

Assumed but rarely documented: women's entrepreneurial activities in late nineteenth century Australia

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Women's paid work and economic contribution to the household and national economy were seldom recognised in public documents in the second half of the nineteenth century in Australia. The discourse of women's role within the home and family was dominant. In this paper we attempt to uncover women's entrepreneurial activities in small businesses in a country town. Women's roles in the hospitality and retail industries are examined and we conclude that, whether through economic necessity or individual preference and choice, women were essential to the financial success of these businesses.

Recognising women's work

In nineteenth century Australia, as in Britain and elsewhere, the significance of women's work and economic contribution was downplayed. This results in the lack of recognition of women's work in official records, including census data, taxation records, civil registrations, arbitration proceedings, and all other methods of control of the mainstream economy.¹ Indeed, in mid-nineteenth century England, 'at a time when the concept of occupation was becoming the core element in masculine identity, any position for women other than in relation to men was anomalous'.² In Australia, 'denying women's contribution to the family income became entrenched as a tradition'.³ This paper is one attempt to redress this lack in the official records by examining the working lives of a handful of women who established their own businesses or made a significant contribution to family enterprises in a small country town.

The principles on which women's work was categorised by the censuses of the second half of the nineteenth century in the Australian colonies shows the transition of official categorisation of women's work towards one which recognised individual paid work as valuable but ignored women's work within the home or in the family enterprise. While the changes in the nineteenth century censuses differed somewhat between the colonies,⁴ this model was accepted 'more decisively' in the Australian colonies than in Britain 'with the result that women were regarded as naturally dependent on their husbands, who were the sole legitimate breadwinners'.⁵ In NSW the government statistician, Timothy Coghlan, used it as the primary division for employment: 'the population of a country is naturally divided into two broad divisions – breadwinners and dependents'.⁶

This rationale supported the prevailing view of women as dependents, and reinforced the ideal of 'the entire separation of love and duty rendered within the domestic circle, as between the wife, husband, and other related members of a family'.⁷ For middle class women, the prevailing ideology of 'separate spheres' with the mother as the 'angel in the home' creating a haven of moral and physical safety for husband and children well away from public life, was a further incentive to undervalue a woman's contribution, encouraging the label of 'dependent'. At the same time, a few families were beginning to encourage their daughters to obtain an education and have independent careers, particularly as teachers and nurses.⁸

The Australian colonies went 'further than the British censuses of 1881 and 1891' in this regard.⁹ Coghlan 'argued that both women's contributions to family economies and their competition for jobs lowered the wages of men and the community's standard of living. A high standard of living and good-quality workmen were found ... where men had to support families'. He concluded that 'the large employment of women in gainful pursuits is not a matter of congratulation'. On the contrary, 'the condition of a country can in some measure be gauged by the number of such women as are compelled to seek occupations other than in their domestic sphere'.¹⁰ Although women had been engaged in trade and business in the colony from earliest times (for instance, before 1820, one fifth of liquor licences were issued to women) and had worked for wages or on their own account,¹¹ such activities were later downplayed or ignored as this view of the ideal society took hold. As Matthews pointed out, women came to be regarded as supporting themselves or supplementing their husband's incomes only 'as a matter of last resort'.¹²

In the civil registration of demographic events (after 1856) the occupations of women are mentioned only on rare occasions.¹³ The data outlined suggests that very few women were perceived officially as having a specific occupation of their own but were differentiated by the occupation of a father or a husband. This suggests that their work was defined by their situations as wives and daughters, and not, as was the case with men, by its relationship to the wider economy. The division of labour within a family was not incorporated into the design of official records. Only the relation of the household to the economy through its male head was recorded. As Davidoff and Hall noted about women in England,

women's identification with the domestic and moral sphere implied that they would only become active economic agents when forced by necessity. As the nineteenth century progressed, it was increasingly assumed that a woman engaged in business was a woman without either an income of her own or a man to support her.¹⁴

While women's work was not recognised in the public records, this does not mean that women did not take charge of their lives. Their economic circumstances, skills and location, plus the number of children that they bore and raised, influenced the opportunities that they had. From the few examples that we have uncovered, it is clear that numbers of women took a leading role in commercial activities which supported themselves and their families. Within the constraints imposed on them, they manipulated their opportunities. The task of uncovering their contribution is difficult as it went largely unrecorded and probably unpaid, whether they were occasional or regular workers, behind-the-scenes managers or business owners.

The site for investigating women's work is the town of Dungog, a small but growing town in the valley of the Williams River, a tributary of the Hunter River on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. The population of the town rose rapidly in the 1880s from 436 at the 1881 census to over 1,000 in 1891, and then more gradually during the next decade. It serviced a rural population dependent on mixed farming, where maize was the main crop covering 70 per cent of the cultivated area, and was grown on 265 holdings, with potatoes, oats and oranges as secondary crops. A few large landowners had extensive holdings and dominated the economic and social life of the district, and others had obtained land under the Selection Acts of the 1860s or the Land Acts of the 1880s, or purchased it. Dairy farming became increasingly important from the early 1890s. In 1899 there were 296 landholders who could be described as farmers, and of these 129 had dairy farms. Of the 140 landholders whose land was entirely given over to crops, many were tenants of the large estates and amongst the poorest in the district.¹⁵

The local economy was supported by a cornflour mill and two creameries, which accepted the products of local farms and employed a small workforce.¹⁶ In the town, several banks, up to eight hotels, assorted auctioneers and merchants, a growing number of general and specialty stores made for a small but lively commercial centre. Building trades such as painters and carpenters were in evidence as well as those more closely associated with the rural economy such as blacksmiths and saddlers. A weekly newspaper appeared from 1888 while the Centennial Hall, School of Arts, race course, cricket, football and tennis clubs provided for citizens' recreational and intellectual lives, and several churches served the town and a number of outlying congregations. A cottage hospital was built in 1892 by local subscription. Daily coach services to Maitland and Clarence Town were supplemented by weekly or bi-weekly services to more remote settlements such as Stroud and Barrington by 1900.¹⁷

Reconstructing women's lives

The difficulties in reconstructing the working lives of women on small farms in the second half of the nineteenth century has been discussed in a previous paper.¹⁸ Some understanding of the work they did in dairying, poultry raising and to some extent pig farming can be gleaned from family memoirs and local sources such as advertisements in the local newspaper.¹⁹ A few women owned land and carried on farming in their own right.²⁰ Evidence of intermittent waged work comes from education files, which also show that providing board and lodging for the school teacher was a source of extra income, as was the sale of eggs, butter or other produce.²¹ This is quite apart from women's contribution to the farm economy of child bearing and rearing, of seasonal work at harvest or at other times, or of housekeeping and production for domestic use (for example clothing, candles, preserves), contributions which are neither reflected in the public record or, for the most part, private sources.²² Official statistics of rural

production mostly relate to activities which were directed towards the market economy, such as grain production, or which recorded 'progress' in terms of fencing and pasture improvement.²³ They ignore those industries of a local or domestic nature, such as poultry rearing or butter making where the women's labour contributed in large measure to the survival or prosperity of families on small farms.²⁴

As noted above, census data provides few clues as to the working lives of women. However hard married women worked on the family farm or in the family business, and however much they contributed to its income, the work they did was defined by their situation as wives and daughters, not by their relationship to the family economy.²⁵ Civil Registration Certificates provide some clues: the bride's and groom's occupation is included on marriage certificates, and the deceased's occupation appears on the death certificate. However, women's occupations were almost never included and where they are they are rarely enlightening, for example, the occupation 'farmer's wife' appears on several occasions, while others are simply designated 'married woman' or 'widow'. The information is fragmentary as 'local records favour men's role in both enterprise and market relations'.²⁶

Probably the mixture of waged labour and home enterprise was, for many families in the town, simply a variation of the family enterprise economy of farm families. Providing regular or occasional services for wages including child care, catering for community events, or care of the sick fell to many married women in Dungog, and would have been seen as just one of the ways in which family members contributed to the family's survival. Similar claims have been made for low-wage earners in the cities, although some opportunities existed in the cities for women to be employed in manufacturing and office work that were largely absent in Dungog in the last decades of the nineteenth century.²⁷ Regular paid work as domestic servants or assistants in workshops or retail stores was no doubt common, but there is little direct evidence to explain which women did this work or what their conditions of employment were. Some evidence comes from family histories, themselves dependent on memories and oral narrative. In one family, for instance, the father was a successful tenant farmer, at least two daughters were domestics and one of the sons married a shop assistant. None of these young women continued their employment after their marriage, or at least there is no evidence that they did.²⁸ One woman is identified on her death certificate as 'housekeeper' and another as 'washerwoman' but such fragments of information are more tantalising than helpful. Such women did not advertise in the newspaper, their occupations were omitted from official documents, and their working lives remain hidden from view. If others were engaged in illegal activities, the lack of police or court records for the area makes it impossible to locate them. It is possible, though, to reconstruct some details of the lives of a few women, using newspaper advertisements, obituaries published in the local press and civil registration data.

The hospitality industry

An important area of employment for respectable women in small towns was in providing hospitality. Here they moved from private to public sphere on a constant basis. Clare Wright has argued for a better understanding of the role of women in the Australian hotel industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.²⁹ Noting the lack of scholarly recognition of female publicans despite their relatively large numbers, she considers that much that has been written about hotels has favoured masculinist interpretations of its role in society, and feminist historians like Marilyn Lake have 'set up a hostile opposition between powerful men in hotels and vulnerable women at home' and has posited the hotel as 'anti-home'. This, Wright argues, 'has clouded the reality that public houses were the domiciles of not only the publican but also his/her immediate family, extended family, lodgers and staff'.³⁰ The hotel provided a public meeting place but was also a private home to the publican's family and a home-from-home to travellers.

Many functions of the hotel were essentially domestic in nature and an accepted part of the female role: cooking, cleaning, laundry, offering hospitality. A female publican was thus able to work within the current model of feminine orthodoxy, while earning money and acquiring status at the same time. Moreover, hotels were not always purpose built, and resembled private homes in many respects, especially in the country. The distinction between the space used by the publican as his family home, and that occupied by paying guests, was often blurred. In this context, there was no clear point of demarcation in the architecture of the public house, nor was there between domestic and economic life.

While Wright concentrates on women who were licensees of public houses, she also acknowledges that women could be informal partners with their husbands in managing hotels, or could work in them as members of the publicans' immediate or extended family. Here is the same dilemma faced by women on farms: women's work is assumed but rarely documented.

In Dungog, only one woman appears as a publican in her own right, but what little we know of Jane Sheridan's life may shed some light on other women's work in hotels. John Sheridan brought his young bride, Jane, to Dungog in the late 1870s. Most likely they were accompanied, or soon joined, by John's daughter and son (by a previous marriage) and Jane's sister. He built the Farmers' Home Hotel in 1881, and remained its licensee until he died in 1903. He is listed as owning 32 acres in 1885 and in 1893 he advertised a cottage to let in Dungog.³¹ The Farmers' Home Hotel was a well known and respected establishment. It was used for meetings such as the Agricultural and Horticultural Association, and there are occasional references to 'Sheridan's rooms' as a venue for community events, but Sheridan did not often advertise in the *Dungog Chronicle*. When he did, it was to boast of 'good accommodation for man or beast, excellent table and unsurpassed paddocks'.³² At his death, Jane was 38 years old. He left money, furniture and stock-in-trade to his wife and daughter, some shares to his sister in Ireland, and his real property – the hotel, its paddocks, a cottage in Myles St, Dungog and other property – to be held in trust for his daughter and grandson.³³

Evidence for Jane's involvement in the management of the hotel is scant: on the public record two advertisements for servants for the hotel provide the only clues.³⁴ However, her death certificate identifies her as a hotelkeeper, and an obituary in the *Chronicle* describes Jane as the proprietress of the Farmers' Home Hotel, following the death of her husband two years before.³⁵ The obituary acknowledges that she and her husband built the hotel, and describes her role as hostess in glowing terms. She was, the newspaper declares, known for her kindness and hospitality. She was 'esteemed for a disposition that was amiable, homely, and kindly'. Long before she became licensee on her husband's death, Jane Sheridan was an integral part of the Farmers' Home Hotel. She looked after her guests, offering friendship and food; she hired the servants and supervised the housekeeping. Just as women licensees could achieve financial independence and social esteem without transgressing the conventional expectations of women as nurturers and homemakers, so this licensee's wife shared both the work and the prestige of the hotel, contributing her skills to the success of the business, even though her name did not appear above the door.

If it is possible to uncover, albeit obliquely, something of Jane Sheridan's working life, that of her sister, Miss Lucy Tester, provides a different challenge. Lucy was Jane's 'life-long companion' and continued at the Farmers' Home hotel after Jane's death, although it was her brother-in-law, George Lloyd, who became licensee for a time after Jane Sheridan's death.³⁶ Eventually the license was revoked, but Lucy continued to run the premises as a boarding house until her death in 1929.³⁷ While there is no specific evidence to support it, logic suggests that Lucy continued in a role that had become familiar to her in her long years living with her sister and brother-in-law. After her death she was described as a remarkable woman. 'Despite her years she continued with the boarding house, doing all the work and battling along with a smile, and the determination not to leave the old home until death claimed her'.³⁸ Here are two working women, sisters, who seem to have taken an active role in running a successful hotel and boarding house, but whose working lives can be more guessed at than thoroughly documented.

Jane Sheridan and Lucy Tester were not the only women involved in providing hospitality in Dungog and surrounding areas. Again the evidence is frustratingly fragmentary. Mrs E. Errington advertised her Temperance Hotel, Dungog in the *Chronicle* regularly from 1888 to 1891. In November 1891 the goodwill and 'fast furniture' were offered for sale and Mrs Errington disappeared from view.³⁹ Other publicans' wives remain shadowy figures, but as the licensee was required by law to reside on the premises, we may assume they shared the same blurring of the boundaries between public and private life and work as is evidenced by Lucy Tester and Jane Sheridan. Certainly Mrs Robson, wife of publican Joseph Robson, was known for her ability in catering for large events.⁴⁰

Private boarding houses were another source of work for women, often as proprietors in their own right, and again often straddling the divide between the public and private aspects of their lives. Travelling with a wagon load of oranges and home cured bacon from Bendolba for sale at Paterson in the late 1880s, the Shelton brothers had an 'overnight stop at the wine saloon and boarding house known as Bird's Inn, run

by the late Ellen Bird'.⁴¹ Among those whose names appear in advertisements in the local paper are Mrs Redman, who also had a local reputation as a nurse.⁴² Mrs P.F. Callaghan advertised Millview House as a boarding house in 1898. According to family records, in 1886 George and Mary Shelton 'leased a hotel building on the Fosterton Road, Dungog, where for the next six years they conducted a boarding house'. However, when it was advertised in the *Chronicle*, only George's name appeared.⁴³

In the closing years of the nineteenth century dentists advertised frequently in the *Chronicle*, and included their traveling schedule to small communities. Hence Mrs McNevin at (illegible), Mrs Cox at Monkerai, Mrs Chisolm at Barrington and Mrs Crick at Stroud made their premises available as temporary dental surgeries for Wells Bros, whose representative made monthly visits.⁴⁴ It is likely that they also accommodated the dentist and his assistant, and probably took in other boarders on a regular basis. At Booral, Eliza Jane Carnell was already well known for her boarding house when she obtained a Colonial Wine license in 1896.⁴⁵ She was at that time aged about 53, recently widowed and the mother of seven, the youngest 16 years old.⁴⁶

Education records show that families often took in school teachers as long-term boarders and that this was often an important supplement to a meager income derived from farming or farm-related trades. The additional work of cooking and laundry fell to the woman, for whom running a boarding house was an extension of her domestic duties. This regular income was essential in many poor farming families and a useful addition for many more, but such arrangements could be fraught with difficulties for both the boarder and the host family. Conditions were often cramped, primitive and uncomfortable, so that there was little room, literally and figuratively, for privacy on either side. This occasionally led to open conflict between the teacher and the woman in whose house she boarded.⁴⁷

The women who offered space to traveling dentists were, like those who accommodated school teachers, most likely contributing their earnings to a family economy, but while they were unseen by official eyes, they attained a certain status in their tiny communities. Again, in these establishments, the boundaries between women's working lives and their domestic lives is fluid and complex. Guests were accommodated in a physical and social space which was often shared with family members and in these women's lives there was no clear distinction between public and private spheres. Some, like Miss Tester, achieved economic independence by fulfilling a role that was at once public and private, but many more performed the same functions in families where their roles as wife, mother and worker were intertwined.

The retail industry

The distinction between public and private lives is perhaps clearer when we enter the retail arena, but here, too, the close connection between family business and public business is evident. General stores provided the necessities, and some simple luxuries, for local people, very few of whom could be described as wealthy. In the last decade of the century, when the population was increasing more rapidly, some specialty stores also opened. Women were constantly appealed to as consumers of the latest fashions or the best and cheapest household goods. Many took their eggs and butter to one of the stores for sale or to exchange for other goods. A few women were also active as storekeepers and retailers.

The most longstanding woman shopkeeper in Dungog was undoubtedly Eliza Dark. Evidence for this comes from country guides and almanacs published in the second half of the century which are the main source of information about the commercial life of Dungog before 1888 when a weekly newspaper was founded. In 1851, 1861, 1868 and from 1874 to 1880 Eliza's name was listed in various almanacs as a store keeper. By 1884 Eliza's name had disappeared from the almanacs, and was replaced by that of H.C. Dark, her son.⁴⁸ Eliza migrated from England as a young woman and married Stephen Neate Dark in 1841 in Sydney. She had eight children, probably all born at Clarence Town, some 20 miles from Dungog, where Stephen had a flour mill. S.N. Dark is listed as auctioneer at Dungog in 1867, but his occupation is given as 'miller' on his death certificate. The *Maitland Mercury* carried an advertisement in February, 1861, announcing the sale of the flour mill at Clarencetown.⁴⁹ Dark then moved to Dungog where he was a storekeeper. When he died in January 1872, the *Mercury* noted that 'his ailments had kept him to his room for more than two years, and for a longer period than that he had been incapacitated for any active part in worldly affairs'. He was remembered, however, as an energetic businessman and sometime Member of Parliament.⁵⁰ He was 57 years old when he died.

Eliza is listed in the *Australian Almanac* as a storekeeper from 1868, four years before her husband's death.⁵¹ At that time she was in her early forties, with a grown family (her youngest child was 15) and a wealth of life experience to draw on. Presumably, Eliza continued to manage the store at Dungog, probably with the help of her children, for the next ten years or so. Her eldest son, Stephen W., settled in Clarence Town, where he is listed as a storekeeper from 1875. Sometime after 1880, Eliza Dark must have handed the reins of her Dungog business to her youngest surviving son, Henry Charles.⁵² Meanwhile, another son married the daughter of a prominent Dungog family and became involved in that family's business. Eliza died suddenly in 1896, aged 71, of a stroke.

When Eliza died, the *Dungog Chronicle* printed a long obituary, in which it described her late husband as a storekeeper, but made no mention of her working life. She was characterised as 'a good mother and a thorough Christian lady'. Conclusions about Eliza's life must be speculative. From her obituary and that of her husband, it is clear that she and her family were respected and prominent citizens of the Dungog area. Her husband's tenure as Member of Parliament and her son's position in the public life of Dungog (as Mayor, member of the Agricultural and Horticultural Show Committee, Hospital Committee) would alone have ensured that Eliza was well known in the community and that her death would not pass unnoticed. Her children had in turn married respectable middle class spouses and continued to own and manage prosperous businesses. Eliza's life would have been immeasurably different from that of many working women of her generation, for instance widows who eked out a living taking in laundry or seeking casual work on farms. When she was widowed, her children were already self-supporting or nearly so, and she was already an experienced business woman. Solid evidence of her working life is notable for its absence, but if the *Maitland Mercury's* correspondent is to be believed, her husband was incapacitated for some years before his death, perhaps explaining why her name appears in the almanacs as 'storekeeper' from an early date. As a widow, the store continued to bear her name, and it is probably safe to assume that she was the prime mover, even if her adult children also worked there.

It seems logical that her sons Stephen, Henry and Albert all helped in the store until Stephen left to become a storekeeper in Clarence Town and Albert married, leaving Henry to take over the Dungog store when he was ready.⁵³ As for her daughters, there is no evidence at all of their working lives. If this is the pattern, it is not surprising that Eliza was praised as a mother, having taken on the role of businesswoman out of necessity and remained at its head until her sons and daughters were established in their own lives. In the absence of business records and judging only by the success of the enterprises Stephen and Henry ran, she had equipped them with business skills and provided a capital asset on which to build. For the Darks, the opportunities were greater than for many other families in the district, but Eliza's life shows persistence in retaining and extending her wealth in order to see her children with businesses and families of their own.

Gerard Bouchard has posited a model of 'family reproduction' common to frontier areas, where families, typically with a large number of children, are able to make use of plentiful land to acquire and expand their holdings, making provision for all the children (who have contributed their labour to the establishment of a family farm) so that family property is transmitted in a number of stages, whether directly, by transferring land or acquiring more land in the same district, or by providing resources for children who migrate to other areas.⁵⁴ The Dark family were never property owners, but there are similarities in the way an apparently close-knit family, headed during its most crucial years by the widow Eliza Dark, was able to transmit their material assets and social standing to adult children, who could take advantage of the opportunities presented by a growing economy and an expanding population.

Less is known about other women who kept shops in Dungog. Before the late 1880s, when a growing population made for increased consumer demand, there was probably little room for specialty shops. One of the first was undoubtedly Mrs Emily Jane Kelly, who advertised the opening of her shop in Dowling St, the main commercial thoroughfare, in 1889.⁵⁵ She sold gift items, toys, stationery, confectionery and fruit. She later advertised her range of Christmas cards and picture frames. Her husband George offered his services as a professional photographer from the same premises. Mrs Kelly advertised her wares from time to time, adding tobacconist's lines and fishing tackle to her array of goods for sale.⁵⁶ Her fifth and last child, Edie was born in 1897 and so for some years Mrs Kelly juggled family and business responsibilities.⁵⁷

Mrs E.A. Collins had a general store a short time, advertising her Dungog Cash Store in 1897 and 1898 with offers of the highest prices paid for eggs and poultry. However the venture does not appear to have been an unbridled success.⁵⁸ Later Mrs Collins advertised that she had commenced business as a dressmaker.⁵⁹ Mrs Bradfield opened her millinery in 1899 and advertised regularly until June of the following year.⁶⁰ Judging by Skillen and Walker's heavy advertising for millinery at around the same time, business may have been a struggle for Mrs Bradfield. About these last two women there is no further information available, so the reasons for the success or failure of their retail enterprises, and the skills and motivation they applied to them, are lost to us.

A small handful of women advertised in the *Chronicle* from time to time as dressmakers. Mrs Brown had a shop in the main street, and a dressmaker was employed at W.H. Green's general store at the end of the decade, but Mrs Collins, Miss Newell and Mrs Cooke appear to have worked from home. For these women, too, the physical and social boundaries of their working lives and domestic lives were fluid. Other women were no doubt occupied in commerce or industry, but their work remains hidden from public view. Not every business would have found it necessary or desirable to advertise in the *Chronicle*, and no doubt many services were carried out without the need for public announcements. In a town of 1,000 inhabitants, word of mouth was probably the best advertisement.

Conclusion

It was not only women on farms for whom the boundaries between production for profit and production for family were hard to define. For some, like Eliza Dark, the balance of responsibility shifted between child rearing and other activities as the years of child-bearing were left behind. Mrs Cooke had two daughters old enough to have been trained as dressmakers. Eliza Carnell was similarly a widow with a grown family. Others, like Jane Sheridan and Lucy Tester, were childless, or, like Annie Robson, wife of publican Joseph, had smaller families than average. But Emily Kelly managed a small shop and a family of small children simultaneously, and we know little about the family structure of other women whose working lives have been partially uncovered. What is common to most of these women is the blurred boundaries between the public and private parts of their lives. Work, including paid work, took place in the same geographical space and was often indistinguishable, or nearly so, from their household duties. Keeping a shop, hotel or boarding house was just an extension of the woman's domestic role. So 'the entire separation of love and duty rendered within the domestic circle, as between the wife, husband, and other related members of a family' was a construct not supported by the little we can re-construct of the lives of these women.⁶¹

Endnotes

1. Edna Ryan, 'Women in Production in Australia', in Norma Grieve and Ailsa Burns (eds.), *Australian Women: New Feminist Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1986, p. 264.
2. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and women of the English middle class 1780-1850*, Routledge, London, 1987, p. 272.
3. Ryan, 'Women in Production in Australia', p. 266.
4. The complexity of interpreting census data and women's labour has been examined elsewhere but suffice it to say that comparison between censuses is difficult. See F.L. Jones, 'Occupational Statistics Revisited: The Female Labour Force in Early British and Australian Censuses', *Australian Economic History Review*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1987, pp. 56-76.
5. Desley Deacon, 'Political Arithmetic: The Nineteenth-Century Australian Census and the Construction of the Dependent Woman', *Signs*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1985, pp. 29-30.
6. T.A. Coghlan, *A Statistical Survey of New South Wales, 1893-4*, Charles Potter, Sydney, 1895, p. 185.
7. Jones, 'Occupational Statistics Revisited', p. 68.
8. Glenda Strachan, Ellen Jordon and Hilary Carey, 'Susanna and Elizabeth: Contributions of Women to the Resources of the Hunter Region', in Cynthia Hunter (ed.), *Riverchange: Six New Histories of the Hunter*, Newcastle Region Public Library, Newcastle, 1998, pp. 115-144.
9. Deacon, 'Political Arithmetic', p. 34.
10. T.A. Coghlan, quoted in Deacon, 'Political Arithmetic', p. 39.
11. Monica Perrott, *A Tolerable Good Success*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1983, p. 114.
12. Jill Julius Matthews, 'Deconstructing the masculine context', *All Her Labours*, vol. 1, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1984, pp. 17-18.

13. Even when women act regularly as midwives this occupation is noted on civil registration forms only on rare occasions. See Glenda Strachan, 'The Reproduction of Labour Power: The Work of Midwives and "Handywomen" in Rural New South Wales, 1850-1880', in Robert Hood and Ray Markey (eds.), *Labour and Community: Proceedings of the Sixth national Conference of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History*, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Illawarra Branch, Wollongong, NSW, 1999, pp. 170-175.
14. Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 272.
15. Figures compiled from *Yewen's Directory of the Landholders of NSW*, The Farm and Dairy Publishing Company, Sydney, 1900.
16. *Harris' Town and Country Guide to NSW 1884*, John Woods & Co, Sydney, states 'Messrs John Wade and Co are the employers of a considerable amount of labour, both male and female'.
17. For example, *Dungog Chronicle*, 7 May, 1901.
18. Glenda Strachan and Lindy Henderson, 'Lost Labourers: the difficulties of uncovering the lives of farm women, 1850-1900, paper presented at The Status of Women in Canada and Australia Conference, University of Newcastle, NSW, 23 March, 2002.
19. Strachan, Jordon and Carey, 'Susanna and Elizabeth', pp. 115-144.
20. *New South Wales Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 5, 1886, pp. 227-255.
21. Department of Education, School Files, NSW State Archives.
22. For example, Olive M. Dawes, *The Shelton Story, from Ruddington to Australia*, privately published, 1988, p. 55; David Adams, (ed.), *The Letters of Rachel Henning*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1988, pp. 238-239, 242, 255.
23. *Statistical Register of NSW*, annual, NSW Parliament, *Votes and Proceedings*.
24. Warwick Frost, 'Farmers, Government, and the Environment: The Settlement of Australia's "Wet Frontier", 1870-1920', *Australian Economic History Review*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1997, pp. 19-38.
25. Strachan and Henderson, 'Lost Labourers', p. 8.
26. Davidoff and Hall, 'Family Fortunes', pp. 272-273.
27. Marian Aveling and Joy Damousi, *Stepping Out of History: Documents of Women Working in Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1991.
28. Violet Moore, *So the Sun Shines*, Taree, 1989, pp. 39-40.
29. Clare Wright, 'Of public houses and private lives: female hotelkeepers as domestic entrepreneurs', *Australian Historical Studies*, April 2001, vol. 32 no. 116, pp. 57-75.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
31. *New South Wales Parliamentary Papers*, 1885 and *Dungog Chronicle*.
32. *Dungog Chronicle*, 1900.
33. Last Will and Testament of John Sheridan, a copy of which is reproduced in Dawes, *Shelton Story*.
34. *Dungog Chronicle*, 21 April 1891.
35. *Ibid.*, 19 May 1905.
36. Under the Reduction of Licenses Act, *Dungog Chronicle*, 13 November 1958.
37. *Dungog Chronicle*, 28 August, 1929.
38. *Ibid.*, 23 August 1929.
39. F.L. Errington was a painter and glazier in Dungog. He continued to advertise until April 1894.
40. *Dungog Chronicle*.
41. Dawes, *The Shelton Story*, p. 96.
42. See, for example, civil registration of births where Mrs Redman is frequently a witness, that is, she was present at the birth.
43. Dawes, *The Shelton Story*, p. 49, illustration; *Dungog Chronicle*, 7 January 1890.
44. *Dungog Chronicle*, 3 August 1897.
45. *Dungog Chronicle*, 7 June 1896: illustration of the house in Newcastle Herald, 27 July 2002.
46. Index of Births Deaths and Marriages.
47. Glenda Strachan, 'Caught in the Community: Teachers' lives in rural schools, 1880-1900', in Phil Griffiths and Rosemary Webb (eds.), *Work Organisation Struggle: Papers from the seventh national labour history conference*, Australian society for the Study of Labour History, Canberra, 2001, pp. 347-351.
48. *Waugh's Australian Almanac for the Year 1861*, Sydney, James W. Waugh: *The Australian Almanac for the Year 1868*, Sydney, John L. Sherriff: *Australian Almanac for the Year 1875*, Sydney, John L. Sherriff: *Moore's Australian Almanac and Handbook for 1880*, Sydney, J. Moore: *Moore's Almanac, 1884-6*, Sydney, J. Moore.
49. *Maitland Mercury*, 2 February 1861.
50. *Ibid.*, 16 January 1872.
51. *The Australian Almanac for the year 1868*.
52. In 1879 H.C. Dark, aged 26, married Mary Ann Wade. He erected new premises and expanded the store, dying unexpectedly in 1901 at the age of 48. (*Dungog Chronicle*, 24 September 1901).
53. Albert was married to Isabella Abbott at Wingham in 1884. He died at Port Macquarie in 1928.
54. Gerard Bouchard, 'Family Reproduction in New Rural Areas: Outline of a North American model', *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 75, no. 4, 1994, p. 495.
55. *Dungog Chronicle*, 26 February 1889.
56. *Ibid.*, 6 December 1892, 21 December 1895.
57. *Ibid.*, 30 December 1898.
58. *Ibid.*, 9 November 1897, 10 March 1899.
59. *Ibid.*, 19 August 1902.
60. *Ibid.*, 10 March 1899.
61. Jones, 'Occupational Statistics Revisited', p. 68.