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**Journeys in Time 1809-1822 is a major research initiative undertaken by Macquarie University Library to create an electronic archive of selected writings by Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie. It forms part of the Accessible Lifelong Learning (ALL) Project, a joint partnership between Macquarie University and the State Library of New South Wales. Journeys in Time is designed to provide scholarly access to primary source texts describing early colonial life in Australia. It also seeks to commemorate some of the tangible links between Macquarie University and its namesake, Lachlan Macquarie, the fifth governor of the colony of New South Wales (1810-1822). This article traces the development of the Journeys in Time project and explores some of the technical and design challenges that had to be met in the preparation of the transcripts and hypertext versions of the original documents.**

## **JOURNEYS IN TIME: DIGITISING THE PAST, EXPLORING THE FUTURE...**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Accessible Lifelong Learning (ALL) Project is a joint initiative of Macquarie University and the State Library of New South Wales to establish a 'gateway' web site for the provision of community-based information and lifelong learning opportunities. ALL was launched in May 1998 and it aims, in the first instance, to produce teaching and learning programs that can be made available to the people of New South Wales on electronic facilities accessible through the public libraries network. Secondly, it is designed to maximise upon the ubiquitous nature of the World Wide Web and allow much of this information and research to be freely available to students, researchers and scholars throughout the world.

The ALL Project is accessible at: <http://www.all.mq.edu.au/>

There are currently 9 topic categories to select from:

- Australian Histories,
- Communications & Technology,
- Early Childhood,
- Education,
- Environment & Science,
- Indigenous Australia,
- Management Skills,
- Online Courses,
- Professional Development Courses.

One small, yet significant, component within the Australian Histories section of the ALL Project is Journeys in Time 1809 -1822: the journals of Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie.

<http://www.lib.mq.edu.au/all/journeys/>

This web site includes complete transcriptions of twelve (12) journals written in the period 1809-

1822: Elizabeth Macquarie's personal journal of her voyage from England to New South Wales (via Madeira, Rio de Janeiro, and Cape Town) in 1809; the ten (10) journals kept by Governor Lachlan Macquarie during his 'tours of inspection' in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (1810 -1822), and his journal describing the return voyage that he and his family made to England via Cape Horn in 1822.

### **PROJECT AIMS**

The aims of the Journeys in Time project are:

- to provide students, researchers and community groups with access to a selection of full text transcriptions of the writings of Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie;
- to contribute towards the documentation of historical research material relating to early Australian colonial history;
- to create a bibliography of primary and secondary source material relating to the Macquaries

### **PROJECT OUTLINE**

The project is divided into three developmental stages:

#### **Phase I (1998)**

Web site design, copying, scanning and preparation of journal transcripts, text correction, historical research, selection and digitisation of images

#### **Phase II (1999 -2000)**

Additional historical research, preparation of supplementary sections:Chronology, Maps, Related Topics

#### **Phase III (2000 -)**

Ongoing historical research, investigation of the feasibility of establishing an electronic archival research project entitled the Lachlan Macquarie Historical @rchive.

### **BEGINNINGS**

I began work on the Journeys in Time in December 1997 with much enthusiasm and a large measure of technological naivety. I recognised that the task was large undertaking, but one that contained an important degree of scholarly merit, and, in particular, a significance for researchers interested in investigating the history of early white settlement in Australia. The project would also provide a unique window into the lives and personalities of Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie and the circle of friends, acquaintances and associates with whom they had contact in the period 1809 -1822.

The Mitchell Library, Sydney, is one of the pre-eminent international collections of manuscript material relating to Australia and the Pacific region; and it is now the repository for the remarkable collection of journals, letterbooks and personal papers kept by Lachlan Macquarie in the years 1787-1824. The collection, which includes 21 journals, 10 letterbooks, and at least 750 letters (with approximately 206 correspondents) has come to the Mitchell Library from many sources, either by purchase, donation or bequest. The principal documents were acquired in 1914 from two key individuals: Margaret, Viscountess Strathallan (January 1914) and Colonel Campbell (June 1914). Later additions and acquisitions have helped to consolidate the holdings of the Mitchell Library and these various items now form an

invaluable personal and historical archive. The bulk of these manuscripts are now also available for purchase on microfilm from the State Library of New South Wales - consisting of approximately 6000 frames of manuscript material on nine (9) rolls of microfilm .

## **SELECTION**

The selection of the primary sources to be included in the Journeys in Time project was a relatively straightforward decision once it had to been determined to make available only those accounts kept by Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie that described their travels to and from Australia, as well as the corpus of ten (10) semi-official accounts kept by Governor Macquarie during his tours of inspection within NSW and Van Diemen's Land. The value of these accounts lies not simply in their novelty but also their eyewitness value in describing places and landscapes that had only recently been 'discovered' by Europeans. The processes of investigating new parts of the colonies, 'naming' the landscape, and determining the order and configuration of new streets and townships were activities that Lachlan Macquarie showed a remarkable keenness to undertake. They also reveal a remarkable tendency for self-indulgence in his administrative style. Though it should be noted that Macquarie's propensity to name places after himself, members of his family, friends and patrons was as much the behaviour of a Scottish laird managing his estate as it was that of the governor of two geographically isolated penal settlements in the South Pacific.

## **CONTENT**

At the outset the preparation of the Journeys in Time transcripts was based upon two broad principles:

- Availability of the original source materials

in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

- Any transcripts that were prepared could be readily compared for accuracy with existing microfilm copies, or (where necessary) the original documents available at the State Library of New South Wales.

Macquarie University Library had already purchased (in 1997) a complete set of Macquarie's papers on microfilm from the State Library of New South Wales, and it has progressively added to this collection any related primary source materials that provide a wider understanding of the life and times of the Macquaries. To date, additional materials have been acquired on microfilm through either the Australian Joint Copying Project, the National Library of Scotland or the Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.

Availability of existing published versions In 1956 the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales published a transcription of Lachlan Macquarie's ten journals describing his 'tours of inspection' in a work entitled: Lachlan Macquarie Governor of New South Wales; journals of his tours in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1810 -1822.

This publication made available in print for the first time a unique collection of documents by Lachlan Macquarie, and thereby provided historical researchers with the means to read transcripts of the original sources in their entirety. It was an invaluable contribution and one that continues to be cited in works on Australian history.

As a consequence, the task of preparing any transcripts could proceed from ready access to the original manuscript sources and the availability of a published 'core' of materials.

## **FUNDING**

The Journeys in Time project was always seen as a contribution by Macquarie University Library towards the scholarly investigation of the life and times of Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie. The ALL Project could not provide funding commensurate to the level of activity required to support the whole project; nevertheless there was a belief by Library management that once the value and importance of such a digital initiative had been demonstrated, there might be the chance to gain research funding grants or to attract corporate sponsorship at a later date.

Funding was provided by the ALL Project Committee (to the value of \$500.00) for the cost of employing a graphic designer to prepare a suitable Web site design. This would provide a viable design structure for the addition of all future content hypertext transcripts and research findings. All other costs would be absorbed by Macquarie University Library for the period of twelve months. This was seen as an opportunity for the development of additional IT skills by Library design staff. If there was a demonstrable level of success the project would then be reassessed at the end of this time period.

## **STAFFING AND FACILITIES**

In 1998 the Library Design & Media Production Unit at Macquarie University had two staff members: manager/researcher, Robin Walsh, and graphic designer, Kate Orman. Once approval was given by the ALL Project coordinators for the Journeys in Time project to proceed there were a number of key issues to be resolved:

## **Copyright**

Discussions between Macquarie University Library and the State Library resolved that the relevant sections of this publication Lachlan Macquarie Governor of New South Wales; journals of his tours in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1810 -1822 could be scanned and digitised to create a preliminary corpus of transcripts and historical notes. This would be supplemented by additional checking and research. In two instances there would also be the publication of original transcripts of unpublished manuscripts material. For the purposes of the project, copyright would be jointly shared between the two institutions whereby the respective intellectual endeavours involved in the preparation of the texts and historical notes would be acknowledged and a distinction made between those derived from the original sources published in 1956 and those prepared specifically for the Journeys in Time project.

## **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

### **Text Identification**

The viability of any digital project must be based upon having a clearly defined set of parameters for the content and activity. In the case of primary source materials this should be always be an identifiable corpus of works that provide the ground bed upon which all other links are derived and interrelated.

### **Site Design and Navigation Principles**

I discussed my design needs with my assistant, graphic designer Kate Orman and explained my desire for comprehensive navigation principles at all levels of the site and the need to be able to continuously 'see' the whole

structure of the site on every page. The use of a 'side bar navigation' template offered the best solution. We mapped out the whole site on paper before any transcription work had been completed and resolved that the digitisation of the selected Macquarie papers would be kept as simple and flexible as possible:

- the design would be modular
- HTML tags would be used for the mark-up of the corrected text and associated historical notes and background information
- validation of the coding language and accessibility would be tested in web-based services such as WebLint and Bobby
- navigation of the content would allow access to all search categories of the site by providing a consistent 'sidebar' menu at all levels
- use of gifs and image maps would be kept to a minimum to ensure that download times were as efficient as possible

### **Transcription and Data Preparation**

At the heart of a project such as *Journeys in Time* lies the question of the accuracy of the transcriptions. The best site design (web or database) in the world will be seriously compromised, if not utterly invalidated, by poor quality data. An important corollary to this is that having selected an appropriate data format you must ensure that a digital resource can be preserved without significant information loss.

There is no question that the task of preparing transcriptions is both immensely time-consuming and exacting. Rigorous attention to detail is required to ensure that the text is as error free as possible. *Journeys in Time* had the benefit of the existence of a published corpus of transcriptions; however a comparative analysis between the published text and the original documents indicated that a number of editorial decisions had been made in the published text to standardise the spelling and punctuation for the benefit of the general reader. While this may have helped to make the text more accessible, it had in many respects stripped the text of its early C19th characteristics and obscured the idiosyncratic character of Lachlan Macquarie's style and handwriting. The reintroduction of these elements into the web site version was one of the preliminary (and critical) decisions that were made regarding the 'new' transcription.

In addition, it was also decided to retain the original spellings, capitalisation and punctuation used by Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie, as well as the use of superscript characters in their abbreviations for official titles and ranks etc. At times this proved to be problematical - especially in the case of Elizabeth Macquarie who was a fluid and impulsive writer, little unconcerned about rigorous use of punctuation. And why should she be? Her 1809 journal of the voyage to New South Wales was a personal document that she kept as her personal 'aide-memoire'. She did not plan sharing her observations with others - unlike her fellow passengers on board the *Dromedary*, Deputy-Judge Advocate Ellis Bent and Captain Henry Colden Antill, who prepared their accounts for the entertainment and information of family members in England. Nor did Elizabeth have literary

intentions or aspirations to convert her travel experiences into a published account like some of her female contemporaries, such as Mary Anne Parker (in 1795) or Maria Graham (Lady Callcott) (1812 - 1824).

Journeys in Time reinstates most of these features in an attempt to recapture some of the 'flavour' of the original journal(s). In this way it is hoped that those incidents or observations that carried special meaning or importance to the original writer will become more apparent to us as readers and researchers .

### **Text Scanning**

In the case of the ten (10) 'published' Macquarie journals appearing in the publication Lachlan Macquarie Governor of New South Wales; Journals of his Tours in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1810 -1822 the text was photocopied and scanned on an EPSON GT-9000 flatbed scanner, and corrected using OmniPage Pro 6.0. OCR software.

Despite the sophistication of this software it was found that many of the font ligatures and layout of the (1956) published text created strange spelling and text variants and a good deal of time had to be spent examining these for correction before a basic file of transcripts could be worked upon.

### **Timetable**

The task of determining the order in which specific journal transcripts would be prepared was subdivided and distributed across the months of the year 1998 according to the relative size and complexity of each account. Progressive publication was the primary

objective thereby ensuring that the project maintained momentum and productivity. I harboured a strong fear that if publication was delayed until all the transcripts were complete there might be the danger that the results would never see the 'light of day.' Outcomes and the ability to see the project operating live were regarded as critical to the validity and outcome of the project.

For the ten (10) 'published' accounts approximately three (3) weeks was allocated for:

- scanning and digitisation of the published text,
- facsimile reproduction of the original text available on microfilm
- comparison and correction of the two versions - content, spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, abbreviations, superscript usage etc.
- HTML mark-up and formatting of the text for each journal - including provision of two text file versions: complete text and daily entries
- uploading of text
- creation of 'hot links' to additional historical research components of the site (People, Places, Ships, and Related Topics)

### **Additional Transcriptions**

There were two journals that had not been published before: Elizabeth Macquarie's 1809 Journal of the Voyage to New South Wales and Lachlan Macquarie's Journal of the Voyage to England in 1822. It was recognised at the outset that the task of preparing these texts from the original sources would be a far more time-consuming task than that required for the published 'tours of inspection.' The reason for this was not simply one of 'reading' and 'transcribing' the text, but also involved

questions of familiarity with early C19th nautical terminology and the interpretation of geographical place names along the coasts of South America, Africa and southern England (and the Thames estuary), as well as various islands and shoals in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans. As a consequence, far more background research was required in the preparation of these transcripts.

Eight (8) weeks was set aside for the 1809 and 1822 sea voyage journals. This allowed for:

- facsimile reproduction of the original text (available on microfilm)
- transcription of the text
- proofing of content, spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, abbreviations, superscript usage etc.
- content clarification and historical research into relevant nautical terminology, geographical detail and biographical information
- HTML mark-up and formatting of the text - including provision of two text file versions: complete text and daily entries
- uploading of text
- creation of 'hot links' to additional historical research components of the site (People, Places, Ships, Related Topics)

### **Text Correction and Comparison**

Lachlan Macquarie's handwriting is, on the whole, reasonably clear and straightforward to read - though there are certain abbreviations and punctuation 'conventions' that take time to become familiar with. His extensive use of exclamation marks for emphasis in regard to specific dates is distinctive and in many ways endearing; while Elizabeth's handwriting is much more problematical though

compensated for by her more effusive spontaneous writing style recording a wider range of personal details and observations.

### **Hypertext Mark-up**

Each text transcription was prepared in Adobe Pagemaker 6.5 as a fully wordprocessed document. After text corrections had been completed (including all punctuation and superscript features) a final version was printed off as well as a new file created using the editing program BBEdit Lite 4.0. This was marked up in HTML and in the proofing of this version all special features and characters were compared with the new printed version. This more time consuming approach, rather than the use of more sophisticated web editing tools such as HoTMetaL, HotDog, TextPad, FrontPage, Netscape Composer, DreamWeaver or software that can export text as HTML such as Pagemaker or Word, was adopted to ensure that no unnecessary code was generated in the preparation of the text. One of the useful corollaries was that this also allowed for a detailed examination of the content of the site, and streamlined the decision-making process about which additional 'hot links' were essential or necessary for the functionality of the site.

### **Images/Graphics**

The use of images in Phase I of the project was kept to a minimum. There is clearly a need on the entry pages of a site for good graphic design principles that create an sense of visual interest and professionalism. However there is always a danger that complex or sumptuous images and designs will become an end in themselves and not add to the value of the site. In particular, they can become a deterrent to



effective use. This can be a particular problem in the case of 'content rich' sites such as *Journeys in Time*; for if the research findings suggesting that web users are intolerant about slow download time and that they do not read text on the screen, it is imperative that the web site design minimises the tendency (or desire) to hit the BACK button and exit the site.

A secondary aspect that I had to consider was the vexed issue of digital copyright. There is a wealth of relevant and exciting images that could be used to enhance the content of *Journeys in Time*. However, the process of establishing copyright ownership and negotiating clearance fees and reproduction rights can be extremely time consuming as well as potentially expensive. I had to make a decision to focus upon the real project objectives - the provision of the transcripts for scholarly research. Only those images whose copyright ownership could be resolved quickly have been used. At a later stage, when the content has been consolidated, there will hopefully be an opportunity to enhance the site with more graphics and photographs.

#### **ADDITIONAL RESEARCH**

One of the 'value added' aspects of this web site is the provision of a detailed bibliography of primary and secondary source materials relating to the Macquaries and life in early C19th Australia. In the same way that 1956 publication of Macquarie's journals provided a service for historians and researchers the Bibliography section of *Journeys in Time* is designed to draw attention to the major advances that have taken place in Australian historiography. The Bibliography documents the many significant contributions that have been made in historical research in the last

forty years including the publication of standard works of reference such as the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

Similarly the biographical and descriptive notes that had been such an important part of the original 1956 publication *Lachlan Macquarie Governor of New South Wales; Journals of his Tours* have now been enhanced by additional research findings inserted under four broad subject headings: People, Places, Ships, and Related Topics. There are 'hot links' to specific research findings from the relevant section in the transcripts, or alternatively, researchers can explore the subject heading materials independently.

#### **PROJECT ASSESMENT**

Phase I of *Journeys in Time* was completed by the end of January 1999 - only one month later than planned. The development of Phase II has been proceeding slowly throughout this year - in part due to an opportunity I had to visit India and follow up some of Lachlan Macquarie's connections with the subcontinent in the period 1788-1807. These research findings will filter down into *Journeys in Time* in due course. Certainly there are similarities between the style of travel adopted by Macquarie in New South Wales and Van Diemen' Land and the manner in which he was accustomed to travelling in India. Similarly his administrative style was conditioned by his experiences and observations as an officer in the Bombay Army and military advisor to the governor of Bombay.

## THE FUTURE

### Lachlan Macquarie Historical @rchive

The development of the Journeys in Time project marks the beginnings of a larger, more ambitious project: the creation an archive of scholarly research materials to be known as the Lachlan Macquarie Historical @rchive.

This electronic archive would be based upon the extensive corpus of surviving manuscript sources written by Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie. It would seek to provide students, researchers and scholars with access to hypertext transcripts of the Macquaries' journals and letters as well as providing interpretive analysis into the lives and times of the Macquaries.

On the 15 December 1809 Elizabeth Macquarie recorded her arrival off the coast of Tasmania in the following terms:

“At half past 10 o'clock this morning we have with the mercy of God made the land; having a clear sight of the New Stone. Coll. M. immediately order'd the Band to play God save the King! When it struck up he felt himself particularly affected. We have made the land in the most favorable manner possible, our reckoning by timekeeper & observation being perfectly correct. We sounded & found a coral bottom at 80 Fathoms, right up & down, being 15 miles from the New Stone, which bore north of us. It blows a fine moderate gale at S. W. which if it continues to blow as fresh and as fair as it does at present, we shall probably see Port Jackson in three days. —”

The Journeys in Time project is also still seeking to make landfall, though it would be premature at this stage to strike up the band. Nevertheless, I believe that a significant part of the digital voyage has been completed and hopefully the run down to the harbour will be achieved without too many unexpected storms or delays.

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Robin Walsh has been working at Macquarie University Library since 1980. He was Reader Education Librarian from 1982-1990 with responsibilities for the Library's orientation and reader education programs, and the preparation and design of brochures, publications, and instructional videos. Since 1991 he has been Manager of the Library Design & Media Production Unit, responsible for desktop publishing and, more recently, web design for the Library. He is also exhibitions co-ordinator and curator of the 'Lachlan Macquarie Room' - the original parlour room from Macquarie's home in Scotland - now located in the University Library. In 1996 he travelled to the UK to visit the estate and undertake further research, as well as visiting Paris to attend the Fifth International World Wide Web Conference. His current research interests include Lachlan Macquarie in India (1788-1807), having completed a study tour there (March 1999) retracing Macquarie's activities in 1799. One of the outcomes has been the preparation the web site Seringapatam 1799 which includes a transcription of Macquarie's 1799 Indian journal.