

HUNTER ESTATES

A Comparative Heritage Study of pre 1850s Homestead Complexes in the Hunter Region

Volume I: Historical Context and Survey of Sites



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Hunter Estates

Executive Summary

This study is an independent and comprehensive comparative heritage study of pre 1850s homestead complexes located throughout the Hunter Region. In order to achieve this outcome, this study first aims to contextualise the homestead complexes found in the area and provides an overview of the historic and cultural phenomenon of the Hunter Estate.

The Hunter Region, settled as part of the second main wave of settlement to occur in Australia, between 1820 and 1850, was driven wholly by new, decisive government policies structured towards the agricultural development of the colony and the management, employment and care of convicts by private settlers.

The successful implementation of these policies supported the arrival of a large number of new, free settlers with substantial means, social connections and ambitions to establish themselves on the land. These people established the estates, stations and pastoral runs throughout the Hunter Region; built homestead complexes; and introduced a range of highly successful agricultural industries, relying on large numbers of convicts as their workforce.

They went on to form the societies and associations that supported their agricultural pursuits and political interests, played a large role in the political development of the region and were part of the judicial systems of the time, fulfilling government roles at their own expense and on their own land.

The means by which these settlers were accommodated on the land, via the uniform grid pattern laid down by survey in the early 1820s over the whole of the region, determined their locations, their land sizes and their modes of expansion.

The Hunter Estate is the tangible expression of this significant phase of NSW history and forms the foundational layer of settlement of the Hunter Region. What you experience of the land today and of the history of the people, directly descend from the estates.

To understand the Hunter Region is to understand this first phase of European settlement and its subsequent impacts on the land and its people. To understand the Hunter Region homestead complex is to understand the Hunter Estate.

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1 Introduction

This is a comparative heritage study of an important building type located in the Hunter Region: the homestead complex. This study is a comprehensive and independent assessment of homestead complexes constructed as part of the establishment of the large estates associated with the first major wave of settlement in the Hunter Region that occurred between 1820 and 1850. It seeks to define both the Hunter Estate and its homestead complex, to map their locations and to locate their importance in the history of the Hunter Region and NSW.

1.1 Background to the Study

In 2010, discussions arose concerning the cultural significance of a particular nineteenth century rural homestead complex located within the Hunter Region. The place in question, Wambo Homestead, is listed on the State Heritage Register of NSW and is currently in the ownership of a mining company. The owners of the property raised two key questions in a formal application to the Heritage Council. Could Wambo be removed from the NSW State Heritage Register? Could some of the remaining buildings on the site be relocated for their protection?

At the time, the application made to the NSW Heritage Branch triggered intense debate throughout both the NSW heritage industry and the Hunter Region community. Many issues were raised and discussed in the public forum. As a result, the Heritage Council initiated a sub-committee to consider the State heritage listed Wambo Homestead and its future management. The current study was commissioned based on a concern that significant colonial landscapes and homestead complexes throughout the Hunter Region could be lost by individual decisions arising from development pressures.

1.2 Scope of the Study

The project scope includes reviewing a large body of previous heritage studies and reports and distilling this material into an updated Comparative Heritage Study and Significance Analysis leading to the nomination of key sites for listing on the State Heritage Register. The study is in two stages and this report (Volumes I and II) forms Stage 1 of the overall study.

The aims of the Stage 1 study are to:

- Provide a contextual history of the Hunter's colonial development across all associated LGA subdivisions (Volume I);
- Identify the location of pre-1850s homestead complexes (Volume II);
- Assess the cultural significance of the Hunter Estate and the homestead complex as a group (Volume I).

The Local Government Areas

The study area is defined in term of administrative units of government and consists of the twelve local government areas (LGAs) that form the Hunter Region. These are: Greater Taree, Gloucester and Upper Hunter in the northern part of the region; Great Lakes, Port Stephens, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie along the eastern seaboard; Dungog, Maitland and Cessnock located in the centre of the region; and Singleton and Muswellbrook in the western part of the study area (refer to Figure 2).

This area is larger than the historically defined Hunter River Valley, which originally consisted of five counties (Hunter, Gloucester, Northumberland, Brisbane and Bligh) that defined the northern limits of settlement in the early nineteenth century. With the formation of the local government areas, the land divisions have expanded slightly and the study area now also contains portions of the counties of Macquarie, Phillip and Hawes.

The River Systems

The Hunter Region is dominated by the catchment of the Hunter River, (from which the region derives its name) comprising approximately 75% of the total area of the region (29,255.3 km²). The Hunter River is fed by a number of major tributaries including the Pages and Isis Rivers, Rouchel Brook, Goulburn River, Glennies and Wollombi Creeks, and the lower Paterson, Allyn, Chichester and Williams Rivers and Wolli Creek, together with a number of other minor tributaries draining the surrounding sub-catchments.

A number of other important water bodies in the region lie outside the Hunter River catchment, including the coastal lakes of Lake Macquarie, the Myall Lakes system and Wallis Lakes. Also outside the Hunter catchment, but within the region, is the major waterway of Port Stephens together with rivers such as the Karuah, which flows into Port Stephens, and the Manning River system, which drains much of the Gloucester Local Government Area (LGA), although it enters the Pacific Ocean north of the study area.¹

The Environment

While much of the region has been cleared for timber and agricultural production since European settlement, large areas of land, mostly steep rugged terrain, have been set aside as national parks and state forests for conservation, recreation, wilderness and forestry purposes. These include the southern parts of the Muswellbrook, Singleton and Cessnock LGAs, which extend into the Yengo National Park and the World Heritage listed Wollemi National Park. The World Heritage listed Barrington Tops National Parks is located in the Gloucester, Dungog and Upper Hunter LGAs.

Settlement

Principal centres of settlement throughout the study area are the city of Newcastle, the districts of Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens and the main townships of Dungog, Scone, Cessnock, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Taree, Maitland and Paterson.

The region is known for its coal mining, agriculture, food production, dairies, sheep and cattle grazing, vineyards and wineries and horse studs. It is also recognised for its wealth of historically significant sites and buildings located throughout the region.

¹ Hunter Region Research Foundation, 2008-2009; *Newcastle and the Hunter Region 2008-2009*, cited at www.hvrf.com.au (downloaded August 2012)



Figure 1: Map of the Local Government Areas of NSW showing location of the study area (coloured orange). (Source: Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2013)

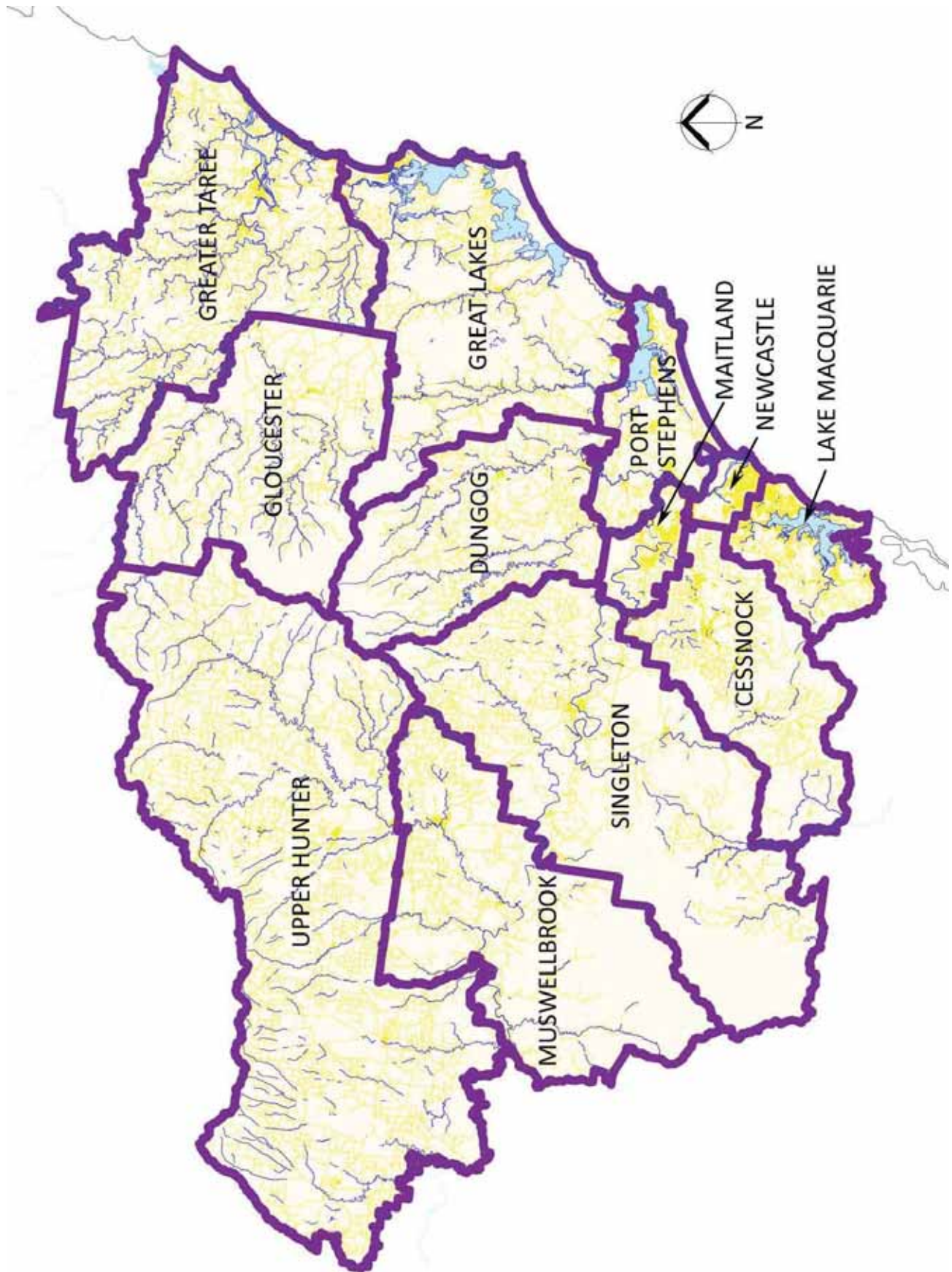


Figure 2: The Hunter Region study area

1.3 Terms

This report uses terms as defined in the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter*.

For terms specific to the Hunter Estates and the homestead complex, the following definitions provided by the Macquarie Dictionary² have been used:

- Homestead:** a parcel of land, originally one considered to be big enough to support a family; the main residence on a sheep or cattle station or large farm; of or relating to a building, settler, etc., on a homestead.
- Station:** a rural property for raising sheep or cattle; a sheep station or cattle station.
- Run:** to keep (livestock), as on pasture or a large area of grazing land; a rural property
- Estate:** a piece of landed property, especially one of large extent.
- Pastoral:** of or relating to the raising of stock, especially sheep or cattle, on rural properties; used for pasture, as land.

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

- LGA:** local government area
- SHR:** NSW State Heritage Register
- SHI:** NSW State Heritage Inventory
- LEP:** Local Environmental Plan
- REP:** Hunter Regional Environmental Plan
- NT:** The National Trust of Australia (NSW)
- RNE:** The Register of the National Estate

1.4 Limitations

In any broad survey such as the present study, limitations presented by the varying amount of detail included in previous heritage reports are to be expected and this was found to be the case for this study. In addition, many of the reports and surveys undertaken into the identification of significant places throughout the study area are 20 years old or more, which further limits their application, particularly in relation to condition.

During the process of the desk top study, a surprising number of potential homestead complex sites were identified, with a total number of 214 places initially listed for consideration. This unexpectedly large number limited the ability to conduct site visits to all of these places.

Not all of the sites that were selected for visitation and inspection were able to be accessed, as permission was not extended by the current property owners.

² Macquarie Dictionary, 2012; Macmillan Publishers Australia; cited at
<<http://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/anonymous@9c9FFD54672463/-/p/dict/index.html>> (downloaded July 2012)

1.4.1 Exclusions

The history of the Hunter Region reveals that certain districts within the study area have a different or parallel history to the principle mode of settlement exhibited throughout the Hunter Region. Although surveyed and opened for settlement at the same time as the other districts, other events shaped their subsequent development and today these areas are historically, economically and socially distinct from the majority of the Hunter Region.

These areas are the Great Lakes, Gloucester and Greater Taree local government areas, whose development was essentially dominated by the Australian Agricultural Company established in 1827 and the majority landowner throughout these three council areas. Today, the Greater Taree and Great Lakes local government areas are considered to be more in line with the mid-north and north coast of NSW history of settlement and development.

Likewise, the Newcastle local government area was settled and developed for entirely different purposes, although it is intrinsically linked with the historical development of the whole of the Hunter Region. Regardless, as Newcastle was first developed as a penal settlement, this use precluded settlement based on agricultural and pastoral pursuits.

1.5 Author Identification

This report has been prepared by the following people:

Kate Denny and Hector Abrahams, Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners Pty Ltd.

Professor Alan Atkinson, Historian, St Paul's College, the University of Sydney.

Dr Edward Higginbotham, Historical Archaeologist.

Dominique Steel, Aboriginal Archaeologist.

Nicholas Jackson, Historic Researcher.

Contributions have also been made by Clive Lucas, Ashley Brown, Alice Stapleton, Elspeth Abrahams and Meg Quinlisk, Clive Lucas Stapleton and Partners Pty Ltd.

1.6 Acknowledgments

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Tim Smith, Deputy Director, NSW Heritage Branch

Stewart Watters, Senior Heritage Branch- Database Manager, NSW Heritage Branch

Elizabeth Robertson, Librarian, NSW Heritage Branch

Julie Blyth, Archivist, National Trust of Australia (NSW)

Stakeholders who provided their input into the study

The property owners:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| – Mr and Mrs K Yore, Negoa | – Paspaly Rural and Mr S Reynolds, Thornthwaite |
| – Mrs D Hilliard, Lewinsbrook | – Mr D Robertson, Turanville |
| – Mr and Mrs T Capp, Cawarra | – Ms S Bramell, Lochinvar House |
| – Vinery Stud, Segenhoe | – Peabody Energy and Mr T Favell, Wambo |

2 Methodology

The overall purpose of this project is to provide a comparative study of pre 1850s homestead complexes located throughout the Hunter Region.

From the outset of the study, it became clear that although the Hunter Region and homestead complexes located in the area are well known and well documented, existing comparative studies focused in the main on the date of the surviving main house (the homestead) as the basis for comparison. These studies include the *Hunter Region Heritage Study* (1982), the *Hunter Region: Interim List* (1981) prepared by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) and the more recent *Wambo Homestead Complex Homestead Strategy* (2010) and *Wambo Homestead Complex: Revised Database of Hunter Region Homesteads* (2010) prepared by Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd.

However, a homestead complex is not formed by the house alone and it was found from the historical readings that there are a number of characteristics that make both the Hunter Region and their homestead complexes distinctive in the history of NSW. Reliance on the date of the main house alone does not acknowledge all of the significant components of the estates and therefore does not provide a clear comparison between the homestead complexes located throughout the study area or other homestead complexes located throughout NSW.

This study therefore attempts to identify all of the particular characteristics that define the Hunter Region homestead complex in order to provide a solid basis from which a comparative analysis can be undertaken.

2.1 Definition of the Hunter Region 19th Century Rural (Homestead) Complex

The NSW Heritage Branch brief for this project required the study to provide an analysis of “Hunter Region 19th century rural (homestead) complexes”. The phrase ‘rural (homestead) complex’ is not found in common usage and as this report is a comparative study its clear definition is required to ensure that like places are examined.

In Australia, the term ‘homestead’ is familiar and in widespread use throughout Australia’s regional and rural districts. J M Freeland’s 1969 definition of the term within its Australian historic context is the most useful definition for the present study, although it does not entirely apply to the homesteads found in the Hunter Region. Freeland states:

*In its strictest sense a homestead is any rural home no matter how mean its size or rude its construction together with its outbuildings. In Australia, during the first sixty years, the word was used to describe the house and buildings regardless of the primitiveness or temporariness of any respectable-sized legally occupied country property. After that time its use was gradually restricted to those permanent homes and establishments which had acquired a certain social and economic paramountcy in an area and a large consolidated holding of pastoral, as distinct from agricultural, land. The homesteads were the seats of the local aristocracy, the well-springs of influence, example and power and after the arbiters of local disputes and the dispensers of justice.*³

³ Freeland, J M., 1969; *Historic Homesteads of Australia*, Australian Council of National Trusts, p. Introduction



Figure 3: 1970s photograph of Berry Park House, Morpeth, the homestead of John Eales

A point of difference between the above definition and the Hunter Region homestead is that in the Hunter Region, a pastoral holding was not the only kind of land that supported an establishment of a “certain social and economic paramountcy” in the region (as will be seen in the following discussions). Agricultural lands in the Hunter Region, as well as other industries (besides sheep and cattle grazing) generated the income and prestige that is associated with the term ‘homestead’ and were similarly located on large allotments of land.

The 19th century homestead owners themselves used a variety of terms to distinguish their different types of rural settlement. Based on the 1832 *New South Wales Calendar and General Post Office Directory*, terminology used at the time for the various landholdings include:⁴

- ‘small farms and settlers’;
- ‘stations’;
- ‘farms’;
- ‘estates’;
- ‘farms for veterans’;
- ‘large farming establishments’;
- ‘residences’; and
- ‘sheep runs’.

⁴ Higginbotham, Dr E., 2012, *Nineteenth Century Rural Homestead Complexes in the Hunter Region: Historical Archaeological Survey*; p. 16 (refer to Appendix 3)

The terms ‘estate’ and ‘residence’ relate specifically to the larger landholders, with the term ‘residence’ limited to the main house of the landowner, while the term ‘estate’ is less indicative of a resident owner and could also have applied to lands managed by an overseer (which is pertinent to this study). The term ‘station’ referred to a landholding managed on behalf of an owner.⁵

The term ‘estate’ then encompasses all types of rural based industries and infers that these properties were, as Freeland describes, “the well-springs of influence, example and power and after the arbiters of local disputes and the dispensers of justice” whether or not the main landowner permanently resided on the landholding, and this was certainly true for the estates in the Hunter Region.

As such, for the purposes of this study the term **‘Hunter Estate’** (or **‘Hunter Estates’**) has been adopted to refer to the whole of the land, the agricultural or pastoral practices managed either by the main landowner or by an overseer, together with the main house and its surrounding outbuildings, the **homestead complex**.



Figure 4: Cawarra, Dr J H Lindeman’s estate in the Allyn River valley (2012)

⁵ Higginbotham, Dr E., 2012; p. 16

2.2 Approach

The approach taken for this particular study was to attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1 What is the number of like sites in the region?
- 2 What are their comparative heritage values and conditions?

The brief also called for historical and Aboriginal archaeological potential to form part of the overall assessment methodology and inform the comparative heritage values of like sites in the region.

In order to achieve the above, a suite of methods for the analysis of the history and existing data was adopted. The methodologies were as follows:

1. A history of the settlement of the Hunter Region in the context of the colonial settlement of NSW and the government policies for settlement and development in operation at the time was prepared (Section 3: Historical Context)
2. As the instigation for this study was to provide the NSW Heritage Council with information regarding complexes of a similar date and form as Wambo, a good starting point for the study seemed to be the identification of the characteristics of this particular estate. Therefore, a review of existing reports and studies addressing the history and significance of Wambo was undertaken in order to extract its distinguishing features.

Based on the information contained within the *Wambo Homestead: A Conservation Plan* (B. Collins, 1994) and the *Wambo Homestead Complex Heritage Study* (Godden Mackay Logan Pty Ltd, 2010) the following characteristics were identified:

- a) Land purchased in 1834-35 (combining earlier 2000acres land grant (Matthew Hindson, 1824) and 746acres land grant (David Maziere, 1825)).
 - b) Main settler (James Hale) was an emancipist.
 - c) Surviving original or early buildings include: Early homestead (1837), second homestead (1844-7), stud master's cottage and servant's wing (1830s), carriage house with stables and granary (1840), servants wing (1844).⁶
 - d) Estate was managed by an overseer for whom the second homestead was built.
 - e) Main industry- pastoral holding for cattle and horse stud.
 - f) Main settler held other lands outside of the Hunter Region (Windsor, Liverpool Plains and New England districts).
3. A desk top review of existing studies for the whole of the study area followed, with particular emphasis on existing listings (SHR, SHI, the National Trust of Australia (NSW), the Hunter REP and the Register of the National Estate), and the thematic histories and inventories for the Hunter Region and the individual LGAs (refer to Section 7: Bibliography). From this review, approximately 214 potential comparative sites were identified together with a basic list of characteristics that were common to the majority of the identified places.

⁶ State Heritage Register listing for Wambo Homestead (Listing No. 00200), cited at www.heritage.nsw.gov.au (downloaded September 2012)

These are:

- a. Main settler was a new, free immigrant to Australia;
- b. Main settler was a key notable person and is featured in the Australian Dictionary of Biography
- c. Main settler was employed as a magistrate for their local district
- d. Main settler was involved in the development of the Hunter Region society and broader Australian community (agricultural societies, politics, held roles in the colonial government etc.)
- e. Agricultural industries included sheep and cattle grazing and breeding, horse studs, crops, vineyards and wine, tobacco and mixed farming
- f. Initial land grants or purchases were 640 acres and over and were eventually much larger
- g. The estate used large numbers of convicts as their labour force

This database in full is provided in Volume II: Appendix 1.

4. Aboriginal reports and records were reviewed and analysed to glean an understanding of pre-contact Aboriginal occupation and post-contact Aboriginal occupation with a particular emphasis on information that pointed to either occupation of or interactions on the Hunter Estates.

This review revealed not only the richness of Aboriginal archaeology that could potentially exist on the estate sites, but that interactions between Aboriginal people and the new European settlers were diverse in nature. It also highlighted the absence of Aboriginal history and archaeology in existing listings for Hunter Region homestead complexes and clearly showed that the Aboriginal history of the region is an emerging history, and one that is continually being built upon and strengthened (refer to Appendix 2: Aboriginal Archaeology Review).

5. A baseline archaeological assessment was undertaken to provide accurate and up-to-date property information, to confirm the identification of already listed places, to provide quantifiable information on the number of houses, cottages and outbuildings on each property and to assist in the selection of sites for site survey.

Documentation used to identify and locate each item was the NSW Land and Property Information Spatial Information Exchange (SIX) Viewer, aerial photographs (Google Earth), historical county, parish, village and town maps and subdivision plans held at the Mitchell Library. This process allowed for identification of the farm layout, garden layout and typology of homestead complexes (refer to Appendix 3: Historical Archaeological Survey).

3 Historical Context

3.1 The Hunter Valley 1815-1850

The following historical analysis has been provided by Professor Alan Atkinson, St Paul's College, the University of Sydney.

Introduction

Early European settlement of New South Wales took place within two approximate half-circles, one after the other, both of them centred on Sydney. The first half-circle was defined by Governor Phillip and had a radius of about 60 kilometres. This was the County of Cumberland, bounded by the Hawkesbury River.

The second half-circle was drawn in the 1820s and its radius was nearly 200 kilometres. It contained three main regions, each the size of a small state in Europe: the Southern Highlands, the Western Plains around Bathurst and, in the north, the Hunter Valley. This larger half-circle was also divided into nineteen counties. However, it was the three regions just named, to the south, to the west and to the north, which drove both popular thinking and government policy in the period up to about 1850.

In short, Sydney had three hinterlands, each with its own distinctive character. Of those three the Hunter Valley was politically and economically the most significant. From the early 1830s, as settlement spread even further inland, these hinterlands began to merge and by the mid 1840s, the Hunter Valley had become partly a staging point on the way to the New England plateau and the Darling Downs. The flood of population inland following the discovery of gold in 1851 complicated matters further. The Hunter remained important and distinctive, but it fell behind the gold-bearing country elsewhere in New South Wales.

This paper sketches the character of the Hunter Valley during the period 1815-50, with a view to assessing its significance for the heritage and broad historical experience of New South Wales. It is useful to compare the Valley in this period and the Northern Midlands of Tasmania at the same time. In both the Hunter Valley and the Northern Midlands a remarkable inrush of capital and free settlement from Britain during the 1820s created rural communities which were relatively rich, but also pre-democratic and pre-industrial (in the sense of using large workforces). Each had its own social hierarchy and sense of identity, echoing late-Enlightenment Europe. These two regions are highly unusual in Australian experience. They complicate the larger Australian story in vivid and intricate ways.

Note that the Northern Midlands (specifically the Brickendon-Woolmers estates, near Longford) belong to the World Heritage-listed network of Australian Convict Sites. This listing draws attention to the rural employment of convicts and to the distinctive forms of civil society built on nineteenth-century penal labour.⁷ It has obvious significance for the heritage evaluation of the Hunter.

The Hunter Valley also has a unique position in the history of political ideas in Australia. It was the earliest site of the phenomenon which Don Aitkin has called "country-mindedness" and which John Hirst makes a component of the "pioneer legend". Broadly, this is the view that rural pursuits are

⁷ A symposium in June 2009, called "Colonial Spaces", organised by CAIA (Colonialism and Its Aftermath), a research centre at the University of Tasmania, and held at Clarendon House, one of the largest surviving homes from the Tasmanian colonial period, focussed specifically on the heritage potential of that region.

ennobling and fundamental to existence, while city life is sordid and parasitical, and (the pioneer legend) civilisation in Australia has depended on those who established properties in the bush.⁸ This understanding emerged in the Hunter Valley in the 1830s. It led directly to the ideology which in the twentieth century shaped the Country and National parties.

The Policy Context

Until the time of Governor Macquarie (1810-22) there was very little European settlement beyond the County of Cumberland. To the north, the lower Hawkesbury and the rough country on its far side made movement difficult for human beings and nearly impossible for livestock in any numbers, and it was usually necessary to go by sea. The Hunter Valley was therefore approached more or less as if it were an island.

A convict settlement had been formed at the mouth of the Hunter (at the site later called Newcastle) in 1804, and escaped convicts were therefore the first Europeans to make themselves familiar with the Hunter Valley landscape. Free settlement began at Paterson's Plains (later Paterson) in 1812-13. By 1820 there were twelve farms in that area and eleven at Wallis Plains (later Maitland). Few were as much as 60 acres (about 24 hectares) and most were considerably smaller. Most of the farmers lived in wattle and plaster cottages, with detached barns and pigsties, and with minimal fencing. In 1822 Patrick's Plains (later Singleton) was occupied. A track had now been opened up from the Hawkesbury, allowing for the movement of livestock, and grazing had begun. However, farms were still no more than 100 acres each.⁹

From this point, the future use of land within the colony was governed by the principles associated with the name of John Thomas Bigge, the British Government's Commissioner of Inquiry in New South Wales from 1819 to 1821. In his reports, presented 1822-23, Bigge proposed that the penal system should become more rigorous. Convicts should be kept away from the temptations of Sydney and employed where possible on large private estates. Large land-owners were supposedly better motivated and better equipped than small farmers to keep convict employees under control. They were also thought to be better able to give them useful skills, thereby promoting their reform. Happily too, in Bigge's opinion, New South Wales was more suitable for large-scale pastoralism than for the small-scale cropping which had been the official preference thus far.

These were the principles guiding settlement in the Hunter during the 1820s. Thanks partly to Bigge, during the 1820s and '30s large landowners were convinced that their own entrepreneurship and moral authority underpinned the penal system and, with it, the prosperity and good order of New South Wales.

Bigge's recommendations made sense within the wider context of European and imperial history. The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 had meant the release from military and naval service of a large number of commissioned officers. Such men were to be the staple of settlement in both the Hunter Valley and the Tasmanian Midlands.

Also, British capital was now directed away from military purposes to investment in the British colonies. In New South Wales, land was still distributed by government virtually free of charge to those judged worthy recipients. In 1824 the Australian Agricultural Company was formed in London, and promised a million acres, which it took at Port Stephens. Its main aim was the growth of fine

⁸ John Hirst, "The Pioneer Legend", *Historical Studies*, vol. 18 (1978), pp. 316-37; Don Aitkin, "'Country-mindedness': The Spread of an Idea", *Australian Cultural History*, no. 4 (1985), pp. 34-41.

⁹ T.M. Perry, *Australia's First Frontier: The Spread of Settlement in New South Wales 1788-1829* (Melbourne 1963), pp. 61-6.

wool, but its promoters were keen to make money in any way they could. They also had moral ambitions. Their investment was not only large-scale but also long-term. They imported carefully chosen skilled labour, with the hope of settling model communities on their land.

These ideals, and a desire to experiment, made an impact almost from the beginning, particularly in the time of Sir Edward Parry, the Company's local commissioner, 1829-34. Devout and far-sighted, Parry founded a church at Stroud and he and his wife established schools. Vineyards were planted at the Company sites on Port Stephens, and wheat and tobacco at its inland settlements (Stroud and Booral). Horses were bred for sale to the East India Cavalry. Even opium was grown for a while.¹⁰ The Company also took over the government mining operations in Newcastle. Its regime was to some extent a model for smaller settlers. However, some had already begun to operate in the same way.

A Distinct Community

Newcastle had ceased to be a penal settlement in 1823. In the same year the Hunter Valley was mapped by the government surveyor Henry Dangar. Substantial settlement began from that time. New arrivals wanted good, well-watered soil and safety from Aborigines and convict bushrangers (escapees from the penal settlement at Newcastle). They therefore preferred land along the Hunter and Paterson Rivers, thereby linking the clusters of small farms already in existence. Settlement along the Williams River and other tributaries of the Hunter soon followed.

In 1828, 43 per cent of European settlers in the Hunter Valley were free immigrants, twice the proportion of any other region of comparable size in occupied New South Wales. Also, an unusually large number had arrived in the last few years. The standard of education was also high. There were many who brought not only significant capital but also an understanding, or at least an awareness, of new agricultural methods. By the end of the 1820s, thanks to fertile, well watered soil and ease of access to the Sydney market (transport by sea being much less expensive than by land), the lower parts of the Hunter Valley were already remarkably highly cultivated.¹¹

Meanwhile the centre of commerce and authority in the Hunter had moved from Newcastle to Wallis Plains, now named Maitland, which was envisaged as a market town commanding its own agricultural and pastoral hinterland. Maitland's main gateway to the world was nearby Morpeth, part river-port, part sea-port. Government postal arrangements are symptomatic of settlement patterns. During the 1830s and '40s there were three long-distance mail runs in New South Wales, serving the three hinterlands mentioned above. The southern and western were overland routes (the southern extending by this time to Melbourne), but northern mail was carried by steamship to Morpeth. From Morpeth there was a run to Dungog, and branches similarly to Cassilis and Murrurundi, soon extending from Murrurundi further north.¹²

By this time the Hunter Valley contained a community which was in some sense self-directed. The 1828 census of New South Wales showed that, even without the Australian Agricultural Company grant, the Hunter now accounted for a fifth of landed property in the colony and about the same proportion of its cattle. It also made up nearly a tenth of the human population, or roughly half of all those living outside the County of Cumberland.

¹⁰ Damaris Bairstow, *A Million Pounds, a Million Acres: The Pioneer Settlement of the Australian Agricultural Company* (Sydney 2003), pp. 247-55.

¹¹ Perry, *Australia's First Frontier*, pp. 73-4.

¹² Alan Atkinson, "Postage in the South-East", *The Push from the Bush: A Bulletin of Social History*, no. 5 (December 1979), pp. 25-9.

At the same time (the late 1820s), besides mapping the large half-circle (known as the “limits of location”), the Surveyor-General, Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, proposed three main traffic arteries leading to the main provincial centres: a Great South Road to Goulburn, a Great Western Road to Bathurst, and a Great North Road to Maitland. He also took some trouble designing these three minor capitals. The Hunter Valley being so promising – almost a sub-colony in terms of wealth and importance – the Surveyor-General’s plan for Maitland was particularly ambitious.¹³

Two problems interfered with Mitchell’s hopes for symmetry in the north, both characteristic of the place of the Hunter Valley within colonial New South Wales. The Great North Road crossed extremely challenging country. The building of a good thoroughfare came to a halt in the early 1830s and was not resumed for many years. Travel by sea was increasingly efficient, thanks to steam ships, and with the spread of settlement inland it could be just as convenient to reach the Valley from the western side of the Blue Mountains. Thus the envisaged road to Maitland did not evolve as planned.

These developments revived the fortunes of Newcastle as a port town, while movement up the Valley, to Singleton and beyond, similarly undermined the vision for Maitland. A straggle of shops on the main road inland, a few miles away on the other side of Wallis Creek, was at first called West Maitland. But it drew all the life from the official town site. In due course West Maitland became Maitland, the largest town beyond Cumberland, and the government town, one of Mitchell’s best visions, barely survived as East Maitland. Only the outline of streets remained, as evidence of late-Georgian town-planning in Australian terms second only to Adelaide.

Land Ownership

The initial settlement of the Hunter depended on government initiative, but by the 1820s the lead had been taken by individual settlers. Some were tradesmen, such as Benjamin Singleton, a miller who took cattle on agistment at the place which became Singleton, and the founders of West Maitland. More important for the time being were the large landowners.

Commissioner Bigge had made grazing central to the colony’s future, but Hunter Valley graziers relied also on mixed farming, including a variety of crops and, in some cases, small-scale industry. James Busby imported hundreds of vine cuttings from Europe and planted them at Kirkton, north-west of Maitland. George Wyndham’s vineyard at Dalwood was on the river between Maitland and Singleton. Wyndham also experimented with hemp, mustard, castor-oil, tobacco, millet and barley, bred cattle and established a racing stud.¹⁴

From the mid 1820s government in the settled areas outside Sydney depended on appointed magistrates, on the old English model. They made up each bench in local court cases and they managed local affairs. They were usually unpaid and were chosen from among leading landowners. From the early 1830s Maitland, as with most leading towns, also had a full-time, paid official, known as the Resident Magistrate or Police Magistrate, but the unpaid magistrates kept a good share of authority. Officially and unofficially the Hunter Valley was therefore governed mainly by its large landowners. These men were also significant employers of convict labour and had an interest in convict discipline. This brought them into conflict with the government in Sydney, especially after the arrival of Governor Richard Bourke, in 1832. In Britain, there was a growing belief that convict labour resembled slavery and Bourke was anxious to cut back on abuses.

¹³ Alan Atkinson, *The Commonwealth of Speech: An Argument about Australia’s Past, Present and Future* (Melbourne 2002), p. 117.

¹⁴ Perry, *Australia’s First Frontier*, p. 74; Judith Wright McKinney, “Wyndham, George (1801-1870)”, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wyndham-george-2824> (seen 13 July 2012).

During 1833-37 numbers of Hunter Valley landowners joined the campaign for constitutional reform, believing that with a representative legislature they would have control of the convict system. This was Australia's first rural political movement, predating the squatters' campaign against Governor Gipps of 1846-47. The Sydney government was too remote, in the view of the Hunter settlers, and ignorant of their needs as employers and landlords. As one of them, James Mudie, said, they wanted laws to be the result of "the property and public opinion of the free untainted colonists".¹⁵

Newspapers can be the best indication of local feeling and Maitland was the first place on the eastern mainland, except for Sydney, Melbourne and Geelong, to have its own newspaper. The *Hunter River Gazette*, 1841-42, was succeeded by the *Maitland Mercury*, in January 1843. The *Mercury*, a weekly owned and edited by Richard Jones, was a very successful paper. Moving on from the blunt, anti-government feeling of the 1830s, by 1850 it had consolidated the image of the Hunter Valley as a forward-looking agricultural (rather than just grazing) district.¹⁶

Produce, Industry & Homesteads

By the 1840s the smaller farmers had taken up a variety of crops. Wheat was the most important local export, worth about £10,000 per annum, but leather from Maitland and its neighbourhood was also valuable. Tweed went from factories at Stockton (employing 200 and exporting also to China) and Muswellbrook, together with soap and candles, made in various places from local tallow. Cheese was produced "equal to any Derby or Gloucester".¹⁷ Horses, worth several thousand pounds per annum, went to India. Coal of similar value was exported mainly to Sydney, but also to New Zealand and Tasmania.

In terms of aggregate value, at this point the Hunter exported more than New Zealand and Western Australia combined, and more than South Australia or the Cape of Good Hope. Here was another cause of complaint against the government in Sydney. With exports of such value and with 27,000 inhabitants, the leadership of the region demanded the right to export directly overseas, rather than through the capital.¹⁸

Table grapes left the port too, but still very little wine. By the mid 1840s 20,000 gallons of wine was being produced each year, plus several hundred gallons of brandy, but it was drunk mainly on the spot. Nevertheless, considerable trouble was taken to develop refined methods of growing and production. At Porphyry Point, near Seaham, Henry Carmichael had both a vineyard and a boarding school for teaching agriculture. (With Richard Jones of the *Mercury*, Carmichael gave the region powerful intellectual leadership, geared to making it more enlightened, better organised and richer.) In the late 1840s more and more wine was leaving the Hunter for Sydney.¹⁹

¹⁵ Alan Atkinson, "The Political Life of James Macarthur", PhD thesis, Australian National University 1976, pp. 134-39, 158; Alan Atkinson, "The Parliament in the Jerusalem Warehouse", *Push from the Bush*, no. 12 (May 1982), pp. 75-104.

¹⁶ R.B. Walker, *The Newspaper Press in New South Wales 1803-1920* (Sydney 1976), pp. 43-44; Elizabeth Guilford, "Jones, Richard (1816-1892)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jones-richard-2281/text2933>, seen 17 July 2012).

¹⁷ *Maitland Mercury*, 3 June 1843, 27 April 1844, 7 June 1845, 15 April 1846.

¹⁸ *Maitland Mercury*, 18 May 1844, 15 April 1846.

¹⁹ *Maitland Mercury*, 9 December 1843, 18 May 1844, 29 July 1846, 10 February, 5, 12 May, 10 November 1849, 8 May 1850 (export figures October 1849-March 1850); *Australian*, 4 January 1845; George Nadel, "Carmichael, Henry (?-1862)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/carmichael-henry-1881/text/2209>; seen 18 July 2012); Cecily Joan Mitchell, *Hunter's River: A History of Early Families and the Homes They Built in the Lower Hunter Valley between 1830 and 1860* (Sydney 2000), pp. 74-5.

For the time being tobacco mattered much more than wine. Tobacco was a more democratic product than wine because it could be grown satisfactorily by anyone. In hard times, according to the *Mercury*, “Tobacco is the only stand-by the poorer settlers have”. Charles Boydell, of Camyr Allyn, near Gresford, was an original grower and became the largest local manufacturer. In 1845 he and two others produced nearly 140 pounds (about 60 kilograms) of tobacco, mostly for sale in Sydney. At one of the lesser factories, run by Charles Walthall at Maitland, there were 35 employees, including fourteen children working as “stemmers” (removing stems and leaves).²⁰

Other industries were small-scale but inventive, especially in their use of indigenous products. Most of the dyes used at the tweed factory at Stockton were collected locally, and James King of Irrawang, at Raymond Terrace, made pottery as well as wine.²¹ A local timber called “white wood” was used to make shoemakers’ lasts. Also, gelatine and cubes of beef soup were manufactured at Raymond Terrace, and liquorice was grown at Yarrabong. At Stockton in the 1840s, Alexander Walker Scott ran a saltworks and an iron foundry.²²

Alexander Walker Scott gave careful thought to the pattern of settlement at the mouth of the Hunter. He built a patent slip at Stockton and he financed the survey of a Maitland-Newcastle railway. By the 1840s East Maitland had yielded primacy to West Maitland, but also, thanks to men like Scott, West Maitland (with Morpeth) was starting to yield in turn to Newcastle. Coal and secondary industry were pushing Newcastle ahead, and it was an easier port to reach than Morpeth.

The pattern of ingenuity in this period shows an interweaving of old and new. The same is true of the way settlers lived. Throughout the countryside the large houses, surrounded by outbuildings, testified to the continuing pattern of hierarchical authority. The assignment of convict labour ceased at the end of the 1830s, and the buildings designed for convict use – separate buildings, for instance, to ensure that male convicts slept away from the main house – were now occupied by free men and women. The big houses themselves were designed sometimes for comfort, sometimes for visual effect. They also varied in their architectural sophistication. At one extreme there was Barraba, near Ellalong, a long, low house built of slabs (and including nearby a barn and mill house, stable, dairy and tobacco house). At the other was Aberglasslyn, north-west of Maitland, stone-built, upright, elegant, and Stradbroke, on the Paterson River, more discretely beautiful, of sandstock brick with stone quoins.²³

At first it must have seemed that houses like Aberglasslyn and Stradbroke represented the future for the Hunter, a future which would be hierarchical, orderly and supremely civilised, and free of the convict stain. To some extent they did. However, the goldrushes of the 1850s, while remote from the Hunter Valley, weakened such settled priorities, and liberal democracy, coming at the same time, pushed their owners to the margins of public life.

²⁰ Maitland Mercury, 4 March, 29 July 1843, 30 November 1844, 1 April 1846, 23 June 1849.

²¹ The Irrawang pottery has been the subject of detailed archaeological investigation: Anne Bickford, “James King of Irrawang: A Colonial Entrepreneur”, *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 56 (1971), pp. 40-57; J.M. Birmingham, R. Ian Jack and D. Jeans, *Industrial Archaeology in Australia: Rural Industry* (Melbourne 1983), pp. 80-4.

²² Maitland Mercury, 27 April, 18 May 1844, 7 June, 5, 12 July 1845; Nancy Gray, “Scott, Alexander Walker (1800-1883)”, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/scott-alexander-walker-4545/text7749>; seen 18 July 2012).

²³ Mitchell, *Hunter’s River*, pp. 13, 116-17, 140-1, 170-3.

3.2 Key Dates

The following timeline provides a brief chronology of the Hunter Region area with key events.²⁴

1770	Captain Cook sailing 4-5 km off shore recorded "a small clump of an island lying close to shore" (Coal Island, later Nobby's)
1797	Lt John Shortland discovered the waterway he named Hunter River (often later called Coal River) and reported coal outcrops
1800	William Reid discovered the entrance to Lake Macquarie mistaking it for Newcastle Heads ('Reid's Mistake')
1801	Penal colony established, but abandoned within 12 months after convict mutiny; first cedar cut for export from the Hunter
1804	Second attempt at penal colony successful, Lt Menzies in charge; the name Newcastle first proclaimed officially by Governor King, but the town commonly called "King's Town" till approximately 1830
1818	Governor Macquarie ordered start of breakwater to join Nobby's Island to the shore to create the port
1819	Disastrous Hunter floods
1822	Majority of convicts held at Newcastle transferred to Port Macquarie; Surveyor Henry Dangar, commissioned to draw up plans for a township
1823	Newcastle declared a free town; inland road access to Wallis Plains (now Maitland) from Sydney achieved with the opening of Howes Track
1824	Australian Agricultural Company set up by charter in London and granted land at Port Stephens to breed sheep;
1825	Government appointed the Rev. Lancelot Threlkeld to establish a mission for aborigines on 10,000 acres at Lake Macquarie
1826	Australian Agricultural Company took over coal mining from the Government
1827-1830	Drought
1828	Great North Road completed NSW Census
1831	Original "William the Fourth" launched at Clarence Town
1833	NSW Census; proclamation of the town of Maitland and the village of Wollombi
1836	NSW Census
1837	Scone proclaimed a town

²⁴ Hunter Valley Research Foundation, 2008; *Newcastle and the Hunter Region 2008 – 2009* (http://www.hunter_timeline_hvrf.com.au, seen May 2012)

1838	First Irish and Welsh miners, 140 in number, brought to Newcastle by the Australian Agricultural Company
1839	Hunter River Steam Navigation Company formed, Australia's first steamship company
1840	Town of Murrurundi gazetted; Dungog township established
1841	NSW Census
1841	Financial crash
1843	First edition of Maitland Mercury; Newcastle District Council established
1845	First dredging of the Hunter River estuary
1846	NSW Census; Nobby's Breakwater completed; ferry service between Stockton and Newcastle begun
1847	Newcastle proclaimed a city at the same time as the Anglican Diocese and See of Newcastle was constituted
1851	NSW Census



Figure 5: Extract from John Arrowsmith's 1842 map *The South Eastern Portion of Australia* showing the 19 counties (Source: National Library of Australia _ MAP RM 925)

4 European Settlement of the Hunter Region

4.1 The Land

Exploration by Europeans

Europeans first approached the Hunter Region as early as 1796, when some fishermen were driven ashore near Port Stephens. In 1801 Governor King sent an exploring party to the Hunter River, led by Lieutenant Grant and Lieutenant-Colonel Paterson (commandant of the NSW Corps). This expedition was followed in the same year by a second group led by Surveyor-General Charles Grimes and Francis Barrallier to examine the Hunter Valley in more detail.²⁵

In 1818, John Oxley explored vast regions to the west and north of the Hunter Valley, journeying down the coastline from Port Macquarie to Newcastle and naming the Hastings River.²⁶ The interior of the valley was explored by John Howe, Chief Constable of Windsor, in 1819. Howe's party included George Loder Jnr and John Milward, three convicts and an Aboriginal man named Myles whose home country is likely to have been around Windsor. This exploration party reached the Patrick's Plains (originally known by the Aboriginal name Coomery Roy).²⁷

Howe's expedition predates the surveys of Cunningham (1822-23), Dangar (1824), and Mitchell (1831) and highlights the role Aboriginal people played in this initial phase of European history in the Hunter Valley that can be exemplified by the way Myles is recorded to have navigated and negotiated his way through country that was not his through birth, marriage, or any known kinship association with the people whose land the exploration party travelled through.

The next phase of exploration of the Hunter Region did not begin until 1822-23 when Surveyor Henry Dangar was instructed to survey the Hunter River and Allan Cunningham, botanist and explorer, approached the Goulburn River and Pages River, starting from Bathurst. Again, historical records show Aboriginal people subsequently influenced the land selection processes that led to the occupation of a number of the project homesteads that were created by 1820s survey and land releases. These include direct historical references to Bolwarra, Dunmore, Glendon, and Camyr Allyn estates, and a similar Aboriginal role can be inferred to have occurred at a number of others.

Although described with a particular agenda in mind (being the settlement of appropriate land), these early explorers and surveyors provide some indication of the land and its people at the time of European settlement. These records also describe elevated hinterland hills, wetlands and islands that initially lay outside of the first European agricultural lands. Aboriginal people are likely to have used these landscapes during the earliest periods of European settlement where they represented 'gaps' in the grid of settler landholding they could have moved through with the least European surveillance and interference.

²⁵ Perry, T. M., 1963, pp. 56-57.

²⁶ Wood, W. A., 1972, *Dawn in the Valley: the Story of Settlement in the Hunter Valley to 1833*, Wentworth Books, Sydney, p. 10

²⁷ Wood, W. A., 1972, p. 10



Figure 6: Extract from John Oxley's 1822 map *A Chart of part of the interior of New South Wales* showing the early explorers routes through the Hunter region (Source: National Library of Australia_MAP T 940)

The Land

Notable throughout the early descriptions of the environment of the Hunter Region are comments relating to the possibilities land offered for pastoral and agricultural pursuits. For example, in 1801, Grant described the area at Collier's Point (Fort Scratchley) as:

*The spot where these coals are found is clear of tree or bush for the space of many acres, which are covered with a short tender grass, very proper for grazing sheep, the ground rising with a gradual ascent, intersected with vallies, on which wood grows in plenty, sheltered from the winds, forming the most delightful prospects.*²⁸

Likewise, Cunningham described the alluvial plains of the Goulburn River in 1825 in terms of their agricultural potential:

The soil of these limited plains, or more level lands, is of a moist alluvial nature; whilst that of the small downs, especially near the southern extremity of this beautiful tract of country, is rich, loamy, and dry, possessing every advantage of local situation to call

²⁸ Grant, Lt. J., 1803 cited in Steele, D., 2012

forth the diligence of the agriculturalist; and being admirably adapted to the formation of artificial meadows for sheep, or wheat lands, as far as the boundary rocky hills to the S.E. Viewed collectively, the lands on Goulburn River offer an eligible situation for the establishment of a very profitable and convenient agricultural and grazing arm, inasmuch as it will be centrally distanced between the located pasture-lands on Hunter's River, and our future stock stations on Liverpool Plains.²⁹

By 1828, with the publication of Henry Dangar's 'Index and Directory', each parish within the counties of Northumberland and Durham was given a brief description based on the suitability of the unappropriated lands for settlement. For example, the unappropriated lands of the parish of Newcastle were described as "generally very barren, and wholly undeserving the emigrant's notice", while the parish of Lemington was described as "well watered, light soil, and desirable as a grazing tract".³⁰

From these records an idea of the richness and diversity of the environment prior to European settlement is garnered. They also provide an insight into the types of environments that were preferred by the settlers and subsequently altered into their present day forms.

The records also show how what was an Aboriginal landscape quickly changed. This can be traced at homesteads where the original course of the Hunter River at Bolwarra House for example was considerably altered, and around Tocal on the Paterson River where the significant wetland complex of Lake Paterson that is featured in Joseph Lycett's 1824 watercolour of the place was progressively drained for agricultural purposes to a point where now little evidence of it remains.³¹



Figure 7: Joseph Lycett *Lake Patterson, near Patterson's Plains, Hunters River, New South Wales* 1824 (Source: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra)

²⁹ Cunningham, A., 1825; cited in *Geographical Memoirs on New South Wales by Various Hands*, Field, B., ed.; p. 140

³⁰ Dangar, H., 1828; pgs. 1-12

³¹ Archer, 2007, p.180

4.2 Aboriginal People

For detailed information regarding the lives and culture of the Aboriginal people of the Hunter Region prior to European settlement, refer to Appendix 2.

As the various explorers and surveyors travelled through the region, interactions, meetings and viewings of Aboriginal people were made. Examples of written descriptions of observations of Aboriginal people include comments made by Lt. Menzies in 1804 at Newcastle who made mention of the “numerous Natives with whom we are on the most friendly terms”.³²

Similar observations were made in the Williams River area:

*We saw several traces of the natives, both young and old, and passed some canoes, which are small and rudely put together (1801); and We....descried some of them at a distance, who fled at our approach. We came to a spot, which they had just quitted and observed the marks of children's feet. The ground was covered with the shells of fresh water fish, of the sort found in the rivers of England and Scotland and called the horse muscle, having sometimes small pearls in them (1801).*³³

Some of the earliest encounters with Aboriginal people in the region that occurred inland and away from the coast around Newcastle were not as successful as planned. These interactions nevertheless also tell us a number of things about different Aboriginal groups that were living in the Hunter Valley at the time.

For example, a possible reason that the Aboriginal member of Howe's expedition in 1819, Myles was reluctant to proceed further after a certain point had been reached may have related to protocols the Aboriginal groups had for governing their land and its management. The people at 'Coomery Roy' will have expected their ownership of the land to have been respected, and access rights were to be negotiated, most likely with some form of reciprocal exchange required to allow Howe's group to continue their journey. The rules governing this type of arrangement may not have been recognised by Howe or may not have been successfully negotiated.

It is also probable the same type of breakdown in communication (or lack of) determined the outcome of Parr's earlier exploration in 1817 when he was forced to abandon his journey and return to Windsor as Aboriginal people are reported to have ‘*set fire to all the ridges round about.*’³⁴ Even as late as October 1824, Dangar's exploration party on the crest of the Liverpool Range was attacked ‘*and near cut off*’ by an Aboriginal party possibly numbering 150 people where one of Dangar's men was struck in the head by a spear before the exploration group knew their attackers were near. This party eventually reached Bowman's Ravensworth property which at this time was ‘*the highest on Hunter's River.*’³⁵

As with the descriptions of the environment, the historical records offer insights into campsites, exchange of goods, aspects of diet, initiation grounds and burial practices. Since then more information has become available that clarifies and often confirms these early observations.

³² Steele, D., 2012

³³ Perumal Murphy Pty Ltd, 1988; *Dungog Heritage Study Thematic History*, prepared for Dungog Shire Council, p. 12

³⁴ Brayshaw, 1986, p.21

³⁵ The Australian, 23 December 1824

For example, Aboriginal camps were described around the Lake Macquarie area as comprising eight or nine huts, each large enough for six to eight people. People gathered shellfish around the lake foreshores and fished using lines, spears and tidal weirs. Archaeological evidence of this occupation survives, with the oldest evidence dating back to about 11,000 years ago. The majority of sites are shell middens, and most are now disturbed as a result of historic land use. Some large and deep middens, a few with associated burials, have also been recorded at Swansea and in Wallarah National Park at Pinney Beach. The latter is dated to around 800 years ago.³⁶

The use of the Aboriginal reference names marked on Dangar's 1828 map of the Newcastle district illustrates the area continued to be a 'shared landscape' which was recognised by Dangar's surveyors in 1822. These landscape names also appear in contemporary diaries and newspaper articles that suggest some of the first European settlers shared a genuine mutual interest in the land with local Aboriginal communities.

On Dangar's map, Tahlbihn is marked near today's Fort Scratchley, Burrabihngarn referred to what the Europeans first named 'Pirate Point' (now Stockton) and Corrumbah is shown as a large island in the mouth of the Hunter (Coquun) River named first 'Chapman' and then 'Bullock' Island before the current name of Carrington became commonplace. Toornbing Creek is today's Iron-Bark Creek, and Burragihnbihng refers to Hexham Swamp which was part of the core territory of the Pambalong, or sometimes referred to in the historical records as the 'Big Swamp Tribe'. Pambalong land is believed to have extended from approximately Newcastle West along the southern bank of the Hunter River, through Hexham to Buttai, and across to the foothills of Mount Sugarloaf to the northern tip of Lake Macquarie.³⁷



Figure 8: Extract of Dangar's 1828 survey of the Hunter River showing Aboriginal reference names (Source: National Library of Australia_ Map NK 646 Tile b1)

³⁶ Steele, D., 2012

³⁷ Maynard, 2000 cited in Steele, D., 2012

4.3 The Spread of European Settlement

The settlement pattern of the Hunter Region that occurred in 1820s and 1830s was defined by the topography of the region. The early maps and surveys show that the settlement of the Hunter Region clustered around the rivers, rarely being located on hilltops or ridgelines or away from rivers on the open plains throughout the river valleys.

Settlement near watercourses is a pattern that is evident the world over. Rivers ensured basic survival, connection to markets, and the ability to water crops and livestock. What is particular to the Hunter Region is the density of the settlement.

The amount of land with direct access to a watercourse in the Hunter Region far exceeds that of many other regions of NSW. These natural features also allowed for settlement to occur broadly throughout the majority of the region, rather than in isolated pockets as can be seen in the western and south-western districts.

4.3.1 Access through the Hunter Region

Rivers

Although the Hunter Region is essentially defined by its waterways, using the river systems for access and transport was surprisingly limited. The river systems tend to be shallow and regular flooding results in obstructions entering the waterways, making the passage for boats difficult.

Dangar (1830) describes the rivers in his *Index and Directory* for the region and provides an outline of the trafficable rivers, noting that at Morpeth, the Hunter became navigable for small craft, being the extreme point at which the tide has effect. Wallis Creek to Newcastle was also navigable; however it was not used by the settlers higher than the parishes of Gosforth (Maitland) and Stanhope. The Williams River was navigable for large boats for about twenty-five miles above its junction and the Paterson River was navigable for boats within two miles of the junction of its two streams, at the parish of Barford.³⁸

The expansive river systems allowed a large number of people to settle in the region because of the richness of the alluvial plains that supported various agricultural pursuits. In addition, the harbour of Newcastle allowed for easy transportation between the Hunter Region and the markets at Sydney. As a comparison, loaded drays travelling from Sydney to Bathurst could take as many as eighteen days, whereas the voyage from Sydney to Newcastle could be made in twelve hours in good weather.³⁹ This allowed both smaller scale agricultural pursuits and large scale pastoral activities to be exploited in the Hunter.

With the coming of steam navigation in the late 1830s, many of the earlier problems faced by water transport were alleviated, and increased access into the various waterways impacted greatly on the development of the region. No longer depending on the wind or tides, the steam boat considerably improved the flow of people and goods between Sydney and the Hunter.⁴⁰

³⁸ Dangar, H., 1830; p. 43-44

³⁹ Perry, T.M., 1963, p. 73

⁴⁰ Perumal, Wrathall & Murphy Pty Ltd, 1982; *Hunter Region Heritage Study: Historic Towns and Settlements*, prepared for the Department of Environment and Planning; p. 19

The popularity of water transport affected the pattern of road building and roads came to serve the river ports rather than competing with them (particularly in the Lower Hunter Valley).⁴¹ For example, the extension of the Great North Road through Singleton, Muswellbrook, Scone and Murrumbidgee up to the New England district fared better than the section between Sydney and Newcastle.

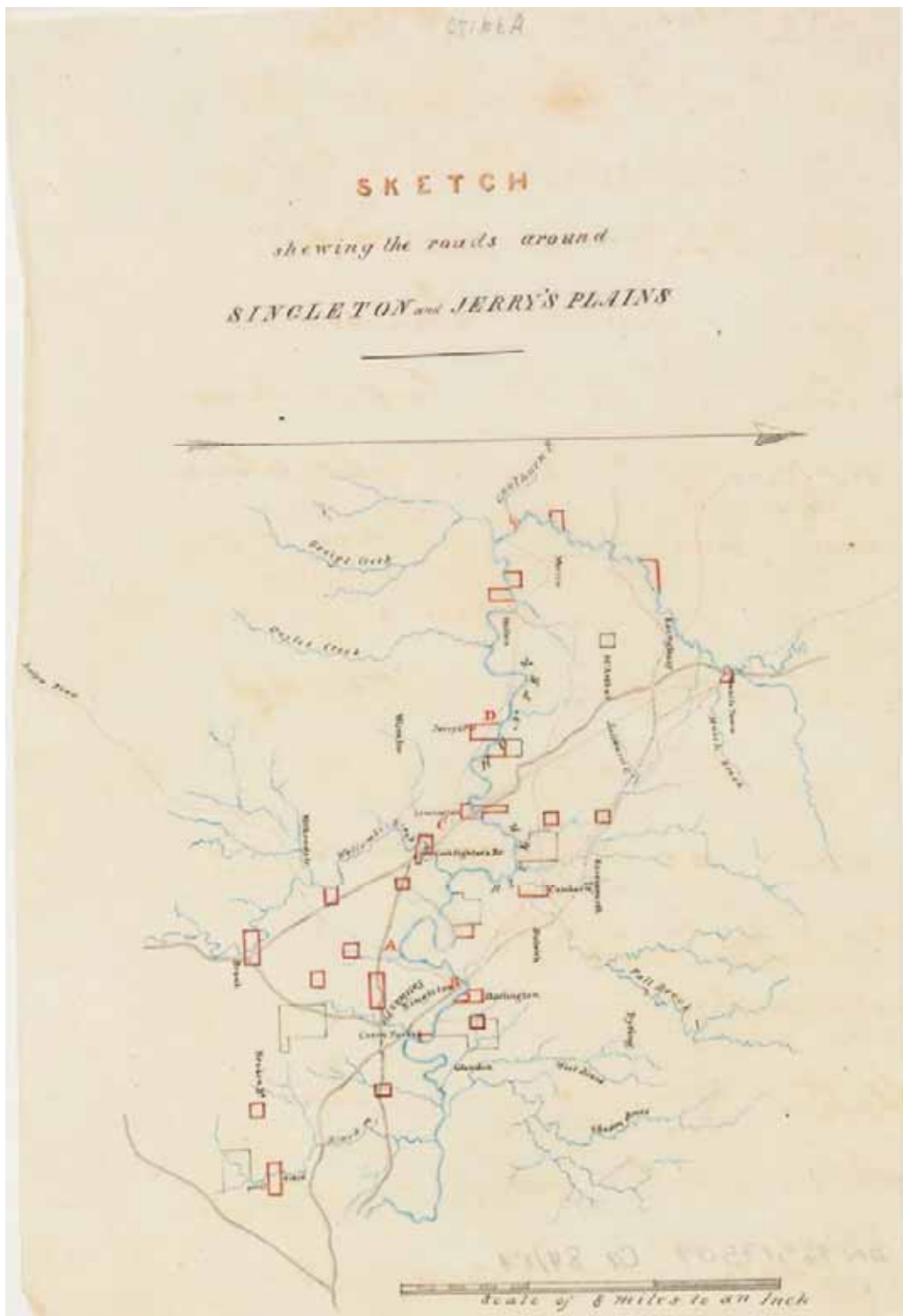


Figure 9: Undated sketch showing the roads around Singleton and Jerry's Plains.
(Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW_Call No. Ca 84/17)

⁴¹ Perumal, Wrathall & Murphy Pty Ltd, 1982; p. 19

Roads

In contrast to the lower portions of the Hunter Region, the upper reaches of the region and most particularly the inland areas, relied solely on land transport.⁴² Essential links were those that provided access to the sea, to Sydney (via the Hawkesbury), and to the western and north-western districts of NSW (for pastoral expansion). The large estates tended to be the driving forces behind the development of the roadways as landowners sought more lands or connections between existing pastoral runs, as well as direct links to transport nodes (Newcastle) and markets.

The Bulga Road (now the Putty Road) and the road from Wiseman's Ferry to Wollombi were the earliest roads in the region. However, it was not until the late 1820s and more particularly the 1830s and 40s that roadways began to be surveyed and constructed (in many cases using convict labour) into the northern reaches of the region.

In 1826, the road between Newcastle and Wallis Plains was opened for travellers on horseback and in 1831, a somewhat shorter route from Parramatta through Castle Hill to Wiseman's Ferry and Wollombi created the Great North Road.⁴³ In 1833 an extension to the road leading from Wallis Plains northwards to Patrick's Plains was surveyed together with lines of road leading from Morpeth to Maitland, from Maitland to Patrick's Plains, from Patrick's Plains to Broke and a line from the Great North Road from Broke up the Wollombi Rivulet.⁴⁴

Aside from official roadways there also existed a number of tracks throughout the region, formed by the landholders to facilitate travel. For example, a rough track travelled through the estate lands between West Maitland to Patrick Plains and a fenced track through Bolwarra became the route from Maitland to the Paterson Plains, leading to Port Stephens, the Manning Valley and eventually Port Macquarie.⁴⁵

4.3.2 The Land Grants

The approach to the initial surveying of the Hunter Region (and the 19 Counties) was an attempt to transpose the government policies and associated conditions of settlement onto the land in order to regularise the settlement pattern and manage the distribution of agricultural lands. The resultant surveys of the region show a uniform grid pattern overlaid on the alluvial plains, river valleys and ridgelines of the Hunter Region with no consideration of the actual topography (see Figure 11). The strength of this grid pattern and the dedication to its application has left its mark on the land and is still able to be experienced today.

The Shape of the Land Grants

The shape of the land grants throughout the Hunter Region including those of the large estates, the medium farms and smaller allotments are all similar and all resulted from the initial surveying of the region prior to settlement. Rather than an organic response to the topography of the land and natural features (other than watercourses) defining boundaries, the land grants are straight edged rectangles made up of uniform units of land.

⁴² Turner, Dr. J. W., 1995; *Historical Themes of the Shire of Muswellbrook*, for Muswellbrook Council; p.32

⁴³ Throp, W., 1994, *Maitland Heritage Survey Review: Thematic History*, for Maitland Council; p. 45

⁴⁴ Jervis, J., 1953, *The Hunter Valley: A Century of its History*, Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings, Vol. 39, Part III; p.121

⁴⁵ Thorp, W., 1994, p. 45

The distinctive rectangular shape of the NSW land grant came about in 1822, when Surveyor General John Oxley was informed by Governor Brisbane of the principles for the surveying and settling of the 19 counties. The country was to be divided into square ‘townships’ (eventually to become Parishes), each thirty-six square miles in area and bounded by six mile long straight sides running north-south and east-west. Each township was to be divided into one mile square sections: a grid pattern.⁴⁶

As the Hunter Region was actually settled later than the south-western and western districts (see discussion below), the majority of land grants and purchases were allocated from the start according to the grid pattern.⁴⁷ This resulted in a distinct uniformity in the shape of the Hunter Region land grant. In contrast, the Bathurst, Argyle, St Vincent and Illawarra districts were already settled prior to the official surveys and the existing scattered, organic landholdings were transferred into the surveys.

In the Hunter Region, the base units of land (one mile square or 640 acres) that made up the grid became the unit on which the scale of land grants and purchases to free settlers was determined. As the estates expanded, they grew in line with the grid pattern, adding more base units or parts thereof and retaining essentially the rectilinear form throughout both the establishment and growth periods of the estate.

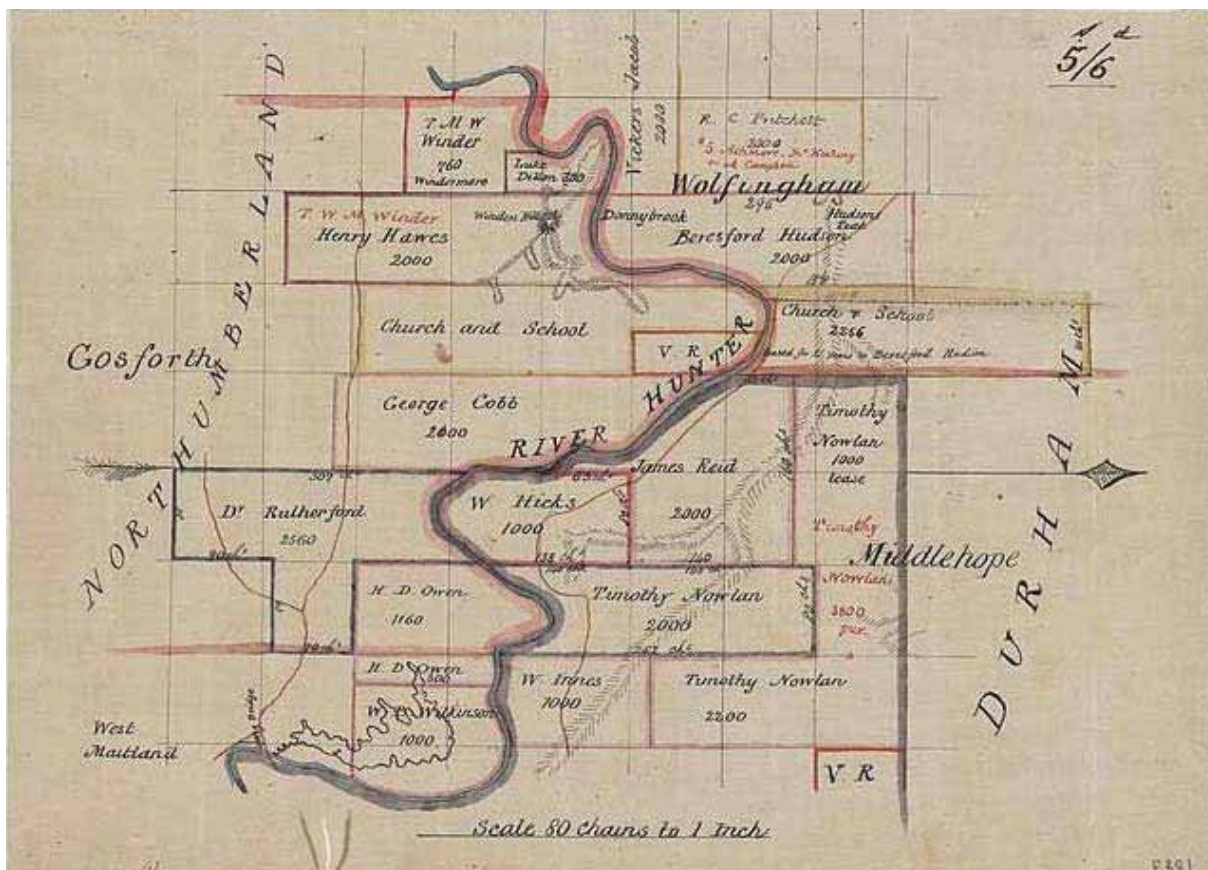


Figure 10: c1830 map of area adjacent to Hunter River above Maitland showing various land grants adhering to the base grid pattern (Source: National Library of Australia_MAP F 381)

⁴⁶ Perry, T. M., 1963, p. 50

⁴⁷ Perry, T. M., 1963, p. 61

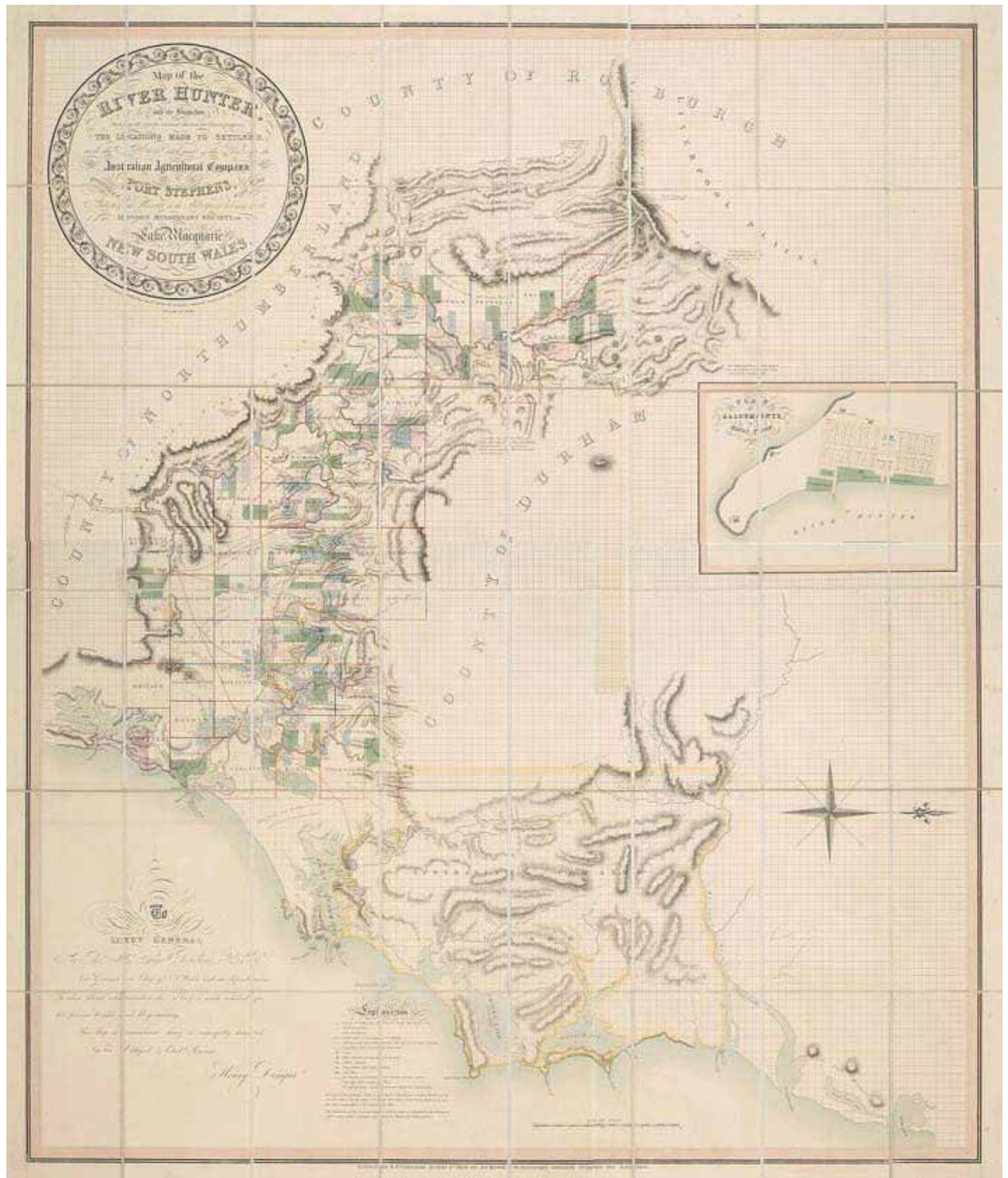


Figure 11: Henry Dangar's published survey of the Hunter River, engraved and published by J Cross, 1828
(Source: National Library of Australia, MAP NK 646_anbd.bib-an10098090)

The Configuration of the Land Grants

Governor Phillip had the power to grant land to any free settlers that came to the colony. The size was left to his discretion, however, to ensure that each grantee should receive “a just proportion of good and inferior land.” Each grant was to be one-third as wide as it was long, and where grants fronted a stream or bay the narrower side was to be the water-frontage, so that as many farms as possible should enjoy access to the water.⁴⁸ This approach to the granting of land was followed through by subsequent Governors.⁴⁹

When Surveyor General John Oxley issued instructions to surveyor-assistant Henry Dangar to undertake the survey of the Hunter Valley in 1822, he specified that the land was to be divided into one mile squares and the small number of early small settlers already located in the area were to have their boundaries fitted into the new grid with no one person having a frontage of more than a one mile on the river.⁵⁰

Consistently throughout the nineteen counties, the allotments that front a watercourse are rectangular in shape (as per the grid pattern) and are positioned at right angles to the waterfrontage, with the smaller side of the rectangle providing water access and the bulk of the land grant located beyond. This configuration of the land grants appears to have resulted from the egalitarian policy introduced by Governor Phillip. Orientating the bulk of the land away from the water allowed the land to be located on higher ground away from the rivers. Given that the lands settled in the Hunter Region were on flood prone alluvial plains, this allowed at least some chance that crops would survive floods.

The Size of the Land Grants

At the time the Hunter Region was opened for settlement in 1822 a series of overlapping government policies relating to the granting and purchase of land were already in place. Outlined by Henry Dangar in his *Index and Directory* of 1828,⁵¹ those policies limited the size of the land grant or land able to be purchased, set out requirements for cultivation and for maintaining proscribed numbers of convicts (based on the size of the land grant). The application of these conditions depended on the amount of capital held by the settler.

However, the policies recommended in the Bigge’s Report in 1822-23 and formally established by Governor Brisbane in 1825⁵² became the basis for the rapid settlement and development of the region. Although modified over the years, the principles that applied to settlement throughout the 19 Counties were:

1. *The largest quantity of land which will be sold is 9600 acres.*
2. *The largest grant that will be made without purchase is 2560 acres; the smallest 320 acres (expanded to 640 acres in 1826, the base unit of the grid pattern).*

⁴⁸ Perry, T. M., 1963, pg. 48

⁴⁹ Perry, T. M., 1963, p. 49

⁵⁰ Perry, T. M., 1963; *Australia’s First Frontier: The Spread of Settlement in New South Wales 1788-1829*; Melbourne University Press, Carlton; p.66

⁵¹ Dangar, H.; 1828, *Index and Directory to Map of the Country Bordering Upon the River Hunter...*; Joseph Cross, Holborn, London

⁵² Campbell, J.F, 1926; *The Genesis of Rural Settlement on the Hunter*, cited in The Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings, Vol. XII Part 11, pg. 75

3. *No grant is to be made to any person without purchase, unless the Governor is satisfied that the grantee has both the power and the intention of expending in the cultivation of the lands a capital equal to half the estimated value of it.*⁵³

The expenditure of capital not only ensured the agricultural development of the land, but also the ability to maintain an appropriate number of convicts. As Dangar points out: “Thus if A had received, as his original grant, one thousand acres, and, at the period of his application for a grant in extension, it appeared from the Colonial Secretary’s books, that he had maintained twenty convicts in the preceding year, he would be entitled to an order in extension of 1000 acres”.⁵⁴

Typically the small farms were located on the alluvial soils of the river banks, with great numbers located on the Wallis, Paterson and Patrick Plains as well in smaller clusters in the valleys of the Williams and Paterson Rivers and the Wollombi. The medium size and large farms were found throughout the region, although medium size properties tended to be more numerous in the Lower Hunter. The large estates tended toward the Upper Hunter and the northern and western boundaries of the ‘limits of settlement’.⁵⁵

By the 1828 Census, there were a total of 191 resident settlers holding land of 1000 acres and over, constituting 47% of the total number of holdings of land of all sizes.⁵⁶ In contrast, the Western district of NSW (Bathurst) had a total of 54 farms above 1000 acres (54%) and the South-Western district (Goulburn) had a total of 44 farms of equivalent size (43%).⁵⁷

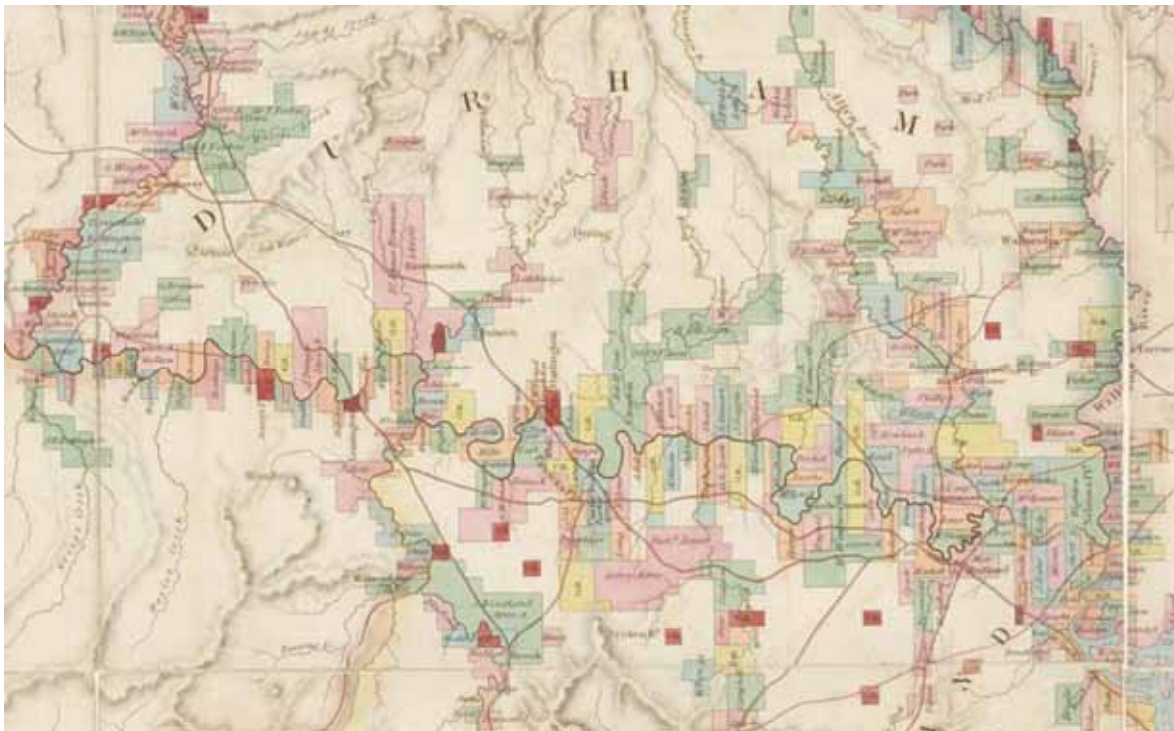


Figure 12: Extract of Dixon’s map of the 19 counties of 1837 showing a portion of the County of Durham and the pattern of development lining the banks of the Hunter River. The grid pattern and the uniformity of the land grants are clearly discernible. (Source: Extract from “This Map of the Colony of New South Wales” by Robert Dixon, engraved by J. C. Walker, dated 1837; National Library of Australia Map-Rm 831)

⁵³ Dangar, H. 1828; p. 34

⁵⁴ Dangar, H. 1828; p. 32

⁵⁵ Perry, T. M., 1963; p. 77

⁵⁶ Perry, T. M., 1963; p. 137

⁵⁷ Perry, T. M., 1963; pgs. 137-145

5 The Hunter Estate

5.1 Characteristics of the Hunter Estate

In its physical form, i.e. a residence with adjacent outbuildings set in a large agricultural or pastoral land holding, the typical Hunter Estate appears much like any other. For example, estates located in the Goulburn or Bathurst regions (such as Kippilaw, Tirrana, Brucedale or Blackdown) also contain a homestead with adjacent outbuildings, located within expansive farming lands and have links to the era of convict labour.

However, as outlined in Section 3: Historical Context, the settlement of the Hunter Region occurred at a particular point in time and under a particular set of government policies that distinguishes this region from others in NSW. The opening up of the Hunter Region in the mid 1820s corresponded to events in Europe that impacted greatly on the type of settler arriving in Australia to claim the new lands and resulted in a distinct and important building type in the Hunter Region: the pre 1850s homestead complex.

5.2 The People

5.2.1 The New Settler

A distinguishing feature of the Hunter Region is the type of settler who chose the area; i.e. a wealthy, socially-connected free man, newly arrived in Australia. The influx of this particular type of settler to the Hunter Region had much to do with the timing of the opening up of the region for settlement (as discussed in Section 3: Historical Context).

The existence of the penal settlement at Newcastle effectively delayed the opening up of the Hunter Region to settlement. The government avoided allowing settlement close by that could aid escaping convicts. As such, the region was not made available to the free settler until the relocation of convicts to Port Macquarie in 1822.

By the time the Hunter Region was finally opened, Governor Macquarie had already met the needs of the established pastoralists in the Cumberland Plain by allowing them access to pastures in the south-western districts and in the Bathurst area. As such, the majority of the local demand for new lands had been already satisfied and the existing established colonists had no interest in moving into the Hunter Region.⁵⁸

While the other districts were more commonly populated and developed by Cumberland settlers and their sons, ex-convicts and some free immigrants, the Hunter Region was populated in the main by immigrants and free settlers, who arrived with a view to obtaining their own land and developing it for grazing and agriculture.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Perry, T. M., 1963; p. 73

⁵⁹ Perry, T. M., 1963; p. 73

The 1828 census recorded the population of the Cumberland Plain as 25,142 (68.7% of the total population of NSW) while the Hunter Valley had a population of 3,260 with the next highest of 2,072 located in the Bathurst district.⁶⁰

Although the Hunter Region population was much smaller than the population of Cumberland, the population of the Hunter Region had almost half the number of the free immigrants of the colony claiming land in the region.

The 1828 census shows the percentage of adult males who came free to the colony for each district; the Hunter Region 42.7%, Cumberland 21.5%, Argyle and St Vincent 19.6%, Bathurst 23.6% and Camden and Illawarra 26.2%. For the whole of NSW, only 24% of the total adult male population were free immigrants.⁶¹

5.2.2 The Estate Owners

The large estates (1000 acres and over) accounted for about half the total number of 191 land grants held by resident settlers in the Region and covered about 91% of the area with all but eight owned by free immigrants of whom two thirds had arrived in the colony since the beginning of 1821. Of the remaining eight large estates, six were held by men born in the colony and two by ex-convicts.⁶²

Some of the wealthier settlers arrived in Australia with resources such as tools, labourers and stock. The most outstanding example of this approach to settlement was Thomas Potter Macqueen who arranged for the importation of a carefully chosen party of mechanics, farmers and shepherds, farm machinery, stores, sheep, horses and stud cattle in two chartered ships arriving in Sydney in 1825. All were transported to his lands in the County of Brisbane, establishing his estate Segenhoe.⁶³

Many of the large landowners held multiple properties throughout NSW including other estates, pastoral runs and stocking stations throughout the Hunter Region as well as runs and stations over the Liverpool Plains and into the New England district, and in the Bathurst and Hawkesbury areas. In part, this was achievable as many of the new free settlers arrived in the colony in family groups bringing siblings, grown children, cousins and nephews. In this way their resources could be consolidated and held within the family while expanding their agricultural and pastoral pursuits. In the Hunter Region, of the land held by private individuals, 58% described themselves as resident landholders (approximately 191 land owners), while the remaining 42% were probably non-resident proprietors, primarily pastoralists and graziers elsewhere, or residing in Sydney with their lands under the management of overseers.⁶⁴

T. M. Perry's publication *Australia's First Frontier: the Spread of Settlement in New South Wales 1788-1829* (1963) provides an excellent overview of the initial phases of European settlement including comparative information and statistics drawn from the 1828 Census for the 19 Counties. As Perry points out in relation to the settlers of the Hunter Region, on the whole "the free, immigrant settlers were men of substance and standing."⁶⁵ The new settlers of the Hunter Region included retired naval and military officers (fresh from the Napoleonic Wars), professional men, successful

⁶⁰ Perry, T.M., 1963; p. 130

⁶¹ *ibid.* pg. 134

⁶² Perry, T. M., 1963; p. 77

⁶³ Dunlop, E. E., 1967; "Macqueen, Thomas Potter (1791-1854)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University (accessed 29th July 2012)

⁶⁴ Perry, T. M., 1963; p. 75

⁶⁵ Perry, T. M., 1963; p. 74

merchants, farmers and their sons, relatives of the colony's civil and military officers as well as young men seeking to make their fortunes.⁶⁶

Certainly, when reviewing the names of the early landowners throughout the Hunter Region, a large proportion stand out in terms of their social status and influence in their homelands as well as their subsequent achievements and involvement in Australian society. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB) entries provide a good basis for demonstrating a person's status. Of the Hunter Region's 144 new settlers who held lands of 1000 acres or more by 1825, approximately one third appear in the ADB.

A small selection of names of note who settled in the Hunter Region include:

- Richard Jones (Bolwarra, 1822 and Collaroy, 1829)
- Charles and William Boydell (Camyr Allyn, 1826 and Caergwrle, 1836)
- George Bowman (Archerfield, 1825, Arrowfield, 1824 and Strowan, 1820s)
- John and James Busby (Kirkton, 1835)
- Charles Windeyer (Kinross, 1839)
- George Forbes and Sir Francis Forbes (Edinglassie, 1825; Rous Lench, 1839 and Skellator, 1826)
- Lt. Edward Close (Closebourne, Morpeth House and Illaluang, 1820s)
- James Brindley Bettington Snr. (Brindley Park, c.1825)
- Henry Dangar (Neotsfield, 1821)
- William Dangar (Turanville, 1825)
- Edward Gostwyck Cory (Mowbray, 1825 and Gostwyck, 1823)
- Thomas Potter Macqueen (Segenhoe, 1827)
- William Cox (Negoa, 1825)
- Joseph Docker (Thorntwaite, 1834)

Establishing a Society

These landowners played a large part in establishing the agricultural and pastoral industries of the Hunter Region. They also had a great influence on the broader colonial society by forming the committees for associations and organisations aimed at their particular industries and needs. Examples include the Association for the Protection of Stock, the Pastoral Association, Hunter River Vineyard Association, the Farmers Club and the National Colonisation Society.

The successful, established land owner in the Hunter Region also played an important role in the operation of the judiciary system in NSW (refer to Section 3: Historical Context). As one of the aims in opening up the 19 counties to settlement was to transfer over the care and employment of convicts to private landholders, a need arose to establish a system whereby both land owners and convicts could air grievances and receive justice. As a result, several of the larger landowners were given the roles of Justice of the Peace (or magistrate) and held court proceedings often at their place of residence. As magistrates they were also responsible for the distribution of blankets to Aboriginal people and the taking of a census called the 'Blanket Return', also often on their own estate lands (refer to the section on Aboriginal People below).

⁶⁶ Perry, T. M., 1963; p. 74

5.2.3 The Overseers

Approximately 42% of the land held in private hands was managed by non-resident proprietors. In many cases, this involved the employment of an overseer who lived on the estate lands, managing both the agriculture and the convict workers. Homestead complexes were developed to accommodate the managers of the estate lands.

Some of the estate managers included Archibald Bell Jnr, supervisor for St Heliers; Philbert Terrior, overseer for Lochinvar (Kaludah); William Durham, James Hale's son in law, managed Wambo and later inherited the property; Peter McIntyre and later H. C. Semphill at Segenhoe and emancipist Moses Carroll, overseer for Cooranbong. Following the depression of the 1840s, a number of the overseers and managers went on to buy the estate lands and become successful agriculturalists themselves.

5.2.4 The Convicts

The schedule of conditions attached to the land grants outlined the government's requirements for improvements and the settlers' obligations to develop their lands (as discussed above). Under Governor General Sir Thomas Brisbane (and per Bigge's recommendations) a specific requirement was introduced for the landholder to receive as a servant one convict for every 100 acres granted. It was the landholder's responsibility to feed and clothe the convict and to pay the colony an annual sum for clerical and medical attendance (if the settler resided within 6 miles of a church or hospital).⁶⁷

Because the Hunter Region was settled concurrent with the introduction of these new government policies, the convict labourer played an important role in the initial settlement period of the region. Convicts were employed in great numbers throughout the Hunter Region and if the landholder was successful, the size of land did not necessarily limit the number of convicts a particular settler could support.

For example, in 1828 John Powell's Orange Grove land grant of only 130 acres (located outside Paterson) is recorded having 11 convicts employed as labourers, pigmen, bullock drivers, stockmen, an overseer and a house servant.⁶⁸ The larger properties necessarily utilised larger numbers of convicts, with numbers reaching into the 40s and 50s and in a very few cases (such as at Segenhoe) the numbers reached into the 100s. In 1841, Glendon is recorded employing 42 assigned servants (convicts) and Merton employed 44 assigned servants.⁶⁹

According to the 1828 census records, 69.3% (1,831 in number) of the total population of adult males in the Hunter Region were convicts. The Bathurst district had a slightly higher percentage of convicts in the population (73%), although lower in actual numbers (1,307).⁷⁰

In fact, the government could not keep up with the needs of the Hunter Region settler as the returns relating to the employment of convicts indicate. It would appear that consistently the numbers of convicts provided were less than the numbers actually requested. For example in 1826, James Pike at

⁶⁷ Dangar, H. 1828, op cit. p. 32

⁶⁸ Perumal Murphy Pty Ltd, 1988, *Dungog Heritage Study Thematic History*, for Dungog Shire Council and the Heritage Council of NSW; p. 28

⁶⁹ Turner, Dr. J. W., 1995, *Historical Themes of the Shire of Muswellbrook*, for Muswellbrook Shire Council; p.28

⁷⁰ Perry, T. M., 1963, p. 136

Pickering near Denman requested 53 convicts over the course of the year and was assigned only 20; similarly J. P. Webber at Tocal requested 28 convicts in the same year and was assigned only 7.⁷¹

5.2.5 The Aboriginal People

For a full discussion regarding the Aboriginal people from the Hunter Region, refer to Aboriginal Archaeology Overview of the Hunter Valley (D. Steele, 2012) and A Summary of the 1828 Census & Annual Blanket Returns in the Hunter Valley: c.1827 to 1844 (D. Steele, 2012) (Appendix 2).

There are no accurate records for how many Aboriginal people lived across the Hunter Valley before the penal settlement at the Coal River was established. Possible ‘shadow effects’ of disease and other social and economic impacts from Aboriginal contact with white people prior to this time is also unknown. Three main historical sources tell us about Aboriginal people during the study period, and each has their own strengths and limitations. These consist of Government records including the 1828 Census, Blanket Returns, and from the late 1830s records generated by the ‘*Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Condition of the Aborigines*’, contemporary newspaper and journal accounts, and later historical recollections and reminiscences. These documentary records can be used to create a broad Aboriginal historical framework for examining the shared history of the region. Five overlapping chronological phases can be identified.

- Pre c1800 before the Newcastle penal settlement was established.
- From c1801 when the first convict cedar camps were operating at places such as ‘Old Banks’ on the Paterson River and ‘The Camp’ at Maitland, and where the first white interactions with local Aboriginal communities took place.
- Between 1812 and 1818 when a small number of ex-convicts and free settlers were living permanently on small farms at places such as Wallis Plains.
- Between c1817 and c1819 when exploration parties led by people such as Parr and Howe were meeting new Aboriginal groups that were living in landscapes inland (and away) from the coast at Newcastle.
- From c1820 when the rapid European settlement of the region commenced where primarily British emigrants took up most of the land along and adjoining the main rivers and creeks in the region.
- From c1820 to the end of the study period in c1850 when a gradual process that some researchers describe as Aboriginal people ‘coming in’, saw Aboriginal people increasingly gravitate towards individual homesteads that had been established on and/or near their traditional lands, and who also over time began to increasingly ‘settle’ within or on the ‘fringes’ of the developing towns across the region.

The 1828 Census and Blanket Returns

In order to gain an understanding of where Aboriginal people lived in the Hunter Region following European settlement, one of the main sources to consult is the Blanket Lists or Returns. The distribution of blankets was initiated by Governor Macquarie in 1814 as an attempt to ‘civilise’ the Aboriginal people and from the late 1820s up to the mid 1840s, blankets were sent annually from Sydney to the Hunter Region, to be distributed on the 1st May each year.⁷² The returns recorded an Aboriginal person’s ‘English name’, ‘native name’, probable age, number of wives, children, their

⁷¹ ‘Returns Relating to the Employment of Convicts at New South Wales 1826-1828’ cited in *Accounts and Papers Thirteen Volumes*, 1830, Vol. 5, pgs. 15 and 18

⁷² Steele, D., 2012, A Summary of the 1828 Census & Annual Blanket Returns in the Hunter Valley: c1827 to 1844, Appendix 2

‘tribe’, and their ‘District of Usual Resort’. Police and magistrates were also to report annually on the ‘conditions’ of the Aboriginal people in their districts.

According to the 1828 Census approximately 40,000 white people (minus military and their families) occupied the settled districts of NSW as a whole, and approximately 3,000 Aboriginal people were counted to be amongst that population. Within the areas of the Hunter Region that were surveyed, about 1,640 Aboriginal people were recorded (men, women and children) with the majority being located in the Hunter River and Newcastle (Coal River) areas.⁷³

It is probable that the ‘Old Settlers Tribe’ that is recorded by name in 1828 referred to Aboriginal people who had maintained an attachment to the lands where Macquarie had previously granted small allotments in 1812 and 1818 to a handful of settlers. Accounts from the late 1830s when Aboriginal people were increasingly living around the main town centres in region also show some people such as the ‘Old Banks Tribe’ in West Maitland still identified themselves according to what is most likely to have been their traditional country where they had encountered the first timber cutters who were camping and moving along the river banks over thirty years before.

As many of the large landholders were given the role of magistrate in their local district (see above), the blanket returns for the period between 1834 and 1844 that are recorded at Patrick’s Plains, Merton, Goulburn, Scone, Dulwich, Singleton, Wollombi, Falbrook, and Cassilis may have possibly been held on the site of those estates. In 1843, ‘four blankets were as usual forwarded to Mr. Hobler’s place’ at Aberglasslyn, ‘and also for those who are usually supplied at Mr. Wyndham’s’ at Dalwood.⁷⁴ The records also show that during this period, blankets were distributed by Blaxland at Fordwich, to the Scott’s at Glendon, and the Wilson’s at Tocal. Sixty blankets were distributed to Aboriginal people by the Ogilvie’s at Merton in 1842, and seventy had previously been provided in 1834, and thirty people received their annual ‘gift’ of blankets at Segenhoe in 1843. At least one Aboriginal person received a blanket at James Mudie’s Castle Forbes in 1841, while seventy nine other people are recorded on the blanket returns for the same year at Scone, and most likely received their blankets on the estates of Invermein and/or Segenhoe.⁷⁵

Newspaper Accounts

A series of violent collisions unfolded between local Aboriginal groups and settlers, particularly in the Upper Hunter, from 1825. In September 1826 Threlkeld wrote to London to advise ‘that war has commenced and still continues against the Aborigines of this land’.⁷⁶ According to Wood, ‘some sensational rubbish was sent to the papers by men diligent in justifying the murder of Aborigines, had the effect of spreading mistrust, fear, and hatred in the settlement’.⁷⁷ In March 1827, the *Sydney Gazette* and *The Australian* published a series of conflicting versions of a fatal event at Edward Cory’s Gostwyck property in which about a dozen Aboriginal people were reported to have been shot by convict shepherds and others on the estate at the time. The *Sydney Gazette* printed Cory’s version of events soon after in April that was written in response to the accusations which he considered to be ‘altogether false’, and which at the same he advised the paper that his shepherds had been ‘provoked by repeated aggravations’.⁷⁸

How the reports of this incident at Gostwyck was presented in the media of the day illustrates difficulties in evaluating the veracity and accuracy of these types of accounts that appeared in the

⁷³ Steele, D., 2012

⁷⁴ Maitland Mercury, 27 May 1843

⁷⁵ Steele, D., 2012

⁷⁶ Wood, 1972, p.120

⁷⁷ *ibid*, p.154

⁷⁸ *Sydney Gazette*, 18 April 1827

papers frequently at a time when other violent occurrences were taking place in other parts of the Hunter Valley. Beyond the newspaper reports and Cory's denial of the events at Gostwyck, no other corroborating or supporting accounts exist. The trial depositions for Nathaniel Lowe however for the execution of 'Jackey Jackey' at the lockup in Wallis Plains in August 1826,⁷⁹ and the independent records for what is colloquially referred to as the 'Rensworth massacre'⁸⁰ that reported the killing of eighteen Aboriginal people on or nearby Bowman's Rensworth property by a party of Mounted Police, convicts, and 'volunteers' led by Magistrate Robert Scott, are not in doubt and the basic facts reported in the papers of these two events appear to have been relatively accurate.

Published Historical Recollections and Reminiscences

Two published personal recollections further illustrate the limitations documentary records can have for reconstructing some aspects of Aboriginal history during the study period. For example, a correspondent recalled in the *Maitland Mercury* in 1877⁸¹ a ritual 'fight' involving 'George, King of Cawarra'about mid-way between Dunmore and Bolwarra house'. This appears to have taken place during the late 1820s or early 1830s. The likelihood this event took place between these two prominent homesteads of the day is supported by other accounts such as a gathering of Aboriginal people at the lagoon in front of Bolwarra House in the mid 1840s⁸² that may have reflected an attempt by Aboriginal people to maintain and/or create a ceremonial space within the settled landscape. In contrast, a second reference in the *Maitland Mercury*⁸³ to a 'fight' at Bolwarra whose provenance and veracity is less clear describes in '35 there was a fight in Bolwarra amongst the blacks in a five hundred acre paddock, known as the Bally Hill now. Their number amounted to 800. It lasted three days, and there were 25 killed'. While the number of people involved in this event in 1835 may be exaggerated, no other contemporary recorders report on this event that appears to have resulted in an excessively high number of Aboriginal people that were killed and which would have been a 'newsworthy' event at the time.

Advice to New Settlers in 1827

Peter Cunningham advised new settlers in 1827⁸⁴ 'in searching for a suitable grant....'a steady white man who is a good bushranger, and a black native, complete your train'. He further suggested 'after you are on your farm':

'A black native upon the list of your establishment will be found well worthy of his hire, as he will not only supply you most abundantly with game, but recover readily for you your stray cattle, from their acuteness in tracing'.

The diaries kept by of Charles Boydell between 1830 and 1834 describe his interactions with Aboriginal living on the land he had selected at Camyrallyn on the Allyn River (Gresford):

'Over to my farm in company with black fellows who were going to [XXXXXX]. There were 3 boys each of whom had a stick about 2 ft long to fling at the Paddy Melons as they passed them. 3 men had spears in case of meeting with game, two or three go in the bush hulloing with all their might to drive the poor animals [and] the others remain outside ready for them. They killed one poor paddy melon which they [cooked] immediately and devoured with great delight'.

⁷⁹ Chaves, 2007

⁸⁰ Umwelt Australia Pty Ltd, 2011

⁸¹ Maitland Mercury, 18 August 1877

⁸² Daily Mercury, 10 September 1898

⁸³ Maitland Mercury 19 July 1890

⁸⁴ Cunningham, P, 1827, p.150

In January 1833 Boydell cut his tobacco crop and ‘with the assistance of the blacks got [it] in the most prosperously’. Two months later his corn was ‘dreadfully pillaged by blacks and cockatoos’ where ‘the rascally Blacks with their natural cunning left unpulled what was immediately by the river and outside and went into it that their traces might not be too evident’.⁸⁵ Similarly, the journal kept by a servant of the Scott brothers who helped establish their estate at Glendon show how Aboriginal people such as ‘Ben Davis’ and ‘Mytie’ assisted in many of the early activities carried out on the property. Similar Aboriginal-European interactions on some other of the project estates can also be inferred to have occurred in the early 1820s.

Aboriginal Camping on Hunter Estates

Archaeological and historical evidence shows post-Contact Aboriginal campsites were frequently located in the same places people had camped before, and many of these places on the riverfronts and overlooking hills across the Hunter Valley were those chosen by the first European settlers to establish their estates and construct their homesteads.

Research undertaken in the Forster-Tuncurry and Taree areas on the Manning River (Byrne and Nugent, 2004) have examined how Aboriginal people may have adapted to a colonial-settler society from the 1830s, which appears to be broadly applicable to the study region. Specifically, a number of Aboriginal site-types can reasonably be inferred to have existed on the lands associated with most of the estates, in so far as Aboriginal people are documented to have ‘lived’ and/or frequently used places such as the Ogilvie’s land at Merton into the 1850s, and the Boydell’s properties at Caergwrle and Camyrallyn into the late nineteenth century and beyond.⁸⁶

Two ‘site-types’ have been identified that may have brought Aboriginal people into further direct contact with the first settlers from c.1820 following in some cases their initial involvement in land selection and establishment; autonomous camps and farm camps.

Autonomous Camps would most likely have been in locations chosen by Aboriginal people for possibly occasional or cyclical use, and may have been remote from white settlement (including specific homesteads) and as such chosen partly in order to get away from white ‘interference and surveillance’. These site types are likely to have been on land not yet surveyed or ‘taken up’ by whites and/or on large established estates where ‘hinterland’ landscapes such as isolated hills or wetlands occurred away from agricultural lands. The implication is that these ‘autonomous’ camps would have been located in the same sort of places Aboriginal people had always favoured rather than being located in relation to white settlement.

Farm Camps located on or adjacent to white farms and pastoral stations and would potentially reflect interdependence between Aboriginal and white people. Given the significant size of most of the 1820s estates, these Aboriginal sites could have been situated close to the main homestead or on smaller but related properties such as ‘shepherd stations’ and other convict/free labour places. Aboriginal people appear to have been attracted by some European foods and other objects during the study period, and records show in some cases white settlers were dependent and/or frequently used Aboriginal labour in certain agricultural/pastoral activities such as seasonal cropping.

A number of the former type of Aboriginal site are recorded for islands such as Hogg Island on the Paterson River at Tocal, and another on the Hunter River near George Hobler’s Aberglasslyn, while historical and records suggest the wetlands in front of Bolwarra House continued to be used from prehistory through to the middle of the nineteenth century. A third example is provided by a

⁸⁵ Walsh, 2007, p.181

⁸⁶ Steele, D., 2012

recollection of ‘King Tom of Dunmore’ who told a correspondent as reported in the *Maitland Mercury*⁸⁷ for a place nearby to Dunmore House that probably dates to the 1820s where:

‘there was always a portion of dry land there, though it had been frequently surrounded [by flood water].....It was customary for the blacks to visit the place in flood time, as the spot then would swarm with wild animals of all descriptions, which fell an easy prey’.

Upwards of 200 armed Aboriginal people gathered at the Ogilvie’s Merton property in August 1826 that came from the ‘*Hills behind the house*’ according to contemporary accounts. This refers to the land to the east of the homestead on the river, split by Denman Gap that includes the present-day Ogilvie’s Hill. Previous research⁸⁸ has mapped the Merton property (and Ogilvie’s Hill) as an ‘Aboriginal Place’ that can be identified in the historical documents, and this identification recognises two different types of Aboriginal heritage values in this regard:

- Homesteads where Aboriginal people camped/worked in the pastoral industry.
- Sites mentioned in the historical sources as occupied or important to Aboriginal people.

Conflict and Conciliation

In October 1825, a small group of Aboriginal people killed Robert Greig (a recently arrived Scottish immigrant) and an unnamed Irish convict shepherd at James Greig’s Martindale estate. Historical accounts for Robert Greig’s murder at his cousins’ property suggest this may have been a mistake in identity. James Greig was well known at this time to have created a relationship of mistrust by refusing Aboriginal people onto his farm. Wood (1972) notes:

*‘When Robert Scott J.P. and Alexander McLeod J.P. made a report on these murders almost a year later at the Governor’s request, they were under the impression that James Greig the owner of the farm was a victim. Their surmise, that his known aversion to blacks in his proximity might have incited their hatred, could have been stated as a certainty’.*⁸⁹

When the large Aboriginal group arrived at Merton, Mary Ogilvie who was alone at the time with her young family and a small number of convict workers diffused a potential outbreak of considerable violence through conciliatory words and the disbursement of ‘*maize and tobacco*’ to the Aboriginal group who had surrounded the house.

The ability of Mary Ogilvie to avoid conflict at Merton in 1826 is widely cited in the literature as representing a key example of how not all of the British settlers followed an aggressive and possibly vigilante mentality during a period when violence between free settlers (and convicts) and local Aboriginal groups had become relatively frequent, and/or was often anticipated by some to be an inevitable outcome of tensions and mutual mistrust that existed at the time in the Upper Hunter.

The event at Merton when contrasted with other violent collisions that are report at estates such as Ravensworth and Gostwyck, and at farms such as Martindale and Bridgman that also saw people killed at around the same, highlights how the nature of relations between the two peoples in the Hunter Valley had a distinct variance in the mid to late 1820s from friendship to open violence.

⁸⁷ Maitland Mercury, 25 August 1877

⁸⁸ ERM Pty Ltd, 2004

⁸⁹ Wood, 1972, pp.113-114

Shared Knowledge

Aside from incidental accounts and the official census records, interactions between Aboriginal people and the landowners and workers associated with a particular Hunter Region Estate were on occasion deliberately recorded. Diaries now held in official archives (such as the Scott's family papers held at the Mitchell Library) and dictionaries of Aboriginal languages provide further information on the relationships formed between the traditional landowners and the new settlers.

A small booklet from c1845 containing a brief vocabulary of words used by the people of the Allyn River district shows that a high degree of interaction must have taken place as the dictionary was produced in order to aid communication between a stockman and Aboriginal people. Words and terms covering directions and instructions for working and describing parts of animals are provided for. In addition, an exchange of knowledge and understanding is recorded, with words for describing each other (a white man, a black man). The local native wildlife and flora are also covered.⁹⁰ The Aboriginal vocabulary in Charles Boydell's journal kept at Camyr Allyn is very similar to 'Vocabulary of the Allyn River Black's Language'.

New Alliances

William and Mary Ogilvie have a favourable historical reputation in their relationships they established and maintained with Aboriginal people at Merton from 1825 onwards. This strong relationship continued through to their son Edward (and daughter Ellen Bundock) in the 1840s where the Ogilvie's had a large sheep run at Yulgilbar on the Clarence River where Aboriginal workmen and women were employed. An account of a letter that C.G. Tindal wrote to his sister describing his arrival at Merton in March 1827 and later published in the Sydney Morning Herald, illustrates the types of relationships that had been established at the place prior to the 1840s:

*'Captain Ogilvie is very partial to the natives, and the tribe he calls themselves his blacks. One day I was introduced to them by Mrs Ogilvie, as another son of hers from England, and therefore brother to all black-fellows'.*⁹¹

Most references concerning 'Ogilvie's tribe' as representing a distinctive Aboriginal group identity that is in ways synonymous with the homestead and the estate lands at Merton come from secondary sources. They do however illustrate the nature of a range of interactions between Aboriginal people living and working at Merton and the Ogilvie family and their convict work force.

Charles Boydell at Camyr Allyn also established a strong relationship based on mutual respect and peaceful coexistence with local Aboriginal people where Aboriginal people were employed for tracking and seasonal work for rations on the land. The depth of trust he established is also demonstrated by the significant privilege that he was allowed to witness the burial and funeral of 'Chief Jacky' in August 1833.

Likewise, by 1828 Francis Little of Invermein was providing the Government with information about the Aboriginal people he saw in the Scone area and recognised the usefulness some European goods were to these people and encouraged the authorities to provide blankets and steel axes.⁹² Similar actions and strong connections between some of the other early estate owners and local Aboriginal communities, which were maintained to the end of the study period, can also be inferred in the historical records. The evidence indicates new alliances were being created at this time by Aboriginal

⁹⁰ 'Vocabulary of the Allyn River Black's Language', c1845; State Library of NSW, Call No. Aa 52 / Item 1

⁹¹ Sydney Morning Herald, 6 April 1935

⁹² Veale, S., p.7

groups with certain land holders, while other settlers who clearly did not like Aboriginal people on their land were to be avoided, and this will have restricted the places within which people could camp and travel with the least European surveillance or unwanted interaction.

Individual People and Associations with Hunter Estates

An extravagant welcoming ceremony was arranged by Thomas Potter Macqueen occasioning a visit by Governor Richard Bourke in 1834 to Segenhoe that included the attendance of both '*David King of Segenhoe*' and '*Duwarrow*', *Chief of Mr. Hart Davis's Principality, called Waverly*'.⁹³ No other historical references have been sourced for David or Duwarrow (nor Hart Davis's Principality, Waverly') so little can be speculated about these men or the forty other people each man had with them. Rather than it is highly improbable that these Aboriginal people at Segenhoe in 1834 in any way shared the same enthusiasm as Macqueen for an event that was in many respects was a formal demonstration of the annexure of their land at Segenhoe on the lower Pages River.

A correspondent recalled in the *Maitland Mercury* in 1877 a ritual '*fight*' involving '*George, King of Cawarra*'*about mid-way between Dunmore and Bolwarra house*'.⁹⁴ This appears to have taken place during the late 1820s or early 1830s. Other than the event occurred '*on a hill side, having a gentle slope to a narrow flat*', no further information exists that can place where the ritual combat occurred in the local landscape between the two homesteads.

It is probable 'King George' who was described at a ritual in the late 1820s or early 1830s at a place between Dunmore House and Bolwarra also had traditional attachments to land around Gresford where Henry Lindeman had by 1843 established his 800 acre property he named 'Cawarra'. The correspondent in the 1877 recollection also wrote George '*held more influence over his country-men than any other chief in the district, from the period to which I have referred*', and adds he had employed George '*one time in pulling corn*'. Little more is known about George other than his dress at the time '*consisted solely of a swallow-tailed blue cloth coat, with brass buttons, and an old tall black hat*' which had a look that George '*appeared more pleased than angry at the laugh which his singular appearance, thus apparelled, created*'.

The references to George pulling corn and his dress is not in itself unusual; historical records document in a fragmentary way a gradual process of Aboriginal people coming to live and work on or nearby large homesteads that had been established on or near their traditional lands. Knowing the name of an individual Aboriginal person who was part of this broad historical and socio-economic and cultural adaptation process in the 1840s and 1850s is however relatively uncommon.

A rectangular sandstone memorial block cut out in the shape of a tomb stone that is inscribed (carved) with the word 'Sacred' on the back of the block, and on the front engraved in 2cm high letters is 'King Tom Died December 1875'. This is likely to be the same man who told a correspondent of a favoured camping spot on a levee overlooking the river when in floods nearby to Dunmore House in the 1820s. The suspected burial site is in an open paddock a short distance to the north of Bolwarra House. The location of this land on the Hunter River bank would have been within the land grant made to John Brown in 1822.

Oral history attached to the recording of this place describes Aboriginal people regularly camping in the late 1840s close to the Hunter River off Melrose Street at Lorn, a short distance to the south of Bolwarra House. There is no direct historical evidence to link Tom to this group at this time.

⁹³ The Sydney Herald, 18th August 1834

⁹⁴ Maitland Mercury; 18th August 1877

However, a number of scattered historical references provide some insights into the life of the man who is described to have died of natural causes.

In 1857, at the funeral of David Dickson of Bolwarra, '*King Tom of Dunmore closed the procession, along with three other Aborigines dressed in their new blankets*'.⁹⁵ *The Maitland Mercury*⁹⁶ reported in 1855 that King Tom contributed a personal donation of '*two pairs wild ducks*' (valued at 5 shillings) towards the Patriotic Fund for the widows and orphans of men killed in the Crimean War. Lang collected this contribution at Paterson. Alexander Park at Lewinsbrook also collected 4 shilling donations each from '*Davis Gordon Wattle and T. M'Cartney (black Fellows)*' at this time⁹⁷

Two other post-Contact Aboriginal burials are also suspected to occur in this vicinity. In addition, a number of flaked stone artefacts have been reported nearby to the memorial stone, and some complex archaeological sites occur on the river further to the north of the Homestead. An image of a '*King Tom of Dunmore, Maitland*' dated September 1861 is held in the *State Library of NSW*.

5.2.6 The Tenant Farmers

The introduction of the tenant farmer onto the Hunter Region Estate is an indication of the end of the prosperous establishment period of the Region between 1820 and 1840.

Drought in NSW between 1836 and 1838 was followed by the financial crash of 1841 that brought bankruptcy to a number of large landholders. Landholders who had expanded their holdings rapidly over the preceding two decades could no longer afford to maintain the amount of land they had amassed, either as a single estate or as a chain of estates throughout the Hunter Region and beyond. Subdivision of the estates therefore began in the 1840s and continued for the remainder of the 19th century. In some cases whole estates were sold to financial and property companies who transferred the lands to tenant estates.

This fundamental change in the occupancy of the lands resulted in significant changes in the layout of fields, crops and the configuration of farm buildings.⁹⁸ The lands were no longer required to fit into the grid pattern established in the 1820s and new farms could now be defined by the natural topography and roadways to maximise access to viable agricultural lands. The typical pattern of the subdivided estate showed tenant farmers taking up small portions of land along the waterfrontages and roadways, leaving the original homestead with surrounding outbuildings and some lands for cultivation beyond.

⁹⁵ Sokoloff, B, 2006, pp92-93)

⁹⁶ Maitland Mercury (14 March 1855

⁹⁷ Ibid, 11 August 1855

⁹⁸ Thorp, W., 1994; p. 17

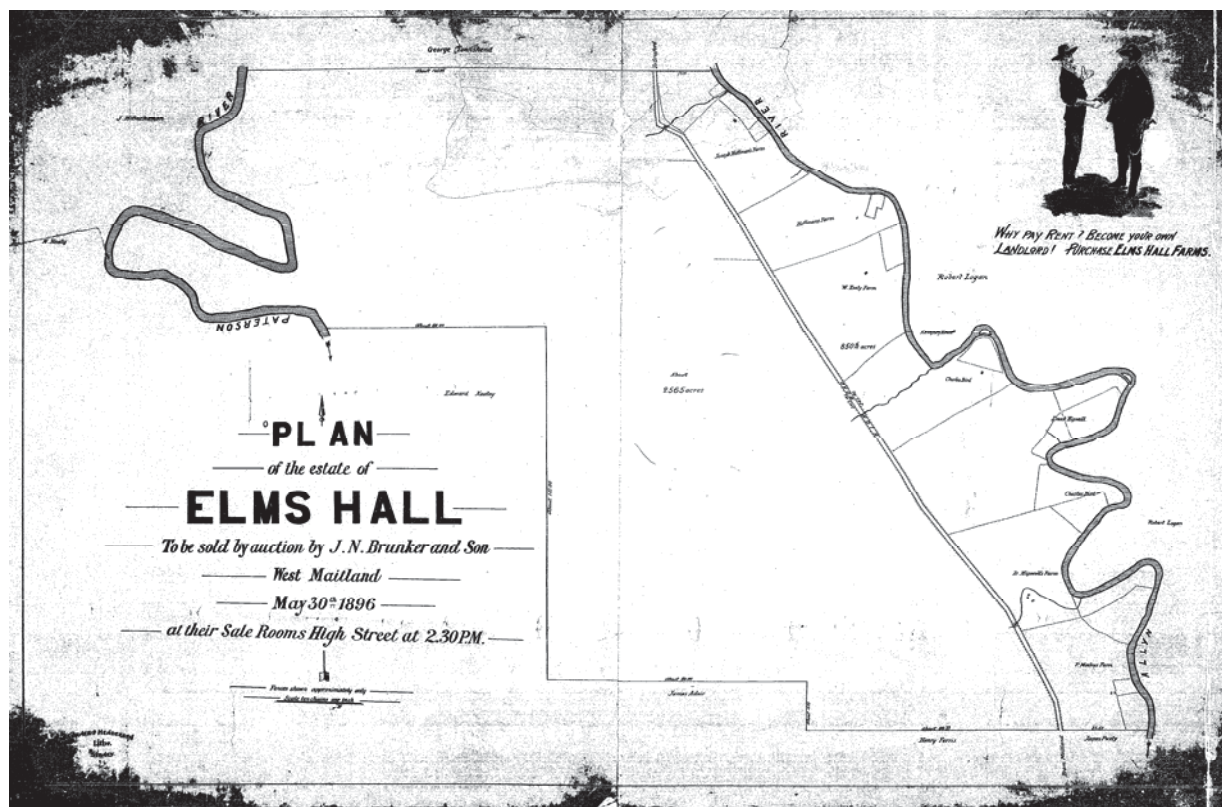


Figure 13: Commercial subdivision plan of Elms Hall dated 1896 showing location of existing tenant farmers lining Allyn River (Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Commercial Subdivision Plans/ ZM3_811.24_1896/ creator H.V.S. White)

5.2.7 Small/Medium Landholders

The small and medium farms displayed a more diverse background of landowners. In 1828, of the small farms (1 to 99 acres) in the region about half of them were worked by ex-convicts and a third by free men.⁹⁹ The small farms were located on the alluvial soils of the river banks and were most numerous on the Wallis, Paterson and Patrick's Plains, with other small clusters in the valleys of the William's and Paterson Rivers and the Wollombi Rivulet.

Approximately half the number of medium sized farms (100 to 999 acres) were held by free immigrant settlers and a quarter by ex-convicts and were found throughout the occupied areas of the Hunter, although were more numerous on the Lower Hunter than elsewhere.¹⁰⁰

The simple, egalitarian policy of limiting the amount of land that a settler could claim along a watercourse, as originally introduced by Governor Phillip, had a strong influence on the development of the region. The policy allowed for shared access to water, development and access to transport, and allowed the smaller landholders to gain a foothold in the area. A strategic position next to a waterway meant that the smaller landholder was able to establish an industry and participate in the market developed by the large estate owners. However, the grid system did favour the wealthy settler who could afford to buy land with a one mile water frontage.

Nevertheless, there were successful small and medium landholders that were more usually located at the junction of two watercourses or at a viable crossing. This brought a greater number of people past their land and allowed for the provision of services (e.g. transport, food, trades etc.). From these

⁹⁹ Perry, T.M., 1963; p. 76

¹⁰⁰ Perry, T.M., 1963; p. 77

strategic positions, the towns and villages grew, peopled by the smaller landholders and providing a concentration of services and trades.

5.3 The Industries

In general, the advice given by the colonial government advised the immigrant settler in the 1820s to settle on the coastal lands, the Hunter Valley, the Illawarra or the Shoalhaven if they intended to be agriculturalists. If however, they planned to raise sheep and cattle, then the western districts were more suitable.¹⁰¹ What actually eventuated was that the Hunter Region became highly successful for a range of industries. The richness of the lands, easy access to water, the relative ease of transport to Sydney and the calibre of the immigrant settler, meant that the Hunter Region could support a diversity of agricultural and pastoral pursuits.

Statistics provided by the 1828 census indicate that the Hunter Region contained 19% of the colony's alienated lands (excluding the Australian Agricultural Company), with 16% of its cultivated lands (second highest percentage after Cumberland), 23.7% of its sheep and 18% of its cattle. Though both the Argyle and Bathurst districts contained more sheep and cattle, neither of these districts were cultivated to any great extent and did not contain a significant proportion of the colony's population.¹⁰²

5.3.1 Crops

During the period 1821 to 1860, wheat was the most common staple crop, with maize for fodder as the second preference. Other cereal and fodder crops grown on a smaller scale included sorghum, lucerne, millet, rye, hay and barley; as well as a variety of vegetables and fruit. These crops were produced primarily for the landholders' own uses or for sale only within the immediate area, rather than for transport to the larger markets.

Although the large estate lands of the Hunter Region contained 65% of the crop lands, the actual areas cultivated were small in comparison to the size of the properties. With an average holding of 3185 acres, only 78 acres on average were cultivated (2.4%). However, some of the largest estates cultivated great areas of land. For example, during the drought in 1827-30 Segenhoe, with more than 10,000 acres, was the main source of grain for the whole valley.¹⁰³

5.3.2 Pastoral

Under Commissioner Bigge's recommendations for the development of the colony, pastoral pursuits were the preferred exploit for the new free settler. Bigge supported pastoralism as, in part, he believed in large-scale British investment in NSW and the grazing of sheep produced exports for the very large wool market. Most other potential exports were perishable, and therefore not suitable for long-distance transportation. Also, grazing seemed to be compatible with the new penal system in which convict men could be employed in large numbers under good discipline. Small scale farming, in Bigge's view, meant that convicts could only be employed in small groups, leaving them too closely involved with their employers, which made penal discipline difficult.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Perry, T. M., 1963, p. 15

¹⁰² Perry, T. M., 1963, p. 72

¹⁰³ Dunlop, E. E., 1967, "Macqueen, Thomas Potter (1791-1854)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University (accessed 29th July 2012)

¹⁰⁴ Additional notes by Professor Alan Atkinson (provided 7th September 2012)

In the Hunter Region, cattle-raising was more popular than sheep-raising. Although much less in numbers than seen in the western and south-western districts, the numbers of heads of cattle and flocks of sheep were reasonably large in comparison to the size of the landholdings. With an average land size of 3,185 acres, the mean size of cattle herds was 243 and sheep flocks, 1,158.¹⁰⁵

The exception in the region was the Australian Agricultural Company (AA Co.) that held extensive tracts of lands in the northern portions of the Hunter Region and became the largest importer of sheep, with 2,122 sheep landed between 1825 and 1827.¹⁰⁶



Figure 14: Dipping sheep at Thornthwaite, c1910(Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW/ bcp_03973r)

5.3.3 Vineyards

The influence of James Busby on the establishment of viticulture in the Hunter Region is well documented. Receiving a grant of 2000 acres in 1828 at Carrowbrook, Busby arrived in Australia already having studied viticulture in France and having written *A Treatise on the Culture of the Vine and the Art of Making Wine*, published in Sydney in 1825. Others of note include Rev. Henry Carmichael at Porphyry Point, who was a pioneer in viticulture in the Hunter Region and in 1847 received permission to bring out three wine-dressers from Europe; Captain G. J. Frankland at Mowbray was the first to introduce the grape into the Paterson district; Dr. H Lindeman at Cawarra who is widely considered to be the father of the wine industry in Australia; and Alexander Munro (emancipist) at Bebeah whose wines won more than 2000 prizes all over the world including more than 500 first prizes.

By the 1830s, a number of properties grew grapes and produced wine throughout the region effectively establishing an industry that continues to this day. Dalwood, Kinross, Kirkton, and

¹⁰⁵ Perry, T. M., 1963; p. 77

¹⁰⁶ Pearson, M. and Lennon, J., 2010; Pastoral Australia: Fortunes, Failures and Hard Yakka- An Historical Overview 1788-1967, CSIRO Publishing, p. 14

Windermere as well as those mentioned above, are just a few of the estates known for wine production. In 1847, the Hunter Valley Viticulture Society was formed and in 1853 the Hunter Valley Vineyard Association was also established.



Figure 15: Picking grapes at Dalwood, 1886 (Source: Balwood, H. B., *Photographs of the Dalwood Vineyards near Branxton, New South Wales, Australia, 1886*; Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW/ a1368009_Plate 5)

5.3.4 Horses

“Undoubtedly, the ‘Horse’ was the most significant animal to be imported to the new colony, in that it provided the first means of transport over land”.¹⁰⁷ Certainly horses were used for travel and transport, however they also played a large role in the management of stock as well as recreation.

Throughout the Hunter Region, the importation of thoroughbred horses was undertaken by the wealthier landowner and usually within the first few years of their settlement. This practice continued throughout the 19th century and resulted in a strong history of horse breeding in the Region.

Although a few breeders in the region did produce stock horses for use on the land, the majority were thoroughbred racing horses and some estates constructed their own race courses and held race meetings. Particular settlers became well regarded for their brood mares or stallions, including Robert and Helenus Scott (Glendon), John Hooke Snr. (Wirra Gulla and Crook’s Park), George Bowman (Archerfield), James Glennie (Dulwich Estate), George Townshend (Trevallyn) and John Earle (Glenridding).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Binney, K. R, 2005, *Horsemen of the First Frontier (1788-1900) and The Serpents Legacy*, Volcanic Productions; p. iv

¹⁰⁸ Binney, K. R, 2005, pp. 223-300



Figure 16: Mr Stock's annual blood stock sale at Turanville, 1880s, creator: J Check (Source: State Library of NSW/ bcp_03911)

5.3.5 Tobacco

For a period of 60-70 years, tobacco was extensively grown in the Hunter Region following the encouragement of Governor Brisbane who reportedly recommended to the new settler to "Go to Hunter's River and make your fortune by growing tobacco".¹⁰⁹ In 1830-31, tobacco was cultivated on only a limited scale although the profit to the grower was apparently large and by 1833-34 almost every farmer turned his attention to the culture of the "weed".¹¹⁰

Initially grown, picked, cured and packed by the growers, the early landowners often erected drying sheds on their estates and acquired tobacco presses. By the 1840s however, tobacco factories were established in the region and the processing of the plant moved away from the farmlands. In 1844, 330,000 pounds of tobacco was produced in the region and William Boydell (Caergwyle), the oldest and largest manufacturer of the crop, purchased about 160,000 pounds for manufacture and distribution.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Jervis, J., 1953, p. 108

¹¹⁰ Jervis, J., 1953, p. 109

¹¹¹ Perumal Murphy Pty Ltd, 1988, p. 168

5.4 The Estates

In 1826, additional conditions to the granting and purchasing of lands were introduced, one of which related specifically to the settler's lands having to be developed with a place of residence included. The condition stated:

*15. The personal residence of individuals on the land which they may obtain by grant or purchase; or the employment, on the spot, of a free man of approved character and respectability, will be made an indispensable condition.*¹¹²

Drawing from Henry Dangar's list of first settlers and T. M. Perry's data based on the 1828 census, by the early 1830s, there were around 207 properties of 1000 acres or more. Settlers continued to arrive in the region throughout the 1830s establishing new properties and *Baker's Australian County Atlas* shows that, by 1843, excluding Australian Agricultural Company holdings, there were 14 properties of 10,000 acres and over; 119 properties of between 2560 acres and 10,000 acres and a further 549 properties of under 2560 acres located throughout the rural districts.

As a residence of some kind, either for the settler or their overseer was a government requirement, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of these 640 properties contained a homestead or residence of some kind, although not all could be considered an estate. As discussed below (see Section 5.5: The Archaeology), the estates were part of a larger agricultural/pastoral chain of settlement that were interconnected and demonstrate a sophisticated network of shared land uses, settlement types, interactions and experiences between the landowners, the workers on the land and the Aboriginal people.

5.4.1 Landscape of the Hunter Estates

Throughout the study area, the siting of the homestead displays a series of consistent characteristics including:

- Located within close proximity to a watercourse with the homestead facing the watercourse;
- Outbuildings (both domestic and agricultural) are located within the immediate vicinity of the homestead;
- Located within an agricultural/pastoral landscape (cleared lands with fenced paddocks, pastures, crops and grazing); and
- Marker trees, such as Araucarias, are found within or adjacent to the homestead complex.

The Hunter Estates are picturesquely located within the landscape, sensitively responding to the land and using the topography of the alluvial plains and river valleys to their best advantage. Slightly elevated and facing the watercourses, the homestead complexes are typically approached from the rear allowing clear views from the main residence to the pastoral and cultivation lands lining the watercourses.

This typical approach to the siting of the homestead complexes together with surrounding cleared agricultural and pastoral lands located in the river valleys and alluvial plains and enclosed by the low mountain ranges of the Region has resulted in unique rural cultural landscape.

¹¹² Dangar, H., 1830, p. 68

Gardens of the Hunter Estates

Few colonial gardens appear to survive within the Hunter Region. As the majority of the estates continued to operate in some form throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, many of the gardens attached to the early homestead complexes demonstrate the history of their development. Estates that have been noted for their gardens include Neotsfield and Baroona (listed by the National Trust of Australia (NSW)), although both of these display elements of garden design dating from the 1860s and later. However, both sites are also listed for the whole of their landscape setting which given the success of each of these estates, essentially changed the landscape in their immediate vicinities, resulting in significant cultural landscapes.

Today, historic gardens and homestead complexes are identifiable in the landscape by the survival of the 'marker trees' planted in the early years of their settlement. Araucarias in particular and fig trees were often planted next to the main residence and serve as a visual locator within the broader landscape.



Figure 17: Tocal in its landscape setting today, locatable by the mature Moreton Bay fig trees surrounding the homestead.

5.4.2 The Homestead

Throughout the Hunter Region, as elsewhere in NSW, the distinctly Australian colonial bungalow and its close relation the Anglo-Indian bungalow, were the dominant style of early 19th century homestead.¹¹³ As a form of residence, it was a step beyond the vernacular single or double roomed timber slab cottage. Rather, it was a residence of distinction, preferred by the gentry and representative of permanent settlement.



Figure 18: Chimney piece in sitting room of Aberglasslyn (1970s) (Source: Clive Lucas)

As a house style, the bungalow is typically single storey, three bay, two rooms deep with a central hall, encircling verandah, and enclosed wings. The verandah, a distinctive feature of the building was a practical solution to the heat of the Australian climate. It also allowed for expansion of the house by incrementally enclosing portions of the verandah as required. This basic form of building was usually built to plan, although some earlier homesteads may have been converted into this form from a simpler vernacular form of house.

Very few homesteads survive from the initial establishment period unchanged from this basic form. Examples include Wambo, Warkworth (1844 - 47), Tocal, Maitland (1841 with a second storey), Dunmore, Maitland (1833), Gostwyck, Paterson (1836), Kinross at Raymond Terrace (c1834), Thornthwaite, Scone (1846); Clifton, Lochinvar (1850); Cliffdale, Wingen (1840s); Lewinsbrook, Gresford (c1839); Invermein, Scone (1830s); Segenhoe, Scone (late 1820s), Ravensworth, Singleton (1830-35) and Terragong, Merriwa (1839).

¹¹³ Sheedy, D., 1982, Hunter Region Heritage Study: Nineteenth Century Buildings, prepared for the NSW Department of Environment and Planning; p. 13

The majority of Hunter Region homesteads started from this base plan and over the years have undergone various alterations and additions depending on the history of the estate, the wealth and social pretensions of the property owner, as well as the changing needs of the residents. David Sheedy (1982) identified a range of homestead types found in the region that illustrate the typical changes. For the period up to the 1850s, Sheedy suggests the following types of development:¹¹⁴

1. The attached wing or wings added at various stages of a property's growth (the most common). Examples include Rosemount at Hinton (1830 with 1870s addition), Negoa near Muswellbrook (1830 with 1840s additions), Stradbroke at Woodville built in three stages (1830-40 and 1900) and Martindale, Denman (c1840, 1860 and 1890), Cawarra, Gresford (late 1840s?) and Segenhoe, Scone (1830s with later domestic outbuildings attached).
2. A separate new house or wing built next to or close by the original house. Examples include Bolwarra (Richard Jones' 1830s house converted into the kitchen wing and second house built adjacent) and Merton (1826 stone cottage near the c1880 brick house).
3. The original house is completely encased by a later and larger addition. Examples include Barooka at Whittingham (c1828 two storey house extensively added to in 1869) and Bolwarra (c1850 second house built by Dixon with first floor taken down and additions made c1900 by Lee) and Torryburn, Allyn River (early house encased in later Edwardian house).
4. Destruction of the original house and construction of a completely new house: Windermere near Lochinvar (1880s house built on 1830s foundations), Camyr Allyn (1829 house now ruins and estate subdivided with new homesteads).
5. Complete destruction of the original house and only outbuildings survive. Examples include the substantial sandstone barn at Bolwarra (1836).

According to Sheedy, at the time of his report, the Hunter Region possessed probably the richest and most diverse collection of 19th century buildings to be found in any comparable area of Australia and that with relatively few exceptions, the vast number of buildings erected after 1830 have survived.¹¹⁵

Architects

The use of architects in the design and construction of the early homesteads was very rare due to the isolation of the region and the necessity to place capital into the development of the farm, rather than into any display of wealth. In the main, early homesteads were probably constructed using convict labour and architectural refinements were only possible if a landowner, overseer or a convict had a particular interest or previous experience.

As James Broadbent points out (1997), "The substantial houses constructed during the latter years of the boom (1830s) tended to be more distantly located on the Bathurst Plains and, particularly, in the Hunter River Valley and on the Southern Tablelands: well-built houses, fine even, and well-detailed, but generally the products of competent tradesmen rather than architects, and seldom progressing beyond vernacular form embellished to varying degrees with more polite detailing..."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Sheedy, D., 1982, Hunter Region Heritage Study: Nineteenth Century Buildings, prepared for the NSW Department of Environment and Planning; pgs. 28-30

¹¹⁵ Sheedy, D., 1982, p. 16

¹¹⁶ Broadbent, J., 1997, *The Australian Colonial House: Architecture and Society in New South Wales 1788-1842*, Hordern House, Sydney, p. 239

The exceptions in the Hunter Region where an Architect is known to have been involved are Aberglasslyn (1842) which is alternately attributed to John Verge and Henry Robertson; Mortimer Lewis was the architect for the Windeyer family and is credited with the homestead Tomago at Port Stephens (1840-45) as well as the later verandah addition at Kinross, Raymond Terrace (1840s);¹¹⁷ Ravensworth for James Bowman (c1830) would appear to be by John Verge and Tocal is by William Moir.



Figure 19: Ravensworth, Singleton (1970s)

Local landowners possessing a particular interest or skill in building design in the region also operated as amateur architects. Of particular note are the brothers Robert and Helenus Scott, who during the 1830s appear to have established a local reputation as architects and were consulted by their Hunter Valley neighbours on house and farm building designs.¹¹⁸ As well as their own homestead Glendon (built in two stages 1826 and 1837), the Scotts are also attributed to being involved with Cliffdale (1840s), Terragong (1838-39), and the stables for Leslie Duguid of Lochinvar (1840s).

Others included Henry Dumaresq, an engineer who built his own house St Heliers (1830s); George Wyndham who built his residence Dalwood (1829-1833)¹¹⁹ and Joseph Docker, a man of many artistic talents who designed and built his own residence Thornthwaite (1840s). The Scott brothers probably also influenced Wyndham and Docker.

¹¹⁷ Broadbent, J., 1997, p.225-6

¹¹⁸ Broadbent, J., 1997, p. 274

¹¹⁹ Broadbent, J., 1997, p. 247-250



Figure 20: Thornthwaite, Scone c.1860-69, photograph by Joseph Docker (Source: State Library of NSW/a1225001h_Pic. Acc. 1349)

5.4.3 The Outbuildings

Given that the agricultural pursuits of the typical Hunter Region farmer was generally mixed, producing goods for use on the estate as well as for the markets, a diverse range of outbuilding types are found throughout the region.

The *Wambo Homestead Complex Heritage Strategy* (2010) details the range of outbuildings that still survive on the Wambo property and provides an example of the range of building types that can form a homestead complex. Aside from the 'New House' (constructed in 1844-1847) there also exists a carriage house with stables and granary (1840), butcher's hut (1900), slab horse boxes or 'the stallions' box' (1900-1906), the servant's wing (1844) and the stud master's cottage (1837). Suggestions have been made that the kitchen wing, a two storey building located at the rear of the main residence was the original house for the estate, with later additions converting it into the servants' wing. Given the siting of the building (facing away from the nearby watercourse), the cellar and the typical layout of the majority of the homestead complexes in the region, it is doubtful that this would be the original house and was probably constructed as a servants' wing/kitchen wing for the main house. On the site are also a mounting yard, horse boxes and stud yards dating from 1906.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Godden McKay Logan Pty Ltd, 2010; *Wambo Homestead Complex Heritage Study*, prepared for Wambo Coal Pty Ltd, pp. 22-30



Figure 21: Wambo main house and adjoining kitchen wing at rear

Similarly, Tocal near Paterson consists of the original homestead (1839) and a range of outbuildings including convict built barracks, outbuildings and cottage (1840), stone barn (1830), timber outbuildings including a blacksmiths, barn (c1867), bullock boxes, stockyards, fencing and underground silos.¹²¹

Although the Hunter Region relied on the convict labourer for its initial development and a great numbers of convicts were assigned to landowners throughout the Hunter Region, surviving buildings that are known to have accommodated the convict labourers are few and far between. Surviving examples are Tocal, Tahlee, Segenhoe (converted into stables) and possibly Corinda and Arrowfield, while some homesteads provided cells in the basement of the main house, such as at Kirkton and Windermere. However, convicts were released and may have initially stayed on the estate as labourers, agricultural workers or domestic servants. Therefore, what is today referred to as workers or servants accommodation may once have been convict housing.

¹²¹ NSW State Heritage Register listing for Tocal Homestead (listing no. 00147)



Figure 22: The stables at Cawarra

5.4.4 Private Villages

When Dangar undertook the surveying of the Hunter Region, he was also directed to reserve lands within each parish for Church & School Lands and for villages. Some of these village sites were slow to develop and others were never actually established at all. The reserved lands were instead claimed by private landholders as additional pastoral lands.

Regardless, villages did start to develop, typically through the late 1830s and early 1840s as the larger estates began to fulfil some of the functions of towns. The townships grew around the boundaries of the estate lands as the landowners began to establish stores and inns on their lands as well as constructing public buildings, including post offices, courthouses and watch houses. Mills were also a feature of the larger estates that drew settlement to them.

An example of this ancillary development can be found at Merton where in 1826 a rough court house had been built to aid in the control of the large numbers of convicts employed on the estate. In addition, the estate maintained cobblers, tailors, and blacksmiths and travellers were able to visit the property to obtain these services. From this economic and judicial base, a small village developed.¹²²

Other private villages throughout the region include Cassilis (originally Dalkeith), Allynbrook on Caergwrl estate lands, Haydonton formed following subdivision of Bloomfield estate lands in the

¹²² Turner, Dr. J. W., 1995; p. 28

1840s, Hinton located on the Bowthorne and Hinton estate lands, and Lochinvar on Leslie Duguid's Lochinvar estate.¹²³



Figure 23: Commercial subdivision plan of the Hall Estate showing the layout of the twin townships of Haydenton and Murrurundi (Source: Mitchell Library Commercial Subdivision Plans_Murrurundi)

5.4.5 Subdivision

The years of drought in the late 1820s, the sheep and cattle buying mania of the late 1830s and the subsequent financial crash of the early 1840s took their toll, and the large landholders began to consolidate their lands, sell their properties, lease out portions of the lands to tenant farmers and finally to subdivide their lands into smaller portions suitable for the small landholder.

The commercial subdivision plans for the region show successive subdivisions of once highly profitable estates. Typically, the 'homestead block' was reserved from sale and continued to retain a larger amount of land, basically moving from a large agricultural enterprise to a medium sized prosperous farm.

¹²³ Jervis, J. 1953; pgs. 123-133

In a few cases, the development of the original estate included two homesteads located on different sites, although on the same property. One may have been the first, unsophisticated residence, while the other a somewhat grander and certainly more comfortable residence. Alternatively, one residence may have housed the property owner, while the other was for the overseer and/or manager of the property. Subsequent subdivision tended to result in two separate nodes of settlement, and each site with its own homestead complex developed independently.

However, in many cases the earlier land allotments associated with the estate can still be identified in the landscape, as new boundary lines often follow historic boundaries, and tracks that were once stock routes also become boundary divisions or public roads.

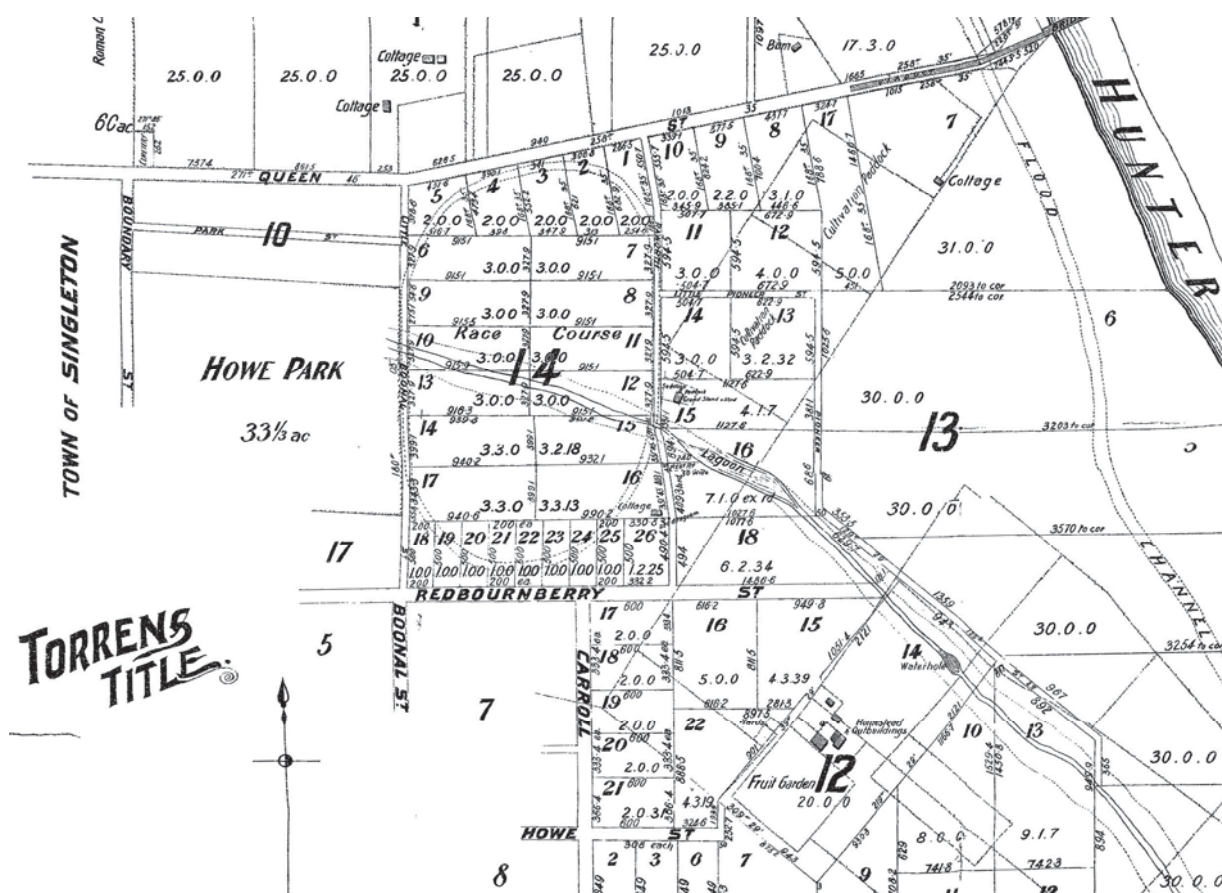


Figure 24: Extract of subdivision plan of Redbournberry (J Howe's estate) from 1896. Note the evidence of a former racecourse located in lot 14. (Source: National Library of Australia_Richardson and Wrench et al; *Rich Farms, Hunter River, Singleton on the Redbournberry Estate of the Late Mr J K Howe, 1896*_MAP Folder 160, LFSP 2562 (Copy 1))

5.5 The Archaeology

5.5.1 Aboriginal Archaeology

The following discussion has been extracted from D. Steele's report 'Aboriginal Archaeological Overview of the Hunter Region' (2012). Refer to Appendix 2 for the full analysis.

Aboriginal Archaeological History

Aboriginal occupation in the region commenced at least 20,000 years ago. A date of >20,200 years Before Present (BP) has been established from a site at Glennies Creek, north of Branxton.¹²⁴ A site of Pleistocene age at the South Lemington mine near Singleton has also been reported. In surrounding regions, Aboriginal occupation has been dated to 19,000 BP on the Liverpool Plains¹²⁵, 11,000 BP in the upper Mangrove Creek catchment of the Hawkesbury River¹²⁶, and 17,000 BP at Moffats Swamp near Raymond Terrace¹²⁷. However, the majority of dated Aboriginal archaeological sites in the Hunter Valley are less than 4,000 years old.¹²⁸

Atkinson (2012) has discussed above (Section 3: Historical Context) that European settlement of the 'Hunter Valley was...approached more or less as if it were an island'. Moore in 1970 speculated that Aboriginal people settled the region in much the same way 20,000 years before.¹²⁹

'The Hunter system may have been occupied from the coast. This could be quite consistent with the geography of the region, since Great Dividing Range would have constituted a formidable barrier in most places, whereas to a people skilled in navigating in sheltered inland waters, movement up and down the coastal plain and up the river valleys would have presented no problem'.

Archaeological Evidence

The vast majority (over 97%) of Aboriginal archaeological heritage sites that have been recorded in the Hunter Valley to date consist of stone artefact scatters and isolated finds. A 'gap analysis' prepared for the Upper Hunter in 2004 (ERM Pty Ltd 2004) reported that over 3,500 sites had been recorded at that time. Some of these open campsites have been recorded in detail where their surface manifestations are exposed on the ground, and a number have also been salvaged through subsurface archaeological excavation.

Less common Aboriginal site types include painted and stencilled art in rock shelters, rock engravings and axe grinding grooves, rock shelters with occupation evidence, open shell middens on the coast, burials, scarred and carved trees, stone arrangements, stone quarries, and ceremonial sites. The latter type of site in particular is rare, and is an example of a type of heritage place that will have considerable significance to Aboriginal communities today.

¹²⁴ Koettig, M, 1987

¹²⁵ Gorecki, P. et al, 1984

¹²⁶ Attenbrow, V, 1987

¹²⁷ Baker, N, 1994

¹²⁸ Brayshaw, H, 1994,

¹²⁹ Moore, D, 1970, p.70

In broad terms, the nature of past occupation that may be reflected by most archaeological sites can potentially reflect a variety of circumstances:

- transitory movement
- hunting and/or gathering (without camping)
- camping by small hunting and/or gathering parties
- nuclear/extended family base camps
- community base camps
- larger congregations of groups
- ceremonial activity

The archaeological evidence could represent a single episode or multiple episodes of one or more of the above types of occupation or activity. The episodes of occupation could have occurred at different times over the entire occupation time-span in the region. Each episode of occupation could likewise also have been for a different duration of time. Unless the archaeological evidence for individual activity events is readily apparent, it can be complex to establish the likely types of occupation/activity represented, the number of episodes in evidence, and the times and duration represented by the evidence at any given site. In this regard, open sites in the Hunter Valley are often mixed as a result of land use (post-depositional) processes and the superimposition of archaeological materials by repeated episodes of occupation.

Archaeological Potential at Hunter Estates

It is almost certain that prehistoric (and historic) Aboriginal archaeological sites occurred on the lands of each estate when they were initially settled from c1820. It is also probable that archaeological evidence of this prior occupation and use will survive in landscapes along rivers and on surrounding elevations where historic land use has not sufficiently altered the land.

In this regard, deeply buried Pleistocene landforms (old river channels and terraces) with archaeological potential occur in different places in the region, while the flood histories connected to many of the project homesteads indicate these events that were accelerated by European environment change have deposited alluvium that may in places cover what were in c.1820 land surfaces. As an example, to the east from Bolwarra House at Raworth, studies have found over three metres of alluvium covering pre-1948 ground levels that are now buried below this recently deposited material.¹³⁰

Archaeological Evidence Recorded at Individual Homesteads

Five separate Aboriginal grinding groove sites have been identified at Tocal. One of these is situated close to the Homestead, and three of the other four are all in sight of it but occur closer towards the waterline of Paterson River and along Webbers ('Pumby') Creek. These sites tell us about past Aboriginal tool manufacture and maintenance, river travel, trade and communication, and can be linked with other similar sites in the landscape such as the grind groves and associated (and excavated) subsurface occupation sites near Bolwarra House. One scarred tree is also recorded to survive on the Tocal property '*where a section of the bark has been removed and either the bark or wood has been used to make wooden containers, shields or canoes*'¹³¹, while a piece of flaked glass found at one of the grinding groove sites support the probability Aboriginal people continued to use the land into the Contact period.

¹³⁰ ERM Mitchell McCotter, 1998

¹³¹ Archer, 2007

Few other project homestead sites have been subject to archaeological survey, and most properties are now in private ownership. Where Aboriginal archaeological sites are recorded on the lands that originally formed the earliest estates, these have generally been identified as a result of EIS work associated with nearby coal mining operations.

Post-Contact Aboriginal Archaeology

Dangar's grid pattern that governed European settlement throughout the Hunter Region was laid over a complex Aboriginal landscape. It quickly created a way for large European pastoral estates to be established and each of the 'selected' homestead sites in the early to mid-1820s contained a diversity of different land units that included in places rugged and rounded hills, river and creek flats, and old river terraces. Each of these in turn will also have had their own features of soil and vegetation that would have supported a range of animal and plant resources.

Some of the landforms contained within each of the individual but contiguous blocks of land along the river and creek frontages will have included places that initially lay 'outside' of the lands that were of first European agricultural interest. Some of these discrete environments (such as on elevated hills or along the margins of lower swamps and wetlands situated away from the first homesteads and convict accommodation and work stations) are likely to have represented places that Aboriginal people may have been able to use and move through during the first periods of European settlement that constituted gaps in the grid of settler landholding.

In 1990, Rich prepared a management study of Aboriginal historic sites in northeast NSW for the NPWS and the *Australian Heritage Commission*. The study identified 31 potential Aboriginal historic places within the Hunter Valley, including sites associated with conflict or "invasion period at locations where grazing and agricultural activities took place" for which "the precise location.....may never be known", and other places where Aboriginal and European interactions may have occurred more peacefully. Some of these places date to the 1820s, while others were occupied and used by Aboriginal people in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Hunter Estates that have already been recorded as holding archaeological evidence of Aboriginal occupation include a ceremonial ground at Kelvinside near Aberdeen, places of employment at Merton, Segenhoe and Dagworth and known places of Aboriginal camps at Cassilis, Segenhoe, Invermein, Merton and Glendon. The current study extends this list.

The historical records, and in some cases archaeological evidence, confirms that places which were favourable for European occupation were the same places which Aboriginal people also found favourable. Early towns such as Maitland, Paterson, Gresford, Aberdeen, Scone and Singleton as well as areas where homesteads were developed are places where Aboriginal people are recorded to have camped on at the time of Contact with the presumption that this occupation had occurred prior to Europeans arriving in the area. An example of this is at St Matthew's Church that was constructed on the reserved land at Gundy in 1868. Wilfred Green (1890–1976), a former resident whose grandfather came to the town in 1873 recalled being told Aboriginal people were living on the site chosen for the church and refused to leave the camp on the reserve when it was selected for building.¹³² According to this account, the church people had in one instance arranged to have the body of a recently deceased Aboriginal person brought into the camp from higher up the river.

The Aboriginal people at Gundy are described to have left the town immediately and relocated to establish a new camp near the foot of Willis's Hill on the Belltrees Road some two kilometres to the north. A number of scattered accounts of Aboriginal people in the general 'Dart Brook area' exist for

¹³² Brayshaw, H, 2005

the late 1820s and 1830s. Francis Little, whose land grant was in the Dart Brook (Invermein) reported in June 1828 that the ‘tribe’ or ‘family’ residing on the Pages River at that time were the ‘*Murr_win*’, and comprised sixteen men, eight women and five children (Little 1828). Brayshaw (2005:233) describes another place at Gundy where Aboriginal people are recorded to have lived when Europeans arrived at ‘Nectarbank’ (Nalalban) which is over the other side of the Page River to the north of the village, which is now on the large ‘Elmswood’ property. ‘Nectarbank’ is reported to have been ‘*one of the tribal meeting places*’, and also a place from where people travelled to Dartbrook and the Pages and the Isis Rivers¹³³ (Mitchell 1969: 28).

Historical descriptions also document the continued use of some ceremonial sites (and burial places) well into the second half of the nineteenth century, with records for some around Singleton and Muswellbrook showing they continued to be used by Aboriginal people into the first decade of the twentieth century. These include the bora ground at ‘Kelvinside’ (which is listed on the Register of the National Estate) near the junction of the Page and Hunter Rivers,¹³⁴ and a number of similar sites near Gloucester, and one on the Allyn River near Gresford.

Another ceremonial site at Gundy was recorded by a former squatter in Aberdeen in the 1870s, at the junction of the Page and Isis Rivers. This site may have been on the land originally granted to Potter Macqueen in 1824 that was developed as the Segenhoe estate. Brayshaw identifies the probable location of the site to be within the present day ‘Elmswood’ property. It was described at the time to have consisted of a circle of raised earth ‘*about 150 yards in circumference*’, and with a figure of a man also made from raised earth ‘*in a pleasant glen at the foot of one of the highest hills in the neighbourhood*’¹³⁵. The description also reported the ‘*ground about this place for some considerable distance, are about one hundred and twenty trees marked with tomahawks...on some the marks reach as high as fifteen feet above the ground.*’¹³⁶

Brayshaw draws on family recollections of ‘Elmswood’ that date back to the 1930s that appear to refer to some of the Aboriginal carved trees described by Macdonald in 1878.¹³⁷ These were on the river bank immediately in front of the family home before both trees disappeared after a high flood in the early 1920s. ‘Elmswood’ is situated on a knoll above the river flat that is about 250 metres to 300 metres wide. The oral history descriptions would place the trees on the flat land to the south-east of the house and to the north of present day Miranee Road. Few other historically recorded Aboriginal ceremonial sites in the region can be so closely identified at a specific place in the landscape

A final example is provided by an historical record of a large Aboriginal ceremonial gathering held at what is often referred to as the ‘Bulga Bora Ground’ in 1852 that is suspected to be partially located on the current Warkworth Mine lease, and partly on the neighbouring Wambo mining property on the eastern side of Wollombi Brook.

¹³³ Mitchell, 1969, p. 28

¹³⁴ Bridge, W, 1924, p. 133

¹³⁵ Etheride, W., 1918, P85

¹³⁶ Macdonald, 1878, p.255

¹³⁷ Brayshaw, H, 2005, p.243

5.5.2 The Historic Archaeology

The following discussion has been extracted from Dr E. Higginbotham's report 'Nineteenth Century Rural Homestead Complexes in the Hunter Region: Historical Archaeological Survey' (2012). Refer to Appendix 3 for the full analysis.

The Archaeological Resource

The use of historical maps to reconstruct the settlement pattern of the Hunter Region up to the 1840s has located 685 properties of varying size. In short, at least 14 properties of 10,000 acres or more have been identified, along with 123 properties of 2560 acres or more (but less than 10,000 acres) and a further 548 other properties ranging from around 500 acres up to 2560 acres. However, it is obvious that not all of these properties survive today and there exists only approximately 200 like properties included on various heritage listings.

An understanding of settlement hierarchies among the properties in the Hunter Region begins to provide an explanation of the lack of correlation between the archaeological resource of 685 sites and the 200+ heritage listed properties. There are a number of potential reasons that can be used to explain why the total extent of the archaeological resource cannot be reconciled with the total number of listings, including:

1. The existing heritage listings only record those homesteads that survive intact or in a state sufficient to recognise architectural or historical characteristics of significance
2. A number of surviving homestead complexes have not been listed, and have been overlooked
3. A substantial proportion of the original homestead complexes have not survived
4. The methodology used to identify the archaeological resource is incorrect.

It is highly likely that all of these factors have played a varying role in the lack of correlation between the listings and the archaeological resource. However, given the high level of professional expertise brought to bear on the heritage listing of the properties in the Hunter Region over the last 30-40 years, it is unlikely that very many properties have been overlooked. There is also a high level of correlation on a property by property basis between the archaeological resource and the household returns of the 1841 Census, confirming the archaeological method used.

Thus the most likely factor for the lack of correlation is the high rate of loss of historical buildings. The archaeological resource may survive in a number of forms, including buildings and structures, then ruins and finally as below ground archaeological sites. The lack of correlation between the listings and the archaeological resource may reflect a worst-case scenario, in which less than a third of the original homestead complexes survive as standing buildings or as ruins (31.38%). The worst case scenario may also have another explanation, relating to our understanding of settlement types, settlement hierarchies and the evolution of the settlement types.

Settlement Types

The homesteads that survive today are primarily located above the flood prone land, adjacent to the alluvial soils that were ideal for cultivation. This fixed relationship between the homestead and the alluvial soils demonstrates the importance given to access to water and the proximity to cultivated land, resulting in the investment of substantial capital in fixed assets at this prime location, not only

homesteads and farm buildings, but orchards, annual and perennial crops. These were fixed assets in contrast to the four legged moveable assets that roamed the grassed paddocks that stretched back and away from the watercourses.

Many landholders possessed a series of settlement types. Typically a single landholder might possess a main residence, a managed station or farm, but also one or more runs on alienated or Crown land. The chain of settlement pattern from the settled districts out beyond the 'Limits of Location' is well documented, particularly from the 1820s and 1830s onwards. Examples include James Hale of Wambo, who possessed a string of properties reaching from Windsor through the Hunter Region and up into the New England district, as did the Dumaresq brothers at Muswellbrook, Scone and Saumarez and Tilbuster in New England.¹³⁸

Research already existing for the region indicates that improvements can be expected on each of the three main settlement types relevant to this study: Main residence, Main residence of other family member and Managed Station or Farm. The land grants occupied as main residences possess the most improvements and the highest level of capital investment.

Those occupied as managed stations or farms had more utilitarian improvements, while runs on alienated or Crown lands mostly possessed only a hut and stockyards or pens. As an example, the use of Lyndhurst Vale (granted to John Verge in 1829) in the 1830s as a stock run is illustrated by the early map of the area showing only 'Verge's Hut' without any other improvement on the property and similarly, one hut is indicated on the adjacent property to the south, Brookfield (granted to Charles Smeathman in 1828).

¹³⁸ Higginbotham, Dr E., 2012; p. 18

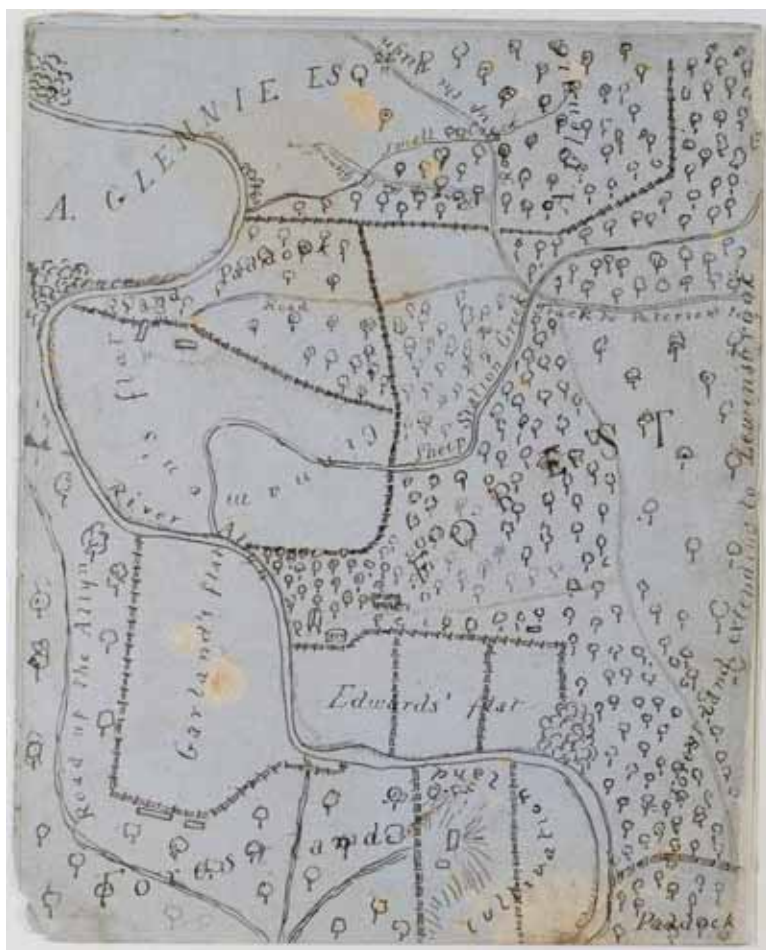


Figure 25: A page from notebook dated c1845 showing a stockman's (?) plan of A Glennie's land on the Allyn River (Dulwich). The mix of land uses and scattered building are an indication of the network of settlement types that existed throughout the Region. (Source: *Vocabulary of the Allyn River Black's Language*; Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW_a1569004)

Historical documentation is also already available to highlight the run on alienated or Crown land settlement type. Various place names, like 'Sheep Station Creek' may also refer to the location of a run on Crown land. The 1885 subdivision plan for St Heliers near Muswellbrook shows the combination of a hut and sheepyard at two locations on the property, approximately 4.8 kilometres from the homestead. This document gives an indication of what must have been a common practice on the larger properties, particularly in the period of convict transportation up to 1840 the use of shepherds and before the advent of wire fencing in the 1860s.

Other property or subdivision plans reveal that many homestead complexes had a greater range of different outbuildings than survive today; for example, Bona Vista, Bellevue, Elmswood, Glendon, Glen Livet and St Aubins. At St Aubins, the homestead is located to the south of Scone but the associated shearing shed and shearer's quarters are located at the other end of the estate at Parkville. Similarly, at Glendon, the 1856 plan indicates the location of two rows of men's huts and other buildings that are no longer extant (feasibly assigned servants' accommodation). A similar arrangement existed at Cassilis, with the surviving shearing shed now located on a separate title and away from the main homestead complex site.

Settlement Type Dynamics

'Settlement Type Dynamics' play an important role not only in the historical settlement pattern but also in the surviving heritage listings. Properties evolved during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As stations and runs were converted or evolved into main residences, so a homestead would be built, together with its associated improvements. From the current heritage listings it is clear that the first homesteads on a number of properties were constructed after the end of convict transportation

in the 1840s. In other instances, it is suggested that landholdings never became main residences and never possessed a homestead complex.

As discussed above, a number of distinct settlement types can be found on one property. St Helier in 1885 had not only a main homestead, but at least two sheep runs on the far reaches of the land. Likewise, a significant number of subdivision plans for the properties throughout the study show not only the homestead, but also a number of other buildings, cottages, houses and related outbuildings. Examples include Lyndhust Vale, Osterley, Overton, Penshurst, Piecefield, Redbournberry, Rosebank, Rosebrook, St Clair and Woodville.

The plans for Penshurst, near Mt. Rivers near Dungog, reveal the nature of much of this development of the larger estates, namely the leasing of smaller farms to settlers. For small farmers, leasehold property on good alluvial soil was a better alternative to conditional purchase on land that was only useful for grazing of cattle and sheep, or alternatively heavily timbered. Thus on the same land as a main residence or homestead complex, there are ample examples of the tenant settlement type (the tenant farmer). Leasehold farms also form a significant part of the settlement pattern associated with homestead complexes.

Other examples of two or more settlement types on one original land grant or combined holding may be found among the current heritage listings. Examples include Dalwood and Leconfield, and Castle Forbes and Barooka. Another interesting combination is provided by Berry Park, Berry House and Duckenfield. Further afield at Muswellbrook, Edinglassie, Rous Lench, Balmoral and Skellator are all located on the one combined landholding of Francis Forbes. At Allynbrook and East Gresford, Caergwrle, Maryville and Camyr Allyn are all located on what appears to be one large landholding, as are Lewinsbrook, Bingleburra and the adjacent Bingleburra Park.

Further research is required to elucidate the historical context of these multiple homesteads or residences on the one landholding, but the study of the 1828 Census has already revealed how family members and other related persons were housed on single landholdings.

6 Significance of the Hunter Estates

The influx of large numbers of free immigrants as new settlers into the region, with their wealth, social standing and ambitions led to the establishment of a number of successful agricultural industries and led the way to the development of the region. These new settlers created large, successful landholdings which covered the majority of the arable lands in the region, and relied upon the labour of convicts to form and develop these estates.

What is particularly special about the Hunter Estates is the way in which the region was originally settled and the resultant estates that were established can still be experienced and understood today.

Changed though they may be and although many have been lost, the Hunter Estate, as an historic and cultural phenomenon survives. Their industries are still represented, descendants of the original settlers continue to live and work in the region, the names of the original estates survive and are in the majority attached to the original area of land, and many homesteads with outbuildings still survive in their settings.

The Hunter Estates and their homestead complexes are the surviving evidence of the foundation layer of settlement of the Hunter Region and remain a vibrant component of the region, and are a substantial part of the current identity of the Hunter Region.

6.1 Statement of Significance

Criterion (a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The Hunter Estates are representative of the introduction of a new and highly significant government policy, constructed by Commissioner Bigge and introduced by Governor Brisbane that focussed on the economic and agricultural development of the colony and the management and employment of convicts by the private landowner. The subsequent settlement of the Hunter Region based on the provisions of this policy forms the foundational layer of the Hunter Region and remains capable of being experienced today.

Criterion (b) An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The settlement of the region and the subsequent development of the Hunter Estates is associated with a large number of people of influence and ambition who arrived in Australia as new, free immigrants in order to take up land. Many of the early settlers of the Hunter Region made a considerable contribution to Australian society, in founding the agricultural and pastoral industries in the region and in being part of the establishment of the judicial and political systems in NSW.

Criterion (c) An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW.

The Hunter Estates, located picturesquely in the land and responding to the particular topography of the Hunter Region with its river valleys and alluvial plains, the siting of the homestead complexes, the remnant gardens and ‘marker trees’, the surrounding pastures and paddocks and the evidence of the surveyed grid pattern in the form of the minor road systems and fence lines, together form an aesthetically distinctive landscape.

Criterion (d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

The Hunter Estates are held in high esteem by the community of the Hunter Region as well as the broader NSW community as indicated by the number of heritage listings represented in the area, together with the great wealth of research, books, images, heritage studies, memoirs and other documentation relating specifically to the history of the region, its people, industries, buildings and the estates. The strength of opposition displayed to threats to the survival of the Hunter Estates and their homestead complexes further demonstrates the strong associations held by the Hunter Region community.

Criterion (e) An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The archaeology of the Hunter Estates is a vital key to the emerging Aboriginal history of this region of NSW and provides insights into the complex network of connections, interactions, shared experiences and shared land use that occurred between Aboriginal people, the settlers, their workers and the estate lands. The archaeology also has the potential to provide further information into the known chains of settlements and various settlement types that existed throughout the region as well as the use of convict labour and tenant farming, associated with the Hunter Estates.

Criterion (f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).

The surviving evidence of the colonial settlement of the Hunter Region in the period between 1820 and 1850 is rare in NSW for being settled wholly under a government policy implemented to advance the economic and agricultural development of the colony and to place the management of convicts into the hands of the private landholder. The reliance on convict labour throughout the district and in particular on the Hunter Estates in large numbers is rare in NSW and a highly significant aspect of the history of NSW.

Criterion (g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places or environments (or a class of the local area’s cultural or natural places or environments).

The principal characteristics of the Hunter Estates; their siting, the homestead complexes, the industries, the people and the archaeology are representative of a significant pattern of settlement, unique to the Hunter Region and one that is still able to be experienced today.

6.2 Summary Statement of Significance

The Hunter Estates are an historic and cultural phenomenon that is associated with a particular approach to settlement in Australia and the management of convicts, implemented in total in the Hunter Region in the 1820s. The Hunter Estates and their homestead complexes are the surviving evidence of the foundation layer of settlement of the Hunter Region.

The evidence of this significance still exists today and is demonstrated by:

- The grid pattern surveyed and overlaid on the land in the 1820s still existing today in the NSW land titles system, the minor road systems, the early fence lines and the configuration of the surviving estates.
- The large number of notable persons in Australian history who settled the region and went on to develop the estates, founded the industries, and established the Hunter Region society of the early to mid-19th century.
- The colonial bungalow homesteads in their many forms, including their subsequent growth, together with the groupings of outbuildings and associated agricultural structures and elements (fences, racecourses, sheep and cattle runs, stock routes etc.) and archaeology, established during the establishment settlement period of 1820 to 1850.
- The picturesque landscape of the region with estate lands adjacent to the watercourses throughout the alluvial plains and river valleys and their homestead complexes situated on knolls surrounded by significant plantings including ‘marker trees’ and remnant gardens and domestic and agricultural outbuildings set in open pastoral and grazing land.
- The continuing foundational industries of sheep and cattle grazing, grain crops, vineyards, stock breeding and horse studs, many with state wide reputations and some known internationally for their products and outputs.
- The archaeological evidence of pre- and post-Contact Aboriginal occupation in the region and the associations and documented evidence of the interactions that occurred between Aboriginal people, the settlers and the Hunter Estate.
- The historic archaeology of the original settlement pattern of the region and subsequent growth and development of the Hunter Estate including the chains of settlement patterns and varying settlement types, the era of convict labour and the later period of tenant farming.
- The depth of knowledge of the region and interest in the Hunter Estates held by the Hunter Region community as shown in the great wealth of research, books, images, heritage studies, memoirs and other documentation relating specifically to the history of the region, its people, industries, buildings and the estates.

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