A Thematic History of the City of Grafton

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Grafton

Grafton sits astride the Clarence River in north-eastern New South Wales. It is the major urban area within the Clarence Valley Local Government Area, which was incorporated in February 2004 in terms of the *Local Government Act* 1993. Clarence Valley was created by the amalgamation of the City of Grafton with Maclean Shire, together with most of Copmanhurst and Pristine Waters Shires, and a small part of Richmond Valley Shire.[1] This study is concerned only with the area known as the City of Grafton as it existed immediately prior to its incorporation into the new Clarence Valley LGA.

Grafton and South Grafton were together incorporated in 1859 as the Municipality of Grafton, comprising three wards, in terms of the *Municipalities Act* 1858.[2] In December 1858, very shortly after the passage of this act, a public meeting was held in North Grafton for the purpose of 'considering the desirability of petitioning for the town to be placed under the Municipal Act'. About 40 persons, principally owners of property in the town, attended, and a committee was formed to carry the idea forward. Within a few weeks, a petition in favour of declaring Grafton a municipality had received the signatures of three-quarters of those residents whose names were on the electoral roll, and this was duly forwarded to the Colonial Secretary. A proclamation was subsequently published, declaring the towns of North and South Grafton to be a municipality, and dates were fixed for the nomination of aldermen and for an election.[3] Thus, Grafton became the eighth urban area in New South Wales to be granted municipal status under the colony's first general local government legislation.

The nominations for candidates for the positions of aldermen were held on 25 August 1859, and at the election of aldermen, held in the Grafton court house on 1 September 1859, three aldermen were returned from each of the three wards. They were: for first ward, Samuel Avery (farmer), Richard Payne (farmer), and William Lambert (building contractor); for second ward, Alfred Lardner (farmer), James T. Jones (publican), and John E. Chapman (boot and shoe maker); and for third ward, Thomas Bawden (auctioneer), William Cowan Jnr (publican), and Patrick Kennedy (storekeeper). Davies has

1 *NSW Government Gazette*, 25 February 2004.
2 *NSW Government Gazette*, 20 July 1859; date of proclamation, 19 July 1859.
3 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 9 August 1859; *Armidale Express*, 8 January 1859, 10 September 1859; *Maitland Mercury*, 13 January, 3 February 1859, 18 August 1859; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 January 1859.

commented that the social structure of the first council represented the emancipation of the town from the dominance of the pastoral community, and a step toward consolidating the new farming community and growing business classes of the town.[4]

The council assembled in the court house for its first meeting on 16 September, and elected Chapman as mayor. The minutes of the meeting reveal that Alfred Lardner was absent. He may have had second thoughts about a position on council, as in his place was Thomas Shoveller (storekeeper), who had received the fourth highest number of votes in the same ward at the 1 September election. Shoveller took part, with Chapman, in the poll for the position of mayor. From 6 October the council met in temporary chambers at the National School.[5]

The Municipality of Grafton was renamed the Borough of Grafton under the *Municipalities Act* 1867 under which all existing municipalities became known as boroughs.[6] The 1867 Act also provided that when the population of a municipality had exceeded 4,000, a fourth ward could be created, and this happened in 1882 in the case of Grafton.[7]

In 1896, that part of the Borough of Grafton lying south of the river was, upon a petition of ratepayers, separated to form a distinct municipality called the Municipal District of South Grafton. Also at that time, the reduced Borough of Grafton was reconstituted under that name.[8] For the next sixty years the northern and southern parts of Grafton were administered separately. The first election for the separated South Grafton municipality were held on 10 February 1897, and the first meeting of the newly-formed South Grafton Municipal Council was held in the School of Arts a few days later.[9]

Local Government was extended across much of the state through the *Local Government (Shires) Act* 1905, which created shires in the vast unincorporated rural areas between the existing municipalities. Thus, in 1906 Copmanhurst Shire was created bordering Grafton in the north, and Orara and Dorrigo

4 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 30 August 1859, 6 September 1859; CRHS Newsletter no. 27; Davies, *History*.
5 CRHS Newsletter no. 27; Grafton Municipal Council Minute Book.
6 Larcombe, *The Stabilization of Local Government*, p. 150.
7 *NSW Government Gazette*, 18 December 1882.
8 *NSW Government Gazette*, 11 November 1896; date of proclamation 6 November 1896.
9 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 13 and 16 February 1897.

Shires were created surrounding South Grafton in the south. Part of Dorrigo Shire adjoining South Grafton became Nymboida Shire in 1913.[10]

Grafton was proclaimed as a city, and South Grafton as a town, in 1885, under the *Crown Lands Act* 1884, at a time when together they constituted a single local government area, the Borough of Grafton.[11] This legally separated the city and town areas from the parishes (Great Marlow and Southampton, respectively) of which they had been parts. It has been stated that city status was conferred upon North Grafton by virtue of it becoming the seat of a Church of England bishop following the dedication of Christ Church Cathedral, Grafton, on 25 July 1884.[12] The basis for this belief is not known. No mention or discussion of the conferral of city status has been found in the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* around the time of the gazettal, suggesting that it was not something of great significance to the Grafton community.

Despite being a 'city' in terms of the *Crown Lands Act*, which meant little in practical terms, the local government authority administering North Grafton continued to be styled a 'borough' or 'municipal' council for many years after 1885. In fact, the circumstances surrounding the adoption of the name City of Grafton for the local government area on the northern side of the river are quite mysterious.

The *Local Government (Extension) Act* 1906 (s.8) provided that a municipality which complied with certain population and revenue requirements could be proclaimed as a city. This provision was continued by the consolidating *Local Government Act* 1906 (s.8), and the *Local Government Act* 1919 (s.11). Accordingly, city status was granted to Broken Hill in 1907, and to such places as Wollongong, Maitland, Lithgow, Wagga Wagga, Katoomba, Tamworth, Orange, Albury and Lismore in the 1940s.[13]

Grafton, however, was not proclaimed as a city in terms of the Local Government Acts, probably because the population within its small geographical area did not reach the statutory minimum of 20,000 (15,000 from 1938). Nevertheless, the name City of Grafton came into regular use for the north-side local government area in 1917. The adoption of the name seems to

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[10] Copmanhurst, Orara and Dorrigo Shires were proclaimed in the *NSW Government Gazette*, 7 March 1906. Nymboida, created from part of Dorrigo Shire, was proclaimed on 6 August 1913.

[11] *NSW Government Gazette*, 20 March 1885, pp. 1853-54, 1932-33.

[12] Moorhead, *Cathedral on the Clarence*, pp. 51, 53.

[13] *NSWGG*, 17 July 1907; NSW, Department of Local Government, Report for the period 1 July 1940 to 30 June 1951. *NSWPP* 1950-51-52, vol. 3; Maiden, *History of Local Government*, p. 108; Larcombe, *The Stabilization of Local Government*, p. 298.

coincide with the reconstitution of the council in that year following a period under administration.

In May 1916, Grafton Muncipal Council was disbanded and civic affairs placed in the hands of a Local Government Department administrator as a result, as the *Sydney Morning Herald* put it, of 'muddle, incompetency, and dishonesty'. The administrator withdrew after about ten months, and the election of a new council was authorised.[14] When the first meeting of the reconstituted council was held on 12 March 1917, the name Grafton Municipal Council was continued, but afterward the style Grafton City Council was used fairly consistently.[15] The basis for this change is not known.

On 1 January 1957 the two parts of Grafton, then known as the City of Grafton and the Municipality of South Grafton, were reunited, and together with parts of the adjoining Copmanhurst, Orara and Nymboida Shires they formed an enlarged City of Grafton. The enlarged city incorporated some existing infrastructure and industry (for example, the Grafton Brewery and the South Grafton Meatworks) that had originally been established within the surrounding shires. The inclusion of rural land from Nymboida and Orara Shires was specifically to create, on the southern side, a non-urban fringe to what otherwise would have been an entirely urbanised city.[16]

When first created in 1859, the Municipality of Grafton comprised 4.8 square miles (about 12.4 square kilometres) of land, and had only 1,000 inhabitants. Nearly a century-and-a-half later, just prior to its inclusion in the Clarence Valley Local Government Area, the City of Grafton had been enlarged substantially to about 31 square miles (80 square kilometres; mainly through the addition of rural land to South Grafton from the adjoining shires), and its population had grown manifold to about 17,200.[17]

Historical Themes

Four major themes have been chosen through which to represent the history of Grafton City. They are:

1. Discovery, exploration and occupation;

2. Urban development;

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14 *NSW Government Gazette*, 19 January 1917, p. 260.
15 *Daily Examiner*, 7, 13 and 31 March 1917, 2 April 1917, 5 May 1917.
16 *NSW Government Gazette*, 30 November 1956, pp. pp. 3503-3514; Larcombe, 1978, p. 247; *Richmond River Express*, 23 May 1956; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 May 1956.
17 Estimated resident population at 30 June 2003; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004, *Regional population growth, Australia and New Zealand, 2002-2003* (ABS 3218.0)

3. Transport and communication; and

4. Secondary industry.

Because a large proportion of the local government area is urbanised, the urban development theme is a particularly important one, and Chapter 2 is accordingly large, incorporating several sub-themes, the main six of which are:

2.1. Law and Public Administration

2.2. Commercial

2.3. Education

2.4. Religion

2.5. Hotels (Licensed Public Houses)

2.6. Parks and Gardens

Historical Sources

Consistent with the funds made available for the preparation of this report, it was to be based primarily on existing, published, secondary sources, such as works of local history and reports of previous heritage studies, with very limited original research. It became apparent early in the study, however, that the nature and scope of available secondary literature would not have allowed an appropriate and adequate thematic history to be produced if the intended approach had been followed. Consequently, a great number of unbudgeted hours have been spent using a range of primary sources to supplement and verify the secondary literature. Notable among these is the main Grafton newspaper, *The Clarence and Richmond Examiner* (est. 1859) later *The Daily Examiner* (from 1915). *The Maitland Mercury* (est. 1843) and *The Armidale Express* (est. 1856) are important sources of Grafton news for the years prior to the establishment of *The Clarence and Richmond Examiner*. The more useful secondary works include *The Clarence River and the City of Grafton: economic and social development 1830-1880* (Davies c.1956), *The Bawden Lectures* (Law 1987), and *European settlement in the Clarence River district before 1850* (Mackey 2001). A bibliography of works consulted and cited appears at the end of the report.

Figure 1: Map showing the boundaries of Grafton City, and some places referred to in this report.

1 DISCOVERY, EXPLORATION AND EARLIEST OCCUPATION

The theme of 'discovery, exploration and earliest occupation' is concerned mainly with the decade from the late 1830s until the late 1840s, culminating in the survey and naming of the town. This period of time has been dealt with in great detail by Mackey (2001) in her *European settlement in the Clarence River district before 1850*, an important source for this chapter.

Discovery and Exploration to 1839

By the end of the eighteenth century, both James Cook and Matthew Flinders had sailed along and charted what is now the northernmost coast of New South Wales. Cook sailed the *Endeavour* northward past the Clarence River in May 1770, but did not see it. In 1799, Flinders, sailing northward in the sloop *Norfolk*, unwittingly discovered its entrance; on 11 July he found at latitude 29° 26' 28" south the entrance to a 'wide shoal bay' but, thinking it deserving of no more than 'a superficial examination', failed to discover the substantial river which emptied into it.[1]

In August 1828, Captain Henry Rous, commanding H.M.S. *Rainbow*, discovered the entrance to the Clarence River. He observed 'the mouth of a large River apparently running in a WNW direction'. He 'sent [the] pinnace to sound for an entrance, but without success from the surf breaking so high on the bar'.[2] Rous did not realise, it seems, that this was Flinders's Shoal Bay. Thus, it was left to later explorers to place the Clarence River on the map.[3]

In the meantime, numerous escaped convicts traversed the country between Moreton Bay and Port Macquarie on foot in the early 1820s, particularly in the years after 1824 when the northern outpost was founded. During the decade

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1 Account of the proceedings of the *Norfolk*, in Collins, D., 1802, *An account of the English colony in New South Wales*. Volume 2 (T. Cadell jun. and W. Davies, London; reprinted 1975, A. H. and A. W. Reed, Sydney), pp. 163-165. Bibliographical details of Flinders's account of the voyage of the *Norfolk* can be found in Steele, J. G., 1972, *The explorers of the Moreton Bay district, 1770-1830* (University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia), p. 9.

2 Log of the Frigate *Rainbow*, 20 August 1828.

3 The departure of the *Rainbow* from Sydney on 14 August 1828 was announced in the *Sydney Gazette*, 15 August 1828. The log of the *Rainbow*, is held by the Public Records Office, London. A copy of the log for part of the voyage only (18-30 August incl.) is held in the library of the Richmond River Historical Society, Lismore (3133-G) but this contains very little geographical information. A condensed account of Rous's visit to these rivers was published in October 1828 in Rev. Wilton's *Australian Quarterly Journal* (Anon. [Rous], 'A Description of the Rivers Clarence [Tweed] and Richmond,…', *Australian Quarterly Journal of Theology, Literature, and Science*, vol. 1(4), October, pp. 352-355). Although this article was published anonymously, it has been attributed to Rous (e.g. by Lang, *Cooksland*). A brief account of Rous's voyage was also published in the *Sydney Gazette*, 5 September 1828.

after the establishment of the penal settlement at Moreton Bay, a veritable flood of runaways travelled the coast southwards in pursuit of freedom. The *Sydney Gazette* of 1 December 1825, for instance, carries a report that four prisoners, escaped from Moreton Bay, had arrived at Port Macquarie after a journey of five weeks. They reported having crossed no less than sixty rivers or streams and that about '30 miles' north of Trial Bay they found a river 'as large as the Hastings' (probably the Clarence, although this is considerably farther north of Trial Bay than 30 miles). 'Plains of a boundless extent' were described as lying between Port Macquarie and Moreton Bay, and 'the country altogether [was] said to be equal, if not superior, to any other part of the continent.'[4] Clearly, many Europeans had traversed the area around the Clarence River by the time Rous visited it in 1828, but their informal reports added little to the geographical knowledge of the area.

In the early 1830s the Clarence River remained formally unknown; a new map of the colony published by Arrowsmith about 1833 showed no large rivers between Port Macquarie and Moreton Bay. The *Sydney Herald*, however, pre-empted the discovery of one by remarking that 'it [could not] be questioned that the surplus waters of [this region] must find some outlet to the sea'.[5] Indeed, the existence of a 'Big River' somewhere between Port Macquarie and Moreton Bay became well established, if mainly from the often vague and inconsistent reports of numerous escaped convicts who had crossed it.[6]

In 1838, the apocryphal 'Big River' was explored to a distance of '120 miles' from the sea[7] by Capt. James Butcher in the schooner *Eliza*. This voyage furnished the earliest known detailed, first-hand, published description of the river,[8] and its first map. [9] Butcher was not the first, however, to navigate the Big River. On 5 May 1838, the Schooner *Susan* left Sydney with a party of sawyers, for the purpose of cutting cedar 'from the banks of a river near Moreton Bay'. She was reportedly 'the first vessel which has gone to that place'.[10] When the *Susan* returned to Sydney on 2 July with a cargo of cedar

4 *Sydney Gazette*, 1 December 1825, p. 2.
5 *Sydney Herald*, 8 July 1833.
6 By 1835, John Mackintosh, Chief Constable of the penal settlement at Moreton Bay, had travelled past the entrance of the Big River in a whaleboat. He did not enter the river and wrote only that the entrance 'seemed to have a fine deep channel little or no bar, with a very strong current'. *Colonist*, 17 December 1835.
7 Butcher had in fact travelled only about 70 miles.
8 *Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, Supplement, 10 December 1838; reprinted from *Sydney Gazette*, 8 December 1838.
9 'Sketch plan of the "Big River" (Clarence) from an eye survey by Mr Butcher, Master of the Schooner *Eliza*, 1838', prepared by Surveyor James Warner, 27 December 1838. AONSW S.1033 (5611).
10 *Sydney Monitor*, 7 May 1838, p. 2.

from the 'Big River', she created great interest. Navigation of the river was said to be 'safe for vessels of from 80 to 100 tons for 70 miles from its mouth', and its banks on either side to be 'thickly covered with the finest cedar'.[11] Undoubtedly encouraged by the published reports of the *Susan*'s voyage, Captain Butcher set off to further explore the Big River, and an account of his discoveries was published in Sydney in December 1838.[12] Butcher, too, reported the banks of the river to be 'thickly covered with timber'.

The credit for discovering the Clarence River is often given to a convict named Richard Craig who, after escaping from Moreton Bay, spent a year making his way south towards Port Macquarie where he arrived in 1831. Craig was certainly not the only escaped convict to pass through the Clarence district,[13] nor was he the first, but his reports of that country were perhaps more detailed and more convincing than others. It is probable that he made good use of his knowledge in his employ with Sydney timber millers Thomas and John Small, and it seems likely that it was at Craig's suggestion that the brothers sent the *Susan* to the 'Big River' in 1838.[14] No official interest, however, seems to have been taken in the region until after Butcher's report late in 1838.

Further interest in the 'Big River' was soon demonstrated when on 14 May 1839 a notice appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* advising that the steamer *King William* would leave Sydney the following week (Monday 20 May) to explore it. The 'detention and stoppages in the river' were to be made under the direction of Captain Samuel Augustus Perry, the Deputy Surveyor-General.[15] This expedition had been organised privately by Joseph Hickey Grose, the owner of the *King William*, with the view of 'affording parties interested in the discovery [of the Clarence] an opportunity of verifying, by personal observation, the accounts that had been received'. Perry was permitted to join the excursion in his official capacity and was directed to 'communicate to the Government such information as might appear to him essential towards the future opening of the country on the banks of the river'.[16]

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11 *Sydney Monitor*, 4 July 1838.
12 *Sydney Gazette*, 8 December 1838, p. 2; *Sydney Monitor*, 10 December 1838.
13 Others are mentioned in *Colonist*, 17 December 1835.
14 Simpson, K., 'The story of Richard Craig', unpubl. typescript dated 26 September 1965, UNE Archives 3051/16 A335. Many other accounts of Craig's exploits can be found, although the details vary. See also Law, R. C. (ed.), 1987, *The Bawden Lectures*, 4th edition (Clarence River Historical Society, Grafton), p. 2.
15 *Sydney Gazette*, 14 May 1839. See also *Sydney Herald*, 12 April 1839.
16 Perry, S. A., 'Report by the Deputy-Surveyor-General on the Clarence River, June, 1839' *in* Lang, *Cooksland*, p. 39.

In July 1839, shortly after his return to Sydney, Perry wrote to the Colonial Secretary of his tour to 'the river entering Shoal Bay', recommending 'speedily opening a direct and easy communication between New England' and the navigable portion of the river, and 'the formation of a town…where wharfs for the shipment of wool could be formed'.[17] The master of the *King William*, Captain Francis Griffin, upon his return, placed his soundings and other observations in the hands of Mr Raphael Clint, a Sydney copperplate engraver, for the purpose of having a map prepared which Griffin intended publishing along with his own account of the voyage. It appears that Griffin published neither the map nor his written account, but he did urge the Governor to give the river a name 'in order that it may come before the public with a title somewhat more clear than its hitherto known appellative of the Big River'.[18] Gipps subsequently bestowed on the Big River the name 'Clarence'.[19]

First European occupation of the Clarence valley

From the mid-1820s, the authorities in New South Wales were concerned with checking the advance far beyond the centre of population around Sydney of pastoral settlement. This advance had been stimulated by the discoveries by explorers of new lands suitable for grazing sheep and cattle, and in 1829, following the report of three Commissioners of Valuation and Survey, Governor Darling issued a Government Order defining the limits of location—an area centred on Sydney, later embracing nineteen counties, which was considered sufficient for the requirements of settlement.[20] This delimiting of rural settlement did not, however, restrain the advance of the pastoralists.

Darling recognised as early as 1831 that it was 'impossible to prevent [settlers] sending their cattle to graze beyond [the] limits' which he had established.[21] Scores of 'adventurous young pioneers' were pouring 'instinctively and

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17 This letter, dated 15 July 1839, is printed in the *Daily Examiner*, 17 December 1933. In it Perry refers to an earlier letter, dated 19 June 1839. This was the report which Governor Gipps had updated and sent to Lord Russell on 28 September 1840 (*HRA*, Series I, vol. 20, p. 840). Although the report was not printed in *HRA* (it was due to appear in a volume in Series V which was never published), a transcript of it can be found at the Clarence River Historical Society, Grafton (C.47). It was also printed in Lang, *Cooksland*, pp. 39-44. The text of the original report, without the 1840 additions, can also be found in *Daily Examiner*, 23 and 30 December 1933. Another account of the voyage of the *King William*, by a passenger named Williams, is printed in the *Daily Examiner*, 6 January 1934.

18 Griffin to Sir George Gipps, 6 November 1839; reprinted in *SMH*, 4 October 1859.

19 T. O. Harrington (for the Colonial Secretary) to T. Griffin, 14 November 1839; reprinted in *SMH* 4 October 1859. See also NSW, *Government Gazette*, 20 November 1839, p. 1312.

20 Government Order of 14 October 1829, *Sydney Gazette*, 17 October 1829.

21 Governor Darling to Under Secretary Hay, 17 February 1831, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 16, p. 89.

spontaneously' with their sheep and cattle across the boundary of the nineteen counties. Effectively trespassers on the lands of the Crown, these squatters (as they came to be called) could not be prevented because 'all the police and military in Australia could not have guarded an open frontier 500 miles in length'.[22] In 1833, Governor Bourke, recognising that a 'new tenure' was being created by the squatting system, introduced an Act of Council[23] to prevent the unauthorised occupation of Crown lands being considered 'as giving legal title thereto'. He appointed three Commissioners of Crown Lands with powers to warn off all trespassers on Crown Lands beyond the limits of location.[24] The task, however, was already quite hopeless.

In 1836 the first attempt was made to recognise and regulate squatting beyond the boundaries when Governor Bourke, through another Act of Council,[25] admitted the right of the squatters to graze their stock but imposed annual licence fees to do so. A list of names of the first persons to be granted licences for 'depasturing stock beyond the boundaries of the colony' was published on 18 January 1837.[26] Seven squatting districts subsequently were proclaimed, and Commissioners of Crown Lands were appointed to protect the interests of the Crown in each.[27] District No. 7, with its headquarters at Port Macquarie, comprised 'the Country northward of the County of Gloucester [north of the Manning River], including Port Macquarie and all the waters falling toward the Eastern Coast' and therefore included the present study area. Henry Oakes was appointed Commissioner for this district.

The Act of 1836[28] was fraught with problems. Although the issue of licences asserted the title of the Crown to the land, they failed to settle the basic problem of land tenure. The licence had to be renewed annually, so the licensee made improvements to his run at his own risk; he was left to bargain with his neighbours about the boundaries of his run, as there were no government surveys; the licence fee of £10 was applied irrespective of area

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22 Ranken, G. E., 1893, *Our Wasted Heritage*, quoted by King, C. J., 1957, *An outline of closer settlement in New South Wales. Part I. The sequence of the land laws, 1788-1956* (Division of Marketing and Agricultural Economics, Department of Agriculture, New South Wales), p. 45.

23 'An Act for protecting the Crown Lands of this Colony from encroachment, intrusion and trespass' (4 Will. IV no. 10; 28 August 1833).

24 NSW, *Government Gazette*, 30 October 1833, p. 443.

25 'An Act to restrain the unauthorised occupation of Crown Lands' (7 Will. IV no. 4; 29 July 1836). In force from 1 January 1837 until 31 December 1838. Continued by 'An Act to continue and amend an Act, intituled, an Act to restrain the unauthorised occupation of Crown lands' (2 Vic. no. 19; 2 October 1838). Commenced 1 January 1839 to continue in force until 31 December 1841.

26 NSW, *Government Gazette*, 18 January 1837, p. 43.

27 NSW, *Government Gazette*, 10 May 1837, p. 362.

28 And presumably Gipps's Act of 1838, which followed it but which operated only briefly.

and stock numbers and thus favoured the large squatters over the small. Some of these problems were addressed by Gipps in March 1839 in the 'Act further to restrain the unauthorised occupation of Crown lands, and to provide the means of defraying the expense of a Border police'.[29] Gipps, like Darling and presumably Bourke, admitted his inability to prevent the dispersion of the graziers. 'As well might it be attempted', he said, 'to confine the Arabs of the Desert within a circle, traced upon their sands, as to confine the Graziers…of New South Wales within any bounds that can possibly be assigned to them'.[30] The new Act was thus framed with a view to continuing the spirit of the 1836 Act, but extending substantially the controls over pastoral occupation of Crown lands.

Under the 1839 Act, the lands of the colony of New South Wales were reclassified into two divisions: lands within the limits of location (the counties), and lands 'beyond the limits of location'. The latter were divided into nine districts, for each of which, again, there was appointed a Commissioner of Crown Lands whose duties were to:

> exercise a control over the very numerous grazing establishments, which have been formed…under Licences from the Government, and to prevent collisions between the men in charge of such Establishments and the Aborigines of the Country.[31]

One district, the Port Macquarie District, included the Tweed and Richmond Rivers and most of the catchment of the Clarence. This district was similar to district no. 7 of two years earlier, except that it did not now include the land between the Macleay and the Manning Rivers, centred on Port Macquarie, which had been incorporated into the settled districts as the County of Macquarie—the twentieth county. The headquarters of district no. 7 remained at Port Macquarie, however, and Henry Oakes remained as Commissioner, reappointed on 21 May 1839.[32] The indefinite northern boundary of the District meant that the Moreton Bay district was included within it.

Although many escaped convicts had passed through the region in the 1820s and early 1830s, settlement of the Clarence did not begin until the late 1830s, and then only in an unofficial and temporary fashion. The precise date of arrival on the Clarence of its first non-indigenous inhabitants in unknown, but occupation had certainly begun during the period of operation of Bourke's permissive Act of 1836 (1 January 1837 to 31 December 1838). It

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29 2 Vic. no. 27; 22 March 1839. Commenced 1 July 1839, to continue in force until 1 July 1841.
30 Gipps to Russell, 19 December 1840, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 21, p. 127.
31 Gipps to Russell, 14 September 1841, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 21, p. 509.
32 NSW, *Government Gazette*, 22 May 1839, p. 606.

seems improbable that occupation commenced before 1837, illegally, in contravention of Bourke's restrictive Act of 1833. The region's first inhabitants, however, were not the graziers for whom the land laws had primarily been framed, but timber getters, who had come to exploit the forests which fringed the coastal rivers in their lower reaches. The subject of timber getting at this time is discussed elsewhere (Chapter 4).

It is not known with certainty when the first graziers brought their flocks or herds to the Clarence River, but they undoubtedly had begun to arrive by the early months of 1840. Early accounts of the region, especially those of the escaped convicts, had described 'vast plains well watered and thinly wooded'. These would have been magnets to the graziers already well established on the tableland to the west. The difficulty of finding a suitable route from the tableland to the coastal plains, across the intervening escarpment country, retarded the pastoral occupation of the Clarence Region, however, and delayed the use of the coastal rivers as outlets for tableland produce.

None of the pastoral licences initially granted under the 1836 Act were for runs in the Clarence River district (although one was granted in the Macleay River district). Similarly, the first list of names of persons granted pastoral licences under Gipps's Act of 1839, for the year to 30 June 1840,[33] included eighteen in Port Macquarie district but none of these appear to be on the Clarence. For the year commencing 1 July 1840, however, thirty licenses were granted within the Port Macquarie district,[34] and a number of these were for graziers occupying lands in the Clarence River catchment (such as Thomas Coutts, Dr John Dobie, William Forster, Francis Girard, Samuel MacKenzie, James Mylne, and Thomas Small, all licensed for the year commenced 1 July 1840).[35]

Great stimulus was given to the growth of pastoral settlement on the Clarence by the journey in 1839 of the *King William*, many of the passengers on which were themselves graziers, or were the representatives of graziers, looking for runs in new territory. Several runs were taken up as a direct result of this trip.[36] For instance, Joseph Hickey Grose, the owner of the *King William*, had 8,000 sheep overlanded from the Macleay River to the head of navigation of

[33] NSW, *Government Gazette*, 19 February 1840, p. 170; 3 June 1840, p. 541.
[34] NSW, *Government Gazette*,, 22 July 1840, p. 692; 12 August 1840, p. 761; 11 November 1840, pp. 1194-1195.
[35] Based on a comparison of the names in the 1840 list with the more detailed, spatially referenced information in the 1848 lists.
[36] Law, *Bawden lectures*, pp. 10-14.

the Clarence River early in 1840 by Richard Craig, the ex-convict whose experience in the region as a runaway ten years before had equipped him well for the task. On 19 February 1840, the *Sydney Herald* reported that Grose's sheep were 'grazing on the banks of the Big River', and these were among the first stock in the region.[37]

By about September 1840, when Perry's updated report on the Clarence region was transmitted to Lord Russell, there were about two hundred persons 'of various classes'—'graziers, mechanics, farm-servants, and mariners'—occupying the country 'between the mountain and the sea'. At the head of navigation a post office and a store, for the supply of the settlers, had been established. Several vessels were employed in the transport of articles of consumption, and 'the utmost activity prevails on the banks of the river, in appropriating the advantages placed by nature at the disposal of civilised man'.[38]

Land survey and settlement, 1840 to 1847

By the end of 1839, the Clarence River was home to a number of cedar cutters and ship builders, and was about to witness the arrival of its first flocks of sheep. Grazing and cedar cutting (and related ship building) became the first commercial activities to be undertaken on the Crown lands of the Clarence Pastoral District. The permissive Acts of 1836, 1838 and 1839 had the effect of formalising and facilitating the process of occupation and exploitation of the region by the issue of licences for pastoral occupation (from 1 January 1837) and for timber cutting (from 1 January 1839). It was not until after the voyage of the *King William* in May and June 1839, however, that the occupation of the district began in earnest. The influx of pastoralists and timber getters to the river which the return of the *King William* from the Clarence had inspired made it desirable, in the view of Governor Gipps, that a 'Town or Settlement' be formed at the head of navigation of the river. Accordingly, Gipps sent a surveying party there, followed by a Commissioner of Crown Lands with his party of Border Police to 'preserve order' among the cedar cutters and cattle owners who had already established themselves.[39] As a result of this new

[37] The page of the newspaper on which this article appears is incorrectly dated 19 February 1839, not 1840, leading to the article being wrongly cited by several writers. The first of these was probably Campbell, W. S., 1922, 'Discovery of, and later development in, the north-eastern portion of New South Wales', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, vol. 8(8), p. 295. The error was perpetuated by, for example, Law, *Bawden lectures*, p. 7.
[38] Perry, S. A., 'Report', in Lang, *Cooksland*, p. 43.
[39] Gipps to Russell, 28 September 1840, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 20, p. 840.

official interest in the Clarence, the year 1840 represents a benchmark in the development of the district.

When Commissioner Oakes set out for the Clarence River from the Macleay at the end of July 1840, he had expected to find the district 'infested by daring gangs of runaways…from Moreton Bay'. On arrival, he was 'agreeably surprised', however, to find the residents on the banks of the river to be 'stockholders of large capital, with extensive establishments in admirable order'.[40]

In their arrival on the Clarence, Oakes and his party had been preceded by a team of three surveyors who by May were 'busily engaged in surveying the fine tracts of country in the neighbourhood of the Big or Clarence River'.[41] These three contractors were Major Edward Lewis Burrowes, and the brothers William Charles Borlace Wilson and Christopher Moore Wilson. They were the first surveyors to be engaged on the Clarence. Although in 1840 there still could be no freehold title in this region—it was still classified as 'beyond the limits of location'—the division of the lands about the Clarence into counties and parishes nevertheless was commenced in that year, part of a general process of surveying the colony in preparation for opening new lands for sale. By the end of 1841, eighteen of the eventual twenty-four parishes laid out around the Clarence River by the Wilson brothers and Burrowes had been completed.

In consequence of the increased occupation of Crown lands (squatting) in the north of the colony generally in the late 1830s and the earliest 1840s, as well as the opening of the Northern District to sale which had begun with the first land sales in Moreton Bay in 1842, the creation of further squatting districts became necessary. The old Port Macquarie District was sub-divided into: a southerly Macleay River District (which included the Macleay, Nambucca and Bellinger Rivers); a Clarence River District, which was bounded 'on the north by the ranges forming the basin of the Brisbane and the Logan, on the south side of those rivers'; and a northerly Moreton Bay District, bounded on the south by the Clarence River District.[42]

Henry Oakes was appointed Commissioner for the Macleay River District, based at Port Macquarie, and the more youthful Oliver Fry was appointed to

[40] *Australian*, 8 October 1840, p. 2.
[41] *Sydney Herald*, 8 May 1840, p. 2. Shone to Deputy Surveyor General, 7 July 1842, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 23, pp. 380-381.
[42] By Proclamation dated 1 March 1842, NSW, *Government Gazette*, 4 March 1842, pp. 361-362; By Proclamation dated 5 May 1842, NSW, *Government Gazette*, 10 May 1842, p. 689. A Commissioner had earlier been appointed; NSW, *Government Gazette*, 5 April 1842, p. 509.

a similar position for the Clarence River District.[43] Oakes, who had been responsible for the Clarence when it was part of Port Macquarie District, was 'considerably advanced in life, encumbered with a large family, and of late quite unequal to the duties which he had to perform'. Oakes died in September 1842, but Gipps had resolved before this to replace him, believing that the Crown Commissioners should be single men, and 'persons of very active habits'.[44] Gipps also believed, it is apparent, that the Port Macquarie District was now too large and too populous for one man to superintend, regardless of his youth and energy, and the excision of the Macleay River was probably undertaken for reasons of efficiency of management. By early 1841 the population of the Clarence District had grown to over 400 persons.[45] This population was predominantly male (82 per cent) and of the male population, 88 per cent were unmarried and 69 per cent were in the 'twenty-one and under forty-five' age category.

The Settlement on the Clarence River

By the earliest 1840s, an informal settlement—or, rather, two settlements—had begun to form on the banks of the Clarence River at the future site of Grafton. The several persons who held licences to depasture stock on both sides of the river erected buildings for various purposes. On the northern side, George Ritchie took out an occupation licence in October 1840 for a large patch of land, and from it he ran a cedar depot. In 1841, William Bawden occupied his Penberthy run, immediately upstream of Ritchie's, erecting a hut close to the river. Robert Bentley occupied York run, immediately upstream of Bawden's, setting up a store and later an inn. In addition, in 1840, Surveyor Burrowes was permitted to mark out and purchase 5 acres within the larger area occupied by Ritchie.[46]

On the southern side of the river, William Phillips, who arrived at the end of 1838, established a ship-building yard. A little upstream of Phillips's place, Arthur Price established a store in 1840, and this also became the first post

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43 NSW, *Government Gazette*, 4 March 1842, p. 362. See also Gipps to Lord Stanley, 31 December 1842, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 22, pp. 448-449.

44 Gipps to Lord Stanley, 31 December 1842, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 22, p. 449.

45 'General Abstract of the Returns of Population and Houses in the different Counties, Commissioners' Districts beyond the Boundaries of Location, Penal Settlements, and employed on Board the Colonial Vessels, according the Census, taken on 2nd March, 1841'. NSW, Legislative Council, *Votes and Proceedings*, 1841. The population of Moreton Bay penal settlement (200) was recorded separately from Clarence River (416) and Macleay River (584) in the census returns. The most populous Pastoral District was Monaro (1,883).

46 Mackey, *European Settlement*, pp. 48, 59-60, 65.

office. In 1841, another store was opened, by William McNeish, and The Clarence Settlers' Arms, the first inn on the river, was built by James Durno. A blind pensioner named John Irving, who had come to the Clarence with William Phillips, resided on the south bank between Price's and McNeish's stores.[47]

Like Burrowes on the northern side, the Wilson brothers were given permission in 1840 to purchase 5-acre blocks at South Grafton. Christopher Moore Wilson's property, named Strawberry Bank, was adjacent to the stream now known as Christopher Creek; William Charles Borlace Wilson's property, Youloumba, was a little eastward of his brother's, adjoining Alipou Creek.[48] Both brothers also occupied much larger areas of land under pastoral licences. W. C. B. Wilson's Youloumba run covered 4,000 acres, and encompassed most of the present town of South Grafton.

The part of the study area that lies eastward of Alipou Creek was within the enormous (40,000 acre) Swan Creek pastoral run (which adjoined Wilson's Youloumba). Swan Creek run included none of the present urban area of South Grafton, but it is of interest here for another reason. A brick house was built on the run, on a hill on the southern side of Swan Creek, and on the western side of the present Pacific Highway (Figure 1.1). This house was allegedly built about 1852. If so, it would probably be the oldest surviving built structure in the study area, and a rare link with the early pastoral period of the Clarence River district. Even if an alternative time of construction of 1860-61 is true, the house is still significant for its association with the Small family; Thomas Small, the founder of Swan Creek run in 1840, was an owner of the schooner *Susan*, which in 1838 became the first vessel to navigate the 'Big River' and the first to take a cargo of timber to Sydney. Much later, he was a founder in 1869 of the Belmore Mill at Ulmarra, the first sugar mill to operate in the Clarence district.

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47 Perry, S. A., 'Report by the Deputy-Surveyor-General on the Clarence River, June, 1839' *in* Lang, *Cooksland*, p. 41; Mackey, *European Settlement*, pp. 27-28, 61-64.
48 Mackey, *European Settlement*, pp. 46-48.

Figure 1.1 Small house at Swan Creek, 2007

Figure 1.2 Small house in 19th century (*Source*: Clarence River Historical Society)

The Town of Grafton

On 9 March 1847 at Osborne House, Isle of Wight, an Order-in-Council was made, pursuant to the Imperial *Waste Lands Occupation Act* (the 'Squatting Act') of 1846,[49] for new rules and regulations for the occupation of Crown lands in the Australian colonies.[50] These rules and regulations had been framed with the assistance of Sir George Gipps, before his death early in 1847. Their essence was that the lands within New South Wales were to be divided into three classes, namely settled, intermediate and unsettled districts, and the established squatters were to be granted, without competition, leases of up to fourteen years over their runs. Furthermore, lessees would be given the pre-emptive right to purchase portions of their runs during the currency of their leases.

The granting of 'fixity of tenure' under the 1846 Act has been said to mark the 'termination of the squatting period' in New South Wales, and the 'commencement of genuine settlement' beyond the limits of location. From this time onwards, 'substantial homesteads' began to replace the 'temporary shacks' of the squatting period.[51] The sites of these improvements were secured by the pre-emptive purchase of not less than 160 acres of the surrounding land.[52] In the Clarence River district, the inhabitants responded to these changes by requesting the establishment of a formal town at the head of navigation of the river. In 1848, the Government agreed to have such a town laid out, and sent William Wedge Darke, an experienced surveyor who had worked in the Port Phillip district under Robert Hoddle, to survey the site. His plan was completed in mid-1849, and notification of the new township was published in the *NSW Government Gazette* on 28 December that year.[53] It was named Grafton in honour of the aristocratic family of NSW Governor, Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, whose grandfather, the British Prime-Minister from 1768 to 1770, was the Duke of Grafton.[54] By the time of its gazettal, the new official town already had several basic services—namely a court-house and lockup, and a police presence—a consequence of the

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49 'An Act to amend an Act for regulating the sale of Waste Land belonging to the Crown in the Australian Colonies, and to make further provision for the management thereof' (9 & 10 Vic. c. CIV).

50 *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 427-438.

51 Campbell, J. F., 1932, '"Squatting" on Crown Lands in New South Wales', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, vol. 17, p. 85.

52 Subject to certain restrictions relating to form and water frontage, and to the general minimum price of one pound per acre. See *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 433-434.

53 Surveyor-General's plan no. G.1359; *NSW Government Gazette*, 28 December 1849, p. 1941.

54 The name Grafton had been applied to the settlement some years before its official notification in 1849.

informal settlement that had developed on both sides of the river during the previous decade. Consideration of the origins of these services is left, however, for the next chapter, which deals with the general topic of Grafton's urban development.

2 URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Although settlement within what later became the town of Grafton began in the late 1830s, the town did not exist officially until December 1849 when the plan of surveyor William Wedge Darke was adopted (chapter 1). In July the following year, the first allotments were put up for sale in the new town. The *Maitland Mercury* reported in November 1850 that Grafton had 'three inns, by courtesy called hotels, and the usual number of blacksmiths, wheelwrights, shoemakers, and others'. Wanted was 'more labour…in the shape of brickmakers, bricklayers, sawyers, and hands who are accustomed to splitting timber, fencing, and putting up rough buildings, as well as general servants'.[1]

In May of 1851, the same newspaper could say that buildings were 'gradually springing up' in the township of Grafton, 'especially on the south side of the river'. As there was neither brick nor stone, they were all built of wood, and it was hard to obtain even that, 'for the sawyers [were] few in number and fully employed'.[2]

Several years later, in September 1858, the town was said to be 'going ahead very rapidly, the population increasing greatly by every arrival of the steamer.' Everything was flourishing 'with the exception of the money market, which is very dull indeed—in consequence, no doubt, of the large sums that are leaving here for the purchase of land. In fact, there is quite a land mania here.' Much of the activity at that time was owing to the large population at the newly opened Timbarra goldfield, which was wholly supplied with stores through the port of Grafton.[3]

The town's main wants at that time were a solicitor, a branch bank, and a newspaper, 'for the whole of which there are good openings'. The first Grafton newspaper, the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, was first published in June 1859 (see Chapter 3). The first bank appeared about the same time (see s.2.2), so that in September 1859 it could be reported that 'We now have a bank at Grafton, the directors of the Australian Joint Stock Bank having established a branch in our township.'[4]

The first brick building to be begun in Grafton was the School of Arts, the foundation stone of which was laid in August 1859. It was in use by September 1860, but by that time it is possible that another brick building had

[1] *Maitland Mercury*, 20 November 1850.
[2] *Maitland Mercury*, 24 May 1851.
[3] *Maitland Mercury*, 9 September 1858; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 January 1859.
[4] *Maitland Mercury*, 9 September 1858, 1 September 1859.

become the first to be completed. Early in 1860 it was reported that 'five brick houses are now in course of erection in Prince and Bacon streets'. The number of wooden buildings going up was 'almost beyond credit; on all sides, in all directions, dwellings are being run up. Bricks would rapidly come into use if it were not for the difficulty of obtaining them.'[5]

In the middle of 1860, the following was written of the burgeoning settlement:[6]

> Three years ago Grafton was a small villlage, and now it is a second-class township, with more than 2000 inhabitants, in every respect well laid out, well built (although there are no grand buildings), well populated, and with beautiful sea-air refreshing every day. Since the municipality commenced operations [in September 1859], the town has risen rapidly, and the streets, formerly mere bush roads, now represent streets in reality. Grafton can boast of three wharves, about 20 well furnished stores, and every branch of trade is represented. A School of Arts has been long established, and the building for the same is rapidly progressing, as is also the new Court-house, and in fact it is a splendid little town. It was calculated that last year in three months there had been built a house every day.

South Grafton advanced rapidly in the early 1870s, a result of the increased trade brought to the town by traffic on the newly upgraded road to Glen Innes, through Newton Boyd (see Chapter 3). For years 'not a single building was erected', but by 1873 the town of South Grafton boasted of 'saddlers' shops, blacksmithing and wheelwrighting establishments, all of whom seem to be kept pretty busily employed, boot and shoe shops, and ample hotel accommodation; while the stores would do credit to any country town'. 'The number of teams camped on the flat, and the busy appearance of the place, would lead one to believe that South Grafton is no longer the sleepy hollow of former years, but all is life and animation.'[7]

It was said in 1874 that Grafton had made 'rapid and wonderful strides in the march of progress' in the past few years. Not much more than fifteen years previously, it was 'an out-of-the-way country settlement, with scrub and bush in great profusion', but now there were 'nicely cleared streets, closely built upon'. The streets, which had been laid out at right angles, were 'from a chain-and-a-half to two chains wide, giving the place an airy and healthful appearance'. The many 'very fine public buildings' included the School of Arts, the Court House, the various banks, Mr Bawden's offices, the Public

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5 *Armidale Express*, 10 September 1859; *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 25 September 1860; *Maitland Mercury*, 23 February 1860.
6 *Maitland Mercury*, 26 June 1860.
7 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 14 October 1873.

School, Hospital, Odd Fellows' Hall, and Messrs Creer's, Holmsten's and Ireland's hotels'.[8]

A correspondent to the *Town and Country Journal* in 1875 found the hotels, stores and banking institutions of Grafton to be 'numerous, and constructed on good designs'. The hotels were 'mostly two stories in height, very spacious, and well designed, with commodious balconies extending over the pathways.' The general stores 'form[ed] a principal feature in the main streets' and the two Grafton banks (branches of the New South Wales and Australian Joint Stock) were 'fine looking buildings'. 'In style and character of buildings, Grafton takes a leading position'. The Government buildings, on the other hand, were 'behind the times', and little attention was paid to 'religious edifices', there being 'no stately piles raised to the glory of the Creator'.[9]

Early in 1878, a visiting journalist said of Grafton that it has 'seven places of worship (which, as buildings, are of little account), four [*sic*] fine banks of many great accounts, three good newspapers, a hospital, a rickety custom-house, an excellent school of arts, a feeble-looking courthouse, a mean-looking gaol, a new post and telegraph office—a fine structure which was long sadly needed—a good range of police quarters, four Public schools, and several fine stores and hotels'. Its 'southern suburb', South Grafton, was 'a stirring, go-ahead place'.[10]

Ten years later, in 1888, Grafton had become 'the most important city of the North Coast district', and one that was 'destined to become a place of great importance in the future'. Its principal public buildings were a 'spacious' court-house, post and telegraph office, public schools and hospital, with branches of three banks.[11]

2.1 Law and Public Administration

The main Government presence in the Clarence River district during the early 1840s was the Commissioner of Crown Lands. This was initially Henry Oakes, who had been appointed to that position for the Port Macquarie District, of which the Clarence was then part, early in 1837. Oakes's duties were to exercise control of the various grazing establishments, to oversee the timber trade, and to 'prevent collision' between the new settlers and the Aborigines.

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8 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 6 January 1874.
9 *Town and Country Journal*, 2 January 1875.
10 *Sydney Mail*, 13 April 1878. If not an error, the fourth bank may be the branch of the English, Scottish and Australian Chartered Bank opened at South Grafton in 1877.
11 *Sydney Mail*, 21 April 1888.

To aid him in the exercise of these duties, he was, from 1840, provided with a small force of mounted constables known as Border Police.

Figure 2.1 Section of a 'bird's-eye view' of Grafton from *Illustrated Sydney News*, 31 May 1888. Prominent buildings include Post Office (1), Gaol (2), Court House (3), Church of England Cathedral (4), Bank of NSW (5), Post Office Hotel (6), Commercial Bank (7), and AJS Bank (8).

Although Oakes was based at Port Macquarie, he made extended visits to the Clarence River, the first being in 1840. On that occasion he made William Phillips's station on the southern bank of the river his temporary headquarters. Later, he established a headquarters at Red Rock, about 36 kilometres upstream of the settlement, on the northern side of the Clarence River near its junction with the Orara River. This became Oliver Fry's base when he took up duties as Commissioner for the new Clarence River Pastoral District in May 1842.

In 1847, a Clerk of Petty Sessions and a Chief Constable were appointed for the Clarence River, and a wooden court house and lock-up were erected at the settlement. Concomitantly, the Border Police were disbanded and the Commissioner's role was reduced to dealing mainly with Crown land matters. The court house and lockup are shown on Darke's 1849 plan of Grafton; they were situated near the river between present-day Queen and

Mary Streets, and near where William Bawden had built his hut in 1841 (Chapter 1).[12]

A new court house and gaol were later erected in Victoria Street, the former at the corner of Duke Street, and the latter midway between Duke and Prince Streets.[13] Newspaper reports from 1860 suggest that their completion in 1861 came not a moment too soon. In September, a correspondent complained that 'after taking thousands of pounds from the district, the Government has left us with a Lock-up…unfit to place a pig in, and a small building called a Court House which threatens to fall in upon and smother the magistrates and lookers-on on any occasion when an ordinary breeze is blowing.' The following month, three prisoners escaped from the lock-up. 'Owing to the ruinous state of the slabs (of which material the present excuse for a lock-up is built), they succeeded in removing one of them and made good their retreat'.[14]

By 1875, Grafton's law and order precinct, partly bounded by Victoria and Duke Streets and the river, comprised: the 1861 court house, which was too small for the requirements of the district; the gaol, a substantial brick building capable of containing forty prisoners; new barracks for the police, including three rooms and kitchen for single men, and three rooms and kitchen for the sergeant and married men; and a new six-room brick residence for the sub-inspector.[15] The latter is still in existence; it is the building facing the river at no.1 Duke Street.

Funds were voted in the mid-1870s for the replacement of Grafton's inadequate court house, and this came in the form of the third and present court house, which was built fronting Victoria Street, between the building which it replaced and the gaol. It was formally opened in April 1880.[16] The old court house was subsequently enlarged and modified for use by the police and the district surveyor. The early 1880s[17] additions to the 1861 court house has also survived (Figure 2.2).

12 Bawden, pp. 20-21, 23; Mackey, pp. 57, 82-83.
13 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 9 July 1861.
14 *Maitland Mercury*, 6 September 1860, 25 October 1860.
15 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 10 August 1875.
16 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 26 August 1876, 9 September 1876, 20 April 1880.
17 It is assumed that the modifications took place in the early 1880s, soon after the occupation of the new court house, but this has not been confirmed.

Figure 2.2 Former Grafton Court House, 2007. This structure is the 1880s extension to the second (1861) court house, the ruins of which adjoin it at the rear. The sign erroneously states that this is the 'site of [the] original police station constructed 1847'.

The gaol in Victoria Street continued to operate until the early 1890s, when it was replaced by a much larger facility, erected on vacant land fronting Hoof Street (Figure 2.3). During 1890, consideration was given to enlarging the old gaol, but on account of 'the unsuitableness of the building, its too limited site, its undesirable position in the centre of the city, and the inadvisability of expending a large amount on so dilapidated a structure' it was decided instead to replace it. A site for the new gaol was chosen above flood level near the hospital.[18]

Designs for the new gaol were invited the following year, and some forty competitors responded. Work began in 1892 after the tender of Holloway Brothers was accepted for the erection of the new facility. It was completed in 1893, and in November of that year the prisoners were transferred from the old gaol in the heart of the city.[19]

[18] *Northern Star*, 9 July 1890.
[19] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 21 April 1891, 14 June 1892, 25 November 1893.

Figure 2.3 The Grafton Gaol, Hoof Street, 2007.

In 1895, tenders were called for the conversion of the former gaol into land and survey offices. This was done, and in March 1896 the building was occupied for its new purpose. Many years later it was demolished to make way for the present NSW Government Offices building, which was officially opened in July 1970.[20]

Local Government

The incorporation of the Municipality of Grafton in July 1859 marks the beginning of local government in the Clarence River district. The council of the new municipality held its first meeting, on 16 September 1859, in the Grafton court house. From 6 October it met in temporary chambers at the National School, and from April 1860 in the newly-erected School of Arts near the corner of Victoria and Prince Streets (see s.2.3). After nearly forty years of leasing space in the School of Arts, the council erected its first Town Hall in the late 1890s. Doing so had been talked about for many years, but the move was finally precipitated by uncertainty about the future of the School of Arts, which had come to be in serious financial difficulty. The Grafton Town Hall was a single-storey brick building (later enlarged to two storeys), facing Prince Street and situated between the School of Arts and the river. The first council meeting in the new building took place early in March 1898.[21]

[20] *Daily Examiner*, 17 July 1970.
[21] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 26 October 1897, 30 October 1897, 12 March 1898.

In the meantime, the formation of South Grafton into a separate local government area in 1896 had created the need for a headquarters for the new council. Like its north-side counterpart, South Grafton Municipal Council met for many years in 'temporary' premises, mainly in rooms at the South Grafton School of Arts. The decision was taken in 1927 to build and furnish a proper Town Hall, and this was completed and occupied early in 1928. The single-storey brick building in Spring Street was opened with ceremony on 7 February.[22]

In addition to the Grafton and South Grafton councils, those of three surrounding shires were also based in the city. Copmanhurst Shire, created in 1906 and bordering Grafton in the north, established its first permanent headquarters in Victoria Street. Later, in 1925, the council purchased the former Court House Hotel building, also in Victoria Street, for use as the council chambers. This and the adjacent house (at the corner of Duke Street) were demolished in 1961 to make way for new premises. These were officially opened on 21 September 1962.[23]

Orara and Dorrigo Shires, also created in 1906, both adjoined South Grafton Municipality. In 1909, Orara Shire attempted to interest neighbouring Dorrigo Shire and South Grafton Municipality in erecting joint premises at South Grafton. Dorrigo eventually agreed, and in 1910 council chambers and offices were built in Spring Street, between Wharf Street and the Great Northern Hotel (on the opposite side of the hotel to where the municipal council would later build separate chambers). A banquet held to celebrate the opening in October 1910 of the substantial two-storey building was catered by host Murphy of the Great Northern Hotel.[24] In 1913, the northern part of Dorrigo Shire became Nymboida Shire, and the latter then shared the building in place of the former.

Immediately after the amalgamation of Grafton with South Grafton at the beginning of 1957, attention was given to housing the staff of the enlarged council. In June of that year it was decided to purchase two buildings adjoining the Grafton Town Hall, beginning a process that culminated in the opening in November 1968 of the Grafton Civic Centre, the council's present home. This required the demolition of the nearly-seventy-year-old Town Hall, which was carried out late in April 1967.[25]

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22 *Daily Examiner*, 8 February 1928.
23 *Daily Examiner*, 21 September 1962.
24 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 6 October 1910
25 *Daily Examiner*, 26 April 1967, 30 November 1968.

2.2 Commercial

A comprehensive historical account of Grafton's commercial enterprises is far beyond the scope of this report, but this brief account of its earliest banking establishments is indicative.

Banks

The first banking company to establish a branch at Grafton was the Australian Joint Stock Bank, which set up in temporary premises in 1859. A permanent home, a substantial two-storey brick and stone building, was later erected at the corner of Victoria and Prince Streets, adjoining the original premises; this was completed and occupied in June 1862.[1]

Grafton's second bank appeared in February 1866 when the Bank of New South Wales occupied temporary offices in Victoria Street.[2] After several years, new premises were erected at Victoria and Prince Streets, opposite the AJS bank (see Figure 2.1). The new building was completed and occupied near the end of 1876.[3]

The third bank in Grafton, a branch of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, opened in December 1874 in portion of the Lion Hotel building in Prince Street (on the site of the present Commonwealth Bank). In 1875 the company announced that it 'intended erecting [its own] building forthwith', and tenders were invited the following year. Construction commenced early in 1877 on the site formerly occupied by the Victoria Hotel at the corner of Fitzroy and Prince Streets, diagonally opposite the bank's original home. By the beginning of 1878 the new building (Figure 2.4) was 'rapidly approaching completion'.[4]

The Commercial, New South Wales, and Australian Joint Stock banks remained the most notable of Grafton's banking establishments at least until the early 1890s. A *Sydney Mail* reporter commented in 1888 that the two first named of these, then both a decade old, were 'fine buildings, worthy of their proprietaries'.[5] The English, Scottish and Australian Chartered Bank opened a branch in the Freemasons Hotel building, at the corner of Prince and Victoria

1 *Maitland Mercury*, 1 September 1859; *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 10 December 1861, 17 June 1862.
2 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 27 February 1866, 6 March 1866.
3 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 21 November 1876.
4 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 8 December 1874, 10 August 1875, 28 November 1876, 10 April 1877, 1 January 1878.
5 *Sydney Mail*, 21 April 1888.

Streets, in 1891.[6] A branch had commenced operation at South Grafton in 1877. This may have been the fourth Grafton bank alluded to in 1878 by a visiting journalist (above), unless he was referring to the branch of the Government Savings Bank, which was carried on in connection with the Grafton Post Office.

Figure 2.4 Former Commercial Bank at corner of Prince and Fitzroy Streets, 2007

2.3 Education

A small private school was operating in Grafton before 1850, but public education began in 1852 with the establishment of the Grafton National School.[7] This operated from grounds on the eastern side of Prince Street, between Victoria and Fitzroy Streets. A new site was later granted at the corner of Bacon and Queen Streets, and the school was re-established there in 1871, the laying of the foundation stone of the new school taking place on 26 January that year.[8]

6 *Northern Star*, 25 April 1891.
7 Before 1867, 'public' schools, the basic elementary school in the New South Wales education system, were known as 'national' schools.
8 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 15 February 1870, 24 January 1871

Grafton Public School became Grafton Superior Public School in March 1881, meaning that it then combined primary and secondary functions in the same school. In 1897, the Grafton Superior Public School was said to be 'the biggest educational establishment [in the colony] north of Newcastle', with an enrolment of 800. Master Earl Page, who was then studying medicine at Sydney University, had matriculated from the school.[9]

The secondary education function of Grafton District School (as Grafton Superior Public School had become in 1906) was separated in 1912 with the establishment of Grafton High School. Land fronting Mary Street was acquired in 1913 as a site for a separate high school building and this was opened in July 1915 (after teaching had continued for a while in portion of the primary school, and was afterwards conducted briefly in a building already on the new site). The foundation stone of the new school was laid by the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Gerald Strickland, on 6 May 1914.[10]

The high school site was that of the former Grafton Grammar School, which operated from the 1870s until the 1890s. The handsome two-storied gothic-style grammar school building, erected in 1878, became the residence for the headmaster of the new high school (and served briefly for teaching). The new two-storey brick building erected on the site in 1915, contained classrooms, headmaster's office, staff room, and library, among other rooms.[11]

Table 2.1 Government Schools in Grafton City

Estd	Name	Closed
1852	**GRAFTON**	extant
1867	**GRAFTON SOUTH**	extant
1893	Grafton Common Aboriginal	1924
1908	Clarenza	1914
1912	**GRAFTON HIGH**	extant
1955	**WESTLAWN**	extant
1964	**GRAFTON SOUTH HIGH**	extant
1971	**GILLWINGA**	extant

Source: New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 1998. *Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 to 1998: 150 years*, 5th ed. (New South Wales Dept of Education and Training)

[9] *Town and County Journal*, 23 October 1897.
[10] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 7 May 1914.
[11] *Daily Examiner*, 6 July 1915.

Among other additions and improvements to the high school were those begun in 1939, and which included a new assembly hall and domestic science unit. The foundation stone for these additions was set on 4 November, and they were officially opened on 28 June the following year.[12]

In addition to government schools, the various churches, and most particularly the Roman Catholic Church, have played significant roles in education in Grafton. When the Sisters of Mercy arrived in Grafton early in 1884, a Roman Catholic school had been operating in the town for many years. The sisters took over the operation of that school, new premises for which had been erected in Villiers Street in 1881. A convent was erected for their accommodation, and this was completed late in 1884. It was a two-storey brick building, facing the river adjacent to Villiers Street, and in close proximity to St Mary's School. A substantial addition to St Mary's Convent, in the form of a new two-storey brick building facing the river and adjacent to the original convent, was completed in 1913.[13]

A Roman Catholic high school, previously conducted in Dobie Street, was conducted by the sisters from Victoria Street after the completion of their convent at the end of 1884. A new high school building—St Mary's College—with frontages to Victoria Street and to the river, was erected between the convent and St Mary's church in 1928 (this is the two-storey building to the right of the Church in Figure 2.7). It is approximately 25 metres square, of Tudor-Gothic style, and constructed generally of Coombell bricks. Additions to the College were later constructed at the corner of Victoria and Villiers Street, and these were officially opened in November 1954.[14]

In addition to St Mary's College and Primary School, St Joseph's Primary and Infants' School at South Grafton was also staffed by the Sisters of Mercy. In 1965, the Marist Brothers opened St Aloysius High School in Grafton.[15]

Schools of Arts

Other important educational institutions were the Schools of Arts, one of which operated on each side of the river. On the northern side, a School of Arts committee was formed early in 1858, more than a year before the

12 *Daily Examiner*, 6 November 1939, 29 June 1940.
13 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 11 June 1881, 26 January 1884, 4 October 1884, 13 December 1884, 7 October 1913.
14 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 13 December 1884; *Daily Examiner*, 16 July 1928, 8 November 1954.
15 *Daily Examiner*, 28 September 1968.

incorporation of the municipality. A grant of land (at the corner of Prince and Victoria Streets) was soon obtained as a site for a building, which was under construction by late 1859 and was completed the following year. It contained a theatre or lecture hall, a library, and a classroom.[16] Typical educational functions of a School of Arts were the maintenance of a library and reading room, and the provision of public lectures, readings and other entertainments.

The Grafton School of Arts soon outgrew its first home, and a new two-storey stone and brick edifice, near the old building and with a frontage to Victoria Street, was opened in May 1871. Among other things, it contained a library and reading room, committee rooms, and a Council Chamber.[17]

By 1895 the Grafton School of Arts was in considerable debt, and it had long been a matter of speculation as to whether it could ever free itself from its predicament. The position turned out to be hopeless, and the climax came early in 1897 when the institution closed its doors.[18] It was subsequently resurrected as a Mechanics Institute.

Figure 2.5 School of Arts, South Grafton, 2007

Meanwhile, work had begun in 1891 on the construction of a new building, to replace rented premises, for the School of Arts at South Grafton. The resulting

[16] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 August 1858; *Maitland Mercury*, 5 October 1858, 1 September 1859; *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 25 September 1860.
[17] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 30 May 1871.
[18] *Northern Star*, 7 April 1897.

two-storey timber structure, erected on a central site in Skinner Street, adjoining the Post and Telegraph Office, contained a hall, library, reading room, and various other compartments. It was officially opened in May 1892 at a ceremony attended by Lord Jersey (the Governor), Lady Jersey, Edmund Barton and John See.[19] Unlike its counterpart of the northern side of the river, the South Grafton School of Arts building has survived (Figure 2.5).

2.4 Religion

The following is of necessity a brief account of the ecclesiastical history of Grafton, and includes details of only the town's three main religious denominations, 'main' being defined in terms of the numbers of adherents. The 1871 Census Returns for the town of Grafton show that followers of the Church of England then made up 52 per cent of the population. Roman Catholics and Presbyterians were the next largest denominations, with 22 and 11 per cent respectively. All three together accounted for 85 per cent of the municipal population, which then numbered 2,250.[20]

Church of England[21]

All church work in the Clarence River district was of a missionary nature until after 1847, when the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle was formed, comprising all the territory north of the Hunter River. A parish was subsequently created with its headquarters at Grafton and embracing the Clarence, Richmond and Tweed River districts. Services were held in the Grafton court house until the first church was built in 1854. It was a small wooden building, the position of which is marked by a boulder (carrying a cross and plaque) near the corner of Duke and Victoria Streets.

In 1863, a new Diocese was formed—Armidale and Grafton—from part of the Diocese of Newcastle.[22] After much delay, William Collinson Sawyer became its first bishop in February 1867. Sawyer and his family arrived in Sydney from England later that year, and he made his first visit to Grafton on 31 December. The new bishop undertook to reside in both Grafton and Armidale, spending part of each year at each place. That was not to be, as Sawyer drowned in the Clarence River in a boating mishap very shortly after

[19] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 25 August 1891, 7 May 1892, 13 July 1901.
[20] NSW, *Journal of the Legislative Council*, vol. 21, 1872, p. 1231.
[21] This topic is dealt with comprehensively in Moorhead, J., 1984, *Cathedral on the Clarence: the first hundred years* (Grafton: Cathedral Restoration Committee)
[22] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 29 December 1863.

his arrival, on 15 March 1868. His successor, James Francis Turner, preferred to reside in Armidale.

Bishop Turner made his first visit to Grafton in September 1869, and moved soon after to build cathedrals in both Grafton and Armidale. He laid the foundation stone of the cathedral at Grafton in June 1874, with the assistance of the architect, John Horbury Hunt.[23] Work was not begun on the building until six years later. It was opened and dedicated in July 1884 (this is the building numbered '4' in Figure 2.1).[24]

Roman Catholic

A Roman Catholic chapel was built at South Grafton in 1857 for visiting clergyman Rev. Timothy McCarthy, regarded as the 'apostle of Catholicity in the Clarence district'. The first resident clergyman, Rev. William Xavier Johnson, arrived in 1863, and later built the first Roman Catholic church in North Grafton. The foundation stone of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church was laid in September 1866, and the building, of brick on a stone foundation, was completed and opened for worship in December the following year. Additions to the original building were made in 1877.[25] A brick church at South Grafton was opened in June 1881 by Bishop Torreggiani, replacing the earlier timber chapel.[26]

Figure 2.6 St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Oliver Street, 2007.

Presbyterian

The first Presbyterian Church in Grafton was built during the pastorate of Rev. James Collins (1856-1864). It was a wooden building,

[23] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 30 June 1874.
[24] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 26 July 1884.
[25] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 28 August 1866, 18 September 1866, 1 May 1913.
[26] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 28 June 1881.

erected at the corner of Mary and Fitzroy Streets on land donated for the purpose by Samuel Avery (one of Grafton Municipality's inaugural aldermen in 1859). This church was removed in 1867 to a Crown grant at the corner of Prince and Oliver Streets.[27]

The present St Andrew's Church (Figure 2.6) replaced the old timber church, which, by the time of the laying of the foundation stone of the new building in October 1886, was overdue for replacement; 'The rain drops of every passing shower', it was complained, 'came pattering through the roof'. The new church, of brick on stone foundations, with a tower and spire at the front (facing Oliver Street), was opened in February 1887. The sale of the original church land in Mary Street provided the nucleus of the fund from which the new church was built.[28]

The Presbyterian denomination in Grafton was divided from an early date, and a second church was established, aligned with the synod of Eastern Australia (the Free Presbyterian Church) rather than with the synod of New South Wales. A timber church was erected in Villiers Street, and this was replaced in 1871 by the present brick structure in Fry Street.[29]

In 1888 the *Sydney Mail* was able to say of Grafton's religious establishments:

> The Church of England has expended some £6,000 on their Cathedral Church; but as it does not yet assume anything like its full dimensions, it is not seen to advantage. The Presbyterian Church of New South Wales has a very handsome place of worship, ornamented with tower and spire, which makes it one of the most attractive looking buildings in the city. The Roman Catholics have chapels in North and South Grafton, with convent and high school and parochial school in the former place.
>
> Other demonimations represented in the city by places of worship are—Wesleyan, church and manse; Presbyterian Synod of Eastern Australia, church and manse; and Baptist. All these churches are built of brick, and it should be added the Church of England has a wooden church at South Grafton.'[30]

The foregoing neglected to mention that a Lutheran Church had also been established in Grafton, a consequence of the town's small but significant German Protestant population (see 4.3.1).[31]

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27 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 18 June 1867, 9 October 1886.
28 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 9 October 1886, 15 February 1887.
29 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 6 June 1871, 27 June 1871, 23 January 1872, 25 February 1873.
30 *Sydney Mail*, 21 April 1888.
31 An account of the building of the Lutheran Church in Grafton is given in Burkhardt and Mackey, *History of the German Community*, pp. 40-42. The church was opened in 1876.

Among the significant advances to occur subsequent to the *Sydney Mail* article was the replacement of the Roman Catholic Church in 1914. The foundation stone of the present St Mary's Church (Figure 2.7) was laid by the Bishop of Lismore, John Carroll, on 18 January 1914. It was built to replace the original (1867) church, which was destroyed by fire in 1913.[1]

In respect of the Anglican church, a separate Diocese of Grafton was formed in 1914, taking in the territory between the Hastings River and the Queensland border, with Cecil Henry Druitt as its first bishop. Twenty years later, on the occasion of the jubilee celebrations of the cathedral in 1934, the foundation stone of a substantial extension to the building was laid. With the exception of a tower and spire, which remain unbuilt, this completed the cathedral to Hunt's original design. The extension was dedicated in October 1937, and in 1959, after clearance of the debt, the cathedral was consecrated.[2]

Figure 2.7 Roman Catholic Church, Victoria Street, 2007. At the left is the 1911 Presbytery (under renovation), and at the right is the 1928 St Mary's College.

At South Grafton, a new Anglican church (St Matthew's) was built in close proximity to the old one in 1907; St Stephen's Presbyterian Church was dedicated and opened in 1922; and in 1935 Bishop Carroll laid the foundation

1 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 1 May 1913, 20 January 1914.
2 *Daily Examiner*, 28 June 1934, 1 November 1937; *Northern Star*, 15 September 1959.

stone of a new St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church (the third) in Skinner Street, and this was opened, also by the bishop, in July 1936.[3]

2.5 Hotels (Licensed Public Houses)

Two of the three earliest licensed public houses to operate on the Clarence River have already been mentioned (Chapter 1). They were the Clarence Settlers' Arms, built by James Durno on the southern side of the river in 1841, and first licensed in 1842; and the Woolpack Inn, built on the northern side by Robert Bentley. The former operated very briefly, and the latter, taken over from Bentley in 1842 by Thomas Hewitt, continued until the mid-1850s. A third licence was granted in 1842 to Patrick Burnie for the Clarence Hotel, situated near the site of the present Crown Hotel at the foot of Prince Street. From these beginnings, the number of licensed public houses grew to around 17 in Grafton (north) and 7 in South Grafton by the early twentieth century; many more had come and gone by that time. Table 2.2 is an attempt to list all the pubs that have operated in the Grafton City area since 1842.

Table 2.2 Grafton City Pubs

Estd	Name	Location	Closed	Present Name
1842	Clarence Settlers Arms	South Grafton	1843?	
1842	Clarence	Grafton	extant	**Crown**
1842	Woolpack Inn	Grafton	1856	
1847	New Inn	South Grafton	1865	
1853	Blacksmiths Arms	Grafton	1863	
1853	Greenwood Tree	South Grafton	1860	
1853	Steam Packet	South Grafton	1862	
1858	Grafton	Grafton	1865	
1858	Royal	Grafton	1881	
1860	Bricklayers Arms	Grafton	1911	
1860	Commercial	Grafton	2002	
1860	Tattersalls	Grafton	1895	
1862	Australian	South Grafton	extant	**Australian**
1862	Criterion	Grafton	1922	
1862	Royal	Grafton	1880	
1863	European	Grafton	1876	
1863	Prince of Wales	Grafton	1878	
1864	Victoria	Grafton	1876	
1865	Star	Grafton	1894	
1865	Steam Ferry	South Grafton	extant	**Walker's Marina**
1866	South Grafton	South Grafton	1885	
1867	Freemasons	Grafton	1965	

[3] *Grafton Argus*, 27 June 1907; *Daily Examiner*, 20 March 1922, 16 December 1935, 6 July 1936.

1868	Harp of Erin	South Grafton	1893	
1869	Holmsten's Family	Grafton	extant	**Roche's**
1869	Vineyard	Grafton	1880	
1870	New Line	South Grafton	extant	**Royal**
1871	Prince of Wales	Grafton	1901	
1872	British	Grafton	1876	
1873	Denmark	Grafton	1878	
1873	United	South Grafton	1880	
1874	Australian	Grafton	1892	
1874	British	South Grafton	1924	
1874	Lion	Grafton	1935 (1)	
1874	Turf	Grafton	1887	
1875	Market	Grafton	2005	
1875	Royal Oak	Grafton	1880	
1876	Albion	Grafton	extant	**Albion**
1876	Maitland and Hunter	South Grafton	1894	
1876	Victoria	Grafton	1913	
1876	Post Office	Grafton	extant	**Post Office**
1876	Willow Tree	Grafton	extant	**Jacaranda**
1877	Cambridge	Grafton	1878	
1877	Camphor Tree	Grafton	1879	
1878	Argyle	Grafton	1880	
1878	Clarence and Richmond	Grafton	1921	
1878	Cosmopolitan	Grafton	1881	
1878	Royal Foresters	Grafton	1879	
1878	Saxonian	Grafton	1911	
1879	Clarence and New England	Grafton	1891	
1879	Laird's Family	Grafton	1935	
1880	Sellers Family	South Grafton	1957 (2)	
1881	Post Office	South Grafton	extant	**Post Office**
1881	Royal	Grafton	2006	
1886	Homebush	South Grafton	1890	
1903	Great Northern	South Grafton	extant	**Great Northern**
1904	Imperial	Grafton	extant	**Village Green**
1935	Lion	Grafton	extant	**Grafton**
1957	Good Intent	South Grafton	extant	**Good Intent**
1971	Hotel Five (3)	South Grafton	extant	**Hotel Five**

Source: Abstracted (with minor adjustments) from Morley, T., 2001. *Grafton Pubs and publicans, 1842 to 2002* (Grafton)

Note: Where an establishment has had more than one name, only the first is shown, unless it is extant, in which case the present name is also shown. (1) Licence removed to new building nearby. (2) Licence removed to new Good Intent Hotel. (3) Licence removed from hotel outside the LGA.

The following section deals mainly with the fourteen pubs that remain in operation in the Grafton City area.

2.5.1 Grafton

Most of the fourteen Grafton pubs that remain in operation have been partially or completely rebuilt, sometimes more than once, since they were first established, and all have been altered to a greater or lesser degree. The following gives a brief account of the history of each building.

The Crown Hotel, at the river end of Prince Street, is often considered to be descended from the Clarence Hotel, established on the same site in 1842. The present two-storey brick Crown Hotel, however, was built much later, then substantially remodelled in 1930 (involving new bedrooms, dining room, lounges, bar, and the present grand entrance hall).[4] The building has changed little in general form since then.

Figure 2.8 Former Vineyard Hotel, 2007. Although this building was licensed as a public house for only about ten years, it is interesting because of its age (erected c.1869) and its connection with Grafton's German community (its first licensee was Philip Hoffman). It is one of the oldest surviving pub buildings in the city.

Roche's Hotel, in Victoria Street, was established as Holmsten's Family Hotel in 1869. It has been greatly enlarged since then, but the original two-storey brick building at the corner of Victoria and Hockey Streets is still identifiable within the present structure.

[4] *Daily Examiner*, 12 July 1930.

The former European Hotel in Prince Street, established in 1863, is one of the oldest surviving pub buildings in the city. It is also significant for its association, through licensees Strauss and Kritsch, with Grafton's early German community. The former Vineyard Hotel, which stands at the corner of Dobie and Alice Streets (Figure 2.8), was established in 1869, and is significant for similar reasons. In addition, it was used as temporary premises by the Sisters of Mercy when they first arrived in Grafton in 1884.

The Post Office Hotel in Victoria Street (Figure 2.9), situated immediately opposite the building from which it took its name, was opened in 1876.[5] Photographic evidence reveals that its general external form has changed very little in the last 100 years at least.

Figure 2.9 Post Office Hotel, Victoria Street, 1973 (*source*: National Trust of Australia)

Weiley's Hotel, Prince Street, was opened as the Market Hotel in 1875. Fire destroyed the original hotel in 1908, and the present two-storey brick building opened in its place in 1909.[6] The name Weiley's Hotel, adopted in 1935, was after its proprietor, William J. Weiley, who conducted the establishment for nearly fifty-seven years, until his death in 1946.[7] This pub ceased trading in 2005, but it is included here because it remains one of the more architecturally significant pub buildings in Grafton (Figure 2.10).[8]

5 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 15 January 1876.
6 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 30 May 1908; *Grafton Argus*, 4 June 1909.
7 *Daily Examiner*, 25 June 1935, 3 January 1946.
8 *Daily Examiner*, 9 December 2005.

Figure 2.10 Window detail, former Weiley's Hotel, Prince Street, Grafton, 2006

The two-storey Grafton Hotel in Fitzroy Street was built as the Lion Hotel in 1935, with pre-cast concrete block cavity walls and a tiled roof. It replaced an earlier building of the same name, situated on the corner of Fitzroy and Prince Streets (now the Commonwealth Bank site). The new Lion Hotel was renamed the Grafton Hotel in 1936.[1]

The Jacaranda Hotel, a two-storey wooden building in Pound Street, is descended from the Willow Tree Hotel, opened on the same site in 1876. The name was changed in 1939 to the Jacaranda Hotel, after the street trees for which Grafton was then becoming widely known.[2]

The present Village Green Hotel was known as the Imperial Hotel until about 1990. It was opened in 1904 at the corner of Turf and Pound Streets, a site chosen for its convenience to the Grafton railway station, then under construction nearby.[3]

The Albion Hotel, at the corner of Queen and Arthur Streets, near the Grafton hospital, was established in the 1870s. It was originally a single-storey building, and was enlarged to two storeys probably about 1918. It was endorsed as a tavern in 1982, meaning that it was no longer required to provide rooms for public accommodation.

1 *Daily Examiner*, 12 February 1935, 11 August 1936.
2 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 11 March 1939.
3 *Grafton Argus*, 7 January 1904.

2.5.2 South Grafton

The Australian Hotel at South Grafton, a two-story brick building at the corner of Through and Wharf Streets, was erected in 1914. It replaced the hotel of the same name that had operated almost continuously on the same site since 1862. Permission was given by the Licensing Court in September 1913 to remove the old hotel and to erect a new building, and this was completed the following March.[4]

One block west of the Australian Hotel, at the corner of Through and Skinner Streets, is Walker's Marina Hotel, another two-storey brick building. The present structure dates mainly from 1909 when the previous hotel on the site was substantially rebuilt for its owner, Elizabeth Walker (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11 Walker's Marina Hotel, South Grafton, 2007. Detail on corner of parapet showing year of construction (1909) and initials of owner, Elizabeth Walker.

South Grafton's Post Office Hotel, at the corner of Skinner and Spring Streets, was rebuilt in 1887 following a disastrous fire.[5] Although it underwent a major renovation in 1925, the present two-storey timber building is in general form quite similar to that of 1887.

The present Great Northern Hotel, in Spring Street, was built to replace its 1903 predecessor, destroyed by fire at the end of 1928.[6] The new building,

4 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 18 September 1913, 17 March 1914.
5 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 19 March 1887, 27 August 1887.
6 *Daily Examiner*, 1 January 1929.

two-storied and of reinforced concrete construction, was opened in May 1930.[7]

The Royal Hotel, at the corner of Ryan and Abbot Streets, was established in 1872, by Francis McGuren (who had previously run the nearby New Line Hotel).[8] It is not known precisely when the present two-storey brick Royal Hotel was erected, but photographic evidence suggests that the general form of the building has changed little since the 1880s.

The modern-looking, two-storey, cream and red brick, tile-roofed Good Intent Hotel was opened in 1957. Its licence came from the Tattersall's Hotel, situated diagonally opposite Walker's Marina Hotel. The Licensing Court in 1946 ordered the rebuilding of the Tattersall's Hotel, but, as the site was flood-prone (as was demonstrated in July 1954), the owner decided to purchase land elsewhere and seek permission to rebuild there. This was granted in 1955, and the new hotel opened for business two years later.[9]

The newest hotel at South Grafton, the Hotel Five, took its name from the situation of its predecessor, the Railway Hotel, a single storey wooden building at the junction of the Armidale and Glenreagh roads, five miles from the township of South Grafton. The licence of the Railway Hotel, popularly known as the 'Five Mile Hotel', was removed to a new site, closer to the town, and near the Grafton abattoir. The new Hotel Five, a single-storey brick building with a two-storey corner 'tower', was opened in 1971.[10]

2.6 Parks and Gardens

One of Grafton's most striking features is undoubtedly its splendid trees; thousands of individuals, of many species, line the city's thoroughfares and ornament its parks. Planting began in the 1870s, and became a continuing activity, extending into new areas and sometimes requiring replanting in places where the originals were in inconvenient positions, or were of unsuitable types.

The idea of planting trees in Grafton's wide streets was the subject of a public meeting held at the School of Arts in August 1866. By that time the town area had been denuded of most of its natural vegetation, and it was thought that

7 *Daily Examiner*, 3 May 1930.
8 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 24 September 1872.
9 *Daily Examiner*, 19 October 1954, 16 July 1957.
10 *Daily Examiner*, 12 May 1971, 18 June 1971.

trees would not only add to the beauty of the town, but would also provide much-needed shade.[11]

It was not until May 1874 that the council of the Borough of Grafton adopted a by-law for the planting and protection of trees in its streets and parks, and the work began in that year. By 1881 it could be said that 'a good deal' of Victoria and Prince Streets had been planted at intervals of 30 feet and at a distance of 12 feet from the footpaths. Trees used included Moreton Bay chestnut (black bean), fig tree, camphor tree, white and red cedar, silky oak, bunya pine and pittosporum. In 1884 it was said that the street trees were 'growing immensely', and that Grafton would soon deserve the title of the 'grove city'. 'Walks, miles in length' could already be made under their shade.[12] An indication of the extent of planting by 1888 can be gained from the 'bird's-eye view' of Grafton in Figure 2.1.

It soon became apparent that mistakes had been made with some early plantings. Some species, such as silky oak and fig, were heavy growers and required severe lopping to limit their size. Pepper trees, planted freely in early years, were liable to internal decay and consequently to blowing over, so were largley replaced by other varieties. White cedars became infested with hairy caterpillars so were 'evidently unsuitable for street planting'. The *Examiner* in 1882 was advocating that they be replaced 'as speedily as possible'.[13]

By 1897 the trees in the main business sections of Prince Street were so large that they were said to take away one-third of the width of the street. Some were then '3ft in diameter, and…40ft high'. A strong movement emerged to have them removed and replaced by a single row in the centre of the street.[14] It was many years, however, before this happened.

In September 1918, Grafton City Council gave consideration to a proposal to remove all the trees in Prince Street between Pound and Bacon Streets (which included many that were dead or dying) prior to beginning the work of remodelling the street. There was strong public opposition, and comparisons were made with the recent destruction 'by the Hun' of the beautiful trees on the battlefields of France.[15]

The remodelling of Prince Street that began about 1918 included the creation of a garden bed, planted with palms, in the centre of the street. For a while

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11 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 14 August 1866.
12 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 28 May 1881; *Town and Country Journal*, 7 June 1884.
13 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 28 March 1882.
14 *Town and Country Journal*, 23 October 1897.
15 *Daily Examiner*, 7 and 17 September 1918.

this co-existed with the side-trees, but as can be seen in Figure 2.12, the latter were eventually removed from the busiest part of the street, probably in the 1930s.

Figure 2.12 View along Prince Street towards the river, from the clock tower, c.1940 (*Source*: Clarence River Historical Society)

Renewal of dead, dying or unwanted trees from old plantings was accompanied by the extension of planting to other parts of the city, sometimes on special occasions. One example is the eastern end of Pound Street, between the river and Clarence Street, which was planted with jacaranda trees in May 1935 to commemorate the silver jubilee of King George V. A memorial tablet of marble, affixed to the side of the railway viaduct, was unveiled to mark the creation of 'Jubilee Avenue'.[16]

Another notable example is the Memorial Avenue planted in June 1949 as a tribute to the servicemen who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars. The avenue extended along Bacon Street, from the public school to Cranworth Street, and comprised more than 130 trees, including jacarandas,

[16] *Daily Examiner*, 7 May 1935.

pecan nuts, weeping figs, cape chestnuts and magnolias. Of these trees, 45 were selected to bear plates inscribed with the names of fallen soldiers.[17]

In June 1953, an avenue of cassia trees was planted in Clarence Street, between Bacon and Pound Streets, in recognition of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. A commemorative plaque was affixed to the railway viaduct where it crosses Clarence Street (Figure 2.13).[18]

Figure 2.13 Marble tablet on the railway viaduct at Clarence Street, affixed to mark the creation of Coronation Avenue in June 1953.

In addition to its street trees, several public parks adorn Grafton's townscape. Notable among these are Fischer Park and See Park in North Grafton, and McKittrick Park in South Grafton. Like the town's streets, these have been planted with a variety of species of trees, native and exotic, over many years.

Susan Island

One piece of land whose native vegetation partly avoided the settlers' axes was Susan Island. This sixty-hectare island, which lies mid-channel between North and South Grafton, was dedicated in 1870 as a reserve for public recreation. This was no guarantee that the island's vegetation would be spared. Largely through the exertions of one Grafton resident—James Fowler Wilcox (1823-1881)—the island remained for a while in a 'state of nature', but

[17] *Daily Examiner*, 14 June 1949.
[18] *Daily Examiner*, 3 June 1953.

by the mid-1920s, much of its vegetation had been cleared or burnt preparatory for clearing. On its southern end were built recreational features such as fireplaces, jetties, seats and tables, and a pavilion, things more attuned to early twentieth century ideas of 'public recreation' than Wilcox's goal of maintaining the island's natural cover for the preservation, study and enjoyment of its plants and animals. In 1982 an area of 23 hectares at the northern end of the island, the only part that retained its primeval cover of rainforest, was declared a Nature Reserve under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* of 1974.[19]

[19] Stubbs, 1999, 'Nineteenth century origins'.

3 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

The head of navigation on the Clarence River logically became an important transportation hub.[1] By the late 1840s, roads linked it with the tableland towns of Armidale (south-west), Glen Innes (west), and Tenterfield (north-west). The establishment of an official town near the head in 1849 reinforced this pattern, and eventually, in keeping with its commercial pre-eminence in its district, Grafton became the point of convergence of major roads, telegraph lines, and railways, as well as the terminus of intra- and inter-colonial shipping services.

3.1 Roads

In an 1840 report to Lord Russell, George Gipps referred to the recent discovery of a valuable tract of fertile land around the Clarence River. Although he had by then sent a surveyor to prepare for the measurement of that land, Gipps 'apprehend[ed] that the greatest use to be derived from the discovery…[would] be the formation of a road, by which Wool from the Pastoral districts between the 28th and 30th degrees of South latitude may be brought for shipment in the Clarence River, instead of being sent as at present to Sydney'.[2] Although not by any means the greatest use, this certainly became an important one, and by the end of the 1840s New England wool was being conveyed to the river along not one road, but three. In addition, the bulk of the supplies required by the New England pastoralists were shipped from Sydney to Grafton, then taken up to the tableland by road.

3.1.1 To Armidale

The original route from New England to the Clarence River—that identified by Richard Craig and used by Dr John Dobie, the Mylne brothers and Joseph Hickey Grose when they first stocked their runs (Ramornie, Eatonswill and Smith's Flat, respectively) in 1840—descended the tableland from near present-day Ebor to South Grafton. The Ogilvie brothers, Edward and Frederick, came down that way the same year in search of pastoral lands, and took up Yulgilbar as a result. A few years later, Commander H. G. Hamilton ascended from the Clarence to Armidale by this route. He said that it passed through 'the worst country it was ever my lot to travel in…and besides the precipitous and rocky ranges we had to pass, there were five or six rivers, or

1 Here 'head of navigation' means for ocean-going ships; smaller vessels could ascend the river as far as Copmanhurst.
2 Sir George Gipps to Lord John Russell, 16 July 1840, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 20, p. 711. The area between the 28th and 30th parallels is approximately that between Toowoomba and Armidale.

rather torrents, all swollen very much with the rains, which were to be crossed.'[3] Better lines were later found, including a practical dray route opened in 1846 by William Freeman and Alexander McLennan, and first used then to cart wool to South Grafton for shipment to Sydney.

The importance of the road to the town of Armidale is indicated by the following comments from an 1871 newspaper report:[4]

> There are two ways to Armidale for goods—one by way of Grafton, and the other by Newcastle and the railway. By the former route goods cost altogether for carriage £7 10s a ton, and are fourteen or fifteen days on the road in summer time, while by the railway line they cost £9 9s a ton, and are from two to four weeks on the road; consequently for every ton Mr Moore [owner of an Armidale flour mill] gets by way of Newcastle he gets five by way of Grafton, having special teams on the road continually employed.

The opening of the Great Northern Railway to Armidale in February 1883 had a mixed effect on the Grafton-Armidale road. On the one hand, freight movement along the road declined as the southern New England pastoralists became less reliant on it and the port of Grafton for obtaining supplies and exporting produce. On the other hand, coaches carrying passengers and mail began to operate along the road to and from the railway in 1884.

3.1.2 To Tenterfield

Edward and Frederick Ogilvie, after having come down to the Clarence from the direction of Armidale in 1840, took a different route when returning to the tableland. They ascended to Tenterfield by way of Sandy Hill, and returned that way in 1841 with sheep to stock their new Yulgilbar run. This became the earliest dray route from the New England to the Clarence River; it descended the tableland to near present-day Tabulam, then followed the river southward through Yulgilbar and Gordon Brook stations to the site of Copmanhurst, then to the settlement at the present site of Grafton. The first load of New England wool is said to have been delivered to Grafton along this route early in 1842.

As an alternative to following the northern side of the river into Grafton, the river could be crossed at Apple Tree Flat (now Winegrove), upstream of Copmanhurst, and a track taken along the southern side of the river, through

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3 Hamilton, H. G., 1843, 'The country between Liverpool Plains and Moreton Bay, in New South Wales', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, vol. 13, pp. 245-253.
4 *Town and Country Journal*, 30 September 1871.

Ramornie station, to what is now South Grafton.[5] Both were difficult routes, so unloading the wool at Grose's wharf (Copmanhurst) and sending it to Grafton by river became a more favourable alternative. Hall has suggested that most of wool-laden drays of the 1840s took this option.[6]

A second route from the tableland to the Clarence River came into use at the end of 1842.[7] This continued eastward from Tabulam, crossed the Richmond Range, then proceeded through Busby's Flat and Wyan to Traveller's Rest and thence to Grafton. A little south of Traveller's Rest a branch road could be taken to the Clarence River at Lawrence. Later a branch road led northward from near Traveller's Rest to Casino on the Richmond River.

The route through Busby's Flat and Wyan surpassed the older one through Yulgilbar and Gordon Brook especially during the 1850s when many teams from the tableland off-loaded at Lawrence rather than Grafton. Grafton's position as the principal port on the Clarence River was confirmed, however, in 1859, when a new road was surveyed along the valley of the river towards Tabulam.[8] This road, which passed through Coaldale and Baryulgil, crossed the Clarence River at Yates's Flat, and joined the Old Road to the west of Tabulam, became known as the 'New Road' or 'New Line', although for much of its course it approximated the original dray route through Yulgilbar and Gordon Brook stations.[9] Thus, within twenty years of the first settlement on the Clarence, two major roads connected the north side of the river at Grafton with the New England tableland at Tenterfield.

The opening of the 'New Road' in 1859 coincided closely with the discovery of gold in the upper Clarence districts. During that year diggings were active at Fairfield, Pretty Gully, Timbarra, and Tooloom. In mid-1859 a regular fortnightly escort service was established to take gold from Timbarra to Grafton whence it was conveyed by steamer to Sydney.[10] In the early 1870s, two further mineral discoveries increased the use of the New Road to Grafton. The first of these was the discovery of tin in New England in the early 1870s:

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5 Hall, G., 1977, *The Road to the* river, 2nd. Ed. (Bording's Publications, Lismore), p. 11; Mackey, N. M., 2001, *European settlement in the Clarence River district before* 1850 (Grafton Family History Centre, Whiteman Creek), p. 56.
6 Hall, *Road to the river*, p. 14.
7 Law, *Bawden lectures*, p. 37.
8 'Survey of new road from Grafton to Tenterfield', Sheet A, 1859, AONSW Map no. 5244.
9 Hall, *Road to the river*, pp. 98-100; 'Survey of new road from Grafton to Tenterfield', Sheet A, 1859, AONSW Map no. 5244.
10 Wilkinson, I., undated, *Forgotten country: the story of the Upper Clarence goldfields, 3rd ed* (the author), p. 62.

near Inverell in 1871, and near Emmaville in 1872.[11] Most of this at first was conveyed from Tenterfield to both Lawrence and Grafton. Meanwhile, the discovery of gold at Solferino and Lionsville, also in the early 1870s, generated considerable traffic on the 'New Road' to Grafton especially during the first half of the decade.

Despite the completion of the Grafton-Glen Innes road in 1876 (see below), both the 'New Road' (through Coaldale and Yates's Flat) and the 'Old Road' (through Traveller's Rest, Wyan, and Busby's Flat) remained important transport routes until the 1880s. When the railway reached Tenterfield in 1886, however, the New England graziers found it unnecessary to send their wool by road to the Clarence River. Even the mines around Drake would send their ore up the mountain to meet the railway at Tenterfield.[12] The 'New Road' fell into disuse. Traffic between Tabulam and the Richmond River at Casino began to cross the Richmond Range at Mallanganee, avoiding the longer route through Busby's Flat and Wyan, and use of this section of the 'Old Road' also declined. The growth of the Richmond River district, however, ensured the continued use of the road between Grafton and Casino.

After the opening of the New Road in 1859, traffic on the Old Road declined, and as it did Lawrence declined in importance as a port compared to Grafton. Edward Ogilvie of Yulgilbar, determined to boost the trade of Lawrence where he had invested heavily, built his own road in 1862 from Yulgilbar, via Gordon Brook and Dome Mountain, to connect with the Old Road at Traveller's Rest.[13] Ogilvie's Road, as it was known, was not a popular route and it soon fell into disuse.

The Summerland Way

During the Second World War, the Grafton to Casino road was reconstructed as a flood-free defence route, using Commonwealth funds, providing a means of getting around the two ferries across the Clarence River on the Pacific Highway (Harwood and Mororo). It was raised in status to a Trunk Road in 1949, meaning that the Department of Main Roads would then provide three-quarters of the cost of road and bridge maintenance and road construction and the full cost of bridge construction, with local government to provide the balance.[14]

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[11] Carne, J. E., 1911, *The Tin-Mining Industry and the Distribution of Tin Ores in New South Wales (New South Wales Department of Mines, Sydney).*
[12] Hall, *Road to the river*, pp. 113-114.
[13] Davies, R. E., 1957. 'History of Clarence River and of Grafton, 1830-1880', part 27, *Daily Examiner*, 2 February; Hall, *Road to the river*, p.104.
[14] *Richmond River Express*, 19 September 1955.

In the 1950s, especially after major floods in 1955 and 1956 closed parts of the Pacific Highway and the Grafton to Casino road carried large amounts of diverted traffic, requests were made to have it raised in status to a highway. This would fully relieve the shire councils of the burdensome cost of maintaining it. The road was not reclassified, however, and ratepayers continued to pay for a portion of its upkeep. The whole of the trunk road, from Grafton to its junction with the Mount Lindsay Highway, was officially designated Summerland Way in 1966.[15] The most southerly part, between about Whiporie and Grafton, approximates the old wool road from Grafton to Tenterfield.

3.1.3 To Glen Innes

The first road from Glen Innes to South Grafton was also in use in the 1840s; it followed a route through Newton Boyd, Dalmorton and Buccarumbi. In 1864, the Commissioner and Engineer for Roads, William C. Bennett, adopted this route over either of the Tenterfield roads (the Armidale road was not in contention) as the future main road between the river and the tableland. Improvements to the route included almost 26 miles of cuttings along its total length of 106 miles, and the construction of a tunnel 66 yards long between Dalmorton and Newton Boyd. It was declared 'open for traffic' in November 1869.[16]

A visitor to South Grafton in 1871 was able to remark that the place was 'the termination of the much heard of Newton Boyd road from Glen Innes, as also the Armidale road…which is not so much admired. These roads are chiefly used by the New England wool teams'.[17]

The Newton Boyd road continued to improve after it was opened for traffic. Important milestones were the completion of bridges across the Orara River (the Bawden Bridge) in 1874, the Nymboida River at Buccarumbi in 1875, and the Mann River in 1877, to provide uninterrupted communication between Grafton and Glen Innes. The Newton Boyd line was proclaimed as a 'main road' in 1876.[18]

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15 *Kyogle Examiner*, 9 September 1966.

16 'The story of the Gwydir Highway', *Main Roads*, March 1954, pp. 69-77; 'Report on the state of the roads in the colony of New South Wales, to 31st March 1865', NSW, *V&PLA* 1865-66, 1, 956; *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 7 December 1869.

17 *Town and Country Journal*, 8 April 1871.

18 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 7 April 1874; *Town and Country Journal*, 2 January 1875; 'The story of the Gwydir Highway', *Main Roads*, March 1954, pp. 69-77; Lee, R. S., 1988, *The Greatest public work: the New South Wales railways, 1848-1889* (Hale and Iremonger, Sydney), p.79; Walker, R. B., 1966, *Old New England: a history of the northern tablelands of New South Wales 1818-1900* (Sydney University Press, Sydney), p.121.

As the road between Glen Innes and South Grafton came into more popular use, especially after its completion in 1876, it surpassed the Tenterfield-Lawrence and Tenterfield-Grafton roads as the major route between the New England and the Clarence River. During one week in 1874, for instance, the Clarence and New England Steam Navigation Company received at the South Grafton wharf nearly 40 tons of New England tin for shipping to Sydney.[19] The traffic from Glen Innes hastened the decline of Lawrence, but it boosted Grafton's position as the principal port of the Clarence, as the place now received goods from three directions—from Armidale, Tenterfield and Glen Innes.[20]

Even after the Great Northern Railway reached Glen Innes from Armidale in August 1884, the Newton Boyd line continued to be an important transportation route. The Glen Innes-Grafton mail coach was upgraded to a motor service in 1913.[21] Together with its westerly extension from Glen Innes to Collarenebri, the road became a State Highway (the Gwydir Highway) in 1928. In the 1930s, when the South Grafton to Glen Innes section of the Gwydir Highway required upgrading, it was decided instead to locate a better route. Construction of the northerly deviation commenced in 1939, was suspended during the Second World War, and recommenced in 1946. It was opened to traffic in December 1960. High-level bridges were later opened across the Mann River at Jackadgery (October 1961) and the Orara River at Ramornie (May 1966).[22]

3.1.4 River crossings

The Clarence River, several hundred metres wide at Grafton, was a considerable obstacle to land transport. The magnitude of the problem is indicated by the fact that two separate towns developed, one on each side of the river, with duplicated services, including schools, churches, post offices, newspapers, and wharves.

The adoption in 1864 of the Newton Boyd route for the main road between the Clarence River and New England was strongly opposed by Grafton residents, partly because considerable business would be redirected to South Grafton where the road terminated. The blow was softened, however, by the establishment of a steam punt, to operate daily, from sunrise to sunset, across

[19] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 26 May 1874, p.5.
[20] Hall, *Road to the river*, p. 110.
[21] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 18 March 1913.
[22] 'New highway route now open to traffic between Glen Innes and Grafton', *Main Roads*, March 1961.

the river between the two towns. The punt, which was 62 feet long and 24 feet wide and was driven by a 6 horsepower engine, was launched in August 1868 and came into service shortly after.[23]

In 1874, the situation was described thus: South Grafton was connected with its sister town 'by means of a steam punt, for drays &c; and a very pretty and swift steam launch, the "Nellie", for passengers. These run all day, and return the Government, who work them under their own management, a handsome sum yearly.' 'There is also another punt, the property of the Borough Council, situate at Dobie-street, but this is worked by hand, and has been let on lease; this, too, is well patronised.' The latter provided more direct communication between Grafton and Ulmarra. By 1888, a 'ferry punt and steam launch' operated from Dobie Street.[24]

3.1.5 Pacific Highway

The main north coast road, which passes through South Grafton, was proclaimed a State Highway in 1928. It was at first named North Coast Highway, but was renamed Pacific Highway in 1931, after Queensland had given that name to its section of the Brisbane to Sydney coastal route. It is now the foremost road to pass through the City of Grafton.

3.2 Post and Telegraph

It is not known when the first regular mail service to and from Grafton began, but it was certainly by 1859, the year of incorporation of the municipality. In that year, a weekly mail service was in operation between Grafton and Sydney by steamer (in-coming mail arrived Grafton on Wednesday morning, and out-going mail departed on Saturday afternoon). In addition there were weekly services between Grafton and Tabulam (in Tuesday afternoon and out Wednesday morning), Grafton and Armidale (in Monday afternoon and out Wednesday morning), and Grafton and Moreton Bay via Casino (in Saturday afternoon and out Sunday afternoon), and a twice-weekly service between Grafton and Casino (in Tuesday and Saturday afternoons, and out Sunday and Wednesday afternoons).[25] By 1900, Grafton received eight mail deliveries from Sydney weekly. Excepting Mondays, a daily mail was received by coach

[23] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 25 August 1868.
[24] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 6 January 1874.; *Sydney Mail*, 21 April 1888.
[25] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 2 August 1859.

from Glen Innes; and on Mondays and Thursdays mails were brought by the Sydney boats.[26]

A telegraphic connection was made to Grafton from New England in 1862. A line had been opened to Armidale in 1861, and extended to Tenterfield in the same year, as part of the Sydney-Brisbane connection, completed in November 1861. The branch line was run to Grafton from Tenterfield via Wyan, and the Grafton telegraph office was opened for the transmission of messages in December 1862. In 1870, connection of the telegraph was made between the office in Grafton and the coast at the Clarence River heads, via Ulmarra.[27]

At first the postal and telegraphic services at Grafton were conducted from separate buildings, but at the beginning of 1870 the post office was amalgamated with the telegraph office. By the middle of the 1870s, the dual-function Post and Telegraph Office was overdue for replacement. A travelling reporter in 1874, after describing some of Grafton's 'prominent and fine buildings', added that the Post and Telegraph Office could 'scarcely be placed in that category', and in fact was 'a most insignificant and unsuitable building'. It was soon, however, to be replaced by 'larger and more commodious premises'.[28]

Construction of the new Post and Telegraph Office commenced in 1874—its foundation stone was laid in October—but its completion took nearly three years. In June 1876 the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* complained that the building was 'yet far from completion' and hoped that it 'will be forthwith completed, and that a few months will see the operators and manipulators of our letters and telegrams doing duty in an office more commensurate with the local demands than the present relic of by-gone times affords them'. This was not to be, and it was another year before the same newspaper was able to report that the Post and Telegraph Office was 'drawing near to completion' and that there seemed 'a probability of its being opened soon'. In September 1877, although completed, the building lay unopened 'like a dead letter', despite 'the hampered and dilapidated condition of the present office' in Prince Street. It was not until April 1878 that the new building was occupied.[29] Several years later—probably in 1882-83—a substantial new post office was

[26] *Town and Country Journal*, 30 June 1900.
[27] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 22 October 1861, 23 December 1862, 15 February 1870.
[28] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 21 September 1869, 6 January 1874.
[29] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 13 October 1874, 6 June 1876, 5 June 1877, 11 September 1877, 23 April 1878.

also erected at South Grafton.[30] It was built of brick, rendered to imitate stone coursing.

Figure 3.1 Grafton Post Office, erected 1874-1877 and opened 1878.

3.3 Newspapers

Grafton's first newspaper, and its most enduring, was established in 1859, shortly before the incorporation of the municipality, under the wide-ranging title of *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*. It was initially published weekly, and when it graduated to a daily in 1915 it assumed the simpler title of *Daily Examiner*, which it retains today. During its long life, the *Examiner* has seen several competitors come and go. The *Clarence and Richmond Independent and Grafton General Advertiser* and the *Advocate and Advertiser for the Clarence, Richmond and New England Districts* both operated briefly in the early 1860s. The short-lived *Grafton Herald* appeared in 1864, followed in 1867 by the *Grafton Observer*, in 1874 by the *Grafton Argus*, and in 1887 by the *Grip*. At South Grafton, the *Mercury* appeared in 1893, was renamed the *Times* in 1897, and later became the *Clarion*; it continued until

[30] Further research on this building is warranted, including to verify the time of construction of the original building and its various additions.

1921. The most successful rival to the *Examiner* was the *Grafton Argus*, which continued until 1922, shortly after having become a daily in 1921.[31]

Not all of these papers operated simultaneously, but for much of the early history of Grafton there were at least two journals in circulation. This is well illustrated in the laying of the foundation stone of the Grafton post office in October 1874, when under it was placed a bottle containing copies of three newspapers: the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, the *Grafton Argus*, and the *Grafton Observer*. Similarly, copies of the *Examiner*, the *Argus* and the *Grip* were deposited under the foundation stone of the Town Hall when it was laid in 1897, and these were discovered 'in a fine state of preservation' when the building was demolished in 1967.[32]

3.4 River Transport

As well as a focus of land transport routes, Grafton became a port for the ocean steamers trading to and from Sydney, as well as a considerable amount of intercolonial trade in timber to Victoria and New Zealand (see Chapter 4). The shipping trade of Grafton was initially carried on by sailing ships engaged in the cedar-cutting business. In 1844, *William the Fourth* became the first steamer to trade regularly with the Clarence; she made fortnightly trips for several years, chiefly carrying wool, and greatly assisting to open the trade of the river.

In 1850 a shipping company with some local proprietors was formed, and had the paddle steamer *Clarence* built for the Clarence River service. Upon arrival of *Clarence* in 1852 the Sydney proprietors decided to sell her instead, the recent discovery of gold having created such a demand for steamships that she could be sold immediately at a considerable profit. Later the same year, a group consisting only of Grafton businessmen formed the Grafton Steam Navigation Company and in 1855 placed the paddle steamer *Grafton* in service between Sydney and the river. The company was formally registered in 1857.

In 1860, the Grafton Steam Navigation Company was re-formed as the Clarence and Richmond Rivers Steam Navigation Company, the new name indicating the intention to begin serving the Richmond River. The company traded under this name until it absorbed Macleay River opposition in 1889 to

[31] A good account of the history of Grafton's newspapers is in Kirkpatrick, R., 1996, 'Survival and persistence: a case study of four provincial press sites', *Australian Studies in Journalism* 5, 158-188.
[32] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 13 October 1874; *Daily Examiner*, 26 April 1967.

become the Clarence, Richmond and Macleay Rivers Steam Navigation Company. When it merged with rival shipping line John See and Company in 1891, it acquired the new name of the North Coast Steam Navigation Company.

The most significant early opposition to the Clarence and Richmond Rivers Steam Navigation Company was the Clarence and New England Steam Navigation Company, begun early in 1865. The company introduced screw steamers into the Clarence River service—these were faster and more comfortable than paddle steamers—and competed successfully for the New England wool trade. Early in 1874 it could be said that 'The Clarence and New England, and the Clarence and Richmond Rivers Steam Navigation Companies run three or four powerful steamers between Grafton and Sydney, and do a large passenger and freight trade. Their arrival creates a considerable amount of stir, as they invariably introduce many fresh faces into the town'.[33] The new company collapsed, however, in 1879.

The seawise trade of the Clarence in 1874 comprised a total of 206 voyages—41 by sailing ships, and 265 by steamships. More than five thousand passangers were carried—2,747 inwards and 2,485 outwards. Among the main imports were general merchandise, clothing, tools and machinery; and coal. Exports included grain; sugar and molasses; bananas and potatoes; meat; livestock (horses, pigs, cattle, fowl); bones, horns, hides, and tallow; oysters; gold; and timber (hardwood and cedar), reflecting the broad range of local products. In addition were more than two thousand bales of New England wool, and tens of thousands of bags of tin ore, also from New England.[34] A substantial amount of the general merchandise received at Grafton was on-forwarded by horse and bullock teams to New England.

In 1900, the shipping service conducted by the North Coast Steam Navigation Company remained by far the main means of communication between Grafton and Sydney. Two of the company's vessels—*Kallatina* and *City of Grafton*—then ran regularly, twice a week. In addition, occasional trips were made by *Oakland* and *Australian*. These four steamers conveyed 8,264 passengers from the Clarence to Sydney in the previous year, and in addiiton shipped the whole of the produce exported from the district.[35] The dominance of the shipping service was unchallenged until the opening of the first railway to Grafton in 1905.

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[33] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 6 January 1874.
[34] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 10 August 1875.
[35] *Town and Country Journal*, 30 June 1900.

3.5 Railways

Along with demands for the improvement of the several roads between Grafton and New England, agitation for rail connection between those places arose in the early 1870s. A Clarence to New England link became the principal theme in railway development in northern New South Wales, and remained so until the mid-1880s.

The first official mention of the construction of a steam railway from the Clarence to the New England seems to have occurred in 1872. In that year Henry Parkes outlined a new programme of railway construction, which included a 'means of railway communication to the extreme Northern coast country, from the tableland of New England down to the Clarence River'.[36]

A sum of £100,000 was included in the estimates of expenditure for 1873 for 'connecting the navigation of the Clarence with New England and the Northern Border'[37] by a narrow gauge railway. Encouraged first by Parkes's August 1872 policy announcement, and later by the inclusion of the project in the 1873 estimates, lobbyists in the Northern District became more spirited in their campaign for the construction of 'a permanent railroad [from the Clarence] to the interior'.[38] On 5 December 1872 a meeting of the 'leading citizens of Grafton' was held with the object of discussing the Clarence to New England railway scheme, and from this meeting was formed the Clarence and New England Railway League whose objects were to advance to interests of the scheme.[39] The group has been described as 'probably the most energetic and certainly the most ambitious group lobbying for railway construction in the colony but also the most unsuccessful'.[40]

The first task of the newly formed League was to be the preparation of a petition, for presentation to Parliament, in support of the railway line. A petition containing the signatures of 1,898 residents of the Clarence and calling for the construction of a railway from the Clarence to New England was duly prepared, and this was received by the Legislative Assembly on 21 January 1873. The petition did not specify a route for the proposed line, but its justification for the railway included: the need to secure the trade of the northern districts of New South Wales which was being rapidly attracted to Queensland; the need to develop the resources of the coastal districts which

36 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 10 September 1872.
37 *Sydney Mornng Herald*, 3 December 1872.
38 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 1 October 1872.
39 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 10 December 1872.
40 Lee, R., 1988, *The Greatest Public Work*, p. 79.

were retarded by the lack of cheap, rapid and reliable communication; and the claim of these districts for a fair share of Government expenditure. It was pointed out that these districts, which contained 11,074 electors, had a disproportionately small representation in the Legislative Assembly, and that this was exacerbated by the great distance from the seat of Government.

A petition from 311 inhabitants of the Tenterfield district followed in February 1873, urging the construction of the line from the Clarence to Tenterfield, and then for branch lines to be constructed from there to Glen Innes and Inverell, thus 'bringing the whole of the richest part of New England within easy access of their natural port'.[41]

Towards the end of 1873, a further three petitions were received by the Legislative Assembly in relation to the Clarence-New England railway. One, in September, signed by 1,820 residents of the Clarence district, emanated from a public meeting held in the School of Arts, Grafton, in August, and convened by the Clarence and New England Railway League.[42] The petition again urged the need for the railway, but this time specified points of departure and terminus of the line. The point of departure, it was suggested, should be Grafton, the head of navigation on the Clarence, for the following reasons: first, that Grafton was the 'natural and principal shipping port of the Clarence, and the central depot of its trade and commerce'; secondly, it was the general depot for most of the merchandise forwarded to the tableland of New England, and also for 'the reception of the products thereof for shipment'; and thirdly, that from Grafton a branch line to the Richmond River could be easily constructed. Glen Innes was suggested as the terminus of the proposed line as it was the most central town on the New England, and the closest to Grafton.[43]

Others, however, had different ideas about the route of the Clarence-New England line. Evidence of this disagreement is provided by two petitions received by the Legislative Assembly on 5 November 1873, one each from Tenterfield and Glen Innes, each town claiming to be the logical point of terminus of the railway.[44] In one, 635 residents of Tenterfield and the northern New England districts argued for connection to that town. Strongest among

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41 Railway from the Clarence to New England. Petition in favour of—residents of Tenterfield. *V&PLA* 1872-73, 2, 441.

42 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 26 August 1873.

43 Railway from the Clarence to New England. Petitionof certain residents. *V&PLA* 1873-74, 3, 741-42.

44 Railway from the Clarence to New England. Petition of inhabitants Northern New England and Tenterfield. *V&PLA* 1873-74, 3, 743; Railway from the Clarence to New England. Petition of residents of Glen Innes. *V&PLA* 1873-74, 3, 745.

the reasons given was the potential of a line from Tenterfield to divert to New South Wales a portion of the 'enormous quantities' of goods (notably tin ore from the recently discovered New England alluvial tin deposits) then forwarded to Sydney by way of Warwick and Brisbane, and thus add 'many thousand pounds…annually' to the revenue of the colony.[45] The need to secure the Queensland border traffic was to become a standard argument in favour of Tenterfield in the debate that ensued.

In April 1875, delegates of the Richmond and Tweed Rivers League petitioned for the construction of a railway between the Clarence and New England, suggesting a route commencing on the north bank of the river at either Grafton or Lawrence and running to Tenterfield via Tabulam on the upper Clarence. From Tenterfield, branch lines could then be carried to the Queensland border near Stanthorpe, and to Glen Innes on the south. Thus the Richmond and Tweed valleys had entered the debate, showing their clear preference for a railway to Tenterfield, and using the Queensland border trade argument in support of their cause.[46]

Late in 1875, inhabitants of Tenterfield, the northern New England district, the Richmond and Tweed Rivers, and some Clarence River residents, were themselves preparing a petition for presentation to the Legislative Assembly. In it they were to repudiate any connection or suggested connection with the earlier petition from the Clarence. Received by Parliament on 10 December 1875, the petition, containing 404 signatures, pointed out that the objects of the earlier petition were 'contrary to the interest of the residents of [Tenterfield, northern New England, and the Richmond and Tweed Rivers] and to a considerable portion of the inhabitants of the Clarence District'. It was argued that any line of railway connecting the Clarence with New England should be constructed from North Grafton, via the Richmond, to Tenterfield and thence to Inverell, Glen Innes and Armidale. Several reasons were given, including: first, that such a line would present fewer engineering difficulties; secondly, that there was a greater population along this route; thirdly, that the land along the Tenterfield to Grafton route was more suitable for agricultural or pastoral purposes; fourthly, that the line would open the trade of the Richmond and Tweed Rivers districts; and fifthly, that such a line

[45] Railway from the Clarence to New England. Petition of inhabitants Northern New England and Tenterfield. *V&PLA* 1873-74, 3, 743.
[46] Railway from the Clarence to New England. Petition in favour of—delegates of the Richmond and Tweed Rivers League. *V&PLA* 1875, 3, 563-64.

would better secure the trade of the border districts.[47] The case for the Clarence to Tenterfield line was restated early in 1876 by ten delegates of the Richmond and Tweed Rivers League in a petition received by the Legislative Assembly on 13 January.[48]

Clearly, although support for the Clarence as the coastal end of the railway was general, support for the inland end was divided between two main alternatives: Glen Innes and Tenterfield. Tenterfield, the more northerly town, tended to receive the support of inhabitants of the Richmond River valley, as a line from that place to the Clarence would pass through, or could be easily connected to, the Richmond. Moreover, the growing economic importance of the Richmond was adding weight to the Tenterfield line over the Glen Innes line; no line of railway from Grafton to New England would be complete, it was claimed, 'unless it afforded an opportunity for the future construction of a branch line to the Richmond River' to 'throw open the magnificent lands of that rising and important district'. The inability of the northern region to present a united case for a coast-tableland railway undoubtedly confused the issue, and lessened the chance of ever having such a railway constructed.

In September 1884, Treasurer George Dibbs presented before the Committee of Supply his Government's proposal for a 'a bold and comprehensive system of railway construction throughout the length and breadth of the land', designed to assure the future greatness of the colony. The combined loan estimate for this ambitious railways and public works programme embraced no less a sum than £14,688,000. Of this amount £4,558,000 (31 per cent) was earmarked for three new lines in the north of the colony: Glen Innes to Inverell (45 miles at £578,000); South Grafton to Glen Innes (103 miles at £2 million); and Grafton to the Tweed River via Casino, Lismore and the Brunswick (165 miles at £1,980,000).[49] The votes for all three lines were subsequently passed, but that for the Grafton to Glen Innes line only after long and spirited debate, and then by a majority of only two.[50]

Although survey work was continuing on the Grafton to Glen Innes line into 1886, nothing else seems to have happened before a change of Government in 1887, and a subsequent dramatic change in railway policy. Although the idea was later revived, the line was never built; that from Grafton to the Tweed

47 Railway from the Clarence to New England. Petition—inhabitants of Tenterfield, northern New England, The Clarence, Richmond, and Tweed Rivers. *V&PLA* 1875-76, 4, 563-64.
48 Railway from the Clarence to New England. Petition in favour of—delegates of the Richmond and Tweed Rivers League. *V&PLA* 1875-76, 4, 565.
49 *NSWPD*, 24 September 1884, pp.5393, 5405.
50 *NSWPD*, 21 October 1884, pp.5948-56; 22 October 1884, pp.5975-6010.

River became the focus of railway-building efforts in the Clarence and Richmond River districts for the remainder of the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth.

3.5.1 The Grafton to the Tweed Railway

By 17 August 1886, plans had been prepared for the first section of the Grafton to the Tweed railway, and on that date these were laid before the Legislative Assembly. Consideration was given by the house on 15 September 1886 to approving this first 22 mile long section which was to run from Grafton, northwards to Mountain View, and would cost £203,000, a small proportion only of the cost of the entire line for which £1,980,000 had already been voted.[51] Before this line could be commenced, however, a change of Government brought about another change in railways policy.

One of the key elements of Henry Parkes's 1888 railways scheme was a new coastal trunk line connecting the Hunter River with the Tweed River. Another was its exclusion of a line from the Clarence to New England. By that time, the Great Northern line had opened to Glen Innes making the Grafton-Glen Innes line a contradiction, according to Parkes, as it would compete with the Great Northern for traffic. Moreover, the real importance of the Clarence as New England's outlet declined with the construction of the Great Northern Railway. Parkes's new policy was a major defeat for the proponents of the Clarence-New England connection and, although agitation continued, serious official consideration lapsed for many years.

Although the 1888 railway policy put the Clarence-New England line out of contention, it did not spell the end of the Clarence to the Tweed railway, another element of the Dibbs policy of 1884. Their purposes, however, were different. That of Dibbs's line from Grafton to the Tweed River was to divert traffic from the Tweed, Brunswick and Richmond Rivers to the more easily navigable Clarence. Indeed, construction of the Clarence to New England line was also predicated on the development of the Clarence River as a major port. Under Parkes's scheme, however, the Grafton to Tweed line would become part of a coastal railway, a line 'of a permanent character to strike off from the Hunter River, and extending to the Tweed River'; a 'gigantic undertaking, one which will probably occupy a number of years' (although many more than the five years that Parkes estimated).[52]

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[51] *NSWPD*, First series, vol.22, pp.4885-4900.
[52] Sir Henry Parkes, 7 June 1888, The Railway Policy of the Government, *NSWPD*, p.5364.

The Grafton to the Tweed railway was completed in three main sections. The first of these connected Lismore with the Tweed River via Byron Bay, and was officially opened for traffic on 15 May 1894.[53] The second section, from Lismore to Casino, opened on 19 October 1903. The third and final section of the Grafton to the Tweed railway, the extension from Casino to Grafton, was opened to traffic on 6 November 1905. The Public Works Committee had recommended the construction of this section in its report of September 1900, and Parliament authorised it by way of the *Grafton to Casino Railway Act*, no.82 of 1900.[54]

The Public Works Committee had considered construction of this line on two previous occasions: in 1890 it had been part of a proposal for constructing a line from Grafton to the Tweed, only the Lismore to the Tweed section of which was recommended; in 1892 it had been part of a line from Grafton to Lismore, and on that occasion construction of only the section from Lismore to Casino was recommended. The main factor in altering the opinion of the committee on the third occasion was the prospect, not previously apparent, of the Crown lands between Grafton and Casino being taken up by settlers for dairy farming, and generating considerable railway traffic.

The first-sod-turning ceremony for the Grafton to Casino line was performed by the new Premier, John See, in Grafton on 12 April 1900, eight months before the Act authorising construction of the line had received assent. It was several months before work began, but once it had, the pace of progress was rapid, in contrast to the Casino to Lismore line. An excursion train, carrying over 200 passengers, ran from Grafton to Casino on 6 November 1905 to mark the opening of the line. A meeting was held at the Casino Town Hall to formulate plans for an official opening of the line, which, it was agreed, should be held in Grafton the following January.[55] As far as has been ascertained, no such celebration ever took place.

3.5.2 The North Coast Line: Maitland to South Grafton

Under Dibbs's 1884 railway policy, the primary purpose of the Grafton to Tweed railway was to link the Tweed and Richmond Rivers with the more easily navigable Clarence River and thus facilitate the transport to market of the produce of the former districts. The idea of linking the Grafton to Tweed

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53 The history of the Lismore to the Tweed section is detailed comprehensively in Dunn, *The Tweed Railway*.

54 NSW, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 1900, 'Report…relating to the proposed railway from Grafton to Casino'.

55 *Grafton Argus*, 15 April 1901; *Richmond River Express*, 19 April 1902, 7 November 1905.

line with the Sydney to Newcastle line was, however, a logical one, and is nearly as old as the idea of the Grafton-Tweed line itself. In October 1884, during debate on Dibbs's policy, Sir John Robertson said that the proposed line from Grafton to the Tweed River was 'a very good one' but he regretted that it was not proposed to carry it south to Morpeth [on the Hunter River].[56] Another member referred to a 'northern coast line' as a 'great national work', which, although a survey had been made, the Government refused to bring forward. As a result, many northern coastal rivers were 'languishing for want of railway communication'.[57]

After several years of existence as only a bold idea, the North Coast line became Government policy in 1888. It was to be a long time, however, before the policy became a reality,[58] and the proposal languished for many years, probably because of its enormous cost. In 1899, several years before the Tweed-Grafton line was completed,[59] representations were made to the Premier and the Minister for Public Works as to the continuing need for a north coast railway. Plans were subsequently completed, an estimate prepared, and a report obtained from the Railway Commissioners, and in December 1902 the line was submitted to the Public Works Committee for inquiry and report. The committee had previously considered a section of line from Maitland to Taree (in 1898) but had recommended against its construction. Although a portion of the coastal line might not pay, the line as a whole was, however, a different matter, and in its report of 28 January 1904 the committee recommended construction of the railway from Maitland to South Grafton.[60] It was authorised by Parliament by way of the *North Coast Railway Act*, no.18 of 1906, which received assent on 17 November 1906.

Construction of the Mailtland to South Grafton line was undertaken in nine sections. The first of these to be completed—Maitland to Dungog—was opened in August 1911; the last—Macksville to Urunga—in December 1923, allowing continuous train travel from Sydney to South Grafton from the 3rd of that month.[61]

The section between South Grafton and Glenreagh on the Orara River had by then been open for many years. It was formally handed over to the Railway

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56 Sir John Robertson, 22 October 1884, *NSWPD*, p.6006.
57 R. B. Smith, 22 October 1884, *NSWPD*, pp.6000-01.
58 It was even a long time between the completion of Dibbs's Grafton to the Tweed line in 1905 and its eventual connection to Maitland in 1924.
59 In 1899 the extension of the Lismore-Tweed line towards Casino was under construction.
60 Report…relating to the Proposed Railway from Maitland to South Grafton, *NSWPP* 1904 (2nd Session), 3, 467 *et seq*.
61 *Daily Examiner*, 1 December 1923.

Commissioners on 12 October 1915, and the first passenger train steamed out of South Grafton station that day. There was no official ceremony to mark the event.[62]

3.5.3 Crossing the Clarence

In the absence of a bridge across the Clarence River at Grafton, ferries were used to convey mainly goods wagons, but sometimes passenger cars and locomotives, from one side to the other. Passenger trains generally terminated at the stations (north and south sides); passengers always disembarked and crossed by launch or punt. It is notable that the Clarence River was the only place in Australia where specially-designed vehicles were used to transport railway vehicles across a waterway.

Figure 3.2 The wreck of *Induna*, South Grafton, 2007 (*Source*: Andrew Tarrant, Grafton)

Two steamships—*Swallow* and *Induna*—were converted by the Railway Commissioners for use as ferries. In October 1924, the modified *Swallow* was towed from Sydney to the Clarence entrance, proceeded to Grafton under her own steam, and immediately went into service.[63] This was nearly a year after the completion of the line to South Grafton and the running of the first through train from Sydney. The smaller *Induna* went into service in January 1926, initially to stand in for *Swallow*, which required repairs. After the return

[62] *Daily Examiner*, 13 October 1915.
[63] *Daily Examiner*, 15 October 1924.

of *Swallow*, the two ferries operated together until completion of a bridge made them redundant.[64] *Swallow* then left the Clarence and was restored to more conventional use. *Induna*, however, stayed in the river, and her remains are now visible on the southern bank a few hundred metres upstream of the bridge (Figure 3.2). Loading wharves for the rolling stock were constructed near each of the stations, about two kilometres apart. The ruins of the wharf on the northern side are shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 Ruins of the train ferry landing, North Grafton, 2007 (*Source*: Andrew Tarrant, Grafton)

3.5.4 The Clarence River Bridge

On 10 December 1910, thirteen years before the completion of the Maitland to South Grafton railway, the Chief Commissioner of Railways wrote to the Public Works Department drawing attention to the need for a bridge across the Clarence River to connect the North Coast Railway with the railway north of Grafton. The North Coast Railway was then under construction from both ends. Without such a connection, the South Grafton to Glenreagh section, then under construction, would, when complete, have to be worked independently

[64] Dunn, I., 2002, *The Tweed Railway*, pp. 111-114; Lee, S., 2003, *Riverboats of the Clarence*, pp. 234-242.

of the Grafton to Murwillumbah line. This would entail both added expense, and inconveniece to through traffic. Accordingly, the bridge proposal was referred to the Public Works Committee on 4 December 1912.[65]

In its report of 6 June 1913, the Committee recommended the construction of the bridge and associated works. In doing so it emphasised the desirability of connecting the West Maitland to South Grafton line, when completed, with the Grafton to Murwillumbah line which by then it expected to have been extended to Tweed Heads to form part of a second line between Sydney and Brisbane. This expectation, with its effect of shortening the journey between the two capitals and also relieving traffic on the main northern line, undoubtedly added importance to the bridge over the Clarence.[66] Construction of the bridge was authorised by Parliament by way of the *Grafton to South Grafton Railway Act*, no.51 of 1915, which received assent on 21 December 1915.

When the Maitland to South Grafton railway was opened to traffic in December 1923, the bridge recommended by the Public Works Committee in 1912 had still not been constructed, leaving a gap in the otherwise continuous line from Sydney to the Tweed River. As has been described above, ferries had to be employed to carry rolling stock across the Clarence at Grafton as an interim measure. War had caused work on the bridge to be postponed, and then it was further delayed, probably because of the great cost and difficulty of the task. The bridge would probably have not been built as soon as it was had it not been for the involvement of the Federal Government in negotiations with Queensland and New South Wales over a uniform gauge railway connection between Brisbane and Sydney.

At the Premiers' Conference in 1920, it was decided to appoint a Royal Commission of Inquiry into railway gauges in Australia. Among the recommendations of the inquiry were: that the cost of unifying the gauges should be borne jointly by the Commonwealth and the mainland states; that 4ft 8.5in. be adopted as the standard gauge; and that a standard gauge railway be constructed from Brisbane to Fremantle.[67] The Kyogle and South Brisbane line (and the associated re-grading and re-laying of the existing line between Grafton and Kyogle) was the first stage in the achievement of the latter.

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65 Report…relating to the proposed railway from Grafton to South Grafton, *NSWPP* 1913, 3, 923 *et seq*.

66 Report…relating to the proposed railway from Grafton to South Grafton, *NSWPP* 1913, 3, p.viii.

67 Report of the Royal Commission on the matter of Uniform Railway Gauge, *Parl. Papers* 1920-21, vol. 5, pp.757-798.

The Kyogle and South Brisbane railway was the subject of an agreement made in September 1924 between the Commonwealth, and the States of New South Wales and Queensland. Insofar as New South Wales was concerned, the agreement was ratified the following month by the *Grafton-Kyogle to South Brisbane Railway Agreement Ratification Act*.[68]

The beginning of construction of the Kyogle to South Brisbane railway was marked by a ceremony at Kyogle on 23 June 1926, and a little over four years later, in September 1930, the first through train passed over the new line.[69] Being the first continuous, uniform gauge line between New South Wales and Queensland, this was a significant national public work. Its construction also gave considerable impetus to the provision of the bridge across the Clarence River at Grafton.

Figure 3.4 A view of the Clarence River bridge from South Grafton. The bridge was opened for rail and road traffic in 1932.

The inauguration of the work of bridging the Clarence was celebrated in Grafton on 11 July 1928 when the Minister for Works and Railways, E. A. Buttenshaw, drove the first rivet in the first caisson. The bridge comprises seven massive concrete piers, upon which are set five spans, each of 240 feet, in addition to a bascule of 85 feet (to allow the movement of ships along the river; see Figure 3.4). The first of the spans was placed in its position on the bearings of no.1 and no.2 piers at South Grafton on 25 May 1930. Two years later, on 7 May 1932, the first train passed across the bridge between South

[68] *Grafton-Kyogle to South Brisbane Railway Agreement Ratification Act*, No. 20 of 1924.
[69] *Richmond River Express*, 18 June 1926, 23 June 1926; *Kyogle Examiner*, 30 September 1930.

Grafton and Grafton stations. The first through trains to cross were the express services between Sydney and Brisbane on 8 May.[70]

When it was opened, the Clarence River bridge was the second-largest railway bridge in New South Wales; it was exceeded only by the Hawkesbury River bridge (which had opened in 1889). The Clarence bridge, however, was the first structure with two decks. The upper (car) deck was incomplete when the trains began to use the bridge in May 1932, so further celebrations were planned for the opening of the completed structure a couple of months later. Dense crowds thronged the bridge and congregated on Wilson's Hill at South Grafton on 19 July 1932 to watch the Governor-General, Sir Isaac Isaacs, cut a ribbon and declare the bridge open. Road traffic began to flow across it the following day.[71]

3.6 Flying Boats

The broad Clarence River was an ideal landing place for flying boats. This was evident to Sydney-based company Trans-Oceanic Airways Ltd, which inaugurated flights from Sydney to the river at Maclean in 1948. The first flight, using a Short Sunderland flying boat converted for civil use, took place on 2 October. The company later changed its Clarence River terminus to Grafton, where there was the prospect of getting more passengers. The first Grafton landing took place at Dovedale reach on 24 December 1948.[72]

Flying boats gave valuable service to Grafton and the Clarence region during floods in June 1950. Mail was conveyed daily to and from Sydney while the North Coast railway was cut by flood water at Kempsey.[73]

On 1 July 1952, Trans-Oceanic Airways went into liquidation, and in April 1953 it ceased all operations. Ansett Airways bought the licences, routes and some of the assets of Trans-Oceanic in 1953, and absorbed them into its Ansett Flying Boat Services Pty Ltd. In January 1955, the Sydney-Grafton flying boat service was re-inaugurated using a Short Sandringham aircraft.[74] The Sandringham was a more aesthetically attractive conversion of the military Sunderland, with nose and tail turret positions concealed by streamlined fairings.

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70 *Daily Examiner*, 12 July 1928, 26 May 1930, 9 May 1932.
71 *Daily Examiner*, 20 July 1932.
72 *Daily Examiner*, 4 October 1948, 27 December 1948.
73 *Daily Examiner*, 7 July 1950.
74 *Daily Examiner*, 29 January 1955. It is not known how long the Ansett service continued to operate. The subject of Grafton's flying boat service is one that merits further systematic research.

4 SECONDARY INDUSTRY

Grafton has been a focus for secondary industry in the Clarence River district since first settlement. Much of it was related to primary industry, particularly beef cattle grazing, dairying, and timber getting, in the surrounding area. Some of it, such as the brewing of beer and the manufacture of soft drinks, was not. Nevertheless, the following account of Grafton's secondary industry begins with an overview of the primary industry on which it was largely based.

Cedar getting on the Clarence

The accounts of the first visitors to the northern coastal rivers of New South Wales emphasised the abundance of timber, notably the red cedar, growing on their banks. It was inevitable, then, that cedar getting would become one of the earliest commercial activities on these rivers. It is a matter of speculation when the first cedar cutters arrived on the Clarence River.[1] In 1835, Major Sullivan suggested to the Colonial Secretary that those interested in the cedar industry should pay a licence fee of £1 and recommended that an order be issued prohibiting any person from passing 'the south side of the river emptying itself into Shoal Bay known by the name of the Big River'.[2] The historian James Jervis takes this as evidence that some exploitation of the cedar on the Clarence River was already taking place by 1835, but this cannot be verified. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 17 March 1847 was published a list of vessels belonging to the Port of Sydney among which was a schooner *Jane* said to have been built on the Big River in 1836. Again, this cannot be verified, but Jervis uses it as evidence for the first occupation of the Clarence by 1836.[3]

Despite Jervis's speculations, it seems unlikely that the cedar trade began on the Clarence River before 1837. In that year, Henry Oakes, the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Port Macquarie, reported that in consequence of the recent 'abolition of the trade', a consequence of the new Crown lands Act which came into force on 1 January 1837, many cedar cutters on the Macleay River

1 Some cedar was cut on the Tweed about 1829 when a military barracks was established there, but this episode was short-lived and very little timber was cut. Evidence of Allan Cunningham, 13 February 1832, to House of Commons Select Committee on Secondary Punishments. *British Parliamentary Papers, Crime and Punishment—Transportation 1* (Irish University Press, Shannon, 1969).

2 Jervis, J., 1939, 'Cedar and the Cedar Getters', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, vol. 25(2), p. 147; Jervis, J., 1939, 'The Discovery of the Clarence River', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, vol. 25(3), pp. 244-245.

3 Jervis, 'Discovery', p. 245.

were 'preparing to proceed to the Big River' where they could continue their trade 'comparatively out of reach of the Police'.[4] No record can be found, however, of cedar shipments from the Clarence before the middle of 1838. Hence, there remains some uncertainty over when the cedar cutters first occupied the Clarence. It is beyond dispute, however, that there was considerable activity in that regard on the river by the end of 1838.

The first vessel known to have entered the Clarence River was the schooner *Susan*, which first left Sydney for the 'Big River' on 5 May 1838.[5] The shipwright Henry Gillett had written to the Colonial Secretary in November 1837 asking permission to embark the *Susan*, of which he was a part owner, in the cedar trade 'and to cut cedar on unlocated Crown Lands about ninety miles beyond the Macleay River on the Big River'.[6] It was the *Susan* that took the first cargo of cedar known to have left the river, and this arrived in Sydney early in July 1838.[7] The *Sydney Monitor* reported in the same month that 'considerable interest [was] being felt by owners of the coasting craft as to intelligence received from the Big River, where the schooner *Susan* procured her cargo'. The same newspaper reported that 'Messrs Girard and Hayes [had] a party of sawyers engaged about 100 miles up the Big River'.[8] The sketch plan of the river (the earliest known) prepared by Surveyor James Warner from Captain Butcher's 1838 'eye survey'[9] shows the huts of three cedar cutters upstream from the site where the town of Grafton was later established. Comments made by a passenger named Williams on Grose's expedition the following year indicate that the cedar trade was flourishing on the Clarence by mid-1839. Williams mentions on 8 June making 'many inquiries…of different of the sawyers who reside on the banks of the River'. On 11 June, he wrote that 'the schooner *Susan* [was] at anchor in the Bay laden with [more] cedar for Sydney'.[10]

By virtue of their river-side position, the Clarence River cedar brushes were particularly vulnerable to exploitation, and as early as the middle of 1842 the

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4 Oakes to the Colonial Secretary, 18 March 1837, 37/2897, AONSW 4/1128.1.
5 *Sydney Monitor*, 7 May 1838, p. 2.
6 Gillett to the Colonial Secretary, 6 November 1837, 37/10278, AONSW 4/1128.1.
7 An account of the early movements of the Susan and the circumstances surrounding her first cargo of Clarence River cedar is given in Law, R. C. (ed.), 1987, *The Bawden Lectures. The first fifty years of settlement on the Clarence*. 4th edition (Clarence River Historical Society, Grafton), pp. 31-34.
8 *Sydney Monitor*, 4 July 1838.
9 This map is at AONSW S.1033 (5611), and is dated 27 December 1838 (but based on a sketch made earlier in the year).
10 Williams, 'Memorandum of a trip to the Big River' (20 May-18 June 1839); copy in Clarence River Historical Society, Law Papers, vol. 15, pp. 96-116. The account was also published in the *Daily Examiner*, 6 January 1934.

effect on them of the activities of cedar cutters was becoming clearly apparent. Captain Perry observed:

> In the brushes by which [Woodford Island] is margined, and on the opposite banks (particularly on the south side) there was [an] abundance of cedar, which has now been considerably thinned by the parties licensed by the Government to cut it for export.[11]

In addition, so limited in area were these accessible stands that exports of cedar from the Clarence River had virtually ceased by the end of 1842. No regular shipments of cedar from the Clarence took place after that time.[12] It is not known, unfortunately, how much cedar was taken from the Clarence brushes during the four and a half years during which the trade was in progress. The 'coasters inward' section of the 'shipping intelligence' column of the *Sydney Morning Herald* was commenced only in July 1842,[13] so details of the Clarence River trade are available from that month only. It can be said, however, that the trade was remarkably brief.

Pastoralism

The beginnings of pastoral settlement in the Clarence River district have been discussed already (Chapter 1). It is sufficient to say here that by 1843, the Clarence River District had become an important sheep grazing area, with 122,599 head (2.6 per cent of the sheep in the colony).[14] Although far behind the New England (425,201), which had the highest sheep population of the eleven Commissioners' Districts, Clarence had more sheep in 1843 than either Darling Downs or Moreton Bay Districts. Cattle numbers were still relatively low, only 12,457 in the district (1.4 per cent of cattle in the colony), but this position would soon change as cattle replaced sheep as the dominant livestock in the region over the next several years.[15]

A quantitative picture of the Clarence district economy can be provided by shipping figures, and these are tabulated below (Table 4.1) for the Clarence River for the years 1842 to 1846.[16] Clearly, by 1845 the Clarence River had

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11 Perry, 'Additional memoranda', *in* Lang, *Cooksland*, p. 46.

12 There were occasional irregular shipments afterwards, but the quantities are insignificant. The depletion of cedar by this time is confirmed by Frederick Ogilvie who said of the Clarence on 21 July 1842 'the cedar is now nearly all cut'. See 'Minutes of evidence taken before the Immigration Committee', p. 50, in 'Report from the Committee on Immigration with the appendix and minutes of evidence', 1842.

13 *SMH*, 8 July 1842, for vessels arriving in Sydney from 1 July.

14 Return of livestock in the colony, September 1843, *HRA* , Series I, vol. 23, p. 764.

15 John Dobie, one of the first Clarence River squatters, said in evidence to a select committee in 1854 that by then sheep had been removed from the district; Evidence of J. Dobie, M.L.C., 9 November 1854, 'Progress Report from the Select Committee on Crown Lands', p. 83.

16 Stubbs, 'A question of competing values'.

advanced beyond its pioneering phase as a cedar shipping port and developed into a more diverse economy based mainly on sheep and cattle grazing and associated secondary products such as tallow, hides, butter, and sheepskins; and upon the export of wool overlanded from the New England tableland. Agriculture was still undeveloped on the Clarence at this stage (except for small quantities of corn and tobacco). It is particularly notable that very little cedar was shipped from the Clarence in 1845 and 1846, confirming that the most accessible cedar—that in the river-bank brushes—had been depleted, and the cedar cutters had moved to new areas—namely the Bellinger, the Richmond, and, most recently, the Tweed.

Well within a decade of the initial occupation of the Clarence River, therefore, two of the three major nineteenth century commercial activities of the district had emerged. These were pastoralism and timber-getting. The third, agriculture, was yet to begin in earnest.

The emergence of agriculture

Prior to 1847, the whole of the sea coast between Moreton Bay and Port Macquarie, with the exception of the County of Stanley (surrounding the settlement at Moreton Bay) was defined as 'unsettled', otherwise referred to as 'beyond the boundaries of location'.[17] The Order-in-Council of that year effected the reclassification of some of these lands as 'settled', including:

> The lands which may lie within the distance of ten miles from any point of the outward limits of…the town which has been established at the head of navigation of the River Clarence [later named Grafton]; and
>
> The lands which may lie within the distance of two miles from either of the two opposite banks of…[t]he Clarence [River] from a point fixed by the Governor, at a distance not less than ten miles above the Government township, at the head of the navigation, and not less than fifty miles from the sea (measured in a straight line).[18]

The definition of the second zone was later refined to include river bank land on the Clarence River to a point 'fifty miles from the sea, measured in a straight line' from the mouth.[19] The reclassification of these lands as 'settled' was intended, in principle, to reserve land close to navigable water from the operation of the Squatting Act for the 'settlement of an agricultural population'.

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17 S. A. Perry, evidence, 15 June 1847, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 649-655.
18 Earl Grey to Sir Charles Fitzroy, 30 March 1847, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 427-438.
19 E. Deas Thomson to the Deputy Surveyor General, 4 September 1847, Appendix A in Select Committee on Crown Lands, 1854, p. 1179.

Table 4.1 Export of produce from the Clarence River, 1842-1846.

Commodity	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846
cedar (super. feet)	287,200	25,600	-	-	11,000
cedar (logs)	-	-	-	-	57
pine (super. feet)	49,000	90,000	26,000	81,200	18,000
pine (logs)	-	-	7	3	-
spars, pine?	-	-	-	7	-
'cedar and pine' (s.f.)	35,000	-	-	-	-
unspecif. 'timber' (s.f.)	18,500	-	12,500	-	-
wool (bales)	280	696	1,307	843	1,195
tallow (kegs)	-	-	-	1	-
tallow (tons)	-	-	6.5	44	50
tallow (casks)	-	6	220	119	212
horns	-	-	-	1,000	'a quantity'
lard (casks)	-	-	-	1	-
lard (kegs)	4	-	-	-	-
fat (casks)	-	-	-	-	7
fat (tons)	-	5	-	-	-
beef (casks)	60	-	4	7	262
beef (tons)	2	-	-	-	7
beef (tierces)	16	35	-	-	-
tongues (kegs)	-	-	-	-	1
calves	-	-	-	-	3
calf skins (bundles)	-	-	5	-	-
bullock hides	-	-	52	103	-
hides unspecif.	72	-	33	475	1,682
hides unspecif. (tons)	-	-	3	-	-
horses	-	-	-	2	-
sheepskins (bales)	-	30	-	24	27
sheepskins (bundles)	-	21	14	7	163
sheepskins	3,000	1,800	2,503	1,324	380
sheep	-	-	-	250	230
bacon (tons)	-	-	-	-	1
pork (casks)	-	-	29	-	6
hogs lard (casks)	-	-	2	-	-
butter (casks)	-	-	13	11	25
butter (kegs)	-	-	-	-	19
butter (tubs)	-	-	-	-	2
butter (boxes)	-	-	-	-	1
butter (cwt)	3	-	-	-	-
butter (tons)	-	2	-	-	-
cheeses	-	-	268	-	-
cheese (tons)	-	1	-	-	-
cheeses (cases)	-	-	2	-	-
sperm oil (casks)	-	-	1	-	-
birds (boxes)	-	-	-	-	1
kangaroo skins	-	50	-	-	-
maize/corn (bushels)	240	5,240	605	100	-
wheat (bushels)	-	700	-	-	-
tobacco (bales)	-	-	-	4	5
tobacco (cases)	-	-	-	1	-

The fifty mile zone on the Clarence River included not only all navigable waters, but even encroached upon several pastoral runs beyond the head of navigation.[20] 'Considerable portions' of the holdings of John Dobie and three other licensed occupants, including their homesteads, were brought within the class of settled lands, excluding them from the privileges of 'a lease for a term of years', the right of pre-emption, and an allowance for improvements. These aggrieved pastoralists requested a modification of the regulations, limiting the settled lands on the Clarence to the navigable portion of the river only, and reclassifying the now settled lands above the head of navigation as intermediate.[21] As a result of the squatters' complaint, Governor Fitzroy suspended from sale 'until favoured with a decision by HM Govt' all improved lands which had been occupied under squattage tenure but which had been brought within the class of settled lands by the Order-in-Council. No record of the Government's decision on this matter can be found, but it is apparent that the limit of the settled land remained at fifty miles from the river mouth.[22]

Initially, no lands within the Clarence Pastoral District were classified by the Order-in-Council as 'intermediate'. This category had been created to 'provide for the probable Course of Settlement along the banks of navigable rivers', but such lands in this region had already been classified as settled. Within two years, however, the intermediate class of land became the most significant in the region. The Order-in-Council provided that 'any county or counties of which the boundaries may be fixed and proclaimed on or before the 31st December, 1848' would be classed among the intermediate districts.[23] A total of thirty-one such new counties subsequently were proclaimed,[24] and one of these, Clarence, surrounded the town of Grafton and encompassed a large tract of land between that place and the coast.

The explicit intention of the reclassification of the Crown lands in the Clarence Pastoral District to 'settled' and 'intermediate' in 1847 and 1848 was to facilitate the settlement of a population of agricultural smallholders in place of the pastoralists who had effectively monopolised the land in the

[20] The boundary of the settled districts on the Clarence River is shown on AONSW Map no. 10314, County of Clarence, 1864; AONSW Map no. 10273, County of Drake, c.1863; AONSW Map no. 32433, County of Fitzroy, 1878; AONSW Map no. 24689, County of Gresham, 1898.
[21] Sir Charles Fitzroy to Earl Grey, 26 December 1847, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 26, pp.121-122.
[22] This was near the junction of the Clarence and Mann Rivers, a point some 30 miles (50 kilometres) upstream of the head of navigation, and 60 miles (95 kilometres) upstream of the settlement.
[23] Earl Grey to Sir Charles Fitzroy, 30 March 1847, *HRA*, Series I, vol. 25, pp. 427-438.
[24] NSW, *Government Gazette*, 30 December 1848, p. 1881.

region since the late 1830s and early 1840s. This was achieved by reducing the maximum periods of time for which leases could be granted over runs for pastoral purposes. Under the Order-in-Council, the Government was empowered to grant pastoral leases within the unsettled districts for pastoral purposes for terms not exceeding fourteen years, but in the intermediate districts the maximum term of lease would be eight years, and lands which were brought within the settled districts (the coastal and riverside land, and the land surrounding Grafton, described above), but which were hitherto held under squatting licences, could be leased for a maximum term of only one year. In 1859 it was considered desirable to extend the settled districts of the colony and an Act[25] was passed reclassifying as settled districts all the lands previously classed as intermediate districts. Thus, the whole of the County of Clarence became 'settled' land. Nevertheless, by the end of 1861 relatively little land in the region had been alienated, and cultivation was not widely practised.

The new leases that had been created in 1847 were for 'pastoral purposes' only, albeit with permission for the lessee to cultivate so much of the leased land as was necessary to provide 'grain, hay, vegetables, or fruit for the supply of [his] family and establishment'. The pastoralists could go in for cultivation on a commercial basis on lands that they had purchased, but advantage was generally not taken of the provisions for the alienation of leased land by pre-emptive purchase. When the pre-emptive right was exercised, it was invariably in order to secure improvements, not to carry on agricultural pursuits.

A more important reason for the failure of agriculture to follow the reclassification of lands was the small amount of land offered for sale at Government auction and purchased for that purpose. The first blocks were not put to auction in the Clarence Pastoral District until about 1857, so negligible agricultural development occurred between the Order-in-Council and that year.[26] Even at the end of 1861, on the eve of the next major change in land settlement policy, a total of only about 32,928 acres of land (about 3.6 per cent) had been alienated in the County of Clarence.

Some indication of this slow progress of agricultural settlement is given by the census figures for the Clarence Pastoral District (which included the

[25] 'An Act to include the Intermediate within the Settled Districts' (23 Vic. no. 4; 22 December 1859).
[26] McFarlane, D., 'History of Clarence. Settlers' experiences. First Crown land sales', *Daily Examiner*, 23 October 1924.

Richmond River district). The population of the Pastoral District at the census of 1851 was 1,721 persons, an increase of about 300 per cent. over 1841, when the population was only 416. The 1851 population included 13 persons (0.8 per cent.) engaged in agriculture, 265 (15.4 per cent.) in horticulture,[27] and 347 (20.2 per cent.) in grazing (sheep, 193; horses and cattle, 154). By 1861, the population of the district had grown to 5,141, comprising 3,306 in the Grafton Police District (including 1,441 in the Municipality of Grafton) and 1,835 in the Richmond River Police District,[28] an increase of about 200 per cent. since the census of 1851. Of these persons, 503 (9.8 per cent.) were engaged in agriculture, 38 (0.7 per cent.) in horticulture, and 277 (5.4) in pastoral occupations (sheep, 33; horses and cattle, 244). The vast majority of the agriculturists (89 per cent.) were located in the 'south part of the Pastoral District in Grafton Registry [Police] District', outside the Municipality of Grafton.[29]

Also by 1861, some 3,500 acres of land in the Pastoral District was under cultivation, the vast majority (95 per cent.) of it in the Grafton Police District, that is, on the Clarence River (not the Richmond). The principal crop was maize (70 per cent. of the area under cultivation), and the next most important crop was wheat (20 per cent.). Comparative figures of land under cultivation, and production of maize and wheat for the years 1858 to 1861 inclusive are shown in Table 4.2. These figures show the dominance of maize in the agricultural production of the district, and also illustrate the rapid growth of agriculture in the region from the late 1850s.

The acceleration of agricultural settlement

The Order-in-Council of 1847 remained in force until repealed by the *Crown Lands Alienation Act* and the *Crown Lands Occupation Act* 1861. These Acts were the next major landmark in the history of land settlement in New South Wales, and the next major factor affecting the evolution of the pattern of land settlement in the Clarence region. The avowed purpose of the Crown lands Acts of 1861 was to substitute large numbers of yeoman farmers for the relatively small number of squatters who occupied the vast tracts of territory beyond the original 'limits of location'.[30] This change was to be effected by

[27] This large number cannot be accounted for.
[28] Census of NSW, 1861, NSW, Legislative Council, *Journal*, 1861-62, vol.8, p.713 *et seq*.
[29] 'Census of the Colony of New South Wales taken on the 7th April 1861', NSW, Legislative Council, *Journal*, vol. 9(2), Session 1862.
[30] See Baker, D.W.A., 1958, 'The origins of Robertson's land acts', *Historical Studies*, vol. 8, no. 30, pp. 166-182; Karr, C., 1974, 'Mythology vs. reality: the success of free selection in New South Wales', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 60(3), pp. 199-206; Robinson, M. E., 1974, 'The Robertson land acts in New South Wales, 1861-84', *Institute of*

allowing each individual 'selector' to appropriate any portion of any pastoral leasehold at any time.[31] Thus, although the squattage was a holding recognised by law, it could be obliterated at any time, in accordance with the new law, if enough selectors wanted the land. In essence, the new policy 'offered for sale to one class of occupants the same land which was simultaneously assigned under lease to another class'.[32] Its general effect was to create a class contest for the public lands of the colony.

Table 4.2 Agriculture: (a) Clarence Pastoral District; (b) Grafton Police District.

Year ended 31 March	Area under crop	Crops (acres)		Produce (bushels)	
	(acres)	Maize	Wheat	Maize	Wheat
(a)					
1859	1,414	1,244	47	74,300	1,776
1860	1,961	1,721	100	115,020	2,400
1861	3,546	2,506	765	145,949	12,768
1862	5,718	5,210	318	265,934	5,829
(b)					
1859	1,339	1,214	42	72,840	1,680
1860	1,824	1,698	100	114,100	2,400
1861	3,393	2,448	741	144,114	12,636
1862	5,538	5,141	283	263,299	5,729

Notes: Police District and Pastoral District boundaries do not necessarily coincide, and where they do not the figures in (b) are for those parts of the Police District which fall within the Pastoral District.
Sources: Statistical Register of New South Wales for the years 1858, 1859, 1860, and 1861; Agriculture and Vineyards.

By and large, the Acts of 1861 comprised the land law of the colony for a period of twenty-three years. Augustus Morris and George Ranken, who in 1883 reviewed the operation of the land law, described 'the history of its whole operation for years' as 'an unintelligible chaos'.[33] The general effect of

British Geographers, Transactions, no. 61, pp. 17-33; Gammage, B., 1990, 'Who gained, and who was meant to gain, from land selection in New South Wales?', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 94, pp. 104-122.

31 Except, of course, land reserved for public uses and land already purchased. Applications for conditional purchase could only be lodged at Land Offices on days when Land Agents were in attendence.

32 'Report of Inquiry into the State of the Public Lands, and the Operation of the Land Laws', p. 13. NSW, Legislative Assembly, *Votes and proceedings*, 1883, vol. 2.

33 'Report of Inquiry into the State of the Public Lands, and the Operation of the Land Laws', p. 15.

these two decades of operation of free selection, they argued, was not the desired increase in rural population. Up to the end of 1882, the total number of conditional purchases (selections) in the colony was 170,000, but only 129,000 of these remained valid, and of these only an estimated 62,000 represented residential selection (the remainder consisting of additional and subsidiary purchases). Moreover, the actual number of resident selectors, it was estimated, did not exceed 20,000. Population returns from the 1882 census tend to confirm the suspected failure of rural settlement in the preceding two decades; from 1861 to 1881, the proportion of rural residents in the population of the colony diminished from 54 to 42 per cent.[34]

Within the general class struggle that the 1861 law had instituted, and its general failure to establish a rural population, Morris and Rankin found that settlement had proceeded most satisfactorily in the coastal portions of the Clarence and Richmond districts. There, in contrast to the general trend, the agricultural lands had been 'largely and most beneficially settled and cultivated'. The lower Clarence, in particular, had been largely settled upon by a farming population.[35] There, the 1861 Act had, 'without competition, placed selectors upon some of the very best maize and sugar lands in the Colony'. Where selectors encroached on cattle-stations, collisions between them and the lessees occurred, but the troubles which arose in the Clarence District were usually over grazing rights and the inability of the selector to confine his cattle and horses to his own grazing area, there generally being no objection to *bona fide* selection. Many runs had few alienations on them, and some had none. Only those on the main river where the land was especially good had attracted early settlement.[36]

One important reason for the relatively harmonious progress of free selection in the Clarence district was the reclassification of Crown lands from unsettled to settled and intermediate that had occurred in this district in 1847 and 1848.[37] By the time free selection was introduced, therefore, grazing leases

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[34] 'Report of Inquiry into the State of the Public Lands, and the Operation of the Land Laws', p. 17.

[35] This is clearly in evidence on the 1864 map of the County of Clarence (AONSW Map no. 10314) which shows that most of the river-bank land to the limit of navigation was taken up by that year.

[36] 'Report of Inquiry into the State of the Public Lands, and the Operation of the Land Laws', pp. 22, 62. On p.63 Morris and Rankin suggest that 'there would be no disputes between selector and leaseholder if it were essential to possession that all selections should be fenced'.

[37] Section 1 of the Alienation Act of 1861 defined as 'First Class Settled Districts' the lands declared as settled by the 1847 Order-in-Council, and as 'Second Class Settled Districts' the lands converted into the settled class by the 1859 Act, that is, those lands designated as

were already being phased out on the best agricultural land in the region. On the Clarence River, the river-side lands had been designated 'settled' in 1847, and pastoral leases reduced to a term of one year. In addition, the creation of four coastal counties in 1848, all intermediate lands, effectively divided the region into two broad zones: agricultural in the eastern portion of the district, and pastoral in the west.

A second, and perhaps more fundamentally important reason, for the success of free selection in the Clarence Region was that the interests of the pastoralists and the first settlers tended to be mutually exclusive. The former sought the open forest land and grassy plains, whereas the latter sought the densely vegetated brushes, which were of no value to the pastoralist, but which were considered to be the best lands for cultivation.

Agriculture, which had commenced on the lower Clarence River in the late 1850s and had developed slowly at first, received great stimulus under the provisions of the *Crown Lands Alienation Act* 1861. The first 'staple' crop, maize, thrived on the narrow strips of fertile soil that flanked the navigable reaches of the river and its lower tributaries. From 1857, the year the first farm was sold on the river, until the late 1860s, maize remained the principal crop grown by the Clarence River farmers, and the prosperity of the district was said to rise and fall with the price of maize.[38]

When the Governor of New South Wales, Lord Belmore, visited the Clarence River in August 1869, he was impressed with the potential of the river, and at a banquet given in his honour at Grafton, he told the assembled diners that: 'In this district I find you have a fertile soil along the banks of the river, and I am told it is a soil suitable for the production of certain species of crops, particularly maize; and also that the sugar cane cultivation is being firmly established among you. I am sure I hope the industry will be firmly established here and take root in the district.'[39] Take root, the industry did, for by 1882, 'every acre' of this fertile land, for a distance of at least ninety miles on both sides of the river, was selected, all in farms of not more than 60 acres.[40]

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intermediate under the Order-in-Council. All other Crown lands were classed as unsettled.

38 Meston, A., 1882, 'Report on the sugar industry on the Clarence and Richmond Rivers', Queensland, Legislative Council, *Journal*, 1882, vol. 31(2).

39 *Sydney Mail*, 7 August 1869, pp. 6-7.

40 Meston, 'Report on the sugar industry'; *Sydney Mail*, 11 Nov. 1871.

By 1871, sugar cane was said to be the 'largest' crop on the Clarence River, superseding the original staple, maize.[41] Sugar:

> reigns supreme on all the cultivable lands of the Lower Clarence, and has even asserted its dominion over the soil beyond Grafton, where the maize fields have been invaded and flourishing colonies of cane established. There is scarcely a farm on Chatsworth, on the islands adjacent, or on the main land, where it does not clothe the fertile soil with a forest of living green.[42]

During his visit to the Clarence River in 1873, the Rev. Dr Lang witnessed the 'wonderful material progress made…during the past eight years' since his previous visit in 1865. Not surprisingly, Lang commented that 'the whole of the available land on both sides of the main river, as well as on its various arms, islands, and tributaries, is now in the hands of resident proprietors'. The 'very remarkable change' that had taken place on the river in the previous few years, however, was 'the almost universal transformation of the growers of maize on its rich alluvial banks into growers of sugar-cane and producers of sugar'.[43]

The spread of sugar cultivation across the Clarence was rapid and spectacular. Although sugar cane was first grown experimentally on the river perhaps as early as 1860,[44] cultivation specifically for the manufacture of sugar was not widely attempted until several years later. By 1868 there were nine sugar mills in northern New South Wales and these produced a total output of about 60 tons.[45] The development of sugar growing in the region was watched carefully by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited which in 1868 announced that, in return for assurances that sufficient area of land would been planted to cane, they would erect central sugar mills.[46] The company then proceeded to establish three mills, which commenced crushing in 1870: at Darkwater on the Macleay River; and at Southgate and Chatsworth on the Clarence River. This move firmly established sugar growing on a large scale, and in a small number of years sugar had attained a position of agricultural pre-eminence on the Clarence that it never lost. Indeed, the

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41 'The Tourist. The Clarence in 1871', *Sydney Mail*, 2 September 1871, p. 860. This is a considerable exaggeration, as the figures in Table 4.4 attest. Nevertheless, sugar was on the ascendency.
42 'The Tourist. The Clarence in 1871', *Sydney Mail*, 7 October 1871, p. 1015.
43 'Notes of a visit to the Clarence River district', *CRE*, 24 June 1873.
44 'The Tourist. The Clarence River in 1871. Sugar', *Sydney Mail*, 28 October 1871, p. 1114.
45 Lowndes, A. G., 1956, *South Pacific enterprise: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited* (Angus and Robertson, Sydney), p. 22.
46 Advertisement in *CRE*, 14 July 1868.

Macleay district soon proved unsuitable for cane growing and the Darkwater Mill was transferred to Harwood on the Clarence in 1873.

The phenomenal growth of the sugar industry in New South Wales is evident in the figures in Table 4.3. The importance of the Clarence district is evident in the following: of the total acreage under sugar cane in the colony in 1870, 1,281 acres (32.7 per cent) was in the Clarence; and of the total sugar produced, 2,247,280 lbs (63.1 per cent) was produced in the Clarence. In 1871, there were 1,310 acres under sugar cultivation in the Clarence Pastoral District (which included the Richmond and Tweed), 1,100 of which were on the banks of the Clarence River.[47]

Table 4.3 Sugar cultivation and production, New South Wales, 1864-1870.

Year	Area under cane (acres)	Sugar Production (lbs)
1864	2	280
1865	22.5	4,478
1866	141	5,700
1867	116	17,780
1868	646	134,740
1869	2,584	3,264,824
1870	3,917	3,563,704

Source: Sydney Mail, 28 October 1871; data from *Statistical Register*.

Sugar growing continued to expand until by 1891 it was 'by far the main industry' of the lower part of the north coast of New South Wales, extending from Grafton to the Clarence Heads, from Casino to Ballina on the Richmond, and all along the Tweed River.[48] By this time the industry operated under a system of small farms supplying cane to a small number of large central factories.

Hardwood timber

In contrast to the scarce softwoods such as red cedar, the Clarence district forests contained enormous quantities of useful hardwood timbers such as ironbark (a suite of species, including *Eucalyptus paniculata* (white or grey ironbark), *E. crebra* (narrow-leaved red ironbark), and *E. siderophloia* (broad-

[47] 'The Tourist. The Clarence River in 1871. Sugar', *Sydney Mail*, 28 October 1871, p. 1114.
[48] Despeissis, 'Sugar industry', p. 35.

leaved red ironbark), having similar properties, notably their extreme hardness, toughness, and durability), tallow-wood (*Eucalyptus microcorys)*, blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis)*, and turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera* syn. *S. laurifolia*).

Table 4.4 Agriculture, Clarence Region (Grafton, Clarence, and Richmond Electorates), (a) 1872 and (b) 1882.

District	**Area cultivated** (acres)	**Crops**		**Maize production** (bshls)
		Maize (acres)	**Sugar** (acres)	
(a) **1872**				
Grafton	19,943	17,087	2,564	685,648
Richmond River	5,872	5,038	230	201,520
CLARENCE PASTORAL DISTRICT	26,665	22,770	2,809	912,572
(b) **1882**				
The Clarence	16,892	9,650	6,901	481,652
Grafton	8,640	7,507	492	231,667
The Richmond	14,594	5,792	5,968	210,034
TOTAL	40,126	22,949	13,361	923,353

Notes: Statistics for 1872 are for the Clarence Pastoral District, and parts of Police Districts within it; statistics for 1882 are for electoral districts. The two sets of figures are not, therefore, directly comparable. The following generalisations can, however, be made: the three combined electorates in 1882 are roughly equivalent to the Clarence Pastoral District in 1872; the Grafton Police District in 1872 is roughly equivalent to the combined Grafton and Clarence electorates; the Richmond River Police District in 1872 is roughly equivalent to the Richmond electorate in 1882.

Sources: Statistical Register of New South Wales for the years 1872 and 1882.

By the late 1860s a small hardwood industry had developed in the Clarence district, cutting and sawing timber for both local use and shipment to Sydney. Locally, hardwood had uses many and varied. On the farm and station, these

plentiful timbers were indispensable for fencing and construction. The export of such timber from the river to both intra- and inter-colonial and other destinations was a much more significant development. In 1867, for example, 130 'girders and piles', undoubtedly of hardwood and probably of ironbark, were included in the exports of the Clarence River. The export of girders and piles from that river occurred on a regular basis from 1875.[49]

Although hardwood was used widely and commonly for construction purposes in the Clarence district from an early date, and had become a regular export by the 'seventies, the large scale export of hardwood sections for construction purposes was a later development. A boom in the trade in New South Wales hardwoods occurred in the late 1880s. It was initially the result of demand created by the boom in public works, particularly railway construction and port improvement, which occurred in New South Wales and Victoria especially from about 1880, but was added to later by the demand for railway sleepers and construction timbers from countries overseas, both within and outside the British Empire. It was abetted by a government policy, instituted in the 1880s but pursued more vigorously in the 1890s, of encouraging both the local use and export of native hardwoods. This policy was actively supported by programmes of testing, experimentation, certification, and marketing.

It is not known when inter-colonial[50] export shipments of hardwood from the Clarence River commenced, nor what quantities were initially being sent, but in October 1886 the Royal Commission on Water Conservation was told in Grafton that the hardwood of the district was being 'sent to New Zealand as fast as possible for the Harbour Trust Works there'.[51] In addition, Messrs. Davis and Hunter, proprietors of a sawmill at Tucabia on the Coldstream River,[52] and another at Casino on the Richmond, had contracts in 1887 for the supply of 4,500,000 super. feet of timber to Victoria for the Melbourne Harbour Trust. 'For two years', it was reported, 'they have been cutting and shipping, having no less than six large vessels constantly trading between the Richmond and Clarence Rivers, and Melbourne'.[53] Clarence River shipping

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49 'Principal exports from the Clarence River by sea in the years 1857-1867 to July 1, 1886 (from shipping reports)', Appendix to evidence on northern rivers, Royal Commission—Conservation of Water, 1887, p. 186.

50 As opposed to coastwise shipments to Sydney.

51 William Goodyer, 26 October 1886, evidence to Royal Commission—Conservation of Water, Third and Final Report of the Commissioners, 1887, p. 139.

52 A tributary of the Clarence that flows northwards and joins the main stream at Woodford Island, downstream of Ulmarra.

53 'Coastal Districts of New South Wales', *TCJ*, 22 January 1887, p. 185.

statistics prepared for the Royal Commission on Water Conservation show a dramatic increase in exports of 'girders and piles' and 'timber' from 1885, compared to the earlier years of the decade, and this is consistent with the trade with New Zealand and Victoria commencing about 1885.[54]

This trade continued for many years, as is evident from the following isolated statistics. In each of the three years 1906-1908, about 1.5 million super. feet of hardwood was shipped direct from the Clarence River to New Zealand. In addition to this, an estimated 3 million super. feet per annum was shipped coastwise from the Clarence River to Sydney, and a further unknown quantity went to Newcastle.[55] It was estimated in 1913 that timber exports from the Clarence River for the previous three years totalled 10 million super. feet, half of which (16,518 tons) was despatched in 1911, and the majority of which was forwarded to New Zealand.[56]

The dairying revolution

Dairying has been carried on in New South Wales since the earliest days. Indeed, part of the cargo of the First Fleet comprised four cows, which presumably were intended to supply milk to the infant colony. In the 1820s dairy herds began to appear in the Illawarra district where early settlers specialised in the production of butter and cheese, which could be transported with relative ease by packhorse and then by small sailing vessels to Sydney for sale. Although small amounts of butter and cheese were exported overseas from the 1830s, dairying in New South Wales remained largely a local consumption industry until the 1880s.[57]

The establishment of dairying on a sound commercial basis, and its development as an important export industry, was enabled by some significant technological developments during the 1880s and 1890s. The introduction of the centrifugal cream separator in 1881 was followed closely by the advent of refrigeration, which facilitated the shipment overseas of

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[54] Appendix 2 to evidence on Northern Rivers, Royal Commission—Conservation of Water, Third and Final Report of the Commissioners, 1887. The available statistics are ambiguous on this point, so this is a tentative interpretation only. Clarence River export statistics compiled in January 1887 for the Railway Commissioners indicate that most of the timber shipped in 1886 was pine, not hardwood. See Appendix A, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 'Report…relating to the proposed railway from Grafton to the Tweed', 1890.

[55] Appendix B, 'Timber trade between the Clarence River and New Zealand', 'Second report…relating to the proposed northern breakwater, entrance to the Clarence River', 1909.

[56] 'Third report…relating to the proposed breakwater, northern side of the entrance to the Clarence River', 1913, p. viii.

[57] Ashton, *Dairy farming*, p. 1.

highly perishable butter. In 1883 the factory production of butter was inaugurated in New South Wales when the New South Wales Fresh Food and Ice Company Ltd installed the new centrifugal separators at its south coast milk depot. The introduction in the 1890s of the Babcock test for estimating the butterfat content of milk and cream helped improve and standardise butter manufacture. The method also provided a fairer and more accurate basis for paying farmers, and provided a strong incentive for herd improvement and a general raising of milk quality. Technical improvements to the pasteurisation process in the 1890s helped further to eliminate the need for preservatives in butter, improving its export marketability. These improvements also contributed to greater hygiene in liquid milk distribution, helping to expand domestic markets for liquid milk.[58]

In 1897 it was said of dairying that 'no other industry [had] advanced with such rapid strides during the past few years'. By 1900, there were 387 creameries and 168 butter factories in New South Wales. Butter production under the factory system had increased to 8,049,656 lb in 1891 and to 18,817,747 lb in 1900, whereas production under the 'old system' had declined to 10,484,474 lb and then to 4,216,143 lb over the same period. Thus, by 1900 the factory system was clearly dominant over the older methods of production.[59]

Another development in the late nineteenth century that aided the growth of the dairy industry was the creation of co-operatives. The first farmer-owned and controlled co-operative dairy produce factory in New South Wales was established near Kiama, in the Illawarra district, in 1884.[60] The co-operative structure was ideally suited to the model of a central butter factory supplied by a number of creameries, a system that had been pioneered by the Fresh Food and Ice Co. Ltd in Sydney in 1883. At about the same time, a co-operative was formed on the south coast to undertake the marketing of dairy and agricultural produce. The co-operative development of manufacturing and marketing of dairy produce quickly became the order of the day throughout the industry.

At the end of the 1880s, the base of dairying in New South Wales remained firmly in the Illawarra district where the industry had begun. The next

[58] Ashton, *Dairy farming*, pp. 6-7; Drane, N. T. and Edwards, H. R. (eds), 1961, *The Australian Dairy Industry: an economic study* (F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne), pp. 29-30; Linge, G. J. R., 1979, *Industrial Awakening: a geography of Australian manufacturing, 1788 to 1890* (Australian National University Press, Canberra), pp. 543-548.
[59] Ashton, *Dairy farming*, p. 6.
[60] Ashton, *Dairy farming*, p. 13.

decade, however, saw the rapid expansion of dairying along the north coast, and a corresponding decline in the south.[61] Although the expansion of dairying during the 1890s occurred along most of the north coast from the Hunter valley to the Queensland border, the most remarkable growth occurred in the northernmost coastal county, the County of Rous,[62] and this reflects the concentration of dairying on the brush lands of the Tweed and Richmond Rivers, in particular the Big Scrub. This single county in 1908 accounted for more than one-third of the butter production of the State, and this had risen to nearly 42 per cent. in 1913.

The growth during the latter part of the nineteenth century of the dairying industry on the north coast of New South Wales, and especially in the Richmond-Tweed district, was phenomenal. The rapidity and suddenness of this growth is expressed in the following figures. The butter production of the Clarence Electorate in 1871 was virtually nil, and in 1881 it remained insignificant. By 1891, however, production had increased to 1.2 million pounds, and in 1900 it exceeded 7.7 million pounds (Table 4.5). Seventy per cent of the 1900 production came from the Tweed and Lismore electorates, the former embracing the catchments of the Tweed and Brunswick Rivers, and the latter including much of the Richmond's Big Scrub. Clearly, the dairying industry in the Northern Rivers region began in the decade of the 1880s and expanded rapidly afterwards.

One of several essential elements for the successful development of dairying in the northern rivers region was the movement of dairy farmers from the Illawarra. Ashton (1950) wrote that the development of dairying on the north coast was in large measure the result of 'Illawarra farmers' sons seeking new outlets for their energies'.[63] In this way the north coast industry had direct and immediate access to stock and expertise from the south, which accelerated its development.

A second factor aiding the initiation of dairying in the north was a slump in the sugar industry in the mid-1880s. The cause of this slump is not entirely clear, but it was probably due to a combination of drought and low prices. A visitor to the Clarence in May 1886 referred to 'the falling off of the Sugar Industry of late',[64] and in October that year a Grafton resident told the Royal

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61 Jeans, D. N., 1972, *An historical geography of New South Wales to 1901* (Reed Education, Sydney), pp. 259-260.

62 This shift is depicted graphically in Figure 55, Changing distribution of dairy cattle in NSW, 1892-1901, in Jeans, *An historical geography*, p. 264.

63 Ashton, *Dairy farming*, pp. 14-15.

64 'Lord Carrington on the Clarence', *Northern Star*, 19 May 1886, p. 2.

Commission on Water Conservation that sugar had been very profitable to the growers on the Clarence 'until the present year'.[65] Whatever the cause of the sugar slump, it is clear that it encouraged cane growers to seek an alternative income, which gave dairying an early stimulus, soon leading to its development as a 'basic' industry in the Clarence district in the 1890s.[66]

Table 4.5 Butter production, 1881-1900

Electorate	Butter made (lb.)	
	1881	*1891*
The Clarence	Very little made	52,636
Grafton	Very little made	140,010
The Richmond	Very little made	1,025,934
TOTAL		**1,218,580**
		1900
The Clarence		537,671
Grafton		1,157,623
The Richmond		546,540
Lismore		2,866,760
Ballina		17,570
The Tweed		2,594,720
TOTAL		**7,720,884**

Notes: The Clarence Electorate was subdivided into three electorates (The Clarence, Grafton, and The Richmond) in 1880; The Richmond Electorate was subdivided into four electorates (The Richmond, Lismore, Ballina, and The Tweed) in 1893 (NSW, *Government Gazette*, 5 October 1893). The figures for each of the three years therefore correspond to essentially the same area of land.

Source: The North Coast District—Population, Agricultural, and Pastoral Statistics, Appendix A, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, 'Report…relating to the proposed railway from Grafton to Casino'.

[65] 'Butter factory at Goonellabah', *Northern Star*, 27 July 1887.
[66] See also Lowndes, A. G., 1956, *South Pacific enterprise: The Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited* (Angus and Robertson, Sydney), p.44, for a general comment on the 1880s sugar slump.

The following summary of Grafton secondary industry is presented under four main headings. Three of these reflect major landuses in the surrounding area: timber-related industries, agriculture-related industries, and meat and dairy industries. The fourth, the brewing industry, is unrelated to landuses in the surrounding district.

4.1 Timber-related Industries

Ship Building

Ship building was a commercial activity closely allied to timber getting, and ships were being constructed on the Big River from locally obtained timber from almost as early a date as the first cargoes of cedar left the river. Captain Butcher in 1838 had recognised the potential for ship building to be carried out on the Clarence, and later that year it was reported that:

> Mr A. M. Phillips…had lately gone to the Big River with a party of shipwrights and sawyers to build a bark of 250 tons and a brig of 170 tons, both of which will be employed in the colonial trade. The country between Shoal Bay and Moreton Bay is admirably timbered and well adapted for ship-building.[67]

The following year, Deputy Surveyor General Perry found 'the frame of a vessel from 120 to 150 tons burden' on the stocks at Phillips's station.

Timber Milling

Minimal processing was carried out on the red cedar logs that were shipped from the Clarence River in the late 1830s and early 1840s. At most they were roughly squared so as not to move in the ships' holds during the voyage to Sydney. The mechanised sawing of timber was a much later development, and was largely, but not exclusively, based on hardwood species.

The first sawmill in the Clarence River district was probably that established by Thomas Hewitt at North Grafton about 1855. The venture was a failure, and in October 1855 it was reported that the proprietor was 'taking it down, to be sent to Sydney for sale'.[68] This mill was probably situated near Hewitt's other buildings (including his store and inn), which were close to the river at the western end of present Fitzroy Street.

Wilhelm Kirchner erected the first successful sawmill on the river about 1856, near the eastern boundary of the town opposite Elizabeth Island. It was steam powered, and operated in conjunction with Kirchner's factory, which also

[67] *Sydney Monitor*, 10 December 1838.
[68] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 1855.

made soap and candles from locally-produced tallow (see below). The Factory Saw Mill, as it was known, was for many years owned and operated by Daniel Selman, both solely and in partnership with Thomas Carter. In 1871, Selman's mill employed about twenty men, and turned out 30,000 super. feet a week in 'cedar, pine, ironbark, and spotted gum', which were 'obtained and used for the most part in the neighbourhood'.[69]

Another sawmill was started in 1871, by Ingpen and Carter (formerly a partner of Selman). They had leased Fraser's Flour Mill (see below) and added a sawmill, including what they claimed to be 'the first planing machine ever worked in the district'. The latter produced flooring and ceiling boards, and weatherboards.[70] In 1874, William Kinnear succeeded Ingpen and Carter in this business, and the following year the mill was said to be employing twelve men (in addition to those engaged in timber getting, which was done by contract). The timber cut averaged 20,000 feet a week, and five teams were employed drawing it.[71] This mill was later operated by Patrick Fraser on his own account, and after his death in 1890 it was purchased and continued by William Fraser (possibly Patrick's younger brother) and Frank Norrie.[72] In 1911-12, when Fraser & Co. was one of five sawmilling firms in Grafton, it shipped more than 2.7 million super. feet of timber to New Zealand.[73]

Because of the relatively small area of the northern part of Grafton City, most of the timber-milling activity on that side of the river at Grafton actually took place within neighbouring Copmanhurst Shire, so is not the concern of this study. On the southern side, however, the enlarged city boundary in 1957 encompassed some significant timber-related industries.

A regional survey of resources conducted in 1945 identified three sawmills at South Grafton.[74] They were the operations of Clarence River Timber Co., Northern Sawmills Pty Ltd, and T. B. Timms. In addition there was the veneer and plywood factory of South Grafton Veneer Co. A detailed history of these businesses is not attempted here, but the following can be said. The T. B. Timms mill was later bought by Jack Notaras and operated with his sons Brinos and Spiro as J. Notaras and Sons. It was modernised in 1966, and

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69 'Jottings by the way. The Clarence River District', *TCJ*, 8 April 1871, p. 426.
70 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 25 July 1871.
71 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 27 October 1874, 10 August 1875.
72 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 11 January 1890, 16 May 1891; *Northern Star*, 11 January 1890.
73 'Third report…relating to the proposed breakwater, northern side of the entrance to the Clarence River', 1913, p. 32.
74 NSW Division of Reconstruction and Development, 1945, *The Clarence Region: a preliminary survey of resources*, p. 40.

continues on the same site today. In 1948, Northern Sawmills Pty Ltd (which also owned mills at Jackadgery and Cloud's Creek) established a veneer and plywood factory near the river in Cowan Street.[75] Northern Sawmills was later bought by Thomas Pidcock, who already operated a sawmill (a rare electric-powered one) at Nymboida. About 1960 Pidcock sold his sawmilling interests to concentrate on veneer production, and in the early 1960s constructed a new veneer factory at Trenayr, phasing out operations at the former Northern Sawmills factory at South Grafton.[76]

Match Manufacture

Restrictions on the importation of timber during the Second World War forced Australian match manufacturers to seek alternative supplies. The Sydney-based Federal Match Co. Pty Ltd, which normally used splints (match shafts) from Finland, decided to build a factory in Grafton to convert mainly local hoop pine into splints and skillets (box components). These would then be sent to the company's Sydney factory for completion. Production of skillets at the new factory, which was situated on the northern river bank near Grafton railway station, commenced in September 1942. Splint production began the folllowing year.[77]

In the mid-1950s, diminishing resources of hoop pine prompted the company to investigate poplars as an alternative source of timber for match production. In 1958 it made its initial plantations at Great Marlow of the eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*), a native of eastern North America. The first locally-grown poplars were peeled at the Grafton factory in November 1964.[78]

In 1966 the company began building a new factory at Great Marlow, where it would continue using hoop pine while gradually changing to plantation-grown poplars. The new factory began operation early in 1967, replacing the original in Grafton. Production continued at Great Marlow until 1984 when the change from wooden to cardboard match boxes made the industry redundant.

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75 *Daily Examiner*, 4 December 1948.
76 Personal communication, K. T. Pidcock, 14 August 2007.
77 *Daily Examiner*, 17 September 1942, 28 September 1968.
78 *Daily Examiner*, 27 November 1964.

4.2 Agriculture-related Industries

Flour Mills

Flour milling was a short-lived industry in Grafton; it followed the rise and fall of wheat growing in the surrounding area. Wheat, with maize, was one of the favoured crops on the farms that sprang up along the Clarence River in the late 1850s after the first sales of Crown land. Towards the end of 1860, the *Maitland Mercury* was able to report that 'The wheat crop…is looking extremely well, and should anything like fine weather set in, it is anticipated that the yield will be more than the average. Land is being cleared in all directions, so that given another two years progress equal to the last, and the Clarence district will not only feed its own inhabitants, but be one of the most important exporting provinces of Australia.'[79]

During that year a steam flour mill was added to the Kirchnerstadt factory in Grafton, which then did 'double duty—by day converting logs into scantling and boards, and at night turning the wheat into flour.'[80] Probably in 1861, Patrick Fraser erected The Clarence River Flour Mill across the river at Clarenza. The mill was destroyed by a flood in February 1863, and Fraser re-erected it on a new site on the opposite side of the river, near where it is joined by Alumy Creek.[81] By this time, however, wheat growing in the district was in decline through the appearance of rust, and the mill struggled through the 1860s, eventually being converted for the sawing of timber.

4.3 Meat and Dairy Industries

4.3.1 Boiling Down

During the 1840s, boiling down of sheep and cattle to produce tallow became commonplace throughout the pastoral districts of New South Wales. It was a highly significant industry in the Richmond and Clarence River districts in the 1840s and 1850s, providing a profitable outlet for the graziers' surplus stock, and employment for stockmen, butchers, coopers, and many others.[82]

Records of exports from the Clarence River (Table 4.1) show that six casks of tallow left the river in 1843, suggesting that the boiling down industry began that year, but it is not known precisely where that tallow was produced. It is known, however, that in 1844 Joseph Sharp established a boiling down plant

[79] *Maitland Mercury*, 6 October 1860.
[80] *Maitland Mercury*, 5 January 1860, 17 November 1860.
[81] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 16 June 1863.
[82] Fry, *Boiling down in the 1840s* is a general account of the industry.

beside Alumy Creek, and that this was the first at The Settlement. Sharp had arrived on the Clarence River in 1841, and, after a stint on the southern side of the river, moved to the northern side where he took over the property originally occupied by William Bawden, thus occupying much of the northern part of the future town of Grafton.[83]

Nearly 9,000 sheep and nearly 300 cattle were boiled down in the Clarence River district in 1844, producing nearly 60 tons of tallow. Most or all of this production probably came from Sharp's establishment. In 1845, about 40 tons of tallow was produced from 500 cattle but only 250 sheep, probably reflecting the transition from sheep to cattle that occurred in the Clarence district around that time. The replacement of sheep by cattle is further emphasised by tallow production figures for 1858; in that year nine boiling-down establishments in the Clarence Pastoral District processed 9,453 cattle, but no sheep, to produce more than 600 tons of tallow.[84]

Probably in the late 1840s, Sharp relocated his boiling down plant northward to a position about 500 metres from the river near Elizabeth Island.[85] It was reported in mid-1851 that 'Sharp's boiling or rather steaming establishment is in full operation, potting down forty bullocks per day'. A 'large quantity' of tallow was said to be 'lying at the wharf waiting for vessels'.[86] The boiling down operation subsequently became an important focus of the commercial activities of Sharp and his business partner Wilhelm Kirchner.

As well as being Sharp's business partner, the German-born Kirchner was an immigration agent, and from the late 1840s he facilitated the immigration of German agricultural workers and tradesmen to New South Wales. Many of these workers found employment on the colony's pastoral stations, including in the Clarence and Richmond River districts. An especially important destination was created at Grafton when Kirchner and Sharp decided to erect a soap and candle factory, utilising the tallow that was formerly exported.

Most of the specialised workforce required for the Grafton factory left Hamburg late in 1855, and arrived in Grafton in March the following year. They included soapmakers and chemists, engineers to set up the plant and equipment, and carpenters to erect the necessary buildings. The last group of German immigrants specifically for the Grafton factory arrived late in 1858.

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83 Mackey, *European Settlement*, p. 65.
84 *NSW Blue Book*, 1844 and 1845; *NSW Statistical Register*, 1849 to 1858.
85 This new position is shown on Darke's 1849 plan of the township (Surveyor-General's plan no. G.1359).
86 *Maitland Mercury*, 24 May 1851.

Many of the workers and their families lived in accommodation built around the factory site, creating in Grafton a German enclave that became known as Kirchnerstadt. [87]

There were many difficulties and delays in completing the factory, and these tested the partnership between Kirchner and Sharp, which was dissolved in 1861. With the exception of the sawmill component of the operation, which continued for many years, the factory was short-lived. Its enduring legacy, however, is the large German community that it created in Grafton (11 per cent. of the town's population in 1861, greater than either the Irish or Scottish cohorts). Many descendents of these German immigrant families still reside in the Grafton district.[88]

4.3.2 Dairy Factories

The first butter factory in the Clarence River district—the Clarence River Pioneer Dairy Factory—began operation at Ulmarra, on the southern side of the river, early in 1892. A second—the Southampton Butter Factory—opened later the same year. It was situated on the bank of the river at South Grafton, and was the first within the study area, but little more is known of it.

Moves to establish a butter factory on the northern side of the Clarence River began early in 1892 with a public meeting of residents of Alumy Creek and Carr's Creek. A site was selected on Alumy Creek, about two kilometres north of Grafton, in the expectation of drawing supplies of milk from Southgate, Carr's Creek, Trenayr, the Richmond road, the River Bank (the name applied to the stretch of the northern bank of the river from the outlet of Alumy Creek to the city boundary) and Grafton itself. The resulting factory of the Grafton Dairy Company was opened in March 1893.[89]

The Grafton, Ulmarra, Southampton and other butter factories that opened in the Clarence district in the early 1890s were all small affairs compared to a new factory that opened in Grafton in April 1896. This belonged to the NSW Fresh Food and Ice Company, an old, established company with diary interests in the south coast district. The works, which were situated in Victoria Street and fronted the river, were supplied by nine company-owned separating stations throughout the district. In addition, there were many private suppliers with their own cream separators, and cream was also

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87 Burkhardt and Mackey, *History of the German Community*, pp. 10-17.
88 Burkhardt and Mackey, *History of the German Community*, pp. 10-17; Burkhardt, 'A profile of Grafton in 1861', *CRHS Newsletter*, no. 98, 23 July 2007, p. 10.
89 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 23 April 1892, 30 April 1892, 21 March 1893.

received from existing butter factories, including those at Alumy Creek and South Grafton.[90]

In September 1909, the Grafton Dairy Company Ltd assumed control of the NSW Fresh Food and Ice Company's works in Grafton, following a deal in which the former paid £3,500 for a plant that had cost the latter around £10,000 more to instal.[91] The factory at Alumy Creek was continued, but by that time it had become only a separating station. It was later closed, but its location is indicated today by Butter Factory Lane, which joins the Summerland Way on the northern outskirts of Grafton.

In the 1960s, declining numbers of suppliers and the resulting need for increased efficiency gave rise to discussions about amalgamation between the Grafton Dairy Company and the Pioneer Dairy Company at Ulmarra, the only two of the 'old' factories remaining in operation on the Clarence. This came about on 1 July 1970 with the creation of Grafton-Ulmarra Co-operative Dairy Company Limited. The further dictates of efficiency gave rise in November 1990 to the merger of that company with Norco.[92]

The most conspicuous reminder of the importance of dairy farming in the history of the Grafton district, and of related manufacturing in the city itself, is a former dairy factory alongside the railway line at the western end of Fry Street. This modern factory was officially opened in 1954 by Peters Creameries (Grafton) Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Peters Consolidated Milk Industries Ltd.[93] It is usually remembered as an ice-cream factory, but it also produced butter, concentrated milk, and powdered milk.[94]

Peters entered the Clarence River district in 1948 when the company bought Foley Brothers, which included the Lower Southgate dairy factory. The Lower Southgate factory began receiving milk (in addition to cream for butter manufacture) in 1951, and this was transported in bulk by rail to the Peters factory at Taree, via a newly-established depot beside the railway line at Westlawn. The new Grafton dairy factory was developed adjacent to the depot, and when it began operation in 1953, the old Lower Southgate factory was closed.[95]

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90 *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 2 May 1896, 3 August 1901; *Town and Country Journal*, 9 May 1896.
91 *Grafton Argus*, 3 September 1909.
92 Ryan, *Norco 100*, p. 266.
93 *Daily Examiner*, 16 October 1954.
94 Much of the following account is based on information provided to the author in August 2007 by Roger Harrison, who worked for Peters at Grafton from 1951 until 1983.
95 *Daily Examiner*, 16 October 1951.

Figure 4.1 Peters Dairy Factory under construction, c. 1953. The small building at the left rear is the company's depot, in operation by 1951. (*Source*: Roger Harrison, Grafton)

The Grafton factory received milk and cream from the Clarence and Orara districts, and this was manufactured into butter, concentrated skim and whole milk, anhydrous skim and full cream milk powder, and ice cream. Some product was forwarded to other Peters factories as raw material; some treated whole milk went to the Fresh Food and Ice Company's Darling Harbour plant for bottling, and cream and concentrated milk went to the Peters plant in Redfern for use in ice cream manufacture.

Butter production ceased at the Grafton factory in 1962 because of a diminishing supply of cream. Powered milk production continued until 1972, when the drying plant, and canning and packaging lines, were transferred to Victoria. Ice cream production, on the other hand, received a boost in 1974 when part of the company's Redfern plant was relocated to Grafton, which then became a key centre for ice cream production. Because of its inner city position, the Redfern plant, which had been established in 1923, was being affected by building and environmental restraints, but this was to the

advantage of the Grafton factory, which, in its heyday in the late 1970s, employed nearly 200 people during the summer months.[96]

The beginning of the end for the Grafton factory came in 1980 when the national ice cream businesses of Queensland United Foods Ltd (Pauls) and Petersville Sleigh Ltd (Peters) were merged to form Australian United Foods. Although the Grafton factory was highly efficient, other factories in metropolitan areas, where most ice cream was sold, were being under-utilised. In order to more fully utilise metropolitan capacity, and reduce duplication, a decision was made to permanently close the Grafton factory, and this took effect on 3 June 1983.[97]

Figure 4.2 Former Peters Dairy Factory, 2007

4.3.3 Meatworks

Although cattle raising was one of the earliest economic activities in the Clarence valley, the large-scale local slaughtering of cattle for meat was a relatively recent development. The purchase in 1931 by Tancred Brothers of a small existing abattoir at South Grafton was an important milestone in the history of the industry. The Sydney-based Tancreds bought the O.K. Meat Company's works at South Grafton, and transformed it into a modern

[96] *Daily Examiner*, 10 May 1974.
[97] *Daily Examiner*, 6 May 1983.

abattoir for the slaughtering of cattle and the chilling of meat for the Sydney market.[98] When completed, the works employed 30 men permanently, and were capable of handling 500 head of cattle and 700 calves weekly. A railway siding to the main North Coast line allowed refrigerated cars to be brought to the door of the cooling chamber. About £25,000 was spent purchasing and transforming the property.[99] Tancreds prospered at Grafton, as the invasion of cattle ticks in the early 1930s and the resultant cessation of trucking of cattle to Sydney gave the company a monopoly in the district.

In the mid-1930s, the Grafton Co-operative Dairy Company decided to obtain an export licence to enable it to market pig products overseas. The company's old bacon factory at North Grafton required considerable work to bring it up to standard, and it was decided instead to build a new factory on a new site. Before this was done, however, negotiations were entered into with Tancred Brothers for the purchase of their works at South Grafton. An agreement was reached and the dairy company took over operations on 1 June 1937.[100]

After nearly a decade under the control of the dairy company, a new co-operative society was launched in 1946 to operate the abattoir independently. The Clarence River Co-operative Meat Society Ltd, as the new entity was named, took over on 1 November that year.[101] The meatworks were originally a few kilometres beyond the southern boundary of the Municipality of South Grafton, but came within the new City of Grafton when that was created in 1957. It continued to operate as a co-operative until the Gilbertson family from Victoria took over in 1980.

On 10 December 1997, the meatworks were closed by R. J. Gilbertson Pty Ltd, and more than 200 workers were terminated. The closure was particularly devastating because of the failure of the company to pay most of its workers' accrued leave, severance and redundancy entitlements. Following intervention by the State Government, the works was sold and then reopened early in 1998, but it has since closed again.[102]

4.4 Brewing Industry

Grafton's first brewery was started by Robert Muir in 1861, but it was small and short-lived. Muir's Grafton Brewery was situated near the Dobie Street

[98] This is understood to be the site of much earlier slaughtering yards established by the Fresh Food and Ice Co., and taken over by Grafton Dairy Co. in 1909.
[99] *Daily Examiner*, 24 June 1931; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 June 1931
[100] *Daily Examiner*, 13 April 1937,
[101] *Daily Examiner*, 11 September 1946.
[102] *Daily Examiner*, 10 and 11 December 1997, 28 March 1998.

wharf, across the river from Patrick Fraser's flour mill. Muir advertised in October that year that he was able to supply ales manufactured 'solely from the best English malt and hops'.[103] The brewery seems to have ceased operation in 1863.

From the closure of Muir's brewery until the early 1950s, Grafton obtained practically all of its beer requirements from breweries in Newcastle, Maitland and, most significantly, Sydney. In the late 1940s, however, when the Sydney breweries were slowly recovering from wartime restrictions on production, there existed a general shortage of beer throughout New South Wales, especially outside the capital city. In the north coast region, to which beer was shipped from Sydney by the North Coast Steam Navigation Co., supply was irregular and shortages commonplace. Under these circumstances, plans were commenced for the construction at Grafton of a new brewery to serve the northern part of the state.

Grafton Brewing Company

The Grafton Brewing Company Pty Ltd was incorporated in 1949, and was granted a licence for its Grafton Brewery when construction of this was completed in 1952. Production of beer commenced in November that year, and the first Grafton beer was sold over the counter in Grafton pubs on 18 December. The brewery, situated on the northern side of North Street, was in Copmanhurst Shire, but a northward relocation of the local government boundary in 1957 brought it within the newly-created City of Grafton.

Grafton Brewing became a public company (Grafton Brewing Company Ltd) in 1953, in order to facilitate the raising of extra capital for expansion. At about the same time, the Sydney breweries were beginning to overcome the post-war shortage, and a rail bulk-loading contract enabled them to send beer cheaply to Lismore, the largest centre within Grafton Brewery's intended distribution area. Resulting strong competition from the Sydney breweries, among other factors, led to the inability of the Grafton Brewery to operate profitably, and in 1961 the company accepted a takeover offer from one of its city rivals, Tooheys Limited.[104]

Under the brewery's new owner, Grafton beers were phased out and replaced by Tooheys brands in the 1960s, but production at the Grafton Brewery was

[103] *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 22 October 1861.
[104] The best account of the early history of the Grafton Brewery is Stubbs, 1996, 'The Revival and Decline of the Independent Breweries in New South Wales, 1946 to 1961,'*Australian Economic History Review* 36(1), 32-63.

greatly increased by the addition of new plant. This included an outdoor 'tank farm' of individually refrigerated fermentation and maturation tanks, and new canning and bottling machinery, all of which were officially opened in December 1968. The canning line processed the first 'ring-pull' beer cans produced and sold in New South Wales. The new bottling line enabled the brewery to fill 13 fluid ounce 'stubbies' in addition to the usual 26 fluid ounce bottles, which the existing line handled.[105]

A review of operations at the three Tooheys breweries in New South Wales resulted in major changes at Grafton in 1987. Packaging of beer at the brewery ceased, although it continued to produce bulk (kegged) products. As a consequence, forty of the nearly 200 workers at the brewery were retrenched. This was a better outcome than at the Hunter Brewery at Cardiff (Newcastle), which was closed completely. The much larger brewery at Auburn (Sydney) would produce all Tooheys packaged products.[106]

Figure 4.3 The brewhouse at the Grafton Brewery, 1988. These copper brewing vessels were manufactured by A. Ziemann Breweries of Ludwigsburg, near Stuttgart, Germany. As far as can be ascertained, they were scrapped soon after the closure of the brewery.

[105] *Daily Examiner*, 7 December 1968.
[106] *Daily Examiner*, 21 July 1987

Further job losses occurred at the Grafton Brewery in 1991 after Tooheys targetted 41 positions to be cut out of the remaining 157. The brewery received a boost in 1993 with the installation of a new keg line to handle the 50 litre kegs that had become standard elsewhere in the industry.[107]

By mid-1994, the Grafton Brewery employed 95 people, fewer than half of its 1987 workforce, yet further reductions were implemented. A year later only 61 remained. Amid rumours of closure, the brewery's new operations manager gave assurances that 'We're certainly not here to close the brewery down'. Barely a year later, the same operations manager told 42 workers that they were no longer required as the brewery would close completely on 30 May 1997. Reduction in demand for keg beer, on which Grafton Brewery concentrated, was cited as the reason for the closure.[108]

Figure 4.4 The former Grafton Brewery, 2007

[107] *Daily Examiner*, 24 April 1991, 2 July 1993.
[108] *Daily Examiner*, 17 June 1994, 21 December 1995, 10 April 1997.

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