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Elaine M. Dunn
University of Wollongong

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Dunn, Elaine M., Kiama: its region and community 1901 to 1938, M.A. thesis, History and Politics, University of Wollongong, 2007. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/644>

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Kiama: its region and community 1901 to 1938

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the
degree of
Masters by Research
from the
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

By
Elaine M. Dunn
Faculty of Arts
2007

Certification

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.)

Source: A Marwick, *The nature of History*, (3rded.),
McMillan Press, London, 1989, p.389

In completing this study I do thank all those who have aided me in the project, and added to my knowledge of Kiama and its adjacent regions. I sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr Glenn Mitchell for his expertise, guidance, support and encouragement during the writing of the thesis, and I also thank Dr John McQuilton for his guidance and valued advice. Suzanne Jones and the University Library Staff must be complemented for their interest and willingness to help at all times. No request was a trouble to them. The co-operation and encouragement of these people helped to make this study enjoyable and its completion possible.

I thank my two daughters, Maxine and Marion, for their encouragement and help and their faith in my ability. The members of the Local Kiama History Centre made available their files and tapes and displayed an interest in the project. Similarly, staff at the Kiama Municipal Library provided me with access to their resources and their micro-film collection covering past copies of Kiama's *Independent*. The Municipal Rate Books showed past property values and ownership changes. Articles and illustrations appearing in the *Independent Supplement* were most valuable. John Mills of the Kiama Municipal Council provided access to past Council Minute Books and these were cross-referenced to similar material appearing in the *Independent*. Information was also sought from the State Library, Mitchell Library and Wollongong Municipal Library.

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 Hactor.
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

¹ *Independent Supplement*, June 28, 2000.