

# The Early Mayors of Bathurst

1863 - 1915



# **Macquarie's Vision**

In the early years of the Colony, its destiny was moulded by the Governors who were in charge of it. The decision of the Governor was paramount, especially in a penal colony such as New South Wales. Lachlan Macquarie and his wife Elizabeth Campbell Macquarie came to Australia with the 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment arriving at Port Jackson on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1809. He took up his commission as Governor on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1810 at the age of forty nine. He was the first military Governor. All previous Governors of the Colony had been naval officers. He arrived to a Colony in disarray, with an unruly population, and tension between the free settlers and convicts. Sydney was a town recovering from the aftermath of the "Rum Rebellion". There were crowded and filthy streets and a shortage of agricultural land. He was able to draw on his experiences as a staff officer and put plans into action to improve the Colony.

His first task was to deal with the increase in convict numbers sent from Britain, whom he employed in ambitious programs that instigated public works, in the form of realigned streets and roads, erected public buildings and developed a financial structure for the penal colony. His policy of encouraging well behaved convicts into the wider community through tickets-of-leave, brought him into conflict with the influential free settlers. They wanted to restrict civil rights and judicial privileges to free settlers and their children only. This proved to be a problem for Macquarie later. Macquarie allowed deserving emancipists to enjoy the same rights as free settlers. He encouraged former convicts like Francis Greenway, by appointing him to be the Civil Architect; the result was the transforming of the streetscape of Sydney and Parramatta. (1)

Lachlan's wife Elizabeth made a critical contribution to New South Wales – it was she who brought a book of building and town designs with her from England. It is said she sat on the sandstone chair on the point, now known as Mrs Macquarie's Chair on Sydney Harbour intently studying the book. (2) Elizabeth designed parts of the Domain and the gardens at Government House in Sydney and Parramatta. Mrs Macquarie also designed the first three-storey building in Australia, the Female Orphan School, which was modelled on her family home in Scotland. (3)

Once the streets of Sydney had been realigned and building work was progressing, Macquarie's next step was to explore for more agriculture lands as the Sydney Basin was getting overcrowded. He encouraged exploration to find a way over the Blue Mountains and to develop the Colony so it was economically self-sufficient. Once the trail had been blazed over the mountains and the potential of the land beyond had been sighted, Macquarie had William Cox build the road to open up the new land. The Western Road was opened in 1815. In his usual practical way, once the road had been completed, he set out with a group, including Mrs Macquarie, to investigate for himself the land beyond the mountains. They set out on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1815.

*Sunday 7. May 1815!!!*

*After breakfast, all the gentlemen and other people assembled for prayers and Divine Service, but previous thereto they were all mustered for the purpose of witnessing my christening the new intended Town on this beautiful spot, which I accordingly named Bathurst in honour of the noble Earl of that name, now His majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies. The British Union Jack was first hoisted on the new Flagg Staff on this auspicious occasion, the military fired 8 volleys and the whole of the people assembled (being 75 in number) gave three cheers in honour of the ceremony. – I prefaced it by complimenting Mr Cox and Mr Evans, and their respective parties for discovering this fine country, and afterwards facilitating our access to it so easily and overcoming such extraordinary difficulties in so doing.*

*The ceremony concluded by all of us drinking. Prosperity to the new Town of Bathurst.*

*After Divine Service had been performed, I accompanied Mr Cox and Messrs Oxley and Meehan, the Surveyors to lay down and mark out the lines of the town of Bathurst at the spot fixed on now here for that purpose, immediately in rear of the present Headquarters; reserving a sufficient space next to the river for a small Government Domain, extending half a mile in front and a quarter of a mile in depth. I also had marked out immediately in rear of the Flagg Staff the spot intended for the Government House being erected on hereafter.*

***Lachlan Macquarie: Diaries***

***Tour to the New Discovered Country in April 1815.***

***25 April 1815 – 19 May 1815***

Lachlan Macquarie and his party left the new site of Bathurst after a stay of a few days. He left a small party of convicts and soldiers to plant wheat which was the start of permanent agriculture on the Bathurst Plains. (4) "The establishment of an outpost at Bathurst (150 miles from the seat of Government) may therefore be regarded as the inauguration of the colonisation of the Australian continent....thus Bathurst grew into a commercial centre of a far reaching radius." (5)



(6)

Macquarie's vision was two-fold. Firstly, the practical side of his vision saw, in the Bathurst area, a chance for orderly growth and development, the antithesis of what he found in Sydney. To this end he divided the use of the land either side of the Macquarie River. The northern side was allocated for development but the southern side (current site of Bathurst) was set as a military outpost. He was a follower of the Scottish enlightenment Philosophy which had an "optimistic belief in the ability of humanity to effect changes for the better in Society and nature, guided only by reason....It's chief virtues were improvement, virtue, and practical benefit for the individual and society as a whole." (7) Macquarie was the first to see past the limits of the convicts and encouraged self-enrichment. To this end the other part of Macquarie's vision was in the merit he saw in each individual, regardless of whether they were convicts or not. He believed in a "clean slate policy". (8) Once a convict had served his/her term or was pardoned, he/she was entitled to be restored to the position in society they had occupied before the conviction.(9) This view was diametrically opposed to that of Earl Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary. Earl Bathurst had little faith in the ability of any convict to reform him/herself. Eventually the two views came to a head.

# **HORACE COLIN DEAN BEAVIS**

## **THE PHOTOGRAPHER MAYOR**

**1914, 1915**

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Horace Colin Dean Beavis and his brother Charles James Beavis were accomplished photographers born in Norwood, South Australia. Before settling in Bathurst, the Beavis brothers travelled all over Victoria and New South Wales, where they honed their photography skills. When they reached Bathurst they opened up a photography studio which was a successful operation. Horace was born on 12 July, 1860 and Charles was born in 1852. The brothers came to Bathurst in the early 1880s.

The *Beavis Bros Photography Shop* was in Howick Street, Bathurst. It was established in 1886. The Beavis' operated the business together until 1901 when they dissolved their partnership. Charles opened up a photographic studio in George Street. Horace remained in their Howick Street shop. Their businesses remained separate from then on.



*The Beavis Bros Photographers shop in Howick Street showing damage after a severe snow storm in 1896.*

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