants. Ultimately the Government, and the free settlers who came later, were forced to concede that the climate on the Hastings River called for more discrimination in the selection of crops than was shown in the early penal period.

1. In August 1826 McLeay acknowledged Wright's advice on agricultural matters and noted particularly that Wright considered the farms could be operated satisfactorily with 60 men. McLeay suggested, in view of the move to discontinue or decrease the penal establishment, that it was not practicable to sell the farms, and advised that they be continued on a limited scale for another season. It is worth noting that at this time there were about 120 convicts employed on the Rollands Plains farms, and there were many others at the smaller farms. However, Government policy was not consistent. By December 1826 Innes, the new Commandant, was instructed to complete farm buildings, the grinding mill and the mill dam at Rollands Plains. Possibly the authorities were constrained to continue the farming ventures and even expand to a certain extent, because it was late in this year, 1826, that Parker furnished glowing accounts of agricultural development on the Hastings River.

Generally speaking, it was hard for the Commandant and

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Wright. 3 August 1826.

2. See Appendix No. 6.
and his subordinates to pursue progressive policy with the farms because of the lack of definite guidance from Sydney. There appeared to be an anticipation of the closing of Port Macquarie as a Penal Settlement and, consequently, the various activities of the convicts were pursued solely to keep the inhabitants occupied. There was little or no planning for the future. This inconsistency on the part of the administration became the more noticeable in ensuing years, not only to the time of free settlement in 1830 but right to the stage where the penal settlement was closed. None knew what was to happen and, in many instances, it was obvious that the Port Macquarie colony was regarded as a burden with which the authorities would have dispensed willingly, if someone had known how to accomplish the dispersal of the felons.

In 1827 Commandant Innes reported that there had been favourable progress with the cotton crop. The Colonial Secretary commended Innes for his zeal in this direction and informed him that bagging would be sent from Sydney so the crop could be baled. There is relatively little information regarding attempts to grow cotton on the Hastings River. The lengthy frost-free growing period of about thirty weeks required by the plant is barely obtainable in this region, so it may be assumed that cotton would not flourish, except under very careful management and understanding of local climatic conditions.

In 1827 Parker was given an increase in salary, to take effect from 1 July 1826. The Colonial Secretary informed
I. Parker to this effect and advised him that, in addition to the salary of £250, Parker was to retain the use of his house and to have at his disposal a horse, for those occasions when he needed same. This letter, which was so favourable to Parker's interests, came after an exceptionally fine report of agricultural progress on the Hastings River. This was one of the few occasions when Parker was in favour with the administration.

It is made clear, from a study of the correspondence of the period that, of all the farming establishments in the Hastings River area, the one on Rollands Plains was the most effective by far. In April 1827 McLeay communicated to Commandant Innes the requirements of the Government concerning "Settlement Farm", the establishment on the South bank of the Hastings River, about one and a half miles from Port Macquarie. Innes was asked to instruct the Superintendent of Agriculture "...to abandon this farm and confine his attentions to the Establishments at Rollands Plains." So, gradually, the other farms became of less importance and the major effort was confined to Rollands Plains. Here, the lands under the control of Parker and Scott adjoined and, despite the evil of persistent flooding, a high degree of agricultural development was obtained.

On the Wilson River at Rollands Plains were situated the mill and mill dam, and this use of water power facilitated the grinding of grain. Mr. H. Bransdon of Port Macquarie, who in his early days resided near the site of

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Parker. 29 March 1827.

2. See Map in Appendix No. 1.
the old convict farms, recalls having seen the remnants of the dam. This was situated about one hundred yards to the West of the Wilson River crossing, on what became the first road to Kempsey. This road was known as "Postman's Line", and runs to-day through William Warters' property. The dam material consisted of logs in the round, angled across the stream so that the intensified rush of water, at the apex of the angle so formed, could be directed into the millrace. The mill race was a bricked underground tunnel leading beneath the mill and returning to the river downstream. There was frequent trouble with the dam because of floods. These caused damage to the wall of the dam. We have on record Parker's letter to Commandant Crotty, typical of many others, I., which mentions the problem. This states "...the river has rose to a considerable height...it has made a fresh breach in the mill dam..." Attention to the bed of the Wilson River for some miles below the site of the dam reveals the presence of many convict-made bricks washed from the mill site, apparently from the brickwork of the mill race.

2. Nearby, and on the old road to Port Macquarie, about half a mile from the mill, towards Bril Bril Creek, were two large brick buildings, used as granaries. One at least of these structures consisted of two floors, and the foundations of both are clearly visible to-day. From the time when these buildings began to decay it was customary for local settlers to come and collect bricks for use in and about their homes. Not a few of the older houses on

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie, Vol IV, Mitchell Library. Outward Correspondence of W.S. Parker. Parker to Crotty. 5 December 1827.

2. See Appendix Map No.
Rollands Plains can boast a chimney and fireplace made from convict bricks. Few convict buildings were made of brick in the first decade of settlement. Most buildings were constructed of timber and, having decayed long since, we have no indication of their exact location.

In returning to the problems associated with agricultural administration at Port Macquarie it is necessary to consider the matter of grain deficiencies. Parker, as Superintendent, could reasonably be expected to provide an accurate assessment of crop prospects or, at least justify failures or shortages. However, from the viewpoint of the Commandants, it may be said that Parker did not inspire trust, and most of the officers at Port Macquarie doubted his honesty and veracity. Parker was prone to criticize freely, and at length, at the slightest opportunity, and this characteristic did not endear him to others on the settlement.

In 1825 Parker was accused of diverting for his own use one thousand bushels of bran from the prisoners' rations. The matter was investigated and Parker required to make amends. However, on 4 May 1825, he wrote to Commandant Gillman denying that the minutes of the inquiry contained an undertaking by him to return the bran. Also, Parker demanded access to the report as other people had been given the opportunity to peruse it.

The 1826 season at Port Macquarie appears to have been extremely favourable as in this year Parker's communications regarding production all strike a high note. Parker claimed
that the maize crop had flourished and the sugar cane was particularly good. In July 1826 Parker advised the Commissariat Officer at Port Macquarie that he was about to commence delivery into store at Port Macquarie of some three thousand pounds of fresh pork. In January 1827 he informed the Commissariat of the production of a quantity of fine tobacco which had been grown at Rollands Plains. Mr. Bowerman, the Commissariat Officer at Port Macquarie, refused to take delivery of the tobacco grown by Parker and told the Superintendent to send it to Sydney. It was in this year, 1826, that each of the Agricultural Superintendents received an assistant, probably on account of increased production.

Parker used lime considerably for cleaning or whitewashing huts and he found, at times, that this commodity was not readily procurable. He wrote to Commandant I. Innes "...I fear that I will not be able to get lime burnt in time to have the buildings on this establishment (Rolland Plains) cleaned..." He added "...I will send my cart to Camden Haven" for the forty bushels required if Innes would give permission. It appears, then, that at this period it was possible for a wheeled vehicle to proceed along the coast, at least as far as Camden Haven. In February of the following year Parker reiterated that lime for cleaning was scarce, and stated that he desired to burn shells "...on the banks of the Hastings (if it is possible to find them)..." We can assume that at this time lime was available locally for use in public buildings.


such as the Church of St Thomas which was nearing completion so Parker should not have had too much trouble in obtaining supplies.

By 1828 Parker had a large grain deficiency which, he claimed, was due to over estimation of the yield and the depredations of the weevil. The Commandant considered this explanation unsatisfactory and demanded a better one.

Parker's reply was that "...the luxuriant appearance of the wheat crop warranted my expectation that it would produce twenty five bushels to the acre...however...the drought and unprecedented hot weather in September and October...caused it to weigh light..." Parker's major troubles originated in the fact that he found it easier to praise his crop during growth than to account for deficiencies at maturity. Had he been more modest in predicting agricultural returns, particularly after he had the experience of several seasons, his problems would have been less. The authorities, naturally expected some correlation between the estimated yield and the actual yield. There is no doubt, knowing the Port Macquarie climate as we do, that Parker's wheat crops would appear to be all that could be desired up to a certain stage. Beyond this, generally, there could be nothing but disappointment because conditions were not suitable for growing wheat.

The Assistant Superintendent of Agriculture appointed in 1826 was Henry Harding Parker, brother of the Superintendent. Despite the intense conflict which occurred between Commandant Gillman and W.S.Parker,

I.Colonial Secretary's Letters. Port Macquarie. Correspondence of W.S.Parker. Parker to Crotty 2 April 1828.
I. Gillman’s last official letter to the Colonial Secretary before he left the charge at Port Macquarie made a plea for the appointment of an assistant for the Superintendent. Gillman claimed that an additional official was necessary due to expansion of agricultural pursuits at Port Macquarie. Parker had made formal application for an assistant in December 1825.

Despite the obvious failings of the Superintendent the farms prospered and, in March 1826, the Colonial Secretary wrote to Commandant Wright expressing his approval of the agricultural progress at Port Macquarie. In 1827, “The Australian” commented, "By the last arrival from Port Macquarie we learn that the Agricultural Establishment there bears a very promising aspect. Two hundred and twenty acres of wheat are looking remarkably healthy..."

It was in 1827 that Colonial Secretary McLeay instructed Commandant Innes to ensure that Parker devoted his main efforts to the farms which were the most effective, namely those at Rollands Plains. Development of "Settlement Farm", situated near the town of Port Macquarie, was to cease. In his letter of instruction to Parker on this matter, Innes advised, also, that portion of the Rollands Plains' wheat crop should be removed from that area and placed in the Commissariat stores at Port Macquarie. The productivity of the Hastings River farms in this period was such that McLeay, on 18 August 1827, instructed Commandant Owen to despatch twenty thousand bushels of maize to Sydney. So, for


2. Colonial Secretary’s Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Wright 20 March 1826.


the first time, a major part of the production of the settlement was available for export to Port Jackson. It will be noted that the grain was maize which, unlike wheat, grows well in the Hastings River climate.

A Mr. John Gilligan of Port Macquarie had requested that seeds of the Castor plant be sent to him from Sydney as he considered that this plant would grow in the Hastings River climate. On 31 December 1827 Commandant Crotty was informed that this seed was being despatched. About one year later Commandant Smyth reported to the Colonial Secretary that the plants had grown well and requested permission to attempt the extraction of castor oil. McLeay gave his approval and, eventually, a trial quantity was forwarded to Sydney for testing.

2. McLeay advised that seven quart bottles of castor oil were received in Sydney and would be tested for quality.

3. Some six weeks later he advised the Commandant that the Inspector of Colonial Hospitals had reported to him that the castor oil from Port Macquarie was inferior to that brought from the West Indies. It is presumed that growing of the castor plant was not continued as no other reference to it has been found in the records.

4. In February 1828 the Colonial Secretary advised Crotty to forward to Sydney a statement of the acreage under cultivation at Port Macquarie, and directed that the growing of maize be discontinued. As maize was the crop which had always grown with considerable success at Port

I. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie.
McLeay to Crotty 31 December 1827.

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie.
McLeay to Smyth. 23 August 1830.

3. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie.
McLeay to Smyth. 2 October 1830.

McLeay to Crotty 9 February.
Macquarie it is surprising that such an order should be given. The letter from McLeay also criticised Crotty for glossing over deficiencies in maize stocks, and stated that the discrepancies in Parker's establishment were no less than those in the department under Scott's care. Crotty was to ensure that Parker accounted for the grain. However, shortly afterwards, another direction from Sydney countermanded the order which had asked for the abandonment of maize production. Later in the same year, 1828, the Colonial Secretary demanded that cultivation of wheat and maize be pursued with all zeal in order that the Port Macquarie settlement should be independent of the mother settlement at Port Jackson. At this period it was common for grain to be shipped from Port Macquarie to relieve the needs of the Moreton Bay colony, which was still in its early infancy.

In January 1829 the Commandant at Port Macquarie was instructed to get a cargo of wheat from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay immediately, as the crops at Moreton Bay had almost failed completely. This is indicative of the increasing importance of the Port Macquarie settlement. We do not know that the Commandant was able to fulfil the order, but the Government certainly had sufficient confidence to forward the necessary instructions for grain delivery.

On 6 June 1829 the Colonial Secretary acknowledged Commandant Smyth's advice to the effect that nine tons of hay awaited shipment to Sydney, and Smyth was asked to

I, Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Smyth 6 June 1829.
continue sending this commodity. The same letter contained a note to the effect that the application of the Superintendent of Agriculture for an increased salary was refused.

Additional supplies of hay became available at Port Macquarie and, in October 1829, the Colonial Secretary advised that forty tons of hay which awaited shipment to Sydney should be held until the ensuing trip of the "Mary Elizabeth", as on the current voyage she would carry a cargo of maize from Port Macquarie to Port Jackson. Later in the same month McLeay's letter to Smyth advised that the "Isabella" was to call at Port Macquarie to take a cargo of maize and hay to Sydney, so we presume that the forty tons of hay referred to previously were not kept until the next trip of the "Mary Elizabeth". In January 1830 Smyth was informed of the impending visit of the "Mary Elizabeth" to Port Macquarie carrying a number of convicts. He was asked to arrange a return loading of grain. The amount of correspondence during 1829 concerning cargo space and quantities of primary produce available shows that Port Macquarie was enjoying a considerable measure of prosperity. The authorities in Sydney appear to have come to rely on the Hastings River settlement to relieve shortages in supplies of grain.

In 1830 free settlement was permitted on the Hastings River and, shortly afterwards, many of the government agricultural estates were disposed of. The story of agricultural progress after 1830, on what were formerly government farms, and the extension of private enterprise,

I, Colonial Secretary's Letters (Outwards) Port Macquarie. McLeay to Smyth, 30 January 1830.
is contained in the chapter entitled, "Development Since Free Settlement".

Meanwhile it is necessary for us to return to the parallel agricultural activity which continued at Port Macquarie - the sugar cane industry in the charge of T. A. Scott, Superintendent of Sugar Plantations.

Thomas Alison Scott applied on 9 August 1823 for a job at Port Macquarie as agricultural adviser on tobacco and sugar cane at a salary of £150, and renewed this offer on 29 August. On 14 October 1823 he again stated his willingness to work for the Government in this capacity. The Government refused all proposals, but permitted Scott to go to Port Macquarie with a promise of rations and a percentage on all production actually sold. Scott arrived at Port Macquarie on 29 November 1823 and, in the next month, forwarded his first report on the state of the sugar cane and tobacco crops which had been planted there. He made it clear that under his guidance the crops could be expected to flourish.

It should be emphasised that Scott did not introduce sugar cane to Port Macquarie although, in many quarters, he is given credit for doing so. In 1821 Commandant Allman planted a few cane cuttings and later, having obtained the services of a West Indian negro convict named James Williams, he developed a considerable plantation at the township.

2. Scott referred to this plantation in his correspondence with the Colonial Secretary.


2. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie. Scott to Goulburn 29 December 1823.
On 23 March 1824 Scott advised Goulburn that he had despatched to Sydney a sample of cured leaf tobacco, and informed him of much progress in the establishment of effective sugar and tobacco farms. In September 1824 Commandant Rolland forwarded to Goulburn a sample of sugar from Scott's plantations and the Governor, in acknowledging this, requested additional samples and reports from time to time. In October 1824 Rolland gave the Colonial Secretary a favourable report of the sugar cane grown by Scott and forwarded specimens. In the same month Rolland sent to Sydney a sample of rum made from Hastings River cane. The Governor advised the Commandant that he approved of the quality of the sugar cane sent to Sydney on 23 October 1824, but Rolland was required to note that only sufficient cane be planted to ensure the suitability of the Port Macquarie climate for the growth of this crop. We shall see that this aim was not pursued, and the production of sugar in considerable quantities became the aim of the Government. As it happened, the extent of the sugar plantations increased and much energy and expense were devoted to trying to grow a crop entirely unsuited to the environment.

Rolland had taken command at Port Macquarie after Scott had been established there for some time. Knowing Scott's character as we do, it is most likely that he would continue a policy calculated to dupe his superiors. However, Rolland was quite aware that the West Indian, James Williams, had been given credit for the first

2. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie Rolland to Goulburn 23 October 1824.
plantings as he wrote to Goulburn, "In Mr Scott's absence, I have tried a variety of boilings by the negro who first planted the cane."

Scott did not prove himself a competent sugar cane farmer. When fresh plantings were required at Rollands Plains, it was found that Scott knew little of sugar cane culture. In 1826 Commandant Wright reported unfavourably on Scott's sugar cane farm at Rollands Plains. The Sydney press made no favourable comment on sugar produced there, while some papers were really very critical of the produce which Scott called sugar.

Few people give credit to the importance of Rollands Plains in the economic development of the Hastings River region in the penal period. It was here that the major experimentation and production occurred, at the river flats on, and adjacent to, the property now owned by Mr. William Walters (a descendant of Jeremiah Walters - one of the earliest free settlers). The area was named after the Commandant, and Rolland's account of his acquisition of this land for government purposes is interesting. He wrote to Goulburn, "Finding that the Lands on the Northwest Arm of the River were in general more thinly wooded than those on the Southern Branch I occupied a Plain about twenty four miles distant on the former...for general farming and experimental purposes."

Goulburn answered Rolland's letter and advised that the present time was not acceptable to start cultivation.


In February 1825 Scott forwarded another pleasing report on the development of the sugar cane and tobacco industries, mentioning some of the problems which confronted him. It was in November 1825 that Colonial Secretary Goulburn received a request from Port Macquarie for an Assistant Superintendent of Sugar Plantations, indicating that the Commandant considered the appointment of another officer was warranted under the circumstances.

2. We must note carefully that the earliest farms on the Wilson River were located at Prospect, near the present site of the township of Telegraph Point, and at Ballengarra which is only two or three miles downstream from the plains which Rolland selected as being favourable for agriculture. Eventually, permission was given to use this land at Rollands Plains, and the farms there became the most important in the Port Macquarie area.

During 1825 dissension between Scott and the Commandant increased, culminating in Scott's suspension by Gillman on 22 December 1825. Scott reacted immediately and, on 23 December, he wrote a strong letter of protest to Gillman. On the same day he despatched a report of his suspension to Colonel Dumaresq, Acting Chief Engineer, in Sydney. Scott complained to Colonel Dumaresq that the suspension occurred because he had forwarded to Dumaresq, direct, a plan of the sugar works. The next day Scott addressed a letter to Colonial Secretary Goulburn, reporting...
his suspension from duty, and demanded justice, saying,
I. "Oh! Sir, step forward and suffer not the Acts of Passion
in a weak man to destroy, to trample upon this brightest
and most promising Establishment that Government could
devote their fostering care upon." Scott stated in this
letter that, in addition to being stood down, Gillman
refused him a passage to Sydney.

This conflict between the Commandant and the
Superintendent of Sugar Plantations had been developing
over a considerable period. On 10 February 1825 Gillman
had written to Scott, criticizing him for not having
ensured that convicts engaged in the erection of barracks
at Rollands Plains were getting full rations. In addition,
Scott had agitated continually for the issue of a new
plough, but Gillman claimed that the new plough was not
used by Scott when he did receive it. Added to these
complaints was one that Scott did not care sufficiently
for his working bullocks. Gillman advised the appointment
of a convict to look after the beasts, and stated that
fences should be erected to restrain them when they were
not working. Two days later Scott despatched a warm reply
to Gillman, objecting to what he termed unwarranted
criticism, and maintaining that his administration of the
farms could not be faulted. This episode began real trouble
between the two men and, by the end of the year, the
Colonial Secretary intervened to settle the dispute. McLeay
sent letters to both Gillman and Scott on 11 January 1826.

I. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inwards) Port Macquarie
Scott to Goulburn. 24 December 1825.
He ordered Scott to apologise suitably to Gillman, and censured Gillman for having suspended Scott, such action being beyond the powers entrusted to the Commandant.

Some comment by the Sydney press on the sugar and tobacco industries at Port Macquarie is illuminating. "The Gazette" wrote in 1825, "The tobacco crops are also flattering having exceeded everything of the kind hitherto known in the West Indies or America..." The same editorial gave a glowing report of agricultural development at Port Macquarie - a report conveying the impression that it was inspired by some person anxious to obtain favourable publicity for these ventures. In August 1825 the same newspaper produced another article glorifying the cane industry and praising the activities of Mr. Scott. This paper usually tended towards exaggeration in its reports of government enterprises, although other publications, "The Monitor" and "The Australian", generally gave credit where such had been earned.

In March 1826 "The Australian" gave praise, though of a more temperate nature than that accorded by "The Gazette", and commented favourably on Scott's agricultural pursuits at Port Macquarie. "The Australian" wrote as follows,

I. "The cultivation of sugar at Port Macquarie, under the superintendence of Mr. Scott, has this year been attended with great success. Tobacco, it would seem, is also grown there on a large scale; there being not less than 50 acres ready to be cut in a few days. The leaves are generally

3 feet 6 inches by 2 feet 6 inches being much larger than the leaf of the Brazils... About 90 acres of sugar cane bear the most promising and luxuriant appearance."

In December, the same paper vented severe criticism of the economic position at Port Macquarie, and made it clear that such settlements as that at Port Macquarie must fail, inevitably, as organisation and administration were insufficient to manage the ventures satisfactorily. "The Australian" maintained that poor administration in New South Wales was a prime factor in ensuring that government enterprises turned out to be failures. It said, "The settlement at Port Macquarie, we fear, has been lately in a lamentable condition, perhaps on very short allowance. Three of the Aborigines were despatched overland about a month ago to Newcastle with the melancholy tidings that there were on 15 November only ninetys stock of provisions in the public stores. "The paper claimed that no more such settlements should be initiated as there was no government organisation which could assure the success of similar ventures.

There is no evidence that this report in "The Australian" concerning privations on the Hastings was correct, and, from a perusal of the sources available concerning the state of the settlement in 1826, there is ample substantiation for the belief that it did operate in a satisfactory manner during that year. This report of famine was vented by "The Monitor" also, but to a

lesser degree. "The Gazette", on 27 December 1826, forcibly denied the accuracy of the reports carried by its journalistic competitors. This example of misreporting by "The Australian" serves to emphasize the frequent inaccuracies of the press at that time. While one has to resort to the columns of the Sydney papers of the period for information and opinions relative to agricultural development, it is necessary to weigh very carefully what is read.

On 20 May 1826 "The Gazette" advised its readers that five thousand pounds of tobacco grown at Port Macquarie were to be auctioned in Sydney on 26 May. In August of the same year another auction sale of Hastings River tobacco was held. Government policy with regard to sales of Hastings River tobacco leaf was determined early in 1826. The Colonial Secretary advised Commandant Wright that, as the Government intended to sell the tobacco production of Port Macquarie in Sydney, all available leaf was to be shipped to Port Jackson as soon as it was ready.

In December 1826 "The Australian" stated that "At the sugar Plantation at Port Macquarie they... set fire to forty or fifty acres of sugar cane for want of the necessary millwork to extract the juice..."

About this time Scott was proceeding with plans for the erection of sugar extraction plants, and in June 1827 four boilers were sent to Port Macquarie for use in sugar mills. The year 1827 appears to have been one of the most

successful from an agricultural point of view, mainly because much of the work of earlier years was coming to fruition at this stage.

The sugar cane farms on the Hastings River, which had greatly impressed Mr. Guilding, the first settler on the Manning River, led that gentleman to entertain ideas of growing sugar cane on his new lands. Colonial Secretary I. McLeay instructed Commandant Crotty to provide Guilding with 2 sugar cane plants. "The Return of the Colony", 1829, shows that John Guilding had been given a land grant of 2,560 acres on the Manning River at a quit rent of £21.6.8 per annum.

"The Australian", in 1827, published some of Mr. Guilding's comments after he had inspected his land grants on the Manning River. The report said, "Mr. Guilding, who has returned from Port Macquarie gives the most flattering account of the richness of the country on the Banks of the Hastings, and its general capabilities for the rearing of most tropical productions, such as sugar, rum, coffee, common tobacco and indigo. Mr. Guilding intends returning almost immediately in order to commence a sugar plantation on a large scale."

By August 1827 Scott had produced the first sugar in quantity, and samples of it were despatched to Sydney where many citizens inspected with interest the new product of the colony. Comments on its quality were varied, but from reports we must agree that much was to be desired to improve the standard of sugar produced. However, the fact remains that sugar had been made, and that alone was much to the credit of


the Superintendent of Sugar Plantations. "The Australian" I. said, "One or two casks from Port Macquarie are said to contain Sugar. A sample is now lying on my table (says a correspondent) and it is the most miserable affair imaginable - wet and black, it is hardly fit for lollypop makers...No estimate can be made of the immense cost of this wretched trash."

2. In December 1827 "The Gazette" notified the forthcoming sale at Sydney Commissariat Stores of 7,674 pounds of sugar and 8,448 pounds of molasses from the Port Macquarie plantation. However, demand for this produce was slight indeed. No more than 470 pounds was sold and the remainder stayed in store for about three months. It was disposed of eventually, presumably at a bargain price.

"The Gazette" wrote a more guarded report than "The Australian" on the sugar production of government farms.

3. It said, "We...have satisfaction in stating, that although the sugar appears to be somewhat moist, it is of richest quality. The tobacco, too, is excellent and not inferior in quality to any of our foreign imports." However, in the following month, "The Gazette" became more extravagant in praise and said "...the present penal dependency at Port Macquarie promises to become one of the finest sugar plantations in the world." "The Gazette" made this statement knowing that it was proposed to open the Hastings River area to free settlers in the near future. It also reported in its columns that the Governor was to be asked...

to allow members of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce to take over the Sugar Plantations as, when the scheme was first mooted, the sum of £4,000 was subscribed in £100 shares in a short period of time. The paper commented, however, that ideas of success could not be entertained unless the Government made convict labour available to work the estates.

Generally, "The Gazette" showed a tendency to gloss over deficiencies and weaknesses in the management of government concerns, while the private newspapers were frequently over-critical of the administration, and prone to place undue emphasis upon the many setbacks which beset the early projects.

Yet, despite the exertions of Scott, and the wide publicity afforded the sugar extraction processes, the Superintendent was dismissed from his position on 9 February 1828. The Colonial Secretary advised the Commandant at Port Macquarie to this effect, and requested Crotty to convene a board of inspection to prepare a report on the sugar establishment. Crotty had been criticised since he took office at Port Macquarie for not keeping an adequate check on the activities of the Superintendents of Agriculture and Sugar Plantations. The Government considered, as returns from crops were invariably much different from early estimates and lighter than could be expected, that the Commandants exercised inadequate supervision.

In the next three years the Government insisted on the maintenance of the farms and preservation of the mill,
mill dam and all machinery. It does appear that Scott's lamentable work adversely influenced governmental opinion of the sugar industry. General government policy was to maintain what had been achieved on the farms until the now imminent free settlement came into effect.

Thus we come to the end of the five year period in which Scott operated the sugar plantations on the Hastings River. The court of inquiry, which investigated maladministration in Scott's establishment, announced in its findings that Scott was not particularly capable in growing sugar cane and manufacturing sugar. The report inferred that sugar cane growing was not suited to the geographic environment on the Hastings River, and stated that frost was a major deterrent to successful cultivation. The denunciation of Scott by the Commissioners of Inquiry left no doubt as to the Superintendent's capabilities. I. Busby wrote, "...we consider it extremely probable that in no Climate nor under any circumstances, would it have succeeded with such management."

From 1828 the sugar plantations deteriorated if it is possible that they could be in worse condition than when Scott departed so ignominiously. On 29 September 1831 the Home Government communicated to Governor Bourke its proposal that the sugar plantations at Port Macquarie should be abolished. So the last crops of sugar cane expired at Port Macquarie - a part of Australia not suited to its growth. Parker had persisted in growing wheat in adverse
conditions, and it is apparent that Scott was equally industrious in trying to promote the growth of sugar in an undesirable climate. Possibly, Scott refused to recognise the fact that the cane was not in its natural environment and, even if he did, it may be that to maintain his own employment he continued his efforts in the face of adversity. Whatever the reason may have been, we know that the sugar crops at Port Macquarie aroused lively interest throughout the colony and, as a few settlers tried to grow the plants in the warmer northern regions, the elements of the industry were retained until to-day's flourishing canefields developed.
With the throwing open of the Hastings River area to free settlement the authorities found that the major problem at Port Macquarie was to adjust the colony there to accommodate new arrivals. As Port Macquarie had been an exclusive penal settlement for nine years it was natural, and necessary, for the administration to change in order that free settlers could operate along with the remaining convict population. Government plans for convicts involved the return of many to Port Jackson and the despatch of the worst types to Norfolk Island. On 23 July 1830, Colonial Secretary McLeay wrote to Captain Smyth, Commandant at Port Macquarie, advising the despatch of the "Lucy Ann" to transport convicts from the Hastings River to Norfolk Island. All capital respites (54 in all), and all lifers (totalling 50), were to be removed thence with the exception of eight of the former category and 25 of the latter who, because of good behaviour, were to remain. McLeay also stated in this letter that five of the convict farms were to be reserved for Government use namely: The Sugar Plantation, Ballengarra, Rollands Plains, Settlement Farm and Owens Plains. Of these recognised farms, which were in full production in 1830, all, with the exception of Settlement Farm, were located along the Wilson River in the area which

was the most highly developed agriculturally in the Hastings River region during the penal period.

One of these farms was to remain directly under Government control and the remaining four were to be let for a period of five years. McLear requested Smyth to advise which one of the farms should be kept and which of the Government buildings should be retained. Smyth was asked to state also how the remaining buildings could be best disposed of, but, if he had no other suggestion, these buildings should be let for a period of one year, except that one building at Port Macquarie was to be kept as an inn and another as a public house. Smyth was to recommend persons best suited to operate these places.

In order that the transference, from an establishment adapted solely for penal purposes to one which embraced free settlers, might be effected as smoothly as possible, the Commandant was to forward lists, periodically, of those employees of the Government who could be dispensed with, at the same time stating the salaries each had been paid. The plan was to withdraw these persons only when they were no longer required to organize convict activities, so that at no time would there be inadequate supervision at the penal establishment.

By the above-mentioned ship, the "Lucy Ann", twenty women were to be sent to Port Macquarie; the
Colonial Secretary advised. Thus the intention of the Government to maintain the Female Factory was made the more obvious by this intimation.

On 28 August 1830 McLeay amended his earlier instructions by advising that Owens Plains farm was to be excluded from the five previously listed for reservation. This letter stated that houses and tenements at Port Macquarie were to be let by tender. The punts at Blackmans Point and Ballengarra should be let also and McLeay suggested that this should not be done immediately, but they could be maintained as a Government service until the area became more densely populated. Prisoners were to be retained to work the farms when they were let, while Settlement Farm must be kept under the direct control of the Government. The reason given for freeing the farm at Owens Plains was that this establishment was located in an area reserved for the Church.

The felons destined for Norfolk Island, a total of eighty, were to be accompanied by their wives and children, so for the first time we learn that policy had been amended to allow wives to be with their husbands at this remote penal settlement. The others, who remained at Port Macquarie, were for the service of the Government and for assignment to new settlers who will "...proceed thither under the Provisions of a Proclamation for throwing open the Settlement on


15th day of August next, which will be published immediately after the departure of the 'Lucy Ann'."

As early as April 1830 some local land policy was being determined, and McLeay informed Smyth "...that persons holding situations under the government are not to be allowed land," although on 26 June 1830 Smyth was told by the Colonial Secretary that the application for a land grant of William Wilson, Overseer of the Sugar Plantation, supported by Smyth's recommendation, was received. By contrast, on 16 September 1830, William Branch, Overseer, was flatly refused a land grant by McLeay because he was in the employ of the Government.

It is clear that, even if not trying to develop the Sugar Plantations at this time, the authorities were making an attempt to maintain them in working order, as William Wilson had been made Overseer of this department. On 20 October 1830 the Commandant was informed that Wilson was to drop this job in order that he might succeed Mr. Stephen Partridge as Superintendent of Convicts. The communication stated expressly, that some other person was to take over the care of the Sugar Plantations without delay. Later in this month Smyth was advised that twelve labourers were being sent to Port Macquarie to assist at the harvest and thereafter they were to be assigned.

The Government did not cast off its responsibilities at Port Macquarie, but endeavoured to

---

maintain some order and cohesion in the agricultural establishments, so that the development of previous years would not be wasted. However, in September 1831, the Home Government instructed Governor Bourke to break up all sugar growing establishments, mentioning particularly the farms at Port Macquarie. The Government, though it noted the worthy nature of the sugar growing project, considered in view of "...the present state of the sugar market." the establishments could not be maintained.

Policy regarding land grants to free settlers who wished to take up holdings on the Hastings River, was not particularly clear, and the terms under which grants were to be made could have been clarified considerably. Smyth had been informed that the Government proposed to re-plan the settlement at Port Macquarie town and, in the interim, persons applying for permission to start business in Port Macquarie could be permitted to occupy certain Government buildings at a moderate rental. Mitchell's survey of the town appeared in April 1831, and involved a spacious realignment of the settlement, which had evolved in a very haphazard fashion from a surveyor's point of view. The survey was done irrespective of existing buildings and provided Port Macquarie, for the future, with an admirable layout forming the basis for the development of the town as it is to-day.

2. Plan of Port Macquarie. April 1831. No. M706G. Department of Lands, Sydney. (See copy in appendix No. 6 based on this map.)
On 12 August 1831 the Colonial Secretary forwarded to Commandant Smyth a copy of the new plan. Smyth was advised to let none but authorised persons take possession of land in the settlement. Enclosed in the letter was a list of ten names, in order of priority in which these people were to be allowed to select allotments in the town.

       2. A.C. Innes.
       4. Hugh McKay.
       5. W.S. Parker.
       7. Middleton Knights.
       9. Stewart McMullen.
       10. James Wemyss."

In June 1831 Smyth had received clear instructions regarding the dispersal of Government interests on the Hastings River. McLeay wrote "It being intended to reduce the whole of the Government establishments at Port Macquarie to the lowest possible level... The Agricultural Establishment is to be broken up entirely and no more grain raised for the purposes of Government... The whole of the prisoners in the service of the Government at Port Macquarie are to be disposed of excepting Invalids and Idiots, and the Persons actually necessary for their superintendence..."

Although this order was quite clear many conflicting requests and orders had emanated from Sydney during the transition period at Port Macquarie and, as with the others, the above order was not obeyed to the letter. Until 1847, and the removal of the last convicts from Port Macquarie, the Asylum operated there for the benefit of those who were impaired physically or mentally. This one institution, necessitating military guards and some convict labour for its maintenance, was the one surviving remnant of the convict era at Port Macquarie until the cessation of penal activities in 1847.

We do not know what actuated the Colonial Secretary to order the suspension of agricultural pursuits entirely but, in the following month, the Commandant at Port Macquarie was advised to call tenders for the supply of 2,000 bushels of maize as this commodity was in very short supply there. Apparently the farms, which flourished so recently, had deteriorated considerably by the middle of 1831, if the settlement required corn from elsewhere.

A notable variation from the common method of transporting livestock occurred in June 1831, when Overseer Oliver and five men brought a herd of cattle overland from Wellington. Though they had to leave a considerable number of fatigued beasts along the route, a great proportion of these were recovered before the
end of the year. It is recorded in the Colonial Secretary's Letters that 2 horses, 52 oxen and 2 pack bullocks were located, and later joined their fellows at Port Macquarie.

The end of the Government farms came in 1832 when H.H. Parker, who had succeeded his brother W.S. Parker as Superintendent of Agriculture, and John Brunker, Overseer of Agriculture, were dismissed. H.H. Parker solicited the job of Superintendent of Convicts, when he would cease his former work, but the Colonial Secretary refused the request. The Government dispensed with another enterprise at Port Macquarie about this time by leasing the grinding mill for a number of years. So additional activities, formerly carried on by the Government, passed to the hands of free settlers. The general plan was to obtain as profitable a return as possible from either the sale or rental of farms, buildings and equipment. The Commandant was particularly active at this period in reducing the convict strength as much as possible.

Retrenchment from Government activities meant that labour became available for free settlers. As the Government recognised the important factor of labour in encouraging development of land by free settlers, sufficient convicts were always made available for assignment. As the supply of labour dwindled gradually, settlers were able to adjust their methods.
so that transition from an economy in which free labour was a dominant feature, to one in which labour had to be hired, was achieved smoothly. At harvest time convicts in road gangs were diverted temporarily to assist the settlers to gather their crops.

In September 1832 the Colonial Secretary made it clear that all Government livestock at Port Macquarie would be sold in the near future, and it was actually the dismissal of Mr. Cheyne, Superintendent of Stock, on 27 March 1833 which brought to a close the maintenance of Government herds at Port Macquarie.

Victualling of convicts was the responsibility of the persons to whom they were assigned. That there was some laxity in the observance of this regulation is evident from the somewhat anguished complaint of Jeremiah Warlters, who conformed, apparently, and clothed and fed his servants according to requirements, that some other settlers did not do so. On 25 May 1831 Warlters wrote direct to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts, Sydney, claiming that Captain Smyth allowed certain convicts to be rationed by the Government while on assignment to settlers. Smyth was asked by the Colonial Secretary for an explanation.

New arrivals at Port Macquarie included felons and so we find that the "Isabella" arrived at that place in April 1832 carrying 64 prisoners of whom 25 were "specials", 23 invalids and 11 were idiots and
In April 1832 Captain Smyth tendered his resignation as Commandant but McLeay requested him to continue a little longer, if not inconvenient to Smyth, but if he desired immediate relief it would be given. "...some time before the departure of your Regiment for India."

2. "The Sydney Gazette" of 21 April 1831 reported a catastrophe at Blackmans Point on 1 April, when the punt sank drowning three assigned convicts. The deceased were ferrying calves across the river and did not notice the animals crowd to one corner of the ferry which capsized immediately. The bodies of the men were recovered and Rev. John Gross officiated at the interment. We do not know if the punt was recovered and used again, but the one in use in early 1833 was described by Harbour Master Geary to Mr. James Nicholson, Master Attendant at Sydney, as being 27' x 8' x 3.2' deep with flat bottom and square ends "...kept for the purpose of conveying passengers or Horses, Cattle etc. of the Settlers residing between that point and Wallabie Hill, on Rollands Plains. Employed on the ferry were one Constable Overseer and three men, prisoners of the crown. The punt at Ballengarra was of similar, though a smaller design, being 18' x 7' x 1.2' deep. Lt. William Geary, Harbourmaster and Pilot at Port Macquarie reported in the same letter that there

was a need at this time for new punts at these places and a new general launch at Port Macquarie.

1. "The Sydney Gazette" of 31 May 1831 commented favourably on the activities of new settlers on the Hastings River and said they all appeared to be happy with their land grants. The paper mentioned that a major problem to the inhabitants was excessively high freight charges from Sydney and gave examples as follows:

- 1 bag of wheat 5/-
- 1 quart turpentine 2/6
- 1 parasol 2/6
- 50 pounds leather 7/6

Additional evidence of the deterioration of Government establishments lay in the fact that, on 25 August 1832, the Colonial Secretary advised Smyth to call tenders for the supply at Port Macquarie of beef and mutton as the Government herds had run wild by this time. However Smyth was instructed to kill the Government cattle as soon as possible in preference to purchasing meat.

Smyth was the last of the military commanders at Port Macquarie with full power. His successor, as the major instrument of Government in the Hastings River colony, was Benjamin Sullivan, appointed Police Magistrate on 5 July 1832 at a salary of £183. Mr. William Nairn Gray was made Clerk to the Bench on 10

September 1832 with a salary of £90.

Despite the good intentions of the Government the number of felons at Port Macquarie did not diminish, and in August 1834 there were 421 in the settlement. In March of that year there had been 402 and, for purposes of comparison, the number in 1828 varied between 350 and 500. The figures for 1834 indicate clearly that a substantial penal establishment was being retained in the Hastings River area. Official figures gave the number of military personnel at Port Macquarie on 31 December 1831 as 1 Captain, 1 Sergeant, 2 and 34 other ranks, while the figure for 31 December 1832 indicates 1 Captain, 1 Subaltern, 3 Sergeants and 40 other ranks on the military strength. If this number of military was required to control the felons it can be gathered that the Government was not reducing hastily the convict strength on the Hastings River. The intention, stated earlier, of removing the majority of the convicts was not being put into execution. Far from a decrease in numbers occurring during these years, there was actually a greater number of convicted persons in the settlement.

During the convict period intoxicants had been excluded from Port Macquarie but, with free settlement, it was necessary to issue a number of licences for inns and public houses. The Colonial Secretary had warned the Commandant that, on proclamation of free settlement, many unauthorised persons would endeavour to import and

1. "The Return of the Colony". 1831. (Mitchell Library)
2. "The Return of the Colony". 1832. (Mitchell Library)
sell liquor illegally, and exhorted him to exercise complete vigilance and control in this regard. On 19 August 1830 Mr. Stephen Partridge was granted a licence to conduct an inn at his Port Macquarie home, and Mr. Charles Farrell was also given a licence for Port Macquarie. In February 1832 Farrell complained that his inn was losing trade for two main reasons. The first was that Mr. Partridge received preferential treatment from the Government and, second, that wines and spirits were being sold in unlicensed houses. Farrell claimed that many people, including Pilot Pettit, were bringing liquor to Port Macquarie and retailing it illegally. On 9 March the Colonial Secretary asked Commandant Smyth to report on these allegations. It is worth noting that Pettit resigned from his post a few days later and was succeeded as Pilot and Harbourmaster by Lt. William Geary. Smyth was informed of the new appointment on May 19, 1832.

In January 1833 William Wilson, Superintendent of Convicts, was found to have supplied his son-in-law, Christopher Doyle, with liquor. This Doyle sold, as in a tavern, though he had no licence. It appears that Wilson, by virtue of his Governmental position, was the more readily able to bring in spirits from Sydney illicitly. The Governor instructed that, as Mr. Sullivan the Magistrate had also laid a charge of habitual drunkenness against Wilson, the Superintendent of Convicts should be brought before the Bench at Port Macquarie.

Macquarie. Sullivan later informed the Colonial Secretary that the evidence in the case was sufficient to warrant Wilson’s indictment, but it was not intended to proceed against him. Therefore Wilson was kept in his job and advised to mend his ways.

Christopher Doyle applied for a liquor licence on 9 June 1834 and he nominated W.S. Parker and William Wilson as his sureties. However the Court decided that, as Doyle had been convicted on 25 January 1833 on the charge of illicit trading in spirits, there were good reasons to subject the application to close investigation. Actually the Court was disinclined to grant the licence but, eventually, Doyle was approved and he operated the "Speed the Plough" public house in Horton Street. In July 1835 the application for renewal of the licence was approved.

William Wilson, Superintendent of Convicts, died at Port Macquarie on 12 April 1836. Sullivan conveyed this information in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, dated 12 April, and recommended that Wilson’s successor as Superintendent of Convicts be Mr. Stephen Partridge, who had filled the position formerly.

The Royal Hotel opened in Port Macquarie in 1841 under the care of Robert McNiven. On the 3 July of that year Mrs. Georgina Kinnear announced in "The Australian" that she had taken over this hotel. Other inns were opened towards the extremities of the
new settlement. On 6 May 1841 the Magistrates at Port Macquarie supported the petition of Thomas Owen for a licence to operate a public house on the Manning River. The applicant claimed this would be the only inn between the Hastings River and Raymond Terrace and was greatly needed. The Governor granted the licence. Also in 1841 James Thompson opened his "Ship Inn" at the head of navigation on the Maria River. On 10 November 1841 one Maxwell Thomson applied for a licence to operate an inn at "Nineteen Shilling Farm" at Rollands Plains, and his request was forwarded to the Governor. We know that one of the old brick buildings erected at Rollands Plains during the period of the convict farms was later used as an hostelry, so it is possible that the application referred to the use of this building.

There was considerable competition among the free settlers to obtain the best of the vacated Government buildings at Port Macquarie, to acquire vacant allotments in the town and to gain possession of the best agricultural land, particularly that which had been developed on the Government farms along the Wilson River. We have noted that the Colonial Secretary provided the Commandant with a list showing the order in which certain individuals were to be allowed to select allotments in Port Macquarie. From 1831 there were numerous and frequent directives from
Sydney regarding the disposal of land on the Hastings River. For example on 29 December 1831 McLeay instructed Commandant Smyth that the house on Allotment 2 Section 4 Port Macquarie, which Jeremiah Walters was desirous to rent or purchase, should be advertised for sale immediately. On 20 February 1832 Smyth was told that the brick house, number 8 on the town map of Port Macquarie, and forming part of the Commissariat Stores, was to be repaired and converted so that it could be given to the Surgeon and Commissariat Officer as quarters. Magistrate Sullivan was informed by the Colonial Secretary on 12 June 1832 that Lt. Matthew Mitchell, who had settled at Redbank, was to be given a cottage in Port Macquarie, and a letter to Sullivan dated 21 March 1833 advised that Hugh McKay had permission to take possession of Allotment 3 Section 2, Port Macquarie.

Dr. McIntyre, Surgeon, and Magistrate Sullivan quarrelled furiously at Port Macquarie and Sullivan incurred the displeasure of the Governor for his ill-considered words. When Dr. McIntyre received a transfer to Moreton Bay influential citizens on the Hastings River forwarded to the Governor a petition asking that McIntyre be retained at Port Macquarie.

2. The petition stated that Dr. McIntyre was "...universally beloved..." and was signed by:

John Cross

   McLeay to Smyth. 29 December 1831.

   Petition from certain persons at Port Macquarie.
   8 January 1833.
William Geary
W.Parker
H.Parker
Jeremiah Warlters
Archibald McLean
James Ralfe and nine others.

As a result the Governor revoked his earlier order and Dr. McIntyre remained at Port Macquarie.

The town and district were expanding rapidly by 1834 and the influx of free settlers was considerable. A pound was established at West Port Macquarie on 26 May 1834 to exercise some control over the increasingly numerous animals in the town.

In December 1834 Sullivan complained to the Colonial Secretary of the destruction and waste of cedar timber on Government land. As a result McLeay asked the Crown Solicitor to report on the matter to determine what action could be taken to control the timber getters and others. It is apparent that few persons respected the natural vegetation in which the coastal areas of New South Wales abounded and, in the pattern of the cedar getters of the latter part of the century, killed the forests with no thought of conservation.

With the advent of free settlement, many free trading vessels began to arrive in the harbour to serve the needs of the new inhabitants. So, on 7 January 1831, McLeay instructed that Pilot Pettit was allowed to charge pilotage fees as follows:

1. "Vessels under 25 tons — 5 shillings."
Vessels above 25 tons - 10 shillings.

By 1833 the authorities contemplated the imposition of a toll on the ferries at Blackmans Point and Ballengarra but eventually the idea was dropped and the Government continued to provide a free service at these points.

The Colonial Secretary on 23 August 1832 ordered that an unfinished vessel which had been on the slips since 1827, when work on her was suspended, should be auctioned as soon as possible.

The importance of sea transport to Port Macquarie, if the settlement were to operate successfully, was realised by the Government. So it was that the Harbourmaster was kept at Port Macquarie while the harbour buoys and other navigational aids were retained, and maintained in serviceable condition. Thus, while navigation was impeded by the natural hazards of the port, the military and civil sections of the community were served rather well in that all possible was done to ensure safe movement across the bar. The Colonial Secretary in 1833 wrote to Sullivan acknowledging Sullivan's report on the deteriorating Port Macquarie wharf, and suggested that the natural bank "...be raised four feet with either stone or brick." This was to be done "...immediately above the boat shed."

Magistrate Sullivan appeared to lead a very energetic existence at Port Macquarie although, as often

as not, the Colonial Secretary considered his exertions misplaced. On 19 September 1832 Sullivan was reprimanded for his part in a dispute with the Surgeon. Sullivan requested on 22 September 1832 that he be given military help to suppress bushranging. The Colonial Secretary answered that such would require an augmented force at Port Macquarie and men could not be made available. Sullivan was instructed to limit his demands for troops and advised that such as were available on the Hastings River should not be sent into the bush after bushrangers as this was the job of the constables. H.E. Parker had complained to the Colonial Secretary that, while Sullivan was lending convicts to the settlers, he refused to lend any to Parker. Therefore on 23 December 1832 the Colonial Secretary informed Sullivan that the lending of convicts was strictly illegal and that they could only be assigned.

When A.C. Innes arrived in Port Macquarie in 1831, he proceeded to develop his new grants rapidly and also those lands located on Rollands Plains, which were given by the Government to Mrs. Innes as a marriage grant. It is assumed that Innes erected the original windmill for grain grinding purposes on the high hill to the South-east of Port Macquarie and near the sea. This structure is shown on Mitchell's 1831 plan of the town and named thereon "Gillmore's Folly". More likely the name should be "Gillman's Folly", after
Innes erected the original windmill for grain grinding purposes on the high hill to the South-east of Port Macquarie and near the sea. This structure is shown on Mitchell's 1831 plan of the town and named thereon "Gillmore's Folly". More likely the name should be "Gillman's Folly", after the enterprising Commandant who, it is supposed, authorized the erection of the mill. The Innes grants were extensive indeed, and this acquisition of land by one man was really quite phenomenal. Characteristically, Major Innes did not like to see his resources lying idle so initiated the early development of all areas over which he had control.

Innes had always impressed those who employed him, and those over whom he had authority as a capable and honest officer. After leaving the army he was as highly regarded in civil life. The following are extracts from the columns of "The Monitor" newspaper while Major Innes was Commandant at the Hastings River settlement. "The new Commandant, Captain Innes, we understand, is gaining the good opinion of all classes at this settlement. The prisoners who arrived from thence in the 'Mary Elizabeth' are warm in his praise..."

On Innes's departure from his post at Port Macquarie, the newspaper stated, "Captain Innes, whose brief command at Port Macquarie, was sufficiently protracted to make his retirement from this station a subject of regret to all, is, we see relieved by Lieutenant Owens, 3rd Regiment..."

To give some additional information about Major Innes there is the inscription, unfortunately now indecipherable, which was

placed on his tomb in the Cathedral Churchyard, Newcastle, New South Wales.

"To the memory of Archibald Clunes Innes, late Major 3rd Buffs of Lake Innes Port Macquarie, New South Wales, 6th son of James Innes, Esquire, of Thrumpster, Scotland.  
Born 14th May 1800. Died deeply lamented and beloved, especially by the Poor and Humble, on 29th August 1857.  
'Looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto Eternal Life.'"

Innes married Margaret, daughter of Colonial Secretary Alexander McLeay, at St James Church, Sydney, in the presence of Governor Darling, on 17 October 1829. The couple had five children namely Eliza, St Clair McLeay Clunes, Gustavus Augustus, Gordinia Clunes and Vivian James Clunes.

The marriage grant of Mrs Innes consisted of 1,280 acres on the South bank of the Wilson River at Crotty's Plains. This property was known then as "Tilbuster" and, a little later, as "Wallaby Hill".

With the depression of the 1840's, and the closing of the penal establishment in 1847, the breath of economic disaster touched the fabulous estates of the Innes family. As a result of the ensuing financial crash Innes was ruined and had to leave Port Macquarie and accept a post as Magistrate until his death in 1857. Innes attempted the cultivation of tobacco in the Hastings River District and particularly at Rollands Plains. Though the climate is recognized as unsuitable for this sub-tropical crop
Innes had some remarkable successes and, in certain areas where frost was less prevalent, produced some high quality leaf.

In July 1833 a Ticket-of-leave man, Adam Barker, was sentenced to twelve months in irons and lost his ticket for having tobacco in his possession illegally. The tobacco which Barker had stolen came from "Tilbuster". The culprit was apprehended because the tobacco in his possession was "new leaf", while the only issue from Major Innes's store, to that date, had been "old leaf" tobacco from the growth of the previous year.

In March 1833 Magistrate Sullivan forwarded to the Colonial Secretary an "Estimate of Agricultural Produce in October 1832" at Port Macquarie. This contained the following details:

1. CULTIVATION. 1832, Wheat 263 acres
   Maize 293 acres
   Potatoes 6 acres
   Tobacco 23 acres

PRODUCE. 1832, Wheat 4,354 bushells
   Maize 10,550 bushells
   Potatoes 36 hundredweights.
   Tobacco 188 hundredweights."

Lt Matthew Mitchell, one of the earliest and most energetic free settlers, who had received 2,560 acres at Redbank, on the Northern bank of the Hastings River, opposite the present site of Wauchope, was killed on 21 June 1833 while clearing land with the assistance of his assigned servants. A falling limb struck Mitchell.

Jeremiah Walters occupied an area of land on what was formerly the Sugar Plantation at Rollands Plains. Walters complained to the authorities that Joseph Wilson, son of William Wilson, was actually a squatter in the Rollands Plains area, and that Wilson's stock strayed and annoyed Walters considerably. Eventually Walters found himself the neighbour of William Wilson and his wife Maria, as the Wilsons were given a land grant adjoining the Walters property.

On 10 July 1837 the Clerk of Works at Port Macquarie submitted to the Colonial Secretary his valuation of government buildings on the Wilson River and at Settlement Farm, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Farm</th>
<th>£5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House at Ballengarra</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn at Ballengarra</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government House at Ballengarra</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick Store and Sugar House at Rollands Plains</td>
<td>£150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill House at Rollands Plains</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Value</strong></td>
<td><strong>£210.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1836 Jeremiah Walters applied to lease two allotments at the Sugar Plantation on which were buildings. Mr George Wynn had offered to purchase these buildings so the government sought the above authoritative valuation of the buildings concerned. Although Governor Gipps did not sanction sale, and greatly preferred the leasing of government properties, his predecessor Sir Richard Bourke had directed earlier that
the buildings and land should be sold. The Surveyor-General wrote to the Colonial Secretary in July 1857 saying that as "...the convict establishment (at Port Macquarie) is about to be, if not already, removed to the Barracks..." he desired to know if old reserve and gaol materials could be sold as "...these buildings interfere with the line of the street." It is quite apparent from the 1831 survey that many of the old buildings which belonged to the early penal establishment encroached on the new alignment and must be removed eventually.

In 1840 a meteorological record was begun at Port Macquarie although, in the first instance, this applied to rainfall figures only. Readings were taken regularly from August 1840 and were continued, without interruption, to October 1852. At this stage recordings ceased but were resumed in September 1870 and have continued to the present. On 25 November 1841 William N. Gray, Magistrate at Port Macquarie reported to the Governor that he had noted advice on altering the system of keeping a Meteorological Table at Port Macquarie from the start of 1842. He also forwarded with his letter the meteorological table kept at what he called "South Head", presumably what is the pilot station at Port Macquarie. The early rainfall records are preserved in the archives section of the Meteorological Bureau, Sydney.

By 1840 prosperity was considerable in the Hastings River District and with quite a large number of the settlers wealth had accrued at a rate which was more than satisfactory.

2. "The Australian" reported that "Mr Edward Cohen, auctioneer, will hold the first sale of Brood Mares, Horses and Cattle from stud

1. Colonial Secretary's Letters (Inward) Port Macquarie. Surveyor-General to Colonial Secretary. 22 July 1837

2. "The Australian" 7 January 1841, p.3.
and herds of A.C. Innes at Lake Innes on Monday, 1 March 1841."

In this same month the Port Macquarie correspondent of "The Australian" wrote in glowing terms of the commercial activity at Port Macquarie, and envisaged the development of a flourishing economy with the advent of the proposed road leading to New England. Many attempts were being made to organize a more regular shipping service between Port Jackson and the Hastings River, and in June 1841 the steamer "Maitland" was put on the Port Macquarie run as the local inhabitants had guaranteed sufficient freight to reimburse the ship's owners. Earlier in the year a Steam Navigation Company had been formed at Port Macquarie to purchase the "Sovereign".

£10,000 capital in £10 shares was required to organize the venture and 600 shares were taken immediately. However nothing came of the scheme and the Hastings River people were left dependent on outside shipowners who were reluctant to trust their shipping to the unkind bar at the river mouth.

1. "The Australian" of 15 February 1841 printed a letter from Jeremiah Walters of Port Macquarie in which that gentleman protested at the local Postmaster's delay in delivering Sydney papers.

Apparently the Postmaster dealt with newspapers as being very second class mail matter, and despatched such to addressees whenever he had the time to sort the material, or simply at his own convenience.

By this time free migration to the Hastings River was increasing rapidly "The Australian" quoted from the "Return of Immigrants hired at Port Macquarie from 1st to 31st January 1842" to the effect that 66 new arrivals were given situations at wages averaging £15 per annum. The paper also emphasized that there

was a considerable demand for young single people of English or Scottish descent.

In its issue of 1 March 1842 "The Australian" stated that the agricultural report for 1841 in the County of Port Macquarie showed land cultivated as 4,000 acres and the average production for 1841 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>20,573 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>50,666 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>230 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>40 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millet</td>
<td>120 bushels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>20 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>11½ tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaten Hay</td>
<td>12 tons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"The Australian" claimed that these results were most miserable considering the land available. The newspaper asserted there were too many imports at Port Macquarie and far from sufficient local production to balance these imports. It maintained that, in an environment such as that on the Hastings River, there should be a flourishing economy.

The Port Macquarie correspondent of "The Australian" was very active at this period and kept his paper well informed of local events. One of his chief laments was that justice was not being served properly on the Hastings River and at New England because no court existed at either of these places. In the issue of "The Australian" dated 3 August 1842 it was pointed out that the slowness of judicial processes for residents in these areas only encouraged criminal activities.

1. The Australian 1 March 1842
2. The Australian 3 August 1842
Early in 1842 the inhabitants of Port Macquarie heard it was the Governor's intention to visit Port Macquarie on his return journey from Moreton Bay. Instantly there was considerable excitement. A great dinner was planned for Governor Gipps and numerous beasts and birds were killed to provide food for the banquet, while the leading citizens drafted an address of loyalty. "The Australian" reported that these preparations were prodigious, and it was a great pity they went to waste as the vessel carrying His Excellency passed Port Macquarie without calling.

1. "The Australian" of 4 June 1842 gave a vivid account of a clash between Rev. John Cross and the Roman Catholic Priest, Rev. Martin Hastings. A dispute had arisen over the faith of a man, J. Allen, who died at Port Macquarie. While Cross was conducting the burial service Hastings and a woman interrupted repeatedly, complaining that the deceased was a Roman Catholic and consequently in the wrong hands. "The Sydney Herald" of 6 June 1842 also gave prominence to this report. Hastings had performed the Allen's marriage ceremony while Allen was on his death bed and wrongfully according to Cross. The outcome of the whole affair was an unsettled argument between the two clerics as each claimed that Allen was of his particular religious persuasion.

The Port Macquarie correspondent of "The Australian" 2, related on 4 November 1842 that an earth tremor "...sufficient to have thrown certain persons from their beds..." occurred early on Friday, 28 October 1842. This tremor, the paper stated, was felt more severely at Berombin (Brombin) and Yarrows (Yarres) than at Port Macquarie.

The New England - Port Macquarie road was brought to the attention of Sydney people when there appeared in "The Sydney Gazette" of 20 September 1842 a notice signed by William N. Gray, Magistrate at Port Macquarie, and dated 9 September 1842, to the effect that this new road was now open to all traffic. "The Sydney Herald", in its issue of 21 September 1842, quoted this report from the columns of "The Sydney Gazette". However it is interesting to note that "The Sydney Herald" of 1 February 1843 wrote "We understand that the road between New England and Port Macquarie is now far advanced." So it may be presumed that Gray's announcement meant the road was open and trafficable though not actually completed.

"The Sydney Herald" on 26 October 1842 had a report from its Port Macquarie correspondent stating that the harbour there held on the one day in October five sea-going vessels which were the steamer "Maitland", the cutters "Esther", "Challenger" and "Queen" and the schooner "Mary Ann". The writer of the article added that the bar continued to be favourable for shipping and that the port enjoyed very brisk trade.

In 1843 there were additional reports on the New England road by "The Sydney Herald". Comments on the state of the road were very favourable and the newspaper said that the farms along the route appeared prosperous and the settlers very contented. That the road was trafficable was attested by the statement from 2."The Sydney Herald" that "...a ride of two days from Port Macquarie brings you to the tablelands." and a further note is

2."The Sydney Herald" 1 June 1844. P.5.
added to the effect that the convict road gang was working well in maintaining and improving the structure.

Rollands Plains had the somewhat doubtful distinction of being the scene of a duel in 1843. The practice of duelling had long since disappeared in most of Britain's possessions, particularly as it was illegal. There had been few instances of duels occurring in New South Wales but Captain Geary and Mr J.R. Middleton, both settlers on Rollands Plains, took it upon themselves to break the law with the idea of inflicting some damage on one another. "The Sydney Herald" of 12 January 1843 gave a lengthy report of the meeting. Geary and Middleton were seconded respectively by Messrs P. Raffe and W. McKenzie. Captain Geary fired first and missed whereupon Middleton discharged his pistol into the air harmlessly. This conclusion to the fracas appears to have upset the seconds considerably, and it seems they almost fought also. Eventually both parties left the field of conflict quite unharmed.

2. In November 1844 "The Sydney Herald" reported "...the wheat crops (at Fort Macquarie)...promise to yield an abundant harvest...A great quantity of tobacco has been planted and... good crops are expected." However such favourable reports were not to last long, and an inkling of the impending economic deterioration, which set upon and almost ruined Fort Macquarie, can be read into the report of the Fort Macquarie-New England road, and trade generally, contained in "The Sydney Herald" of 3.28 December 1844. The account stated "The wool is now beginning to come down from New England...we hope to report an improvement in the trade of this town, which, for the last six weeks, has been

at as low an ebb as can possibly be conceived”.

The period with which this work deals concludes with
the departure of the remainder of the convicts from Port Macquarie
in 1847. It is significant that the Hastings River region
should have lost the demand for goods and services by the convict
establishment while the mantle of economic depression hung over
the settlement. While suffering, as did the rest of New South
Wales, the Hastings River area managed to maintain many of its
industries, but the departure of the convicts and military in
1847 dealt a severe blow to the economy of the district from which
there was no recovery for many years. While the Asylum remained
and a military guard was required to control the inmates, and
certain civilians worked to maintain services to this institution,
there was a reasonable demand for the produce of some of the
farms. The government despatched ships to Port Macquarie while
the convicts remained there thus maintaining some communication
and an outlet for produce for which a market could be found in
Sydney. Generally, the people felt that things could be worse.
After 1847 shipping services to the port were reduced to a minimum
and the industry of the inhabitants was of no avail because it
was well-nigh impossible to dispose of the greater part of their
produce. Banks foreclosed on many farmers who left the land,
because of their insolvency. So Port Macquarie and the Hastings
River District suffered an economic decline which not only
caused stagnation but led to a decline in vitality until the turn
of the century and even later.

Extracted from Report of Court of Inquiry convened at Port Macquarie on 26 July 1825 at the Direction of the Commandant, Captain Gillman.

Members of Court. It Carmac, Rev. Hassall and Mr. Bowerman.

W. S. Parker, Superintendent of Agriculture, had complained that W. Scott, Superintendent of Sugar Plantations, and others "...did on or about the 20 inst. at Rollands Plains act toward him in a violent and improper manner..."

Scott laid a similar charge against Parker.

Evidence in brief:

Parker had ordered the constable on duty at the farm at Rollands Plains, Constable Saffin, to prevent trespass on or through any part of the ploughed land. The constable stopped Scott and his party and informed them of this order. Scott replied Parker "...was a fool for giving such orders and that he ought to wear a fool’s cap." Scott cocked his musket and stated he would pass. The constable drew his cutlass, but then reported to Mr. Parker who was on his way to "the large plain". The constable said in evidence this was the first day he or any other constable had been given the job of guarding the road in the five weeks he had been in that locality. For
Parker, evidence was given that the instruction was only to apply to convicts. Chief Overseer Graham said he was cautioned by Parker not to stop Scott of the military. When Scott and party insisted on passing, the constable and others tried to turn back the prisoners only. The Overseer continued by stating that previously watchmen had been placed to keep Scott's men and cattle from passing through the farm. He said he had seen Scott's cattle eating the growing wheat.

Scott denied he had cocked his musket. He claimed the Commandant had sanctioned his using Parker's road as the "bush road" was poor.

The report of the Court of Inquiry found that both parties had shown a lack of responsibility. On 27 July 1825 Gillman acknowledged receipt of the report. He said he did not plan to lay the report before the Governor but would keep it for reference should either Parker or Scott make a report at Headquarters.

Gillman gave it as his opinion that both men had acted improperly and were deserving of censure. He said "...it is a damned shame to see two men at the head of Government Establishments act so completely for their own interest without considering the interests of their employers!"

The evidence and report of this enquiry
support the contention, expressed elsewhere in this work, that Parker and Scott were not men big enough to surmount the difficulties so peculiar to the Port Macquarie establishment. Frequent bickering with other free persons at the settlement meant impairment of efficiency on the agricultural estates. The authorities, particularly the Commandants, were loathe to concede the assistance and support which could have improved the farming activities. However it is hard to determine how far the aggravation and provocation of others influenced adversely the work of the Superintendents.

The clear point is that some men could, and would, have overcome the obstacles, and won the respect of others in the settlement, while being efficient agriculturists. Scott and Parker were incapable of rising to these heights.
Governors of New South Wales during the Penal Period at Port Macquarie.

1810-21 - Lachlan Macquarie.
1821-25 - Sir Thomas Brisbane.
1825-31 - Sir Ralph Darling.
1831-38 - Sir Richard Bourke.
1838-46 - Sir George Gipps.
1846- - Sir Charles Fitz Roy.

Military Commandants at Port Macquarie.

1821-24 - Lt Allman.
1824 - Capt. Rollands.
1824-25 - Lt Carmac. (Acting)
1825-26 - Capt. Gillman.
1826 - Capt. Wright.
1826 - Lt Owen. (Acting)
1826-27 - Capt. Innes.
1827 - Lt Owen.
1827-28 - Capt. Crotty.
1828 - Lt Meyrick. (Acting)
1828 - Capt. Aubin.
1828 - Capt. Hunt.
1828-32 - Capt. Smyth.

Resident Magistrates at Port Macquarie in the Penal Period.

1832-36 - Benjamin Sullivan.
1836- - William Nairn Gray.
**POPULATION.**

In February 1841 John Thomas, Archibald Turnbull and Bartholomew Walters were appointed census collectors for the District at a rate of seven shillings and sixpence a day while so engaged.

The following is information extracted from Census figures taken on 29 June 1841 - Police District of Port Macquarie.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born in colony</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrived free</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other free persons</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>Ticket-of-leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond,in Government service</td>
<td>130.</td>
<td>Bond,in Government service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bond,in private service</td>
<td>579.</td>
<td>Bond,in private service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>621</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married males</th>
<th>Single males</th>
<th>Married females</th>
<th>Single females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>519</td>
<td>1357</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total persons within Police boundary = 2,402.

**Religions.**

- Church of England = 1,275
- Wesleyan Methodist = 37
- Other Protestant Dissenters = 29
- Roman Catholics = 703
- Jews = 40
- Mohammedans and Pagans = 4
The rate of increase in the population of the Port Macquarie District from 1836 to the 1841 Census was given as only 60%. "The Australian" newspaper claimed that the restriction of Crown Land sales in the District was the main factor hindering people who desired land from coming to the Hastings River.
Statistics given in Colonial Secretary's Correspondence (Port Macquarie) (Outward Letters) - Collected letters of W.S. Parker, Superintendent of Agriculture, Port Macquarie. (Mitchell Library).

Average yearly employment of convicts at Port Macquarie Agricultural Establishments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Settlement Farm</th>
<th>St. Rocks</th>
<th>Rollands Plains</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of convicts employed on Port Macquarie Agricultural Establishments at Specific Times.

- 5 December 1825: 227
- 24 April 1826: 222
- 9 December 1826: 137
- 5 May 1827: 108
- 24 November 1827: 139
- 19 April 1828: 71
- 1 November 1828: 42

Return of land cleared and brought into cultivation at Port Macquarie Agricultural Establishments by 1828. (acres).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Timber Felled</th>
<th>Burned off</th>
<th>Stumped</th>
<th>Total Extent of Farm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Farm</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Rocks</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rollands Plains</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Return of Government Stock at Rollands Plains.

24 August 1828.

Horses - 1
Oxen - 31
Pigs - 226

Return of buildings erected for public service on the Agricultural Establishments at Port Macquarie. To 1828.

Settlement Farm. - Granary - 110' x 17'
1st Maize Store - 94' x 16'
2nd Maize Store - 70' x 16'
3rd Maize Store - 38' x 26'
Also many smaller buildings.

Rollands Plains. - Granary - 100' x 25'
St. Rocks. - Granary - 34' x 16'

Return of the Colony.
Return of Stock at Port Macquarie.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Sheep</th>
<th>Hogs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1825</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1826</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1827</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Return of the Colony.
Return of land held and cultivated at Port Macquarie in 1825. (acres).


1000 793 20 500 49½ 1½ 60½

Total acres under cultivation. 631½.
Return of the Colony 1832 and 1833.
Return of crop acreage and yields.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th></th>
<th>1833</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acres</strong></td>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>263</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bushels</strong></td>
<td>4,354</td>
<td>10,530</td>
<td>38cwt.</td>
<td>188cwt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acres</strong></td>
<td>369</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bushels</strong></td>
<td>5,590</td>
<td>10,730</td>
<td>28cwt.</td>
<td>225cwt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although there does not appear to be any record of burials, it has been stated that 28 burials took place on the point at the east end of Clarence Street. This street was not laid out until 1840 and the site mentioned was at that time just outside the northern fence of the Military Barracks and a few yards from where the first flag was hoisted.

Of the 28 interments which were suggested by the depressions on the surface, only three stones remain to give evidence of the departed, viz.

1. Sacred to the Memory of John, the infant son of Mr. G. Smith, Commissariat Storekeeper, who died on the 12th day of January 1822. Aged 12 days.

   Also Sacred to his only surviving child who, after 4 days illness departed this life on the 31st October, 1823. Aged 3 years 4 days.

   "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven". Matt. X.14.

   The deaths of these children resulted from a tragic occurrence. A servant mistook arsenic for flour and thickened broth with the mixture. All the family who partook of this were very ill. The parents recovered, but it is recorded that the infant was fatally poisoned from the breast of the mother and that the other child evidently succumbed to the effects of the poison.

2. Sacred to the Memory of James Vaughan, of Captain Allman's 48th Regiment, who died 28th November 1823, of a gun wound received whilst attempting to capture runaway prisoners. Aged 23 years.

   The death of this soldier is said to have occurred through dissension in the ranks of the companies of soldiers sent after escaped convicts, one company being strong Roman Catholics and the other Orangemen. Bad feeling had existed over these shades of opinion, which was settled by an exchange of shots. Vaughan was wounded and brought to town where he died.

3. Headstone - To the memory of F. Patrick Murphy, who died 14th July, 1824.

   Footstone - Erected by the mate of deceased.

Old Burying Ground at the Southern End of Horton Street.

The first interment in the "Old Burying Ground" appears to be the remains of Elizabeth Murphy, daughter of Corporal Murphy, 3rd Regiment of Buffs, who died on 5th November, 1821. The stone appears to have been cut by an inexperienced Mason and is local stone. All the other tomb stones are of sandstone brought from Sydney. The vault of the Innes Family is from England.
This is a complete inventory of the tombstones legible in October, 1939.

The following names are familiar to those who have taken any interest in the early days of the colony.

Major James Henry Crummer, late of the 28th Regt of Foot, with which corps he fought during the eventful years 1807-1815.

In this colony he served as a Police Magistrate at Newcastle, Maitland and Port Macquarie from 1836 to 1864. Died 29th December 1867. Aged 76 years.

Copenhagen, Bussaco, Badajos (1st Siege), Campo-Major, Albuera, Vittoria, Puerto-de-Maya, Pyrenees, Nivelle, Nive, Bayonne, St. Palais, Cazes, Lamego, Toulouse, Quatre-Bra, Waterloo.

All his medals are in a glass case in front of the picture "Forming of the squares" in the National Gallery, Sydney. (His wife was a Greek lady (nee Plessis) born at Calesmes, Ionian Isles.

McKeller:

Sacred to the memory of Frederick McKeller, many years an eminent Physician in Sydney. Born at Dundee, Scotland, April 22nd 1811. Died at Port Macquarie June 18th, 1863. Aged 52 years.

Also, Charles Kinneard McKeller, Surgeon, Born at Dundee, Scotland. Died at Port Macquarie August 12th, 1861. Aged 42 years.

Father - John McKeller, Lieutenant 2nd Garrison Battalion, Mother - Euphemia, formerly Jackson, was a widow of the late Wm. McEwrie who sold his interest in the S.M. Herald to John Fairfax, came to reside in Port Macquarie and died on 1st April, 1841. The late Sir Charles McKeller was a son of the above, whose daughter is Miss Dorothea McKeller, writer and poetess.

Cross:

In memory of Rev. John Cross, who died 7th August, 1858. First Rector St. Thomas' Church (30 years). Aged 77 years.

Also his wife Ann, who died 10th May, 1837.

John Cross M. A. was the first Chaplain of St. Thomas' Church. Arrived in Australia 26th June, 1819. Was appointed temporary Chaplain at Parramatta during the absence of Rev. Samuel Mareden in New Zealand. On return of Rev. Mareden, Mr. Cross was appointed to Windsor. Gazette of 15/1/1828 appointed Rev. J. Cross to Port Macquarie and Rev. Elijah Smith to succeed Rev. J. Cross at Windsor. Mr. Cross was therefore Chaplain to the first three Churches in Australia.
His first wife, (Ann Davis) born in Wales, died at Port Macquarie on 10/5/1837. His second wife, whom he married in 1838, was a daughter of Rev. Smith, a N.Z. Missionary, who died and the widow came to live at Port Macquarie with the daughter at the Parsonage. Mrs. Cross survived her husband and died in Melbourne in 1880. Mrs. Smith is buried in the same allotment as the Rev. Cross and Ann, his first wife; the inscription reads:

Sacred to the memory of Dinish, relict of William Smith Esq. of Sydney, N.S.W., who departed this life at Port Macquarie 23rd June, 1863, in her 90th year.

Mr. Cross had five children by his first wife, three of whom survived. The eldest, Annie Mary, married H. H. Parker Director of Agriculture in 1829. The youngest daughter married Dr. James McIntyre in 1828. Descendants of both these families reside in this District. The one son resided on the Manning for many years.

Prior to Mr. Cross' appointment the Rev. Thomas Hassell was Military Chaplain, arriving with the first party.

Innes:

The stone was cut and imported from the Isle of Mann.

Sacred to the memory of Margaret, the beloved Christian wife of Major A. C. Innes (3rd Buffs), who fell asleep in Jesus, 7th September, 1858. Aged 56 years.

Also Gordina Clunes, daughter of Major A. C. Innes and beloved wife of Rev. T. O'Reilly, who died at the parsonage, 31st May 1860, aged 25 years.

Also St. Clair Clunes, son of Major A. C. Innes and Margaret, his wife. Born 24th January, 1840. Died at Lake Innes.

Also Vivian Innes, his infant son.

Major Archibald Innes, son of Major James Innes, of Thrumster, Scotland, came to Australia in charge of Guard on the Transport ship "Eliza" (3rd Regt. or Buffs). His brother, George, came out as passenger on the same ship. Another brother was General Peter Innes, and a nephew was General McLeod Innes, V. C., R. E.

Major A. C. Innes married Margaret, daughter of Alexander McLeay (Col. Sec.) She was born in London in 1803. They had five children. Eliza married Hugh Mackay, of Colinfirth, Gordina Clunes married Rev. Thomas O'Reilly and had two children. After her death Mr. O'Reilly went to Sydney and later became Canon of St. Andrew's Cathedral. Mrs. A. B. Piddington is a daughter by his second wife. St. Clair McLeay Clunes was born in 1840 and died in 1841. Vivian James was born in 1841 and died in 1842. Gustavus became Archdeacon at Hamilton, Victoria, where he died.
Warlers:

Sacred to the memory of Jeremiah Warlers. Died 18th October 1869. Aged 51 years.

Arrived in Port Macquarie in 1830 with a large amount of capital and settled at "Kenuay" and afterwards at Wrights Creek. He built large wool stores and was interested in many ventures with Major Innes. His nephew Tom arrived in the colony at a later date and married, daughter of Jeremiah. Tom and his wife lived at "Meldon".

Gaswell:

Thomas Gaswell, Commander R.M., retired from the Navy, chartered a ship and brought out his family, servants and furniture. He selected a farm and lived in a house next to the Town Hall which was known as "Liberty Hall". He entertained most lavishly.

A daughter married Mr. B. Neylon, who entertained the Earl of Belmore when on a visit to Port Macquarie. Descendants still reside in many parts of the districts.

Wilson:

Sacred to the memory of Mr. William Wilson (Native of Scotland). Formerly of the Royal Engineers and many years Superintendent of this Settlement. Obit. April 12th, A.D. 1856.

William Wilson was at the Peninsular War with the Royal Engineers and severely wounded at Badajos. In 1822 the Engineering Department decided to send an Engineer in charge of Colonial Works to N.S.W. and Mr. Wilson was appointed. On arrival at Sydney he was immediately transferred to Port Macquarie.

He did much exploration work. Discovered the Wilson River and the Maria River, the former being named after him and the latter after his wife, a Portuguese lady named Maria de Costa. There are numerous descendants in the Town and District.

ANN HILL died 1st May, 1886, aged 60 years. (The Hill Family have resided about the District for many years, having properties on the Rivers. They are now resident at Tors.)

JOHN KERR, a native of Fermanagh, Ireland. Died 7th May, 1881, aged 46 years. Leaving a wife and three children (Blacksmith — Children: P. J. Kerr, died 1921; W. Kerr, died 1937, married McGrath, Royal Hotel)

THOMAS WIDDOWS, native of Liverpool, England. Died 5th September, 1871, aged 59 years. (Widdowson Lane — No issue.)
DAVID DAVIES, A. M. 5596 (1836). (Brother of Davies, Bushranger shot near Kempsey.)

ROSE, eldest daughter of Abraham and Sophie Cohen. Died 29th October A.M. 5601 (1841). Aged 5 years, 4 months and 11 days. (Cohen was a Storekeeper and Auctioneer. He bought the wreck of the "Wanderer", which was owned by Ben Boyd. The vessel broken to pieces on the rocks at the bar.)


JOSEPH BARKER KNIGHT, died at Port Macquarie 14th Dec. 1868. Aged 59 years. (Descendants still in District.)

ANNIE MARY MAUNSELL, died 30th December, 1882, aged 49 years. (Wife of Lt. Col. Maunsell, Police Magistrate at Port Macquarie. R. D. Maunsell, Chief Draftsman, Department of Lands — Son. A daughter married Louis Becke, son of Becke who was G.P.S. at Port Macquarie. Louis was a writer of South Sea Stories.)

AUGUSTA LOUISA DE FAUR. Wife of Eccleston De Faur and daughter of Major J. H. Crummer, late of H. M. 28th Regiment. Died 23rd July 1867 aged 28 years. Also Eccleston, Infant son of the above died 17th July, 1867 aged 9 hours. Desideratissima. His jacent illa novem mihi tam dilectae per annos Conjux heu tatiens menses, modo, mater et horae. Translation: She lies here beloved by me for nine years. Alias a wife for nine months, and mother for nine hours. (E. DeFaur, afterwards DeFaur and Gerard, and Agents, Exchange Sydney — also President of National Art Gallery and was instrumental in securing picture "Forming of the Square at Quatre-Bris.)

MICHAEL PARRY, died 15th April 1839, aged 41 years. Leaving a wife and five children to deplore their loss, his life was one of strict integrity, a faithful husband, an affectionate father and a sincere friend. (Was Corporal in the 28th Regiment — 1st Lending Party — Has many descendants in Port Macquarie. One daughter married Geo. Halliday (First Miller's son). Another daughter married Chas. Wilkens.)

REV. JOHN CROSS died 7th August 1858, aged 77 years. First Rector — St. Thomas Church (30 years). Also his wife ANN, died 10th May, 1837. (One son and two daughters. The eldest daughter married Henry Harding Parker (1829). The youngest married Dr. James Macintyre (Gov. Med. Officer). Dr. Macintyre died in 1853, his wife in 1887 — John Cross married his second wife in 1839 — Mary daughter of Wm. Smith esq. of Sydney, whose widow lived with the Cross family and is buried in the Old Cemetery, 23/6/63, aged 90 years — The above tombstone is in a disgraceful condition and is a censure on the Church authorities. John Cross' son lived at "Crosslands".)

DIANA SMITH, reliet of William Smith Esq., of Sydney, N.S.W. Died 23rd June, 1863, at Port Macquarie, in her 90th year.
CHRISTOPHER DOYLE — Died 26th May, 1842, aged 50 years (Bullock Team Driver — New England to Port Macquarie — and afterwards Hotel Keeper. Married Mary, daughter of Wm. Wilson, 1st Superintendent, born 1813 died 1864. Kept "Speed the Plough" Hotel. Daughter Elizabeth Maddied Dodds, whose daughter married W. Cumming, grandfather of A. A. Cumming, Storekeeper.)

GEORGE DOUGLAS DODDS — Died 17th June, 1868 aged 12 years (?).

JOHN PLATT — Died 17th July 1870, aged 42 years. (Brother Robert Platt. Nurse Platt married Albert Denham (Mayor), brother of Mrs. James Wrigley.)

WILLIAM WILSON, Native of Scotland, formerly of the Royal Engineers and many years Superintendent of this Settlement. Died 12th April 1856, aged 66 years. (Arrived here in 1823 as a Surveyor — Wilson River named after him — Maria River named after his wife. Married Maria de Costa, Lisbon. Three are many descendants.)

JOHN MUDIE WILSON, of the Commissariat Department. Died 16th May 1872, aged 61 years.

JOSEPH WALLACE, of Staines, Middlesex, England. Died 23rd May 1882, aged 33 years. (Descendants live at "Geolaws", the old home of Captain Jobling.)

MARY SUSANNAH CASWELL, relict of the late Thomas Caswell, Commander R. N. Died 8th December, 1865, aged 74 years. (Children: John, Elizabeth Mansell, married James Hadden Kemp; Thomas. Children of son, Thomas: Arthur G. W. Eve. Fanny, married Parker, Burrawang St.

FREDERICK RICHARD KEMP, Pastor of Port Macquarie and Macleay District for nearly 20 years. Third son of the late Major Kemp of the 80th Regiment. Died at Robert Town on 3rd August, 1877, aged 50 years. Leaving a wife and large family. (His wife, Emma, was a daughter of King of "Boolee-oo", Werielde, and was widow of Lieutenant Gell.)

CHARLOTTE KEMP, daughter of Rev. Frederick and Emma Kemp. Died at Richmond, N.S.W., 26th October, 1892, aged 33 years.

MARY ANN KEMP, third daughter of Rev. F. E. Kemp.

MARIA KEMP, relict of the late Major Kemp, J. P. 80th Regt. Died 6th June, 1863, aged 62 years.


BRIDGERT, beloved wife of George Edward Denham. Died 3rd May 1872 aged 60 years. (A native of Cork, Ireland. Descendants still in Port Macquarie.)

JAMES MORDON, Commander Royal Navy. Died 21st January, 1856. (Member of the Licencing Bench in 1852 with Capt. Waugh and Mr. Fenwick, J. P. See "Pioneers of Australia". Elizabeth Arndell married James Gordon, 1814.)

CLEMENTE BEAFLIPS LAMONDERIE (did Fattorini). Died 5th April 1840, aged 40 years.
MARY O’DONNELL, wife of James O’Donnell. Died 10th January, 1862, aged 23 years. (Sister of the late Robert Henry of Long Fleet, father of Mrs. O’Neill, Hotel keeper at Long Fleet.)

WILLIAM ARCHIBALD LANDOWNE — Died 16th November, 1842, aged 1 year 5 months 11 days.

MARIATIO T. N. TOZER — Died 28th October, 1865, aged 49 years. (Had a store and wine shop. He built the Terrace in Horton Street opposite Blair’s Newspaper shop — known as “Tozer’s Terrace”. His third daughter married Dr. Falettrini. Son, Sir Horace Tozer, Agent General for Queensland. Grandson D. Tozer.)

THOMAS PARSONS, Surgeon, for many years a resident and medical practitioner in Port Macquarie. Died 21st December, 1878, aged 80 years.

GEORGE EDWARD TELFORD — Died 3rd October, 1881, aged 17 years 6 months.

MARGARET INNES, wife of Major A. C. Innes. Died 7th September, 1858, aged 56 years.

GORDON CLUNES, daughter of Major A. C. Innes and wife of Rev. T. O’Reilly. Died in the Parsonage, 31st May, 1860, aged 25 years.

ST. CLAIR CLUNES, son of Major A. C. Innes and Margaret his wife. Born 24th January 1840. Died at Lake Innes 1842.

VIVIAN INNES, infant son of Major A. C. Innes.

MARGARET INNES, wife of Sergeant Flood of H. M. 3rd Regt. (Buffs). Died 1st June 1826, aged 21 years.

JOHN BYRON POUTNEY, Died 29th September, 1879, Aged 7 years 9 months.

JOHN POUTNEY — Died 8th April 1876, aged 56 years. (Wife Mary Ann, née Woodlands.)

REBECCA SARAH, wife of Charles Hayward. Died 24th January, 1881, aged 70 years.

CHARLES HAYWARD (husband of above). Died 28th September, 1883, aged 78 years.

MARY PATCH, wife of John Barton, Chief Warden of Port Macquarie Goal. Died 11th July, 1869, aged 43 years.

MARY, daughter of John and Mary Barton. Died 28th May, 1870, aged 2 years 5 months and 8 days.
JEAN BATISTE CHARLES LAMONNERIE (did Fetterini). Died 24th October, 1853, aged 66 years. (Alleged son of Napoleon.

JEREMIAH WALTHERS, died 18th October 1869, aged 81 years. (Arrived in Port Macquarie with a large capital and settled at Wrights Creek. There is a large number of his descendants in the district. His nephew Thomas arrived from England later and married a daughter of Jeremiah. Had interest in contracts with Major Innes.)

ELIZA MURPHY, daughter of Corporal Murphy, 3rd Regt. of Buffs. Died 5th November, 1824, aged 4 months. (This is the oldest stone in the cemetery and was evidently cut by father or some inexperienced mason.)

GEORGE COATES, of Alfriston, Derbyshire. Died 7th July, 1859, aged 28 years. (Chemist and Druggist - Unmarried.)

HENRY TAYLOR ESQ. M.D., late of Nottingham, England. Died at Port Macquarie on 30th June 1853, aged 42 years.

JANE SIMPSON, relief of the late John Simpson Esq. J.P. Died 25th September, 1870, aged 60 years. (Kept a boarding School at "Ocean View").

JOHN SELWYN WOODRICK — Died 10th April, 1880, aged 6 years.

SMITH FREETHAM, born in the Parish of Felthwell, Norfolk England, 20th July, 1800 and died at Port Macquarie 5th March, 1877.

GEORGE TAYLOR, Shipwright, a native of Yarmouth, England. Died 17th September 1867, aged 68 years.

HERBERT EDWARD CUMMINS, son of J. R. and M. D. Cummins. Died 8th September, 1871, aged 3 years 7 months. (Father first Post Master.)

ARCHIBALD BLAIR EWAN, of Glen Ewan, Hastings River. Born at Edinburgh 10th September, 1845. Died at Port Macquarie 29th January, 1872. (Descendants still on property on the River.)

IVY CATHERINE ST. JOHN, daughter of Henry and Jessie St. John. Born 18th November, 1831, died 22nd January 1882. (Henry St. John still in Port Macquarie — highly connected (Beauchamp). Two sons Church of England Clergy. Miss St. John-Secretary to Hospital.)

JOHN BLACK McIVOR, born in Ardmorrock House, Argyleshire, N.B. 22nd March 1837. Died at Port Macquarie 28th October, 1869. (Brother of Mrs. Wilson. The father, John McIvor, came from the New England District about 1860. Lived next to "Cliftan" and then went to property on the Wilson River. They belong to the Stonehaven Family.)

THOMAS HENERY, of County Antrim, Ireland. Died 4th April, 1880, aged 82 years.

ELIZABETH ANN SCOTT, County Antrim, Ireland. Wife of Mr. Thomas Henery. Died 27th September, 1880, aged 82 years.

JAMES HENERY, of County Antrim, Ireland. Died 2nd December, 1887, aged 57 years.

JOSHUA FRAZER, late pupil teacher of the Public School. Died 30th November 1867 aged 22 years. This stone is erected by the scholars of the Public School as a mark of respect and esteem.
LOUISA COOPER -- Died 20th June 1860, in her 40th year.

WILLIAM MANTEL WOOLAND -- Died 13th March 1896, aged 72 years.

MARY WOOLAND (Wife of above) -- Died 17th December, 1880, aged 70 years.

ELIZABETH WOOLAND, second daughter of Henry Wooland, the beloved intended wife of John Blyney. Died 15th October, 1881, aged 19 years. (Dealt with in S.M. Herald under "Quaint Tombstones".)

JOHN VERGE -- Died 9th July, 1861, aged 79 years.

MARY VERGE (Wife of above) -- Died 25th July 1872, aged 62 years. (John and Mary Verge -- parents of Jermy Verge, who left fortune to "Returned Soldiers". The Supreme Court took years to decide what was meant by "Returned Soldiers". Gift by Will £147,000.)

JOHN CROXTON -- Died 22nd Feb. 1864, aged 20 years. (Death Certificat of John Croxon, son of Thomas Croxon, and wife née McKenzie.)

DOUGLAND McKENZIE, native of Ross-shire, Scotland. Died 2nd December 1862, aged 65 years.

THOMAS HENRY, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Henry of the Upper Hastings. Died 24th May 1882, aged 15 years. (Descendants are still in the District at Long Eflst. P. J. O'Neill's son married Robert Henry's daughter.)

THOMAS NEADE (Licencese of the Royal Hotel) (No details).

JULIA NEADES (No details)

LAWFORD WILLIAM BURNE -- Died 17th December, 1859, aged 35 years.

BRYANT PAYNE -- Died 8th April 1854, aged 51 years.

ANN, wife of above -- died 20th November, 1860 aged 7.

JAMES BLAIR -- Died 28th May 1852. (Descendants everywhere).

MARY YOUNG, wife of above -- Died 22nd January 1861.

JOSEPH THOMAS CHIDGEY -- Died 16th July 1870, aged 25 years.

PATRICK JOHN MAHER, County of Tipperary, Ireland. Died 15th June 1886, aged 75 years. (Descendants still here)

CATHERINE MAHER, wife of John Maher, Ashburn Hill. Died 16th February 1870, aged 57 years.

WILLIAM MAHER -- died 1st October, 1883, aged 27 years.

JON WILLIAMS, a native of the County Tipperary, Ireland. Died 26th February, 1874, aged 63 years.
FREDERICK McKELLAR, many years an eminent Physician in Sydney. Born at Dundee, Scotland, 22nd April 1811. Died at Port Macquarie (Glenesk) 18th June 1863, aged 52 years. (Married Isabelle McGarvie, widow of Wm. McGarvie, a partner in S.M.K. in the 1830's. Had issue — one son — Charles, afterwards Sir Charles McKellar, Chancellor of Sydney University etc, whose daughter is Miss Dorothea McKellar.)

CHARLES KINNEARD McKELLAR, Surgeon, Born at Dundee, Scotland. Died at Port Macquarie 12th August, 1861, aged 42 years. (Father John McKellar (Lieutenant, 2nd Garrison Battalion). Mother Euphemia McKellar, Formerly Jackson. ?Kinneer or Kinneard. Informant J. McGarvie, nephew of deceased.)

EUPHENIA McKELLAR, mother of above. Died at Glenesk (Rollands Plains) 31st October 1866, aged 83 years (?)

WILLIAM CONWAY, a native of Dublin, died 5th April, 1865, aged 57 years.

ELLEN McDermott, Roden Island. Died 25th February, 1866, aged 40 years.

THOS WHITE MEYRICK, infant son of Lieutenant Meyrick, 39th Regt. and Catherine, his wife. Died 2nd May 1826, aged 12 days.

MATTHEW MITCHELL (No details). (Killed by falling tree on his property up the River.)

SAMUEL PROSSER, native of Worester, England. Died 10th October 1856, aged 52 years. (Was a Wood Turner in Horton Street — son of Ed. Prosser, who died in Sydney 28/12/52.)

MRS. HELEN COPELAND ARMISTEAD — Died 5th January 1870, aged 69 years. Erected by her pupils and friends, one of whom had known her for many years. (Kept a private school.)

RAYMOND BRERETON, Aged 11 months. 1841.

ROBERT MARTIN, formerly Color Sergeant, Her Majesty's 28th Regt. of Foot. Died 1859.
Published 15 March 1820 in "Journals of Two Expeditions into the Interior of New South Wales" by John Oxley. (Mitchell Library)
From "Journals of Two Expeditions into the Interior of New South Wales" by John Oxley. Published 15 March 1820. Original in Mitchell Library.
"District of Port Macquarie". Prepared about 1833. Original in Mitchell Library.
TOURING IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS.

THE northern districts of New South Wales, by reason of the excellent roads which stretch for hundreds of miles beyond Newcastle, and the diversity of scenery which characterises the country, are always popular with cyclists, and the sight of parties of wheelmen at different seasons of the year is a familiar one to the country inhabitants. For years past the writer has been accustomed, about this season, to map out a route, and in the company of a friend seek health and recreation on the wheel. A pleasant trip, covering nearly 400 miles of country was completed in the early part of the current month, the recollection of which will add more material to the stock of reminiscences of past expeditions.

The train from Sydney was taken on Saturday, March 19, and a fairly quick run landed the tourists in the "city of sails" at an early hour in the evening. About 7.30 a.m. a start was made on the 16-mile ride to Raymond Terrace, lamps being necessary, as the night was very dark. Once clear of the city, the pace improved, and the road being in good order, the punt at Hexham was soon reached, and the remaining six miles to the Terrace were completed soon after 9 o'clock. Next morning an early start was made for Gloucester, 62 miles distant, which was to be the destination of the day's ride. Breakfast was taken at an accommodation house 12 miles distant, and the well-known qualities of the northern road enabled the town of Stroud, which lay 18 miles further away, to be reached by noon. On again early in the afternoon, the character of the road changing into long winding descents with corresponding "free-wheel" runs on the descending grade, the surface being everything the most particular cyclist could desire. For 30 miles the road is a succession of hills, some of easy grade, but others requiring a fair amount of exertion in riding, and at last, about 5 p.m., the little township of Gloucester was in sight, guarded as it is on one side by a towering chain of high mountains, locally known as "Buckets," an old-fashioned haunt of famous bushrangers.

The town, which is situated in the midst of a flourishing agricultural district, consists of the usual "one main street," with a few houses straggling off to right and left. The surrounding country comprises a huge area—some millions of acres—originally granted to the Australian Agricultural Company. Most of the land in the near vicinity of the town has been portioned off into farm lots, and when offered at a recent sale was readily disposed of. For grazing purposes, it is considered second to none in the State, and is well watered. Before many years have passed, the greater portion of this territory, which has for so long a period been allowed to exist in its primeval state, will present a more civilised aspect and the fortunate owners should realise all their expectations.

The night was spent at the only available hotel, and when the journey was resumed early on the following morning, a "snap" was taken at the peaceful little hamlet from the summit of a neighbouring rise, the dark mass of towering mountains, which seem to guard the town, forming picturesque background. The weather, which had hitherto been favourable, now turned against the tourists, and the whole of the next day's 25 miles, which is over mountainous country, to Krambach, was performed in heavy rain. A cyclist, however, must be prepared for the worst climatic conditions, and beyond the discomfort occasioned by the mud in places, the ride was not unpleasant. The celebrated Brusly Mountains with its tropical scenery and finely-graded road, was duly admired, and a few minutes were spared near the summit to watch the operations of several men engaged in felling the big timber, in preparation for an experimental farm at this spot. Krambach was reached at noon, and another 22 miles remained of the day's work, the wheels were soon in motion, and Taree was eventually reached at 5 p.m. This is a thriving place on the banks of the Manning River, a noble stream, capable of accommodating some of the largest coasting steamers. The surrounding district is principally agricultural, and the appearance of the farms gave evidence of the bountiful harvest that has blessed the State.

Next morning a start was made due north over as fine a road as could be wished for, which for the first 15 miles is on a dead level, giving the free-wheelers an easy and agreeable speed. Though dull and cloudy, the rain had ceased and entering fully into the intoxicating delight of a long stretch of good road, the machines were driven at a good round pace, the time for the distance to Coopernook (15 miles), being 1 hour 17 minutes. With a wind astern, there would be no practical difficulty in knocking off the 50 minutes, but a stiff nor'-easter limited the pace on this occasion. The 32 miles to Port Macquarie, consisted of plenty of hill climbing, but the whole distance was comfortably run off by 5 p.m., the last five miles to the Port, being somewhat of a surprise, owing to the wonderfully undulating nature of the track. This is composed of fine hard gravel, and is given over to the running of the "free-wheel" run of over a mile landed the tourists at their hotel in the centre of the main street.

Port Macquarie is a picturesque town with an "old world" air about it, this latter impression, to the stranger, being enhanced by the frequency of old and decrepit buildings scattered about the town.
Prisoners' Dormitory in the Old Gaol.

PENISSIIU OF THE OLD GAOI.

In the Old Gaol Yard, showing Sentry Box.

Iron Grill inside Entrance Gate to the Old Prison-house.

The "dark cells" were also inspected, and the tourists were locked inside for a few moments to try the effect. Darkness which could be felt, immediately succeeded the closing of the iron door, and it was easy to imagine what effect a long incarceration in such a terrible place would have upon the unfortunate inmate. Many other interesting spots within the old prison were visited, and our guide entertained us the while with stories grave and gay, concerning the poor wretches who formerly were kept here in dungeon-like. The building has been untenanted for many years, and signs of decay and neglect were visible everywhere. In the exercise yards, a prolific growth of weeds and grass had completely obliterated the stone flagging, and the walls in many places were hidden with massive spreads of ivy and other creepers. Passing out through the iron grating which guarded the entrance gate, the old bell, rusty and immovable in its socket, seemed to utter a mute protest at the neglect and ruin which surrounded it, and the fresh breezes from the ocean appeared doubly fragrant, in contrast to the mustiness and oppressive silence of the old prison behind us.

The following day a visit was paid to St. Thomas' Church, which occupies a commanding eminence close to the town. The foundation stone was laid by Lieutenant Carmac, Acting-Commandant, on December 8, 1824, but the church was not opened for worship until February 24, 1828. It is a fine brick building of a severely plain Norman style, with a massive square tower at the western end. The interior, with its quaint "box-pews," and old-fashioned furniture, is little altered from the times when the church was filled with a motley gathering of civilians, soldiers, and convicts, and the tablets on the walls recall the names of many who passed their days in this lonely spot, surrounded by the symbols and emblems of military rule, and the cast-iron principles of the "convict system," the interpretation of which was their daily allotted task. A fine view of the township, an extent of coastline and the surrounding country for many miles adjacent, was obtained from the top of the church tower, which was deemed quite worth
the camera's best efforts. The old graveyard, with its time-worn headstones sloping in any direction but the right one, and half-obiterated inscriptions telling their pathetic story of past lives, provided a morning's entertainment for the visitors, and in the deciphering of many of the cords an almost forgotten page of the early history of the settlement as soon got together. Not the least entertaining feature of the visit to this quiet corner of the State was a subsequent conversation with one of the Port's old identities, and as the worthy man possessed a very retentive memory, his reminiscences were listened to with great interest.

**Relics of Old Times in the Gaol.**

At length came the last day of our sojourn, and the following morning, with a dull sky overhead, and the promise of a head wind later on in the day, the wheels were turned southward, and the last farewell jeep of the old town was obtained, as the road dipped suddenly after climbing an eminence leading direct from the main street. Before many miles had been covered, the rain set in, and then began that most disconcerting phase of cycle-riding—through driving rain and over roads rapidly assuming their worst and most dangerous aspect. When over twenty miles of this sort of thing had been put behind, the village of Kew was a-beam, and as the weather seemed to be set in for the remainder of the day, it was thought desirable to make this spot the resting place till morning. Torrents of rain fell during the night, but the sky cleared somewhat about the hour for starting the next day, and though anything but a desolate time was anticipated from the state of the roads, the task was assumed. The remaining 34 miles to Taree were accomplished without great difficulties, the mud in places being almost impassable, but once pastoopemook, the good road defied the rain, and Taree was reached at 5 a.m., the tyre of one of the machines, however, being hopelessly ruined. However, a cycle shop was soon found, and in exchange for the current coin of the realm, a new cover was fitted, and all further trouble in that direction was obviated.

The journey now lay over a different route from that traversed on the outward trip. Bulahdelah being the objective point for the next day, but the old saying, "The best laid schemes o' mice and men, gang aft agley," was never more clearly proved than in this case, the next three days being one continual struggle against rain, wind, and mud. Miles upon miles were walked, riding being out of the question, and the condition of the roads, what with the continuous rain and the constant passage of bullock teams, was beyond description. On the Tuesday, nearly 60 miles were covered between "dawn and dark," against tremendous odds, and accompanied by heavy and incessant rain. A halt for the night was made at Berlang, and the soaked and sodden riders were not sorry to find a roof once more above their heads. The next morning the journey was resumed still under the stormy conditions which had hitherto prevailed, and when Raymond Terrace was reached at an early hour in the morning, it was decided that fate was too strong, so the steamer to Newcastle was taken, and the long and toilsome ride was at last finished. Apart from these melancholy circumstances, the trip was greatly enjoyed, and though soaked clothes and frequent excursions through swamps or along fence rails were not the things to put one into a proper frame of mind to admire the beautiful in Nature, still enough was seen on the journey to call forth much admiration and praise. Under favourable conditions, this trip would be an ideal one, but unfortunately the coast districts in the northern portion of the State have an unenviable reputation for moisture, and plenty of it, so that would-be trespassers in these domains should surely forth prepare for such contingencies, no matter what the season of the year.

No accidents occurred to add to the discomforts experienced at the latter end of the journey, and despite the rough handling the machines received, they came out of the encounter no worse for their unusual experiences. Mention might be made in closing, of the kindness received at the hands of the good people of Port Macquarie, whose readiness to afford us all the information desired, and to point out the interesting and historical features of the place, placed us at a great advantage.
...tions to the situation. The Government Domain on the site of the former Fort Macquarie...
COP1 of John Oxley's letter to Governor Macquarie, reporting his discovery of Port Macquarie. (Mitchell Library) APPENDIX P.

The attention in our course served
finding coast town in a very different description
of History, forming an admirable account to the north
and surveying our climate for climate running
northly, south, and west into broad and beautiful country, the
which we passed whilst the 17th Sept, when we entered the
estuary of Sydney, we also the most elevated known
land in New South Wales being then as Latt 31° 05 S.
We saw afterwards immediately terraced and surrounded by
very lofty mountains; On the 20th Sept, we gained
the Summit of the most elevated mountain in this
Estuary range, and from it we saw galleries with
a view of the coast, at a distance of 30 miles, the
Country beneath us being forms into an extensive
terrace, situated between the State of extinct volcanic activity
the land from the Three Brothers on the South, to Cape
Lind North to Sunday Cape. We heard the further prate
of elevation, to know that we were near the source of a
large stream running to the Sea. On descending the
Mountain, we followed the course of this stream, in
many by many accidents, until the 20th Oct., when
we arrived on the Beach near the entrance of the Port
which occurred by having passed over since the 10th July
a kind of country near 300 miles on return from
West to East.

This inlet is situated in Lat. 31° 23" S.
and long. 163° 50' 10" E., and has been previously entered
by Capt. Flinders, but from the distance at which
until it falls into the sea at Port Macquarie. In that report I respectfully beg to refer your Excellency, as my opportunity of examining the Country at that time, once of course so much more extensive. To the Prospects of the Country as then reported may now be added great quantities of Rose Wood, the Floreted Gum, and Coal, that was before noticed lying in large masses on the Beach; the Coal as appears to me may be worked without difficulty, as I think that a portion of it forms the whole of the South side of the Harbour, which Harbour is again seen Southly as far as Camden Haven.

I have the honour to remain,
With great respect,

To, Your Excellency,
Governor Macquarie.

[Signature]
Copy of Governor Brisbane's letter to Earl Bathurst, dated 16 August 1824, referring to the appointment of Rev. Thomas Hassall as Chaplain at Port Macquarie.

APPENDIX 21

My Lord,

I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship the copy of a letter from the Rev. Samuel Marsden, Principal Chaplain, calling my attention to the necessity of appointing another Chaplain to the pleasure which shall be known, the Rev. Thomas Hassall, to be an assistant Chaplain, or the Establishment, than in consequence of the deep conviction impressed upon my mind of the necessity of such a measure, recommended to the previous, to the Superintendent at Port Macquarie, until the pleasure of His Majesty's Ministers shall be known - on a Salary of £250 annually, which I shall be not happy, should your Lordship be pleased to approve of such a course - I shall only add, that I have attentively ob-
and the Rev. Thomas Veale, since my arrival here; and I consider it as in my 
regard highly qualified for the Sacred 
charge to which I have previously recom-
dinated Him.

I have the consequence directed,
that a plain building, without any 
shind of pantage feet will only, shall 
be constructed, for the purpose to 
held six or seven hundred people, with 
Distant Church Service, and that the 
whole of attend, and, should 
this building be no longer required, 
for Sacred Office—can be usefully 
converted to others—

I have the honor to be,
My Lord,
Your Lordship,
Most obedient humbly,