



M.D.Mackie- A Passionate Intellect

Kerith Megan Power, B.Ed (Early Childhood), Macquarie, Grad.Dip. Extension,
Hawkesbury C.A.E.

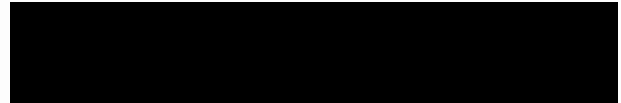
A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Education (Honours) of the University of
New England

March 1998

Certificate of Originality.

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

I certify that to the best of my knowledge any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



Signature

Acknowledgements:

My principal thanks go to Miss M.D.Mackie.

Thanks to friends and colleagues of Miss Mackie: Deirdre Hayter, Marlene Sheppard, Mary Thompson, Margaret Hill, Alf Fox, Bob Ross and Christine Perrott.

For collegial relationships and support, thanks to my fellow students, the 'Fiery Cottiers'.

Many thanks to my patient supervisor, Dr Susan Davies.

Note on the Biography

I was not the second grandchild, but the first, on both sides of the family. The laundry van which the nursemaid considered "rude" depicted a near-naked baby (not an "overwashed" one). I had honours in English and Botany in the Leaving Certificate, not in Mathematics. The History mistress, Mrs Greenwood, wrote to my mother when I left school, not the headmistress. Neither at the university or elsewhere did I advocate the overthrow of capitalism by force. The family did not accompany my brother to Oxford to "install" him in his college. My parents were in Sydney. I was already in Oxford as a student. When I applied for a Teachers' College lectureship I had not been promoted as far as I could go. I was a graduate assistant. When I was not tempted to stay in England and teach there in 1949 it was not because I had been told that Cheltenham Ladies College was "the best I could aspire to." It is a highly prestigious school, credited with being the first to give an academic education (as distinct from drawing room accomplishments) to girls. I was not tempted because I did not go into teaching to help the highly privileged. I am not aware of writing any college course which was not given. I did not write my books late at night. As a school pupil, university student, teacher and lecturer I finished academic work by 9.30 p.m. It is not true that university lecturers said my books were 'trite'. This comment was made by one lecturer about a hurried conversation which he misunderstood. My book on school administration was guaranteed publication before it was written, by Professor Walker. It is not true that when Kerith came to help me at the time of the cancer operation the house had not been dusted for 15 years. It is not true that I believed that every household in Scotland contained a Greek dictionary. I have always dusted my house at least weekly. My brother was not present at my mother's funeral: he was in Oxford. It was to visit my mother in hospital several years before she died that I asked my brother to come to Sydney from Oxford for a few days, and he did so.

The contention that my parents had a "gender bias" which disadvantaged me is not supported by my experience. They sent me to two universities at a time when most girls did not complete the five years of the secondary course. My brother and I had to share household tasks equally. At no time were these allowed to interfere with academic work. Kerith herself refers to my father's support of Plato's view on the equality of men and women. My choice of teaching as my profession was my own. Though no comment was made I felt that I was disappointing my parents rather than following their wishes in entering the service of the Department of Education. It was not till long after it could have affected my career that I remembered my father's saying when we were students that when we were no longer in danger of being adversely affected by his doing so he intended to reveal some of the inappropriate things done in the Department. My being employed there would have prevented this if he had wanted to proceed. No comment was ever made.

Kerith's belief that my parents lacked information on child rearing seems equally speculative. The latest books on such topics came into the house on their way to the college library and I read them myself from the age of seven.

My mother's hope that in marrying a professor she would be in a position to "Meet intellectual people" was not an expectation of attending constant "academic occasions". She wanted contact with people having her own level of education. This was difficult to achieve in Wahroonga in its then state of isolation. Visits from people like Miss Skillen meant journeys of at least an hour each way. Shopping or other business in the city took half an hour in the train and a further quarter of an hour in the ferry.

being at variance with convention that married women whose husbands could provide for them did not go out to work is inapplicable because my mother had no desire to teach in a school. It is true that, late in life, she had outstanding success with a migrant girl neighbour who took up French in her fourth high school year. This independent work, with an enthusiastic pupil, was very different from what would have happened in class teaching.

Fisher Library, in the University of Sydney, has a large collection of Mackie family papers.

M. Mackie

20/10/2000

Table of Contents:

Introduction	Page 1
Scottish Forebears	Page 16
Childhood	Page 32
Young Womanhood	Page 51
Teaching and Writing	Page 68
Bibliography	Page 87

Illustrations:

William Mackie, Master Grocer, 1913	Page 16
Pupil teacher with unknown friend	Page 18
Alexander Mackie, M.A. Edinburgh, 1899	Page 19
100 Moss St, Keith, where John Duncan was born.	Page 25
Annie B. Duncan, 1912	Page 33
Annie B. Mackie, 1921	Page 34
'Drumgrain', 3 Woonona Ave, Wahroonga	Page 36
Annie B. Mackie and Margaret, 4.	Page 40
Deveron Bridge, Huntly	Page 43
Margaret in Abbotsleigh uniform with her father, c. 1930.	Page 49
Margaret Mackie at 20 (12/11/34)	Page 60
Margaret and her grandfather, John Duncan, c.1948.	Page 72
Alexander Mackie, 1876- 1955	Page 77
M.D. Mackie, M.A.(Oxon), B.A. Dip.Ed., (Sydney), c.1960	Page 81
M.D. Mackie, O.A.M., in 1997	Page 86

Abstract

This thesis sets out to trace the making and mature achievement of a 'born' teacher. Using narrative, it employs a selection from archival material, interviews and contextual readings, of incidents, anecdotes and analysis to illustrate the heritage, early childhood, young womanhood and professional achievements of a distinguished educator, Miss Margaret Davidson Mackie.

In such a project it is impossible to make a claim to represent an entire life and no such claim is made for this work. Instead, it has concentrated on drawing out several major themes.

These are the themes of national and cultural background, family life and educational experience as formative influences in the personal and professional choices of one woman.

The formative influences are then traced into her classroom practices as related by several former students, and theoretical writings, as represented by her books and teaching materials.

These themes are immersed in a medium of beliefs and practices of gender. Throughout, a reference point is the parallel career of the subject's brother. This is intended to illustrate a contrast in life choices not solely attributable to individual differences or personal agency, but to the social forces binding on both, according to their gender. These social forces enabled certain choices and constrained others.

An attempt to explain why Miss Mackie chose certain paths and resisted others is sought by reference to both the personal and public life of her family and mentors and by reference to the very few women of the era whose opportunities and choices were similar in some respects.

Closure is sought by taking a glimpse at the daily life of a woman who from an early age took up and integrated her experience so that, to be a teacher became, and remained, an integral and driving force in her self-concept.