

SUMMARY OF AN INTERVIEW WITH DICK BURGESS

BY LEANNE DURIE

Dick Burgess, my maternal grandfather, was born on May 6th, 1916 to Herb and Alice Burges of Wyong. His mother's family hailed from Minmi and his father's from Wollombi. His paternal grandfather, Charles Burgess had been transported from England, apparently for buying turnips from a lady who had stolen them. Later he selected land at Paynes Crossing, near Wollombi, and remained there until he died at age 107.

In 1921 Dick's family moved from Wyong to Paterson, where his father drove a bullock team in the bush falling logs, cutting sleepers and girders for bridges. Later he worked in the office of the Co-Op at Paterson.

The house his family lived in was a very old brick home. It had solid stone steps that were worn in a half circle from use. The house had three bedrooms but he preferred the sleepout on the verandah. The house is located on half an acre of land on the banks of the Paterson River. His father used to farm the land with vegetables, he also fished from the river.

Paterson was, and still is, a small town, however, it was largely self sufficient. George Cant had a general store that sold things such as groceries and haberdashery. There was also a cafe, hairdresser, butcher bank and two hotels. The shops would send someone around to collect orders and these would then be delivered. A man named Creek also drove a horse and sulky from Maitland and took orders for anything that was needed and these would be delivered a few days later. If wished you never need leave your yard.

Paddle steamers used to come up the river to load timber; there were two wharves, one called Queens Wharf where Tucker Park is now and another under the railway bridge. The cream boat used to come up the river every morning to collect milk to deliver to Morpeth. This would have been in the late 1920's.

Dick left school in the midst of the depression. The year was 1932 and little work was available so he went into the bush cutting timber. Following this he worked at the BHP in Newcastle for five years. The workers went on strike for ten weeks and unwilling to return he applied for the third time to join the Police Force. This time he was successful and went on to enjoy 24 years of police work in the Maitland area.

In Dick's view the biggest changes in the area have been roads and communication and that these changes are for the better.

This is an interview with Alfred Frank Burgess, known as Dick Burgess, taped at his home in East Maitland by his granddaughter, Leanne Durie of Tenambit, the date is the 15th September, 1989.

Q. Your real name is Alfred, but everyone calls you Dick. How did that come about?

A. I've never been called anything else - even since a baby I'm told. My father's brother was Dick and no doubt I'm called after him.

Q. Where were you born?

A. Where?

Q. Yes

A. Wyong

Q. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A. I had one sister and three brothers, my sister was the eldest.

Q. When did your family come to Paterson?

A. About 1921

Q. Was that your father? That was your father wasn't it?

A. Who?

Q. That came - who was the first to move to Paterson?

A. Yes, Mother and father - yes, that came to Paterson.

Q. What were your parents names?

A. Herb, that was my father of course,

Herb and Alice

Q. Where did they come from?

A. Father was born in Wollombi and my mother Minmi, I think.

Q. Her family is from Minmi?

A. What?

Q. Was her family from Minmi?

A. I understand, yes - I don't know what they did there. I heard Minmi mentioned and Clarencetown was mentioned and then Wyong, and my Mother was only about 21 when she was married, I was young when they moved up this way, about 7 years old.

Q. What did your father do for a living?

A. He drove horse teams - he owned a bullock team - rode it, then he worked in the bush - timber work, falling logs, cutting sleepers, girders for bridges then he worked when he retired from that, in an office at the Quarry at Martins Creek - what to think if he'd have had the opportunity he could have done well for himself really because he worked in the office of the Co-op of Paterson.

he did the books for them, the Crouche's Garage for years there after he was finished in the bush until he eventually gave it up.

Q. Did he work for himself in the bush or did he work for a Company?

A No, he worked for himself.

Q. And what about your Grandparents - what were their names?

A. Mother's father was Alfred, that's probably where I got my name from, Hare, H.A.R.E., and mother's mother was Bridgette, they were catholic, yes Catholic and I didn't know dad's mother and father, they'd died long before I was born, but dad's father was married in England, he was born in 198, I'm sorry, 1776 at Salisbury, he married there, and then he, I'm told, he bought vegetables off a woman who had stolen them and as a result he was probably cited with receiving, he was sent out to Australia as a convict, but I don't know for how long and he married again out here, he selected land at Paynes Crossing, between Wollombi and Singleton, this wife eventually died and he married again and my father was born in the, the first wife out here, not the second one, the first one and the, I'm told, my grandfather used to walk from Paynes Crossing to Maitland to sell, sell produce that he grew, stay the night and walk back, goodness me, and he was 107 when he died.

Q. What was his name?

A. Charles, that's right, Charles Burgess.

Q. Can you remember your parents or grandparents describing the early days to you?

A. No, not really, I suppose its my fault - I didn't ask questions. No, I don't, wouldn't it have been interesting to find out what they used to do. I do know Dad got caught playing 2 up at Wyong and don't know whether he got away or whether he was charged with playing 2 up.

Q. Was that a serious offence?

A. Well that's it.

Q. Yes, but was it a serious offence?

A. I suppose, it was illegal and the school was raided, I don't know whether he was caught or whether he got away.

Q. Can you describe your house at Paterson, where it was and how it was laid out ?

A. Well it was a pure brick house, very old. The steps front and back were, into the house itself, were stone , a block of stone and they were worn from footsteps - they have worn in a half circle from countless footsteps, on the bank of the Paterson River, I suppose 1/2 an acre of ground from the main road down to the river bank, there was two bedrooms, a lounge room, I suppose you'd say, another bedroom, a third bed room with sleepouts on the verandah and a large kitchen that went for the full width of the house at the back.

Q. Did you sleep in the sleepout, or did you share ?

- A. No, I slept in the sleepout, out on the verandah, the verandah was covered in with lattice and asbestos, up so high, with blinds on the lattice.
- Q. Even in winter?
- A. Oh yes, it was good, I loved it outside.
- Q. Who was in the bedrooms?
- A. Probably no-one when I was in high school, my elder brother and sister had gone, they'd left home. Probably no-one.
- Q. What sort of furniture did you have?
- A. Ah, I know there were some chairs that your Mum would love now, old fashioned easy chairs, then there was heavy oak chairs and table, but ah, dressers, and.....I can't, I'm not really up on furniture.
- Q. What sort of stuff did your Mum cook?
- A. Oh, what did she cook? She was a good cook - cooked everything, yes, all sorts of things, gramma pies, apple pies, yeah, Dad used to go down the back and fish, we often had fish for a meal. He used to plough about half the area down towards the river, with all sorts of vegetables in there, good soil by the river bank.
- Q. Did he go hunting?
- A. Yes, he did before I was old enough to go with him, I know he and a friend used to go shooting rabbits, his friend had a stretch of grass at Paterson, away they'd go shooting rabbits.
- Q. What sort of chores did you have to do?
- A. Chores - Oh, we had a cow, I used to have to get up of a morning, a winters morning, and I had no shoes on my feet of course, I used to hunt the cow up and I'd get into where she was laying and it was lovely and warm, I'd keep my feet warm after the ice and frost on the grass. Get the cow, bring her back, I don't remember whether I milked her or not, perhaps I did, I don't remember but then I'd have to go to school later, after that, that would be high school too, I'd get the train at about a quarter to 8 I think, in the morning and come down here to school, get home about a quarter to six, six o'clock at night.
- Q. How long did the train trip take?
- A. Well, 1/4 to eight till 9 about an hour and a quarter - we used to get to school on time, get off here at Vic Street, walk up to the school, do my home work mostly before the train left that afternoon a lot of other blokes did too, catch the train, it used to leave Maitland railway station at 5 to 5 because in the winter time the sun would be just setting in the west as the train would pull out to go home.
- Q. That was Maitland Boys High wasn't it?
- A. Yes, there were two schools then, the Maitland Tech over where the Public Primary school is at Maitland now - you had to sit for an exam in primary school and you'd get to High School and if you'd missed out on that you finished up at Maitland Technical College,

of course, those that qualified went to high school, there were only two of us went to high school and the rest went to the Tech.

- Q. How many were there? Is this just from Paterson School?
- A. Yes, just from Paterson, yes, I don't remember Lea, oh, probably half a dozen.
- Q. Was it a big school? How many teachers would you have had at Paterson?
- A. Paterson, no, two teachers, 1st class, I don't even remember if there was kinder, 1st class, 2nd class and third in one room, and the 4th, fifth and sixth class in another room.
- Q. Just like now?
- A. Oh, I don't know - they've got new schools and everything at Paterson now.
- Q. Do you remember much about the historical things of Paterson? like....
- A. Well, I can remember the paddle wheel steamers coming up the river, loading timber at the wharf, there was a wharf - the Queens Wharf, where Tuckers Park is now, there was Queens Wharf there, there was then another wharf under the railway bridge further up and used to be up there, the cream boat used to come up the river every morning - there were, were no, apparently there's been no motor lorrys going picking up the milk in the surrounding areas and they'd take it to the river and boats would pick it up from the river and cart it to Morpeth, boats to Morpeth.
- Q. When was that?
- A. Well I can remember that well, so that'd be about in the 20's 1926,7,8 - I went to high school in 29..... we used to spend the summer in the river - beautiful, there was a tide there, you would get in the water and fish.
- Q. Did you?
- A. Yeah, I'll say - well thats about the only, I don't remember anything other of interest as far as this is concerned about the vocation of Paterson.
- Q. What sort of shops did they have in Paterson?
- A. A general store, George Cant had a general store, it's vacant there now, it was up past the church, go straight up then towards Gresford, theres a bank on the right hand corner, I think it might be closed now, you go straight ahead there and there was a General Store, groceries, drapery and that sort.of,anything you like.
- Q. That's pulled down now is it?
- A. Yes, its gone. Other stores, well there was a cafe, a restaurant there near the gift one is now, on your left as you go up around that sharp corner, a hairdresser up where they sell hamburgers now, a hotel, 2 hotels, top pub and the bottom pub we called it,we used to go there Sunday, we'd play cricket all day and take the visiting

team to the hotel perhaps, lived for cricket I did, loved cricket.

Q. Did you play for different areas?

A. Yes, we played all around the place, Gresford, Paterson, Vacy, Aungog, Woodville and then down here all around Maitland. I played my 1st grade game of cricket at thirteen and I played too long, I should of started bowls long before.

Q. Whereabouts did your parents shop - did they do all their shopping in Paterson or did they come to Maitland?

A. No, they used, well, they used to go, a chap named Creek, I forget his first name, used to drive a horse and sulky out from Maitland to Paterson and he'd call to our place and my mother would give him an order of how much, whatever she wanted, groceries, and then it would be delivered, I don't know when - some days later perhaps. The shop up town would send their boy around too.

Q. You never had to go to the shop if you didn't want to?

A. No, you didn't go to the shop if you never wished to, the butcher used to call, how much meat do you want? you name it they used to call, vegetables, fruit - like they still do, they called - no you didn't have to leave the house - never thought of that before.

Q. What about the fellow from Maitland, how often did he come up?

A. Now, I don't, only about once a fortnight I think, an old horse and cart, sulky from Maitland, with groceries, it would be expensive wouldn't it. It would have to be expensive to travel across all day.

Q. What about industries? What sort of industries did they have?

A. No.

Q. No sawmills or would they be up in the mountains?

A. Not at Paterson, one chap, started up one there but I don't think it lasted very long, see the timber used to be carted by bullock teams to the railway and then they say 2-3 truck loads of logs ready to carted away, they'd order through the railway so many trucks and then the trucks would come when they came they'd load logs on, they'd load them on with bullocks, there was no cranes or anything then, they'd hook them up and the bullocks would pull them up the skids onto the train..

Q. What other public transport, was the train the only way to get into town besides your own car, did they have buses?

A. Yes, one man had a taxi, Bill Collins - the brother of the chap that owned the service station/garage, he had a taxi, you could hire him to go to Maitland if you wished, if you had enough money, I don't remember how much it was though.

Q. Expensive?

A. Yes - I know my sister, she worked in Newcastle and she would come home week-ends occasionally and to get back she'd have to get the train on Sunday afternoon to go back to Newcastle, she'd have to perhaps hire him to take her to Maitland, but I don't know how much.

Q. The trains weren't very frequent?

A. Oh, there wasn't any from Paterson then - oh on weekdays there was the school train in the morning and there was, you could come home about 2 o'clock from Maitland, the north coast mail went through - that was the only way you got to Maitland then, in those days it was only the train, later on there was a bus service.

Q. When did you leave school?

A. When? 1932

Q. Where did you go? Where did you work then?

A. Work, well there wasn't anywhere to go - it was right in the middle of the depression and there were no jobs available anywhere. I remember my father saying to me, if you don't do well at school I'll put you on a bakers cart, wasn't even that available when I left....went out into the bush, cut sleepers out of logs, which I didn't like of course. But I didn't have any ambition really Lea, I got a scholarship in accountancy when I was at school, I didn't keep up, I could have done it through correspondence.

Q. Did you work while you were at school?

A. The only job I had was selling oranges of a Sunday - I got 5 shillings a day for that and a lovely cup of tea. I can remember in the morning, I gave a chap the wrong change and he was heading north and I didn't realize until after he had gone - I was so upset, I told the, see I was out there on my own, I told the owner what I'd done, a Mister Doyle, and that afternoon Mr. Doyle was with me when the chap came back, he called in and gave back the money that I'd given him too much back, so it was just as well I'd told him, wasn't it.

Q. Yes it was.

A. Yes, that was the only job I had - 5 shillings for a days work.

Q. What about your courting days? Where did you meet the girls?

A. Dances, dances were the only place you'd meet them then, oh, there was a, what you'd call a Church of England, not Sunday school it was after Sunday School, it was a fellowship for young people in the Church of England. Oh, yes you used to go to Church of a Sunday regularly, because you used to walk home with a girl after and that was probably the attraction.

Q. How old were you then?

A. Well, 17 I'd say - 16 to 17. Then of course there was dances. According to Gran I was a shocking dancer so I'd, she was a good dancer.

Q. Did you have to be a certain age to go to the dances?

A. No, not really. I suppose once you started to take an interest in girls you went to the dances - didn't meet them otherwise, although I used to go the euchre parties with old ladies and old men, there wasn't much to entertain a young person in Paterson in those days. Fishing in the winter and in the summertime, course you could play cricket and swim. I used to play tennis too, yes you met girls at dances.

Q. Where were the dances ?

A. Dances well they were at Paterson, Vacy and Gresford. Martins Creek was noted as a wild place for dances - I only went there once, you got into fights at Martins Creek, I first met Gran at a dance at Gresford. Also I worked on a dairy farm - a pound a week and my keep - probably twelve months.

Q. Whereabouts?

A. One of Joyce's father's dairies. I tried to join the Police Force Cadets at sixteen, failed on my size, failed on my size, you probably wouldn't be here today if I'd have passed.

Q. You wouldn't have met Gran?

A. No, your mother mightn't have been born. Then I tried again when I was 23, I was only 11 stone 4, six feet tall and 11 stone 4. and I was too light for the foot so the sergeant asked if I could ride a horse. I said yeah, I can ride a horse, used to ride up at Grans, they had horses. I used to love it, ride all around. But they had a buck jumper called Sailor, and I'd never touched on before, the first horse they brought in was a mare, they herded it in the bullring, the bullring was about 50 yards long by about 30 wide and it was all sand with high fences all around it, and I had to get on this mare while the Sergeant watched how you mounted, check the reigns and then he'd walk, trot, canter and then he'd say right, cross your stirrups and you'd take your feet out of the stirrups and cross them over on the saddle so you'd have no stirrups. right, walk, trot, canter and I'd overheard, I'd been told by one of the constables that when the sergeant cracks his whip the mare's likely to prop, swing right or swing left, and it was only a saddle, no kneepads to hang onto with your legs, and then "right, over that hurdle" and when the horse was in the air he'd crack the whip and the horse wheeled sharply to the right. I just hung on - I nearly fell off "right to get off" and called in Sailor, I'd been told what he was up to, so I went to measure the stirrups - like you always do when you get on a horse, and the sergeant said you won't need that - how right he was. I didn't get in that saddle, the 1st time he ripped my shirt from my shoulder down the sleeve, Sailor did, I got one foot in the stirrup, I didn't hit the saddle and he'd thrown me about 20 feet, so they said "right, we'll hold him for you" - so they held him and I got on again "you right?" Yes ! so they let him go - he threw me 4 times, I went to get on the fifth time and they said "right, that'll do". There was one other chap who was going for it at the same time, he got thrown once and he said "that'll do, you'll hurt yourself." He passed me and he failed the other chap. I don't know why he passed me.

Q. Where did you have to go for that?

A. That was Redfern, the police depot at Redfern.

Q. You had to go all the way down there to tryout?

A. Yes, well I wasn't called up. The next time I tried I was 29.

Q. What did you do in the meantime?

- Q. How long were you on BHP?
- A. In the meantime I worked at the B.H.P. Open hearth - the heat, dust, 3 shifts - a nightmare to think of it now - over 50 years.
- Q. Did you live in Newcastle?
- A. No, I lived here in Vic Street. I'd catch the train down. They went out on strike at the BHP for 10 weeks and during that 10 weeks we went back up to Gran's parents place at East Gresford. It was so beautiful up there, clean air, bed everynight instead of shiftwork, I was so dissatisfied with going back to the BHP that I decided to give the Police Force another go before I was thirty - thirty was the limit then. So I went down and they said - "can you start next Monday?" That was that.
- Q. How long were you in Maitland with the Police?
- A. 24 years. They told us when we were sworn in those who were married and had a home to go to they send us back as near as possible to where you came from. This fellow's from Newcastle, Newcastle, Newcastle, me No.10 where's No.10 - it was Paddington I didn't know where that was, and the other chap I knew he was sent to Paddington too, No.10.
- Q. How many were there?
- A. About 10 of us. It was a while before I was sent back to Maitland in the meanwhile I was in Sydney in classes in the Depot and in came the mounted sergeant and he said "anyone here fancy themselves as a gentleman jockey?" a few had put our hands up, I put my hand up, they had no Sailor by that time - so out we got on horses and I'd forgotten about it till one winters night, it was raining and I was about to go on nightwork and there was a knock on the door, it was police - report to the depot in the morning for mounted training, so from then on I was on the horse. We used to do musical rides, we used to go to Centennial park every morning and do musical rides in the show ground, went to Randwick races on the horses, opened Parliament, used to ride up Macquarie Street, Castle Hill Show used to ride there and it was wet and the horse slipped over and we came down sideways. Then I transferred to Maitland.
- Q. Did you ride horses in Maitland, didn't they have mounted?
- A. No - no horses - that was only ceremonial down there - we thought we were something extra, nice clothes, white stripes down our arm, britches, light leather across our shoulders, around our waist, I have a photo somewhere But I don't know which one is me. There was musical rides done on the inside of the Burke Street depot for a passing out parade - the police depot occupied one whole square of the centre, was all lawn and the passing out parade was for the probationary constables and we did musical riding there and they took photos, somebody did, I don't know which one is me now, it was a fair way away, So I came to Maitland and I was here less than 12 months when I got on the motorbikes and I stayed on traffic then for the rest of my service.
- Q. Well yes, then it was, I went to Maitland in the afternoon after I was sworn in and they said start tomorrow on night shift, 10pm-5am in the morning - I had a month of that straight and the next 2 months we worked 7am-9.30pm and then tomorrow we'd work 1.30pm to midnight, alternate each day, daywork one day and nightwork shift the next for 2 months and I had 1 day a week off - they'd let me accumulate that 1 day to 2, I'd have 2 for the

- Q. How long were you on motorbikes?
- A. A bit over 12 years - an outfit for 5 and solo for a bit over 7.
- Q. Where did you have to go?
- A. Maitland was the headquarters and we used to have to go once a month to Scone, stay the night, once a month to Gloucester and stay overnight and then later on Taree came into our area too, I had a solo by that time and I used to go there and to Forster Christmas time and New Year and stay there for several days.
- Q. What do you mean by solo? No sidecar?
- A. No, no side car. Solo bike. Nelson Bay was our area, a big area, we did whatever we wanted to, when we wanted to.
- Q. What did Newcastle do if you did all that?
- A. Well, Newcastle, Maitland then was a subdistrict, Newcastle was the head of the district, was the head of Maitland and Newcastle included up near, nearly to Port Macquarie and down to Gosford, Newcastle did so they had plenty enough to do.
- Q. What sort of things did you have to do - they didn't have radar or Breathalizers?
- A. No, No, No, we had to put in a return every month on the amount of work we did and the amount of breaches we got, although the Department would never say you'd have to get so many breaches, but if you didn't get them then they knew you weren't really working. We had to type our own breaches out. We take the particulars in a field book in the field and then we'd come back and say twice a week - depending on how many we had we'd type them out ourselves, and then we got a cadet at Maitland and amongst other things one of his jobs was to get our journals and type our breaches out, so we had 2 books, 1 for the cadet and we'd take the other one out with us. It was a free life - a good life then, you could come and go as you pleased, we had no radio, so the station couldn't contact you and say do this or that, once you left, sometimes, quite often, the cyclists from Mayfield would ring up and say meet you at Hexham bridge tomorrow - bring your lunch and we'll go up the highway. Yeah, right in the morning we would set off and go up to the highway then wasn't the new one, it was the old one over the Bulahdelah mountains, we'd go up and work there for a shift and come home, or go to Singleton, a mate and I'd go off to Singleton and stay there the day work had a good time.
- Q. What were the wages then?
- A. When I left the BHP I was getting about between £14-16 per fortnight, that's \$28-32 a fortnight, when I started at the Police Force I was getting a bit over £12 pound a fortnight so I lost money.
- Q. Was it less hours - it was still shift work wasn't it?
- A. Well yes, then it was, I went to Waverly in the afternoon after I was sworn in and they said start tomorrow on night shift, 10pm-6am in the morning - I had a month of that straight and the next 2 months we worked 7am-3.30pm today and then tomorrow we'd work 3.30pm to midnight, alternate each day, daywork one day and afternoon shift the next for 2 months and I had 1 day a week off - they'd let me accumulate that 1 day to 2, I'd have 2 for the

and I'd come home once a fortnight - catch the train home, when they approved my transfer they said how long before you can go? I said overnight! I didn't really take it in, when they told me I was placed in Sydney.

Q. Getting back to Paterson, did the depression or the wars affect life much?

A. The depression did, no work, there was some sort of Government assistance, I think, I was never ever involved in it, I don't know if they called it the dole or not. I'm not sure of that. There'd have to be something or people would starve. I don't really know.

Q. Is that when businesses and things close down and the store, the bank?

A. Well no - there wasn't that much business in Paterson. If you took away the store, the bank, the butcher, the baker, the schoolteacher, the policeman, the railway, there wasn't much else. I don't know how all the people made a living.

Q. Looking back, what do you think have been the biggest changes in the area?

A. This area?

Q. Paterson, Maitland.

A. Maitland and Paterson, I suppose communication, better roads, radio, television, a lot of properties are cut up now to 10 acre lots and 5 acre lots and lovely homes built on them, where before there was practically nothing, say between Woodville and Paterson, now there's nice homes every 1/2 a mile or so, Yes, I guess it would be the roads are so much better, motor vehicles.

Q. Do you think its better or worse?

A. Ah, it's got to be better, we all say the good old days, but nobody would really want to go back. I would n't mind knocking say 50 years off my life, but Gran— no way - she doesn't want to be in it at all.

OPEN FOUNDATION

WED 7-9.

M. HENRY.

REGIONAL HISTORY ASSIGNMENT

- THE HISTORY OF SHIPPING ON
THE PATERSON
RIVER.

LEANNE DURIE

OCT 89.

The history of the magnificent steamships that ferried cargo and passengers between Morpeth and Sydney has been well detailed in many histories of the Hunter Valley. However, the ships that were the backbone of life further inland along the Paterson River on the river between Jones Vista and Fillingby, in 1830 she do not share the same recognition. For a generation and more surrendered 40 acres of this land for the erection of a public everything that came to Paterson and the properties along the way wharf at the head of navigation on the Paterson (1). There was had to be transported by river.

In 1801 a party led by Lieutenant Colonel William Paterson this was used mainly for the loading of timber. aboard the *Lady Nelson* came across two rivers, which were later named the Paterson and William's, on exploratory trip on the Hunter River. On their return to Sydney they recommended the site of Newcastle for a penal colony (1). In 1811 Governor Macquarie visited the Newcastle settlement and inspected land twenty miles up river. He was so impressed with what he saw that he had a few small farms established there. In 1821 the Hunter Valley became available to free settlers and a village emerged at Paterson primarily because of its excellent position. Paterson was at the head of the navigational part of the river and the banks were high making it an ideal location for a wharf.

The introduction of steamships to The Hunter Valley occurred in 1831 with the arrival of the *Sophia Jane*. The engineer of this ship was Mr James Keppie who later settled in Paterson (2). the northern approach at Lagg's ferry. At Hinton a slip for repairing vessels was provided by Mr Coombs and a wharf built in

(1) W. J. Goold in, A. C. ARCHER., The Settlement of The Paterson Valley Maitland 1986, p2.

(2) Y. McBurney, Road to Paterson of Old Newcastle From Nobbys to Paterson. Newcastle, 1987 p46

Before the arrival of the steamships shipping on the Hunter was dominated by small steam packets and shallow draught droghers

(3). The wheel vessel that was worked by horses to convey heavy

In 1822 Susan Ward applied for land and was given 600 acres loads from the steamers at Murrumbidgee to Maitland and Paterson (3) on the river between *Bona Vista* and *Tillimby*. In 1830 she

as well as carrying produce such as timber, maize, surrendered 90 acres of this land for the erection of a public wheat, wine, cotton wool, tobacco and even wild pigs steamers wharf at the head of navigation on the Paterson (4). There was such as the *Marie*, *Maranda* and the *Jane Marie* were used to ferry another wharf on the site where Tucker Park is located now and passengers. Paterson was the stepping off point for people this was used mainly for the loading of timber.

traveling further north. From Paterson they would proceed by

It wasn't long before industries were established, built coach to their destination, often spending the night at Paterson around shipping on the Paterson. Daniel Peattie, a shipwright, before he died. As a result of this trade Paterson located five built three steamers on Brisbane Grove, opposite the mouth to into a coach repair factory, a courthouse, police and police Brown's Creek. These he named *Pegasus*, *Paterson Packet* and *Comet*.

harrains, four blacksmiths, two wheelwrights, three bootmakers, a Mr William Corner of *Cintra* estate chartered these to pick up

tannery, two callers and various grocery stores in addition to wheat along the river between Maitland and Paterson for his flour the two flour mills and shipyard (7). Timber was also a big

mills. He also connected a tramway with the wharf and thousands industry and there was plenty of work. Wood was in great demand of bags of grain, pigs and produce were shipped from there. A

for building houses, planks for ship's sides, ribs and beams, fourth steamer *The Falcon* also collected wheat. There was also a

callers for wheelwrights cedar and rosewood for furniture and shipyard at Wallalong where the three masted barquentine soft woods for candle and soap boxes. Dozens of men were employed *Australian Sovereign* was built by Edward King and John Roderick in the timber industry.

in 1871-72 for the china trade (5). In the early 1900's Edward King's son, William King, built a steamer which was launched off

1840 after John Falson of Duckenfield called a meeting of his the northern approach at Larg's ferry. At Hinton a slip for

influential friends who were unhappy with the various companies repairing vessels was provided by Mr Coombs and a wharf built in that controlled Hunter River shipping. It went on to become the

(3) E. Hunt, The Tocal Story.p10

(4) W. A. Wood, Dawn in the Valley. Sydney, 1972 p270

(5) J. Turner, J. Sullivan, Photos of Old Newcastle From Nobbys

to Paterson. Newcastle, 1987 p48

first successful steamship company in Australia (8). In 1832 George Yeomans and Benjamin Singleton built a fine however, the people of the Hunter Valley became paddle wheel vessel that was worked by horses to convey heavy disillusions with this company and as a result the Newcastle loads from the steamers at Morpeth to Maitland and Paterson (6).

As well as carrying produce such as timber, maize, wheat, wine, cotton wool, tobacco and even wild pigs steamers such as the *Marie*, *Waraneen* and the *Anna Maria* were used to ferry passengers. Paterson was the stepping off point for people traveling further north. From Paterson they would proceed by coach to their destination, often spending the night at Paterson

before hand. As a result of this trade Paterson boasted five inns, a coach repair station, a courthouse, police and police barracks, four blacksmiths, two wheelwrights, three bootmakers, a tannery, two tailors and various grocery stores in addition to the two flour mills and shipyard (7). Timber was also a big industry and there was plenty of work. Wood was in great demand for building houses, planks for ship's sides, ribs and beams, wheelwrights cedar and rosewood for furniture and soft woods for candle and soap boxes. Dozens of men were employed in the timber industry.

The Hunter River Steamship Navigation Company was formed in 1840 after John Eales of Duckenfield called a meeting of his influential friends who were unhappy with the various companies that controlled Hunter River shipping. It went on to become the

(6) Wood, Dawn in the Valley. p270
(7) C.B> Mitchell, The Hunter's River. Newcastle, 1973 p149

first successful steamship company in Australia (8). In time however, the people of the Hunter Valley became disillusioned with this company and as a result the Newcastle Steamship Navigation Company started in 1880. In 1891 these companies amalgamated to become the Newcastle and Hunter River Steamship Navigation Company (9).

At times the usually placid Paterson was the scene of problems. In Miss Phoebe Broughton's diary in the early 1840's she reports that, after a visit to Gresford she boarded the *William IV* at Paterson to go to Morpeth. But the steamer stuck several times, and she writes "we were at last obliged to leave her and go to the inn at Paterson to sleep." (10). On Boxing Day 1912 the passenger ferry *Guthrey* struck a rock near the Woodville bridge that was invisible due to the high tide. The *Guthrey* was fully loaded with passengers but, fortunately, there were no lives lost. The impact was quite severe and she listed considerably. The passengers all had to be taken ashore by small boats (11).

On August 11, 1911 the first locomotive came to land before a single train had been pushed through. The reason for this is the river; they provided a significant highway for

(8) R. Parsons, A Pioneer Australian Steamship Company. Lobethal

S.A. 1970 p10

river and the steamboats before the railway. Along the rivers

(9) A. Wilson, Newcastle Packets and the Hunter Valley

p163

(10) E. Hunt, The Local Story. Aust, p10

(11) Turner, Photos of old Newcastle. p56

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Paterson. From this time the steamer's days were numbered and the bustling township of Paterson went into decline. Nothing could compete with the speed of the North Coast Railway. The railway bridge at Paterson passed directly over the main wharf, and it is ironic that in 1914 the Newcastle and Hunter Valley Steamship Company's steamer *Marie* was set alight and burnt to the waterline by a spark from a passing locomotive. In 1909 while the *Anna Maria* was unloading ironwork for the construction of the railway bridge a three ton portion slipped from the slings and crashed through the deck and bottom (12).

By the 1920's all the river traffic had been handed over to the creamboats. These were mostly plain, white-painted motor launches, very different from the bright noisy paddle churning packet boats of the early days. The creamboats maintained old traditions, calling at every property, collecting one or two cream cans from the shelter at the end of each wharf and delivering groceries, mail and even passengers at times (13).

The whole basis for prosperity of the Hunter Valley had been laid before a single track had been pushed through. The reason for this is the rivers; they provided a magnificent highway for the people of the Hunter whose entire existence depended upon the river and the steampackets before the railway. Along the rivers of the lower Hunter the steampackets were as bright, regular and welcome a sight as the steamboats on the Mississippi.

(12) *ibid*, p73

(13) Hunt, The Tocal Story. p12

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