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Kiama: its region and community 1901 to 1938

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Kiama: its region and community
1901 to 1938

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
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degree of
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By
Elaine M. Dunn
Faculty of Arts
2007
I, Elaine M. Dunn, declare this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Masters by Research in the Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Signed: ...........................................

Date: .............................................
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Acknowledgments

History as a discipline is not a form of art, and what each historian accomplishes he [or she] does not accomplish alone, as an individual. The significance of any historical enquiry, like the research of any scientist, depends directly upon what others have already done or will be able to because of his work. (Maurice Mandelbaum.)


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Abstract

This thesis examines the Kiama region, its economics and the social progress of its environs during the years 1901 to 1938. It recognises the basic self-sufficiency and independent nature of the inhabitants and the individuality in rural and village life as it places the Kiama society within the context of a changing world. This ‘outside world’ brought issues and influences that intruded into, and disturbed the simple on-going rhythm of the rural life.

The thesis recognises the influence of the region’s geographical and environmental elements and the difficulties encountered by people in their attempts to advance and expand the dairying and metal industries. Transport, communication and improving technology all played a part in the progress and development of these industries.

Work in relation to gender is considered, and irrespective of class, the ways by which males and females performed their duties within the family unit and within the community. Religion and respectability were also important elements in their lives. However, World War 1 created change as the community was forced to experience the anxieties and distress of wartime commitments. By the 1920s Kiama was trying to reconstruct its earlier pre-1914 life style, but it could not return to the ways of the past. With the advance of the depression years, commencing around 1938, the Kiama community could no longer ‘shrug off’ or protect itself against the influences of the ‘outside world’.
Abbreviations

AANS  Australian Army Nursing Service
AIF   Australian Infantry Forces
BHP   Broken Hill Property Limited
ES&A  English, Scottish and Australian Bank
hp    horsepower.
NSW   New South Wales
UK    United Kingdom
USA   United States of America
MLA   Member of the Legislative Assembly
MP    Member of Parliament

Notes

1. On February 14, 1966 the Australian currency changed to dollars and cents from the previous pounds, shillings and pence. One shilling was equal to 12 pence and 20 shillings or one pound was equal to two dollars. Distance was measured in miles.

2. The Independent and Reporter were both produced by the Weston Family. Originally there were two newspapers being published in the area, but when Reporter was taken over by the Joseph Weston. The two papers then became available on different days, one at the week end, the other in the middle of the week. The Supplement was a Centenary production that summarized important incidents in Kiama’s past history. It was co-ordinated by Michelle Hoctor.

3. It is thought that the name Kiama derives from the aboriginal word Kierama, where the sea makes a noise, or from Kieremia, fish in plenty here. The Sydney Morning Herald in 1921 claimed that the two Aboriginal names Kiar and mai came together to signify ‘a fertile district’. The word Gerringong was defined as a ‘place of peril’ or ‘a fearful place’, while Jamberoo was simply ‘a track’. Minnamurra meant ‘lots of fish’.1

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