

COLONIAL ARMIDALE
A STUDY OF PEOPLE, PLACE AND POWER IN THE FORMATION
OF A COUNTRY TOWN

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ABSTRACT

THESIS: COLONIAL ARMIDALE: A STUDY OF PEOPLE, PLACE AND POWER IN THE FORMATION OF A COUNTRY TOWN.

BY JOHN FERRY.

This thesis examines the changes in colonial Armidale, New South Wales, from a small centrally located frontier village in the early 1850s to an eminently respectable cathedral city by 1891. The process of change was one of struggle for control of the district's resources and for the control of the social space of the town. That struggle is viewed using a concept of power with particular emphasis on the strategies people used in their communal encounters and conflicts.

In the 1840s and early 1850s young, single, working class men dominated the town and the essence of status behaviour was prowess, centred on the male body. However, as Crown Lands were sold to private purchasers, a middling class of small farmers and urban entrepreneurs emerged. This class comprised young families, and, unlike the squatters and large investors of the middle class, was resident. This class struggled with the squatters for control of the arable lands, and with the large-scale investors to free their small businesses from debt. There was, as well, the continual struggle between workers and bosses for control of labour costs and working conditions.

Family life was centred on the reality of an enormous power imbalance between husband and wife under the principles of the law of coverture, and women were engaged in struggle to define family roles in such a way as to ameliorate that power differential. This was part of a much wider gender struggle which saw the emergence of precepts of respectability which challenged the older ideology of masculinism. With the ascendancy of respectability every effort was made to control the public places and social infrastructure of the town and status behaviour based on property ownership and displays of wealth took over from the displays of prowess which characterised the earlier town.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century sophisticated class and gender structures had emerged and these were reinforced by the patterns of wealth devolution evident as the pioneering generation of the middle and middling class passed away.

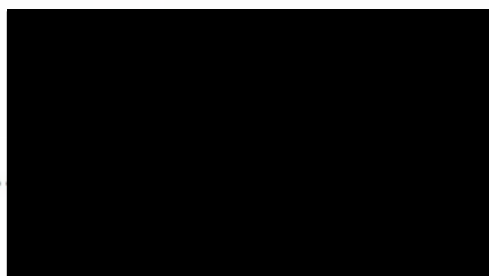
CERTIFICATE

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

signed

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7.4.1994.

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John Ferry,
Armidale,
February, 1994.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used consistently throughout the footnotes to this thesis

<i>ADHSJ</i>	<i>Armidale and District Historical Society Journal</i>
<i>AE</i>	<i>Armidale Express</i>
AONSW	Archives Office of New South Wales
LTONSW	Land Titles Office of New South Wales
<i>NSWGG</i>	<i>New South Wales Government Gazette</i>

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