Chapter 13

Elizabeth Farm Cottage, Parramatta

By early November 1791, George Worgan was sailing between Batavia (Jakarta) and Cape Town on his return journey to England on board the Waaksamheyd. At the same time, thousands of kilometres away, John and Elizabeth Macarthur were returning to Sydney Cove, having spent approximately four months at Rose Hill.

Two months prior to the Macarthurs’ return, the Gorgon arrived at Sydney Cove, on Wednesday, 21 September 1791. The Gorgon carried officers and marines of the NSW Corps (as well as the chamber organ, destined for Norfolk Island, which had been acquired in Cape Town by Lieutenant Philip Gidley King).1

To [Elizabeth’s] … great joy, several of the newly arrived officers had their wives with them, as had the ship’s captain and the government agent. [Elizabeth writes that] as a result, our little circle has been of late quite brilliant; we are constantly making little parties in boats up and down the various inlets of the harbour … There are so many ladies in the regiment that I am not likely to feel the want of female society as I first did.2

In June 1792, John ‘returned to Rose Hill (by then called Parramatta) … as regimental paymaster. Elizabeth remained in Sydney where their daughter Elizabeth was born.’3 Perhaps the renaming of Rose Hill with the Aboriginal word ‘Parramatta’ had not so much to do with respect for Aboriginal culture, nor with etymological accuracy, as with an assertion of possession, an act of ‘civilising’—a claim to priority through the appropriation of the Aboriginal word. After all, Captain Cook ‘had already set a precedent: when, on the Endeavour voyage … [he] restored St George’s Island to its native name of Tahiti, he was not so much exhibiting his interest in Tahitian sovereignty as his self-interest in establishing his precedence there over the island’s earlier English visitor, Samuel Wallis [1728–95]’.4

During the absence of her husband, and prior to the birth of her daughter, Elizabeth may have found playing Worgan’s piano a source of solace during her

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1 See ‘The Colony’s First Pipe Organ’, in Chapter 11, this volume.
2 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 84.
3 Hughes, The Macarthurs, p. 4.
4 Carter, The Road to Botany Bay, p. 67.
‘vacant hours’. It is reasonable to assume that Elizabeth’s pianistic skills were still quite basic. As an unaccomplished pianist, she may have been reluctant to play in front of the wives of the newly arrived officers of the NSW Corps. It is likely, however, that the women making up Elizabeth’s ‘little circle’ would have been aware not only that she owned a piano, but also that the instrument had been given to her by surgeon George Worgan.

In January 1793, Captain David Collins, the colony’s first judge advocate, wrote:

In the course of this month the lieutenant-governor judged it necessary to send an officer to Parramatta, whom he could entrust with the direction of the convicts employed there … as well as to take charge of the public grain. This business had always been executed by one of the superintendents, under the immediate inspection and orders of the governor, who latterly had dedicated the greatest part of his time and attention to these settlements. But it was attended with infinite fatigue to his excellency; and the business had now grown so extensive, that it became absolutely necessary that the person who might have the regulation of it should reside upon the spot, that he might personally enforce the execution of his orders, and be at all times ready to attend to the various applications which were constantly making from settlers.

The lieutenant-governor, therefore (his presence being required at Sydney, the head-quarters of his regiment, and the seat of the government of the country) deputed this trust to Lieutenant John Macarthur, of the New South Wales corps; the superintendents, storekeepers, overseers, and convicts at the two settlements, being placed under his immediate inspection.

On Tuesday, 12 February 1793, John Macarthur occupied a government land grant of 40 hectares ‘on the south side of the creek leading to Parramatta’. He did this 13 days before the official paperwork was signed. Macarthur was officially given his land grant on Monday, 25 February 1793. By this time, John had been promoted to captain. By May 1793, Macarthur commanded the military detachment at Parramatta [and] … ran the public works … Macarthur and his seventy-four soldiers [were] … in charge of almost half the colony—including over half the convicts and most of

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6 See Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 84.
7 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners, &c. of the Native Inhabitants of that Country, Chapter XX, para. 19.
8 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 100.
its agricultural activities—while [acting Governor Major Francis] Grose, his four captains and several hundred soldiers lolled about Sydney Cove enjoying the harbour breezes … apparently not doing much at all.9

Macarthur’s grant—‘some of the best land yet found’10—was ‘to be known by the Name of Elizabeth Farm’ in honour of his wife.11

‘With ample access to convict labour’—the Macarthurs were given 10 convicts to clear and farm the land—‘Macarthur cleared and cultivated 50 acres [20 hectares] of virgin land, thus earning a further hundred acres [40 hectares] grant, and, with unrestricted access to convict craftsmen.’12

John Macarthur immediately set about supervising the construction, by unpaid convict labour, of a small cottage on Elizabeth Farm.

Macarthur was responsible for allocating convict workers … He … creamed the top off the labour market, while those who displeased him received farmhands riddled with tuberculosis, equipped with fewer than the usual number of limbs, or unnaturally interested in the colony’s limited supply of livestock …

A steady trickle of animal husbandry cases came before the courts in the early days of the settlement. Successful prosecutions were difficult because of the requirement that two witnesses give evidence against the accused—offenders not only had to be deviants, but exhibitionists to boot. James Reece was executed in 1799 for making bacon, as was the unfortunate sow he’d befriended. The colonial courts would also order the death of any four-legged party to such proceedings in accordance with Leviticus 20:15.13

One wonders how the unpaid convicts felt about being forced to construct the cottage at Elizabeth Farm.

‘The phrase ‘Kiss my arse!’ was a popular one in Sydney Cove—it appears in the records of the judge-advocate’s court as standard badinage, and may well have been’ muttered by the convicts in response to John Macarthur’s orders as they laboured over the construction of Elizabeth Farm cottage.14

The convicts who formed the bulk of the agricultural and pastoral work-force … were in assignment to private settlers … Some features

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9 Ibid., p. 114.
10 Ibid., p. 100.
11 Quoted in Hughes, *The Macarthurs*, p. 4.
[of such an arrangement] remained constant, such as the legal basis of the arrangement as a tacit contract between the government and the settler. But the actual context of assignment varied so much, and the situations into which convicts were thrust were so different, that from their point of view it was completely unpredictable … Convicts who got a conciliatory master would be in a position hardly distinguishable from that of a labourer or household servant in England. But those who got a grasping or hostile master, or one infected by a sense of righteousness and a mission to punish the transgressor, might be in for years of brutality and oppression. In cases of dispute, the government would almost certainly step in on the settler’s side.15

Elizabeth Farm cottage sat on the brow of a small hill, and looked across to the Parramatta River (Plate 123).

Plate 123 Joseph Lycett (1774? – ca 1828): The Residence of John McArthur Esqre. Near Parramatta, New South Wales (1825)—the two figures in the foreground may be John and Elizabeth Macarthur. Hand-coloured aquatint; plate mark 23.2 x 33.0 centimetres.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Australia, Canberra. Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an7690900.

The exact 1793 plan of Elizabeth Farm cottage is unknown. What is known is that it was rectangular, brick, 5.6 metres by 15.5 metres with a ‘parlour’—that is, a drawing room—‘the hall and, presumably, the bedroom (later to become the dining room)’.16

‘The kitchen and servants’ accommodation were … separate buildings’17—‘lean-to constructions or skillings, built against the back wall of the house, or, if the recorded length of the house is not an error, built at either end of the house’18—‘giving the … house, once finished, the air of a set of pavilions. It had, like almost every other building in the colony, plenty of fireplaces and just one storey. The house was surrounded by a three-acre [1.2 hectare] garden and orchard.’19

The main face of the house had a centrally placed square-headed doorway that was flanked on each side by two 12-paned Georgian windows.20

The cottage was made from hand-pressed clay bricks crudely fired without the benefit of kilns.

These were made from … clay obtained from Clay Cliff Creek, 100 meters north of the house. The creek is now a stormwater channel. The bricks were laid with English bond in a mud mortar, as lime was not readily available before 1795.21

The building had a ‘steeply pitched roof and close-cropped eaves’.22 ‘The roof was formed of massive baulks of pit-sawn timber held together by wooden pegs without the use of nails or iron, and sheathed with cedar planks.’23

The cottage was ‘roofed with [split] hardwood [swamp-oak] shingles rather than thatch or tiles’.24 ‘In 1793, Elizabeth Farm [cottage] … was an exemplar of good and conscientious building.’25

Nine months after construction first began—and 17 months after John Macarthur had left his wife in Sydney to take up his position as regimental paymaster at Parramatta—the Macarthurs, now with three young children, moved permanently to Elizabeth Farm, in November 1793.

16 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 18.
18 Ibid., p. 18.
19 Ibid., p. 109.
20 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
22 Ibid., p. 7.
23 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
24 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 18.
25 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
By August 1794, Elizabeth Farm cottage consisted of ‘four rooms on the ground floor, a large hall, closets, cellar &c.; adjoining is a kitchen, with servants’ apartments and other necessary offices’.26

**Worgan’s Piano at Elizabeth Farm**

It is probable that in November 1793, Elizabeth took Worgan’s piano to Elizabeth Farm cottage, where it remained as part of the household furniture for at least the next 17 years. When Elizabeth Macarthur first brought the piano to Elizabeth Farm, the instrument would most probably have been put into the drawing room. ‘The elite mistress managed her household property like a museum curator administering her collection, for the neatness and order of a house and furniture was a quintessential feature of genteel economy, a mark too reflective of character to be left entirely to the unexacting care of servants.’27 As an ‘elite mistress’, Elizabeth would have paid ‘precise attention to the physical arrangement of the household’,28 including the exact location of her piano—an instrument that ‘helped to structure family space and activity’.29 Such care ‘for the private dimension, for the home as an expression of the individualism typical of modern man’, was characteristic of the bourgeois spirit, and ‘took concrete form in the search for and in the application of extremely strict norms’.30

That Elizabeth probably chose to place Worgan’s stylishly inlaid square piano in the drawing room is not surprising. During the late eighteenth century, the drawing room—a term derived from the earlier ‘withdrawing room’—was usually adjacent to the dining room. ‘The drawing room was a more flexible space than the dining room, being the place where guests were entertained by the family, or shown into for sherry before a meal.’31 According to Thomas Sheraton, writing in *The Cabinet Dictionary* in 1803, the function of the drawing room was ‘to concentrate the elegance of the whole house, [it being] the highest display of richness of furniture’.32 Here, furnishings were formal and upholstery lavish.33

The danger of luxury, however, was a late eighteenth-century concern.

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28 Ibid., p. 148.
30 Eco, *On Beauty*, p. 244.
33 Quoted in Riley, *World Furniture*, p. 137.
34 See ibid., p. 137.
Some worried that there was a tendency for people to pursue the creation of splendid [drawing rooms] … to ‘outshine’ their neighbours. This was thought to be corrupting because it put the ownership and display of material goods before more important moral values. These arguments, combined with the idea … of politeness, which … valued restraint rather than excess, led [some] to [adopt] a taste for plainer furnishings and decoration.35

Not only was the drawing room a space within which guests were entertained, but it was also the room within which that most British of vices—a cup of tea—was served following the evening meal. ‘Tea was a popular drink at the time, and was usually served weak and without milk’ (often with the addition of sugar).36 Because tea was expensive, ‘tealeaves were kept under lock and key and when finished with were passed onto the servants to be used again or to be sold locally’.37 ‘The elegant ritual of tea begat numerous … small tables including a variety supported by a pillar on a tripod base known as a teapoy.’38

During the early nineteenth century, the 10 500 tonnes of tealeaves that were imported every year to London,39 exclusively from China, were of either the black or the green varieties.40 Black tea was more expensive than green. Elizabeth Macarthur would have ‘presided over the tea table, taking the tea from a locked … caddy and making it in a teapot with boiling water heated in an urn or in a kettle heated by a spirit lamp’.41 The tea urn was an eighteenth-century icon: ‘it was an urn-shaped kettle with a tap [or spigot] close to the base instead of a spout, first charcoal-heated, and after 1774 with a patented box iron. Silver-plated tea equipages centred around a tea urn led novelty and fashion by the later eighteenth century.’42

Elizabeth Macarthur may also have served biscuits, cakes and/or sandwiches with tea. (Sandwiches were first referred to as such in ca 1765. They were named after John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich, who on one occasion ‘spent 24 hours at the gambling table sustained only by some slices of cold beef between pieces of toast’.)43 ‘The Complete Servant by Samuel and Sarah Adams of 1825 recommends “Sandwiches should be neatly cut in mouthfuls, so as to be taken up with a fork”.’44

35 The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label (for an eighteenth-century room) in the Geffrye Museum, London.
36 Yorke, Georgian & Regency Houses Explained, p. 100.
37 Ibid., p. 100.
38 Riley, World Furniture, p. 138.
39 See Morris, Why the West Rules, p. 7.
40 See Palmer, The Soanes at Home, p. 57.
41 Ibid., p. 58.
43 Palmer, The Soanes at Home, p. 56.
44 Quoted in ibid., pp. 56–7.
During the mid to late eighteenth century (for the wealthy at least), ‘dinner’ was usually taken between 2 pm and 5 pm. By the early nineteenth century, this had changed to a time with which we would be more familiar: approximately 5–7 pm. That the meal times of the wealthy moved forward during the second half of the eighteenth century was commented on by a 'country correspondent [who] in the 1790s complained that … “the manners, the customs, the hours of eating, and in short, the whole face of things is ... turned topsy-turvy within these 40 years”'.

For many, dinner was the main meal of the day. If Elizabeth Macarthur took wine with her meal, she may have watered it down, ‘as it was the custom of some ladies to do at the time’. By the early nineteenth century, ‘dining practice had developed many refinements’. When more than one individual attended dinner, such refinements included, for example, ‘serving wine from chilled containers and providing each diner with his or her own wineglass, which was rinsed between refills’.

In the drawing room, chairs and tables were set around the perimeter. The centre of the room was left open. Worgan’s square piano would most likely have been placed close to, and parallel with, the inside wall of the drawing room at Elizabeth Farm cottage (an inside wall was preferred because of temperature stability). When closed, the instrument would have functioned as a side table (the normal role of a square piano).

Most late eighteenth-century square pianos have no veneer or inlay on the spine (as is the case with Worgan’s piano) (Plate 124). This is because the spine was meant to never be seen; the instrument, like a cabinet, was intended to stand against a wall rather than in the centre of a room.

Any piano with a veneered and inlaid spine functioned as an indication of wealth; in the very large rooms of the palaces and great houses of the wealthy, such an instrument was often placed in the centre of the room in order that the spine could be seen.

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47 Koda and Bolton, Dangerous Liaisons, p. 17.
48 Ibid., p. 17.
Plate 124 The unveneered spine of George Worgan’s square piano.

Source: Stewart Symonds Collection, Sydney. Photo by the author.

Alterations Made to Elizabeth Farm Cottage

Over the next few decades, Elizabeth Farm cottage was enlarged, reflecting the growing prosperity and dominant social position of the Macarthur family.49

‘John Macarthur appears to have added a verandah to’ Elizabeth Farm cottage ‘shortly after it was built, possibly in 1794’ (Plate 125).50 During the late eighteenth century, verandahs were ‘never appreciated or used as a means of keeping a house cool. Because of their main purpose as passageways’51—as well as ‘a place for meeting and socializing’52—‘verandahs were not arranged with regard to the sun but to the movement of people’.53

50 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 55.
51 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
52 Rosen, Australia’s Oldest House, p. 19.
53 Freeland, ‘Elizabeth Farm’, p. 3.
The most ambitious and complicated building program of the late 1820s saw the house transformed into an Indian bungalow.\textsuperscript{54}

In a letter written to his son Edward on Tuesday, 12 September 1826, during the process of refurbishment, John Macarthur states: ‘we are occupying the old drawing room as a dining room … the hall [is] the same as before with an addition of one foot to its length.’\textsuperscript{55} ‘Evidence suggests that further alterations took place in the late-1820s or late-1830s—probably carried out by the architect John Verge (1782–1861).’\textsuperscript{56}

Part of these alterations involved the main fireplace in the 1826 dining room—that is, the 1793 drawing room—which was given a new marble surround and mantle shelves.
No part of the original 1793 building can be seen today, but its walls and ceilings form the dining-room, hall and living-room of its present incarnation.  

Elizabeth Farm is acknowledged as one of the most significant buildings in Australia not only for its associations with [the Macarthur] … family, but also as a unique archive of the development of building techniques, architectural styles and social history of the first forty years of British colonization of Australia …

Elizabeth Farm is considered to be of such significance that it is incorporated into the New South Wales Heritage Act (1977) as Permanent Conservation Order Number One.58

In May 1794, the Macarthurs’ son John (junior) was born. Obviously proud of her home and property, Elizabeth wrote to Bridget Kingdon on Sunday, 23 August 1794, describing her house as ‘an excellent brick building 68 feet in length and 18 feet in width, independent of kitchen and servants’ apartments’.59

As inspector of building works, John Macarthur not only controlled the supply of convict labour, but was also in a position to obtain the most skilled workers for his own farm. From the time that the Macarthurs first moved permanently into Elizabeth Farm cottage in November 1793, until just a year later, the number of convicts working there trebled. (‘In 1795, only five of the approximately 40 servants at Elizabeth Farm were female. By 1822, only two of the workers at Elizabeth Farm were female.’)60

Elizabeth continues in her letter to Bridget Kingdon dated 23 August 1794:

I have a farm of nearly 250 acres [100 hectares], of which upwards of 100 [40 hectares] are under cultivation and the greater part of which is cleared of timber. In the granaries remain upwards of 1,800 bushels of corn; 20 acres [8 hectares] of fine wheat [is] growing and 80 acres [32 hectares] prepared for Indian corn [maize]. The stock consists of a horse, 2 mares, 2 cows, 130 goats, upwards of 100 hogs and poultry of all kinds … the house is surrounded by a vineyard and gardens of about 3 acres [1.2 hectares], the latter abounding with excellent vegetables.61

The popularity of gardening as a fashionable leisure activity grew during the 18th century … Light, amateur gardening was seen as an

57 See ibid., p. 3.
58 Sansom, The Conservation of Elizabeth Farm, pp. 2–3.
59 de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, p. 68.
60 Geraghty, A Change in Circumstance, pp. 54–5.
acceptable pursuit for women. By the end of the century, a visitor to London observed that ‘every one in town or country had a garden ... A woman in very easy circumstances and abundantly gentle in form and manners would sow and plant and rake incessantly’.\(^62\)

That, in 1794, Elizabeth Macarthur’s garden abounded ‘with excellent vegetables’\(^63\) is not surprising, given the ever-present potential for food shortage. (The fear of starvation explains the fact that in Sydney, 33 years later, many houses had ‘substantial gardens “decked out with flowers and teeming with culinary delicacies”’.)\(^64\) By 1824, Elizabeth Macarthur’s garden grew an abundance of peaches, apricots and melons to such profusion that the pigs were fed upon them when they were in season; while loquats, which had been brought from China also did well ... Elizabeth Farm had an air of settlement about it. European trees, olive, oak, mulberry, horse-chestnut and others, planted in the early days of settlement, were well established. Flower beds, in which a great variety of roses proliferated, lay around the house.\(^65\)

Elizabeth’s garden may also have had a less practical function, being calculated to imply that she was a ‘woman in very easy circumstances and abundantly gentle in form and manners’.\(^66\) Late eighteenth-century gardens were mainly ornamental and featured paved or rolled gravel paths, beds edged with box or other low-growing plants, and the use of clipped evergreen shrubs. Bulbs and annuals were arranged in neat groups between perennials, and bare soil was left visible between the plants.

Potted plants, which could be moved around easily, were used to add variety, colour and scent to gardens. They were also frequently brought indoors.\(^67\)

Some of these elements—that is, rolled gravel paths, beds edged with low-growing plants, evergreen shrubs and potted plants—can still be seen in the garden at Elizabeth Farm cottage (Plate 125).

\(^{62}\) The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label (for an eighteenth-century sunroom) in the Geffrye Museum, London.


\(^{64}\) Fletcher, ‘Sydney’, p. 70. Fletcher takes the quotation from P. Cunningham, Two Years in New South Wales, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), Vol. 1, p. 40.

\(^{65}\) Geraghty, A Change in Circumstance, p. 51.

\(^{66}\) Excerpt taken from an exhibition label in the Geffrye Museum, London.

\(^{67}\) The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label in the Geffrye Museum, London.
John Macarthur’s Duel

In 1801, ‘the pugnacious John Macarthur, who saw himself as a gentleman and a “man of honour”, foolishly provoked’ his commanding officer, Lieutenant-Governor William Paterson (1755–1810),68 into demanding ‘a duel at a time when duelling was against the law’.69

Duelling between officers was contrary to the army’s Articles of War, section 7, article 2, which declared No officer … shall presume to send a challenge to any other officer … to fight a duel, upon pain … of being cashiered (i.e. dismissed from the army). Moreover, according to article 3 of the same section, all seconds, promoters, and carriers of challenges in order to duels, shall be deemed as principals, and be punished accordingly.70

Anyone connected with a duel therefore found themselves in a predicament. In 1795, the anonymous author of Cautions and Advices to Officers of the Army declared: ‘such is the unaccountable prevalence of custom, that the disobeyer of these orders is generally applauded, while the obeyer of them is obliged to quit the army with disgrace!’71

That John Macarthur regarded himself as an easily affronted gentleman is not surprising. At the very least, he had become a dazzlingly successful self-made man. According to Governor King, when John Macarthur arrived in the colony in 1790, he was £500 in debt.72 In 1801, by the time he had provoked Lieutenant-Governor Paterson into demanding satisfaction, he was worth at least £20 000.73

Lieutenant-Governor Paterson’s second was Captain Neil Mackellar (? – after March 1802). On Thursday, 10 September 1801, Mackellar visited Macarthur and said:

You have abused the confidence Colonel Paterson had reposed in you, he expects you will give him that satisfaction he, as an injured man, has a right to require.

68 An oil-on-canvas portrait of William Paterson by William Owen (1769–1825), dated ca 1800, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DG 175; Album ID 874690; Digital order no. a928495).
69 de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, p. 74.
70 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 197.
71 Ibid., p. 197. ‘The last recorded duel in New South Wales was in 1851 between a future Premier and the Surveyor General.’ King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 26.
72 See Hoorn, Australian Pastoral, p. 47.
73 See Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 84.
To this Macarthur replied, whatever he pleases. [Macarthur's] friend Captain John Piper74 agreed to be his second.75

At 1 pm on Monday, 14 September 1801, the duel took place at an unknown location in Parramatta.

Just prior to the duel, and contrary to custom, Macarthur loaded his pistols himself. This is because his guns were faulty. After the duel, several officers examined Macarthur’s pistols, ‘and agreed that, due to various defects, no one unacquainted with one of them could load it without the greatest danger of shooting himself’.76

Lieutenant-Governor Paterson’s guns were loaded by his second, Captain Mackellar.

The seconds then tossed a coin to see who would shoot first, and [John] Piper won. They measured out twelve steps, and [Macarthur and Paterson] … took their places facing each other. Macarthur raised his gun and fired, hitting Paterson … in the right shoulder … There was still a chance that Paterson might return fire, but the injury proved too serious to allow this …

The ball could not be extracted from Paterson’s shoulder and the doctors couldn’t say if he would survive.77

On hearing of the duel at 8 that evening, Governor King had Captains Mackellar and Piper put under arrest in their barracks. The next day, King had John Macarthur (whom he described as a ‘rich Botany Bay perturbator’)78 put under house arrest, confining him to Elizabeth Farm cottage.

Mackellar, Piper and Macarthur were held under arrest, without charge, ‘for eight days, the maximum allowed under military law’.79

‘King decided that it would be too difficult to try Macarthur in the colony, so he … ordered him to prepare himself for a return to England, where he would be’ court-martialled.80

74 A watercolour portrait entitled Captain John Piper Commandant of His Majesty’s Settlement Norfolk Island in the South Pacific Ocean for Six Years by an unknown artist, on ivory, dated ca 1815, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. MIN 75; Digital order no. a128921).
75 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 196.
76 Ibid., pp. 197–8.
77 Ibid., p. 198.
78 Macintyre, A Concise History of Australia, p. 46.
79 ‘A court martial in 1802 acquitted Piper for his part in the affair after he apologised.’ Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid, p. 73.
80 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 203.
Arrogantly and presumptuously, Macarthur responded to Governor King’s order by letter. He wrote:

‘I … wish to be acquainted whether my arrest is intended to be so rigid as to prevent me from walking over my own grounds for the benefit of exercise and health, as a close confinement previous to the voyage I have to undertake must necessarily make me very unfit to embark on it.’ King told him he could walk in his garden but no further.  

Perhaps, in the midst of this turmoil, Elizabeth occasionally played Worgan’s piano in order to bring some calm into John’s and her life at Elizabeth Farm.

On Sunday, 15 November 1801, John Macarthur sailed from the colony on board the Hunter, via Calcutta, for his court-martial in England.

With him he took his second and third children, Elizabeth, aged nine … John, aged seven … [and a servant. Macarthur’s] eldest child, Edward, had already returned to England to school [two years previously] at the age of … [ten, in 1799]. Elizabeth remained in the colony with her youngest children, Mary, James, and William, to manage Macarthur’s affairs.

That two years previously the 10-year-old Edward Macarthur (1789–1872) had been sent alone 

on board the Marquis Cornwallis … to England to be educated [must] … have been an extraordinarily wrenching experience for Elizabeth and possibly John, neither of whom was to see him for many years. That he was sent, and at such an early age, indicates the importance of a good education in a young gentleman’s life, and also, perhaps, his parents’ desire to remove the growing boy from the pernicious influence of New South Wales.

By remarkable good fortune … [John Macarthur’s] ship … was forced to put into Ambiona [now Ambon, in Indonesia] to shelter from a gale. There he met the British resident, Sir Robert Farquhar, son of the influential Sir Walter Farquhar, who was physician to the Prince

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81 Ibid., p. 205.
82 ‘Edward was born on 16 March 1789 at Bath, England.’ In 1790, ‘he went to Sydney with his parents … and spent his boyhood’ in Sydney ‘and at Elizabeth Farm’ until 1799, when he was ‘sent to England to be educated … He returned to Sydney in 1806’ at the age of 17. A. J. Hill, ‘Macarthur, Sir Edward (1789–1872)’, in Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1974], Vol. 5.
83 See ibid.
84 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 11.
85 Duffy, Man of Honour, p. 150.
of Wales. Macarthur was able to give young Sir Robert some advice which he regarded as valuable; and when the disgraced ... [Macarthur eventually] reached England he was welcomed by Sir Walter with great cordiality.\textsuperscript{86}

(Not long after, and as an expression of his gratitude, Sir Walter Farquhar (1738–1819) used his influence to obtain a generous land grant in New South Wales for John Macarthur.)

On Monday, 29 March 1802, four months after Macarthur’s departure in disgrace from Sydney Cove, Lieutenant-Governor Paterson’s second in the infamous duel, Captain Neil Mackellar, left for England on the American whaler \textit{Caroline}. Mackellar carried documents that were to function as evidence in his prosecution of John Macarthur in London. He also carried John Macarthur’s confiscated sword.

Captain Mackellar and the \textit{Caroline} were never heard from again. The death of the unfortunate Mackellar ‘was a considerable stroke of luck for John Macarthur’.\textsuperscript{87} The absence of any witnesses in England (apart from Macarthur himself) made his court-martial untenable.

\section*{John Macarthur’s Happy Sheep}

Macarthur also managed to wriggle out of the charges laid against him by distracting attention away from his behaviour in the colony, to matters concerning the development of the wool industry in New South Wales. Macarthur’s timing was impeccable. Britain was experiencing a crisis of supply in the wool market.

The political disruption of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon had cast doubt upon the British textile industry’s continued access to Spanish super-fine wool. Therefore, textile manufacturers sought access to an abundant supply of wool within the Empire to satisfy this need. Macarthur [believed] … that the wool industry in NSW had the potential to expand in the same way the cotton industry had done in America, which had developed into an enormously lucrative industry.\textsuperscript{88}

When Macarthur left Sydney Cove on Sunday, 15 November 1801 for his court-martial, the owners of the largest flocks of sheep in New South Wales were either military or civilian officers: Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Foveaux (1767–1846)

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Wannan} Wannan, \textit{Early Colonial Scandals}, p. 84.
\bibitem{Ibid} Ibid., p. 211.
\bibitem{Geraghty} Geraghty, \textit{A Change in Circumstance}, p. 17.
\end{thebibliography}
owned 1250; Paymaster William Cox (1764–1837) owned 1000; Commissary
John Palmer (1760–1833) owned 650; Quarter-master Thomas Laycock (1786–
1809) and Reverend Samuel Marsden (1765–1838) each owned 340.89

Macarthur’s interest in breeding sheep first began in 1794. Macarthur initially
purchased ‘sixty Bengali ewes and three Irish sheep from the captains of
convict ships. These animals, bred for mutton rather than wool, were crossed
by Macarthur and the result was an improved grade in the wool.’90 Three years
later, in 1797, Macarthur bought ‘a number of merino sheep’91 from the Second
Commander of the Reliance, Henry Waterhouse (1770–1812), who, in June 1797,
was ‘the first to import merino into Sydney’92 and ‘crossed them with his own
flock, by 1800 some 600 strong’. In 1801, ‘he augmented his flocks with another
1200 sheep … through purchasing [Joseph] Foveaux’s Toongabbie farm, which
was ‘for sale following Foveaux’s [move] from the colony’ to Norfolk Island as
acting Lieutenant-Governor.93

‘By 1800, thirty-four officer-farmers had accumulated 14,584 acres [5900
hectares] of land, 6,295 head of stock, and held 1,528 acres [600 hectares] under
cultivation.’94

In 1803, whilst in England for his court-martial, Macarthur

prepared a Statement of the Improvement and Progress of the Breed of
Fine Woolled Sheep in New South Wales for the Government and, in
a remarkable exercise of self-promotion, established himself as the
colony’s representative of the industry and the most worthy recipient of
preferential support for its development.95

Macarthur’s ideas attracted the attention of the Committee of the Privy
Council on Trade and Foreign Plantations. Not only were the charges against
him dropped, but also through his friendship ‘with Sir Walter Farquhar, [he]
was given the opportunity to buy [six] … Spanish pure merino rams and a
valuable merino ewe’,96 which were ‘auctioned’97 from His Majesty’s Spanish
flock. ‘Through the kind intercession of Sir Walter Farquhar, John Macarthur

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90 Hoorn, Australian Pastoral, p. 47.
91 Ibid., p. 47.
92 Ibid., p. 48.
93 Ibid., p. 47.
95 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, p. 11.
96 de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, pp. 74–5.
97 See Geraghty, A Change in Circumstance, p. 18.
received a grant’ from Lord Camden (1759–1840), the Secretary of State for War and Colonies, of 2000 hectares of ‘the best pasture land in New South Wales for raising sheep’.98

Macarthur was promised an additional 2000 hectares if his ambitious merino sheep-breeding venture was a success.

It is not surprising that Macarthur’s grant of 2000 hectares—‘selected at the Cowpastures, rich pastoral land to the south-west of Sydney’99—was named Camden after the Secretary of State for War and Colonies. Lord Camden also gave Macarthur 30 convicts to work his newly acquired land,100 as well as permission to resign from the army. Commander Henry Waterhouse, who sold a number of merino sheep to John Macarthur in 1797, ‘described the Cowpastures, across the Nepean [River] and at the foot of the Blue Mountains, as a beautiful park, totally divested of underwood, interspersed with plains, with rich luxuriant grass’.101

The first sheep were more like large dogs than today’s fat, waddling woolly creatures. Like dogs, the most prized sheep wore collars … Elizabeth Macarthur, had she lived long enough to see [Australian sheep] … in their paddocks in … [the twenty-first century], would have realized that they were about seven times as heavy as her original sheep.102

**John Macarthur Returns to New South Wales**

John Macarthur returned to New South Wales in June 1805. Fortunately for John Macarthur, Lieutenant-Governor Paterson survived his duelling wound. This survival did not come, however, without its psychological consequences. In January 1803, two years and one month after Macarthur had left Sydney Cove for his court-martial in England, Paterson ‘had himself examined by no fewer than five doctors, all of who concurred that he needed to maintain as easy and tranquil a state as possible’.103

Following a severe and unpleasant falling out with Governor King, Paterson wrote to Sir Joseph Banks, stating: ‘Not having a very good constitution, the anxiety and uneasiness I suffered injured my health so materially as to require absolute retirement.’104

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99 Broadbent, *Elizabeth Farm Parramatta*, p. 11.
100 See Birmingham, *Leviathan*, p. 269.
104 Ibid., p. 219.
William Paterson died on his voyage back to England.

‘When his widow arrived at Portsmouth in November 1810, Macarthur met her’ (between 1809 and 1817, Macarthur was in virtual exile in London) ‘and returned to town yesterday bringing under my escort Mrs Paterson, who appears to be grateful for this mark of attention—you know I sometimes like to return disobliging acts this way’.105

Such an act of kindness (regardless of Macarthur’s motives) was uncharacteristic. Macarthur was a compassionless and unforgiving enemy. ‘Anyone who thwarted his wishes and ambitions was marked for his deepest hatred.’106 He boasted to Governor Ralph Darling (1772–1858) that he had ‘never yet failed in ruining a man who had become obnoxious to him’.107 One can only wonder at what it was that had driven him into such a state of moral sickness.

There can be little doubt that the Macarthurs saw themselves as members of the colonial elite, having aspirations to live out the image of gentility in the colony. During the early 1800s, however, their idea of gentility was already becoming, if not obsolete, then certainly old-fashioned in England. It was feudal and rural. It belonged more to the 1720s than the [early 1800s]. It parodied an ideal of privilege they had never had and, moreover, was distinguished by its absolute inability to relax. English gentility defined itself in relation to an aristocracy above and a peasantry and serving classes below. But its vision of the ‘good yeoman’ did not apply very well in convict Australia, whose peasantry was, by definition, not good.108

Nevertheless, the Macarthurs were members of the colony’s pastoral gentry. As an officer of the original settlement, John Macarthur (like some of his peers) had a prickly sense of [his] … own status as … [a gentleman,] which was maintained by a ceremonious code of interaction (it was taken as an insult to leave the word ‘Esquire’ off the address of a letter), and a constant display of deference from social inferiors (it was taken as an insult not to raise one’s hat to a gentleman in passing) …

The accumulation of wealth turned a considerable part of [the colony’s] … social elite into an economic force which moved from trade towards pastoralism, seeking not only profit but also the traditional prestige of large land ownership …

105 Ibid., p. 325.
106 Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 40.
107 Birmingham, Leviathan, p. 267.
Pastoralism under the gentry created a polarised, patriarchal society in the countryside, a deep gulf of status, property and power separating the work-force from the rulers.\textsuperscript{109}

Within the cold embrace of respectability, however, the status of gentleman had to be carried not only with subtlety, but also with ‘a languid elegance’.\textsuperscript{110} The proud Lord Chesterfield (1694–1773), for example, advised his illegitimate son: ‘Wear your learning, like your watch, in a private pocket; and do not pull it out merely to show you have one … Perfect good-breeding is equally inconsistent with a stiff formality, an impertinent forwardness and an awkward bashfulness.’\textsuperscript{111} Despite outward appearances, the Macarthurs may well have been ‘afflicted by the fear of losing status and wealth which gnaws at all members of the bourgeoisie [who] … scratch and claw … their way to prominence’.

**George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano in Elizabeth Macarthur’s Life**

On her upstream estate in 1800, Elizabeth Macarthur would have regarded the downstream ‘first’ settlement as a bustling one. At Sydney Cove,\textsuperscript{113}

high on ‘the rocks’ above [a] … dockyard … was [a] stone windmill, situated so as to catch the harbour wind and process the grain being grown upstream and north on the Hawkesbury. A sandstone granary [had been] … built on the western side of the Tank Stream, not far from the Hospital Wharf … An assembly of small huts dotted the hillside, connected by winding pathways rather than streets. There were homes, shops, pubs, and even a theatre.

All the houses faced the Heads, the gateway to the world to which the town was increasingly connected after [12 years] … of settlement.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{109} Connell and Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History*, pp. 51, 53.
\textsuperscript{110} de Botton, *Status Anxiety*, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{111} P. D. Chesterfield, *Letters to His Son on the Fine Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman* (Last updated 14 February 2007), Letter 30, Bath, 22 February 1748.
\textsuperscript{112} Birmingham, *Leviathan*, p. 279.
\textsuperscript{113} See oil-on-canvas painting entitled *Sydney. Capital New South Wales* by an unknown artist, dated ca 1800, housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DG 56; Album ID 825790; Digital order no. a1528055).
\textsuperscript{114} Hoskins, *Sydney Harbour*, p. 68.
Sydney had ‘quickly developed in precisely the opposite way to the original vision for the colony; instead of a closely supervised, harsh, subsistence agricultural settlement, it was a distinctly urban place with considerable freedom’.

The harbour at Sydney Cove was also a hive of activity. For example, whenever a ‘convict transport arrived, the local people took to the water in small “bumboats” to tout fresh fish and vegetables and re-establish links with anticipated or unexpected friends and relatives’. The convict Joseph Holt described such a scene: having anchored at Sydney Cove ‘on a Sunday morning in January 1800’, Holt found that within

the course of half-an-hour, fifty boats were alongside; all the robbers, pickpockets, and thieves had plenty of acquaintance, but I did not see a soul to whom I was known … Next morning there were twice as many boats alongside as on the previous day, every one bringing presents to their acquaintance.

For Elizabeth Macarthur at Elizabeth Farm, playing Worgan’s square piano may have been one of several ‘genteel escapes’ that sometimes engaged her attention. Elizabeth may have found such an escape desirable, given that her ‘difficulties’ concerning the running of Elizabeth Farm were never ending. In a letter dated Sunday, 15 April 1804 (written during her husband’s first absence overseas between 1801 and 1805), she admitted to her friend ‘the kindly and luxury-loving [Captain] John Piper’ (who had acted as John Macarthur’s second during his duel with Lieutenant-Governor Paterson): ‘The management of our concerns gets troublesome to me in the extreme, and I am perpetually annoyed by some vexation or other.’ Many of the letters of contemporaneous English aristocratic women reveal that they ‘engaged in matters that took them beyond narrowly domestic affairs. They were most successful in doing so when circumstances left them without the presence of a male head of household.’ Elizabeth Macarthur was no exception.

When it came to playing Worgan’s piano, perhaps Elizabeth (in a manner reminiscent of the novelist Jane Austen) was discreet; there may have been a

116 Hoskins, Sydney Harbour, p. 68.
117 Ibid., p. 68.
119 Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 42.
121 Tague, Women of Quality, p. 124.
resemblance between the musical circumstances and pianistic skills of Elizabeth Macarthur and Jane Austen. In her Memoir of 1867, Jane Austen’s niece Caroline reminisced:

Aunt Jane began her day with music—for which I conclude she had a natural taste; as she thus kept it up—’tho she had no one to teach; was never induced (as I have heard) to play in company; and none of her family cared much for it. I suppose that she might not trouble them, she chose her practising time before breakfast—when she could have the room to herself—She practised regularly every morning—She played very pretty tunes, I thought—and I liked to stand by her and listen to them; but the music (for I knew the books well in after years) would now be thought disgracefully easy.122

(Austen owned a square piano by Christopher Ganer. In May 1801, she sold the instrument when the family moved from the village of Steventon, near Basingstoke, in Hampshire—where, until that time, Jane had spent all her life—to Bath.)123

On the other hand, Elizabeth may not have played her piano at all. In her letter to Bridget Kingdon dated Monday, 7 March 1791, she revealed her concerns related to the possibility for ongoing pianistic progress once George Worgan had departed from the colony: ‘I fear that without my master I shall not make any great proficiency.’124 Or perhaps McGuanne’s judgment of Elizabeth Macarthur is closer to the truth than is comfortable. He states (without supporting evidence): ‘When Surgeon Worgan left the colony … he left the first piano as a present to Mrs. Macarthur, but the instrument was silent for want of a player—the … lady was not a musician.’125

George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano Escapes Destruction for the First Time

Between Sunday, 4 March and Monday, 5 March 1804, Worgan’s piano escaped destruction by a fire that had been planned by the leaders of a convict uprising. Although the rebellion ‘seems to have involved English as much as Irish [convict,

124 Quoted in Egan, Buried Alive, p. 229.
the uprising] ... was officially given an Irish identity, for the Irish convicts had acquired the image of monopolizing such turbulent tendencies and rebellious intentions as existed'.

Some Irish convicts had been transported to the colony for committing ‘offences that were uniquely Irish. For example, the innumerate or unipedal Mary McLoghlin was transported for “felony of sock”.

Whilst taking supper at the Anglican Reverend Samuel Marsden’s Parramatta home one Sunday evening, Elizabeth was informed that the convicts (known as ‘croppies’) were at the Macarthurs’ Seven Hills and Pennant Hills farms; a house at Castle Hill was in flames (signalling the beginning of the uprising), and the rebels were approaching Parramatta (‘the flames from burning Castle Hill were visible from Parramatta’). The Marsdens and the Macarthurs were friends, frequently enjoying each other’s hospitality. Eliza Marsden ‘found Elizabeth Macarthur [to be] a charming ... woman who rejoiced in the company of her ... children’. Moreover, Eliza wrote that Elizabeth was ‘a very pleasant agreeable lady’.

Elizabeth described the moment when a manservant burst into the parlour, ‘pale and in violent agitation. “Sir”, says he, looking wildly at Mr Marsden “Come with me”. And “you too”, looking at me. Then half shutting the door he told us that the “croppies” had risen.’

The Reverend Marsden was particularly loathed by the croppies. ‘Known as the “flogging parson”, he was responsible for [mercilessly] flogging many Irish Catholic convicts.’ Marsden identified Catholicism with rebellion ... He predicted: ‘it is more than probable that if the Catholic Religion was once allowed to be celebrated by authority, that the colony would be lost to the British Empire in less than one year’. His supporting argument ran thus. The number of Catholic convicts was very great; most of them were Irish of the lowest class, ‘wild, ignorant and savage ... men that have been familiar with robberies, murders and every horrid crime from their infancy’.

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126 O’Farrell, The Catholic Church and Community in Australia, p. 5.
127 Hunt, Girt, pp. 149–50.
128 See King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 31.
129 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 27.
130 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 27.
131 King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 31.
132 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 31.
133 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 37.
134 A watercolour portrait of Elizabeth Marsden by Richard Read (ca 1765–1827?), on ivory, dated 1821, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. MIN 74; Digital order no. a128728).
135 King, Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World, p. 37.
138 A watercolour portrait of the Reverend Samuel Marsden by Richard Read (ca 1765–1827?), dated 1833, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. ML 29; Album ID 874693; Digital order no. a928171).
139 de Vries, Females on the Fatal Shore, p. 75.
To Marsden they seemed ‘destitute of every principle of religion and morality … governed entirely by the impulse of passion, and always alive to rebellion’. Were the Mass allowed, it would become the occasion of seditious assemblies which would issue in assassination, arson and destruction and the overthrow of the government; for not only was there the ‘natural ferocity’ of the Catholic Irish, but they would infect other convicts with their turbulence, and that horror of the colony’s rulers, a mass convict mutiny, would surely occur.137

The Reverend Marsden’s cruelty as a magistrate was confirmed by Commissioner John Thomas Bigge (1780–1843),138 ‘who wrote that his character as a magistrate was “stamped with severity”’.139 ‘In an age that was far from squeamish in the matter of cruelty, Marsden was singled out by reputable men of the colony as a magistrate whose punishments were extraordinarily severe.’140

Apart from his anti-Catholic bigotry, the Reverend Marsden’s lack of mercy may also ‘be attributed to his high-mindedness, his passionate detestation of sin and his conviction that Parramatta was such a sink of iniquity that morality could be preserved only by the most rigorous disciplinary measures’.141 For all that, ‘the flogging parson’ was commonly regarded in the colony as an unattractive character.

Marsden was

a busy squire, attending to his rich estates; he was a money-lender and an investor; he engaged extensively in trade and manufacture; he was a magistrate; he was a vigorous contender in political squabbles; he was a persistent litigant; he travelled extensively. These were the occupations that largely filled his days.142

138 A watercolour portrait of John Thomas Bigge by Thomas Uwins (1782–1857), dated 1819, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. P2/290; Digital order no. a1528261).
140 Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 182.
141 Yarwood, ‘Marsden, Samuel (1765–1838)’.
142 Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 173.
Leaving Elizabeth Farm cottage (including Worgan’s piano) in the care of servants (who must have been every bit as scared as Elizabeth herself), Elizabeth and her children, in the company of the Marsdens, fled from Parramatta to Sydney by boat, arriving at 3 am.\textsuperscript{144}

The boat that took the refugees to Sydney probably belonged to one of the watermen who plied the estuary at the head of the harbour, and who was subject to the comprehensive set of port regulations published as a proclamation in the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}, on Sunday, 10 July 1803: ‘to be more circumspect in their conduct towards their passengers … The boats to be always kept tight, furnished with at least four oars in case the passengers may wish to assist in rowing, and with one mast and sail. To treat the passengers with civility.’\textsuperscript{145} Given the extreme circumstances, one can only hope that the boatman did not charge the stipulated 1s per adult and 6d per child for the journey, but made the journey gratis. (Had the boatman been a compassionless opportunist, he may have hired out the ‘whole boat’ for the prescribed ‘£1 6 shillings’.)\textsuperscript{146}

Elizabeth and her children were accommodated in the Marsdens’ Sydney residence, to which, wrote Elizabeth, ‘our little frightened, sleepy tribe were escorted and civilities poured in upon us from every quarter’.\textsuperscript{147}

\section*{The Convict Uprising is Defeated}

The convict rebellion was ruthlessly suppressed. Superior firepower enabled ‘less than three dozen troops to defeat over 250 rebels’.\textsuperscript{148} Major George Johnston’s (1764–1823)\textsuperscript{149} men were so enthusiastic in their pursuit of the convicts that ‘he had to threaten to shoot some of them to stop them killing the convicts they had taken’.\textsuperscript{150} Retribution was savage: 15 rebels ‘were butchered … eight hanged and more flogged in an effort to obtain information’\textsuperscript{151}—proving Georges

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\textsuperscript{143} A watercolour drawing entitled \textit{The Landing Place at Parramatta, Port Jackson}, attributed to George William Evans (1780–1852), dated 1809?, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. PXD 388; Album ID 823548; Digital order no. a1313034).

\textsuperscript{144} An engraving entitled \textit{By Water to Parramatta; With a Distant View of the Western Mountains Taken from the Wind Mill Hill at Sydney}, by James Heath (1757–1843), dated 1798, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. DL Pd 764; Digital order no. a1528096).


\textsuperscript{146} See ibid.

\textsuperscript{147} Macarthur, ‘Letter to John Piper, 15 April 1804’. Quoted in King, \textit{Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World}, p. 31.

\textsuperscript{148} Keneally, \textit{Australians}, caption for image ‘Convict uprising at Castle Hill’, between p. 180 and p. 181.

\textsuperscript{149} A watercolour portrait of George Johnston by Robert Dighton (1752–1814), dated 1810, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. ML 511; Digital order no. a1528248).

\textsuperscript{150} Duffy, \textit{Man of Honour}, p. 228.

\textsuperscript{151} Macintyre, \textit{A Concise History of Australia}, p. 45.
Clemenceau’s (1841–1929) ‘point that “military justice is to justice what military music is to music”’. 152 ‘The bodies of the fifteen rebels killed in the battle … were left to rot where they lay.’153

The Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Sunday, 11 March 1804 gives an account of how an end was put to the uprising:

Major and trooper advanced within pistol shot, and endeavoured to persuade [the rebels] … to submit to the mercy that was offered them … which they refused. The Major required to see their chiefs, who after some deliberation met them half way, between the detachment and the insurgents, when by a great presence of mind and address the Major presented his pistol at the head of the principal leader (Philip Cunningham), and the trooper following his motions, presented his pistol also to the other leader’s head, (Wm. Johnston) and drove them into the detachment without the least opposition from the body of the insurgents. Major Johnston immediately ordered Quarter Master Laycock to advance with the detachment, &c and cut the body to pieces, which immediately filed off and fled in all directions, pursued by the detachment and followers, several shots were fired by the Insurgents without effect. As the pursuit was along the road & on each side in the woods, the number of dead are not yet ascertained; nine bodies were found about the road, and several were known to be killed in the pursuit through the woods. A number were overtaken and made prisoners, among whom was the leader (Philip Cunningham), who was to all appearances left dead on the road … Philip Cunningham the principal leader … being still alive, and very properly considered by Major Johnston as a proper object to make an immediate example of, by virtue of the martial law that then existed, and the discretionary power given him by His Excellency, and after taking the opinion of the officers about him, directed him to be publicly executed on the stair case of the public store, which he had boasted in his march he was going to plunder … ten … including the two leaders Johnstone and Humes … were … sentenced to be hanged—Johnstone and Humes to be hung in chains: a part of the sentence was carried into execution at 6 o’clock on Thursday evening, upon Humes, Charles Hill, and John Place … Humes gave much important information, respecting the secret contrivers; and on Friday morning Johnston, Harrington, and Neale were executed at Castle Hill.154

153 Hunt, Girt, p. 184.
Plate 126 portrays the unfolding of events; in keeping with a particular style of eighteenth-century painting, different stages of the conflict are depicted simultaneously.

The tragic tale is told thus: in the centre distance, a dark-coated figure, Father James Dixon (1758–1840), a Roman-Catholic priest, asks the convict rebels to ‘Lay down your Arms you deluded Countrymen’. (After the rebellion had been ‘bloodily repressed, the … panic-stricken Protestant establishment’ was convinced ‘that Father Dixon had been in some way implicated, and that, obscurely, the rebellion was the outcome of Catholic teachings. Dixon’s privileges of public ministry were withdrawn.’)\textsuperscript{155} The convict leader, Philip Cunningham, standing in the foreground on the right-hand side, cries ‘Death or Liberty Major’. Major George Johnston (mounted on the brown horse) aims his pistol at Cunningham’s head and replies, ‘You scoundrel, I’ll liberate you’. Inspired by Major Johnston, the trooper mounted on the black horse aims his pistol at the head of the other convict leader, William Johnston, and orders, ‘Croppy lay down’. William Johnston immediately cries out, ‘We are all ruin’d’. Quartermaster Thomas Laycock (1756?–1809) strikes the convict leader with his sword, saying ‘Thou Rebel Dog’. The bleeding convict despairingly cries, ‘Oh Jesus’. The troops open fire on the rebels. In the distance (behind the trees on the left-hand side), two convict leaders, Humes and Johnstone, are hanged on the gallows—‘a grim reminder to would-be rebels that the empire would always strike back’.\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{155} O’Farrell, \textit{The Catholic Church and Community in Australia}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{156} Hunt, \textit{Girt}, p. 185.
Following the 10 days of martial law that were declared in the colony, Elizabeth Macarthur and her children returned to Elizabeth Farm cottage. Subsequently, she was informed that the convicts had intended ‘to set fire to her home as they knew of her lonely situation and thought that the soldiers would immediately go in strength to her aid. The defence of the barracks would thus be weakened.’\textsuperscript{157} That the Irish convicts singled out Elizabeth Macarthur suggests that she had become a person of importance in the colony, and that the rebels were aware of her social prestige. In a letter written to Captain John Piper on Sunday, 15 April 1804, Elizabeth remarked: ‘Thank God all was happily prevented.’\textsuperscript{158} Worgan’s piano had escaped a fiery demise, surviving the convict rebellion to sound another day.

\textsuperscript{157} Macarthur, ‘Letter to John Piper, 15 April 1804’. Quoted in King, \textit{Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World}, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{158} Quoted in ibid., p. 31.
Elizabeth Macarthur at Leisure

During the extended absences of John Macarthur overseas (1801–05 and 1809–17), when not engaged in the day-to-day management of Elizabeth Farm, Elizabeth may have been occupied with

plain sewing, visiting, fancy needlework, the taking of tea and the reading of novels.159

A catalogue of the books at Elizabeth Farm, made in 1854, revealed that, once the farm was established, Elizabeth’s choice of imported books covered a wide field from Roman history to the novels of Walter Scott [1771–1832] and the poems of Lord Byron [1788–1824].160

(At one time, Elizabeth became ‘so fascinated by Afghanistan that she borrowed all she could on the subject’.)161

During the early nineteenth century, a leisure culture emerged that ‘revolved around literary institutions, lectures … concerts’162 and the reading of books.

At the centre of such a culture, there lay a view of men and women as beings having freedom of will, responsibility for any actions flowing from that freedom, and capable of ‘standing on his or her own two feet’. As an autonomous being, responsible for what he or she made of his or her life, the individual would see self-help and ‘improvement’ as a duty …

‘Improving’ leisure became synonymous with ‘respectable’ leisure.163

‘Respectable’ leisure was commonly linked with reading.

In the eighth chapter of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Charles Bingley lists the skills that an ‘accomplished’ woman must possess: music, singing, drawing, dancing and languages.164 Bingley continues by remarking that an accomplished woman must also ‘possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions’.165 Mr

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159 ‘Elizabeth Farm: John and Elizabeth Macarthur’, in *Historic Houses Trust*.
163 Ibid., pp. 77–8.
164 See Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 43.
165 Ibid., p. 43.
Darcy continues the conversation by stating: ‘All this she must possess … and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading.’

In 1838, the Quaker William Howitt (1792–1879) linked leisure-time reading with happiness. ‘Happiness’, he said,

> does not consist in booths and garlands, drums and horns, or in capering round a May-pole. Happiness is a fire-side thing. It is a thing of grave and earnest tone; and the deeper and truer it is, the more it is removed from the riot of mere merriment … the more our humble classes come to taste of the pleasures of books and intellect, and the fire-side affections which grow out of the growth of heart and mind, the less charms will the outward forms of rejoicing have for them.

‘Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Quakers … habitually condemned theatre and dancing … travelling actors were blamed by the godly for everything from encouraging sin to … yellow fever epidemic,’ Not that Elizabeth Macarthur was of the ‘humble classes’. Nevertheless, sitting near the fireside with a book, in private, constituted ‘respectable’ leisure, because ‘a contented home was the … proper alternative to the increasingly private leisure of the drinking place’ (for many, it was the fireside of the pub that beckoned).

That Elizabeth Macarthur’s reading matter was eclectic is not surprising given: first, her engagement, as a ‘respectable’ lady, with the ‘improving’ and ‘respectable’ leisure pastime of reading; second, the fine education that the Reverend Kingdon had provided for her in her youth; third, her apparent desire to be ‘accomplished’; fourth, her thirst for knowledge; and fifth, her innate and apparently incisive intelligence.

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166 Ibid., p. 43.
168 Potter, ‘Music by the ‘Celebrated Mozart’’, p. 91.
Two Hundred and Seventeen Years Later, Worgan’s Piano Returns to Elizabeth Farm

On Thursday, 11 February 2010, Worgan’s piano was taken from its current location (in Ermington, Sydney) and placed in the 1826 dining room of Elizabeth Farm cottage. This room was selected because prior to the room’s 1826 refurbishment, it may have been the Macarthurs’ drawing room—the most likely location of Worgan’s piano.

The 1826 dining room is now a rather stark and loveless shell, a space of ineffable blandness (Plate 127). The room feels empty, sad and subtly remote. There is little sense of the warmth and passions of home life, time having consumed John and Elizabeth’s extraordinary past. Gone is the lavish paraphernalia that once reflected the couple’s sensibilities. Even a sudden burst of sunshine through the windows fails to uplift the heart. The room remains immoderately poignant; all is grace and melancholy.

Plate 127 shows the 1826 dining room as it appears now. The colour of the walls is similar to the colour they were painted in the early 1830s. Note the bare wooden floorboards, which are in keeping with late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century norms; to clean them, ‘household manuals advised that they should be scrubbed with hot sand. A dark brown stain was also recommended to hide dirt.’ Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano, positioned next to the fireplace that faces the front windows, was subsequently photographed (Plates 128 and 129). As the first time in more than 200 years that Worgan’s piano has sat in Elizabeth Farm house, the instrument entrancingly resumed its place as a medium of beauty and cultural sophistication.

170 See ‘Drawing Room’, in Historic Houses Trust: Discover Elizabeth Farm (n.d.).
171 The quotation comprises an excerpt from an exhibition label in the Geffrye Museum, London.
Plate 127 Elizabeth Farm cottage: 1826 dining room.

Source: Photo by the author.

Plate 128 George Worgan’s Beck piano in the 1826 dining room of Elizabeth Farm cottage.

Source: Photo by the author.
Plate 129 George Worgan’s Beck piano in the 1826 dining room of Elizabeth Farm cottage.

Source: Photo by the author.

The Historic Houses Trust describes Elizabeth Farm cottage as ‘Australia’s oldest European building’.\(^{172}\) Moreover, Ian Sansom states: ‘Elizabeth Farm contains the structure of the oldest remaining building in Australia.’\(^{173}\) Historian Sue Rosen, however, convincingly demonstrates that Experiment Farm Cottage, built by John Harris, surgeon to the NSW Corps, is ‘the oldest surviving European building in Australia’,\(^{174}\) and reveals the damage that may be done ‘when heritage “experts” refuse to engage with historians’.\(^{175}\)

The Macarthurs would probably have laughed had they known that people would someday pay money to visit their home.

Precedent forces us to suppose that later generations will one day walk around our houses with the same attitude of … amusement with which

\(^{172}\) ‘Elizabeth Farm’, in *Historic Houses Trust: Venues* (Historic Houses Trust, n.d.).
\(^{175}\) Ibid., Back cover.
we now consider many of the possessions of the dead. They will marvel at our wallpapers and our sofas and laugh at aesthetic crimes to which we are impervious.\footnote{A. de Botton, *The Architecture of Happiness: The Secret Art of Furnishing Your Life* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), p. 154.}

The Macarthurs may also have been astonished, perhaps grateful, to think that people would be curious about, or deeply moved by, the domestic space that they simply took for granted.\footnote{See H. Sachs, *The Ninth: Beethoven and the World in 1824* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010), p. 12.}

**Mrs Macquarie’s Piano: An anecdote**

Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano is particularly portable. Because the instrument’s legs are hinged to the bottom of the case, Elizabeth Macarthur would have been able to easily move the piano and its stand (presumably with the help of a servant’s straining arms). An anecdote describing the use of Mrs Elizabeth Henrietta Macquarie’s (not Elizabeth Macarthur’s) piano to frighten Indigenous trespassers reveals that only two people were needed to carry an ‘old piano’ (a square piano?).\footnote{See J. Lang, *Botany Bay, True Tales of Early Australia, XIII: Music a Terror* (n.d.).}

The anecdote may have its source in the writings of the colonial-born author John George Lang (1816–64). Lang included among his fictional stories, ‘often with a strong factual content, an account of Mrs Macquarie’s piano, providing an image of its civilizing qualities together with its powers as a successful deterrent to marauding Aborigines’.\footnote{K. Fahy, ‘Furniture and Furniture-Makers’, in J. Broadbent and J. Hughes (eds), *The Age of Macquarie* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press in association with Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 1992), p. 122.}

Lang writes:

> The next morning, soon after daylight, Romer came into my apartment, and, with a smile upon his face, said, ‘This old piano, it occurs to me, may be turned to very profitable account.’

> ‘How?’ I inquired.

> ‘We may make it an instrument of terror to the blacks. Of late they have become awfully troublesome in the matter of spearing the cattle, merely for the fat wherewith to grease themselves, and only last week we lost in this way a very valuable cow. I will send for some of the tribe and frighten them, or rather you must, by playing on the bass keys.’

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\footnote{See J. Lang, *Botany Bay, True Tales of Early Australia, XIII: Music a Terror* (n.d.).}
I liked the idea vastly. Besides, I was very curious to see the expression of a savage’s face when, for the first time, he heard music.

The encampment of the blacks was only three or four miles [5 or 6 kilometres] distant, and a stockman was sent to bring several of them; and at noon, about eight or nine of them, in all their nudity, made their appearance. Mrs. Romer had a strong objection to admit them in or near the house, and so Romer and I carried the old piano [a square piano?] out into the open space in front of the dwelling.

The aboriginal native of New Holland—just like the native of India—cannot help touching and examining everything that is strange to him; and no sooner did ‘the blacks’ whom we summoned observe the old piano, than they moved towards and examined it very attentively. One of them at last opened the instrument, and touched the keys rather heavily, and (like, Fear in the ‘Ode to the Passions’), terrified at the sound he had produced, recoiled backwards, his spear poised ready to be thrown, and his brilliant black eye firmly fixed on the demon, for as such he regarded the old piano. His companions also poised their long spears, and retreated cautiously step by step.

Romer now begged of them not to be alarmed, and with some little difficulty brought them back to the piano, where he represented to them that inside was a fearful demon, who would eat up the whole of their tribe if he were told to do so; but that, if they did nothing to offend or annoy him [Romer], they had nothing whatever to fear.

I corroborated this statement by nodding my head; and, advancing to the instrument, I touched the keys and began to play as loudly as possible. Who shall describe their faces and their attitudes? Some of them grasped their boomerangs, others poised their spears ready to repel any sudden attack that the demon might make upon them. It was a scene such as I would not have missed on any account.

When I had ceased playing, Romer explained to them that I had been telling the demon what he was to do, on the next occasion of a bullock, a cow, or a calf being speared on the run; and they must have believed every word he said, for from that day forward the nuisance abated, and the tribe very rarely came near the forest where our cattle used to graze; so that the old piano, after all, was by no means dear at the price I paid for it, to say nothing of the amusement which it afforded to Romer’s children.180

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180 Lang, *Botany Bay, True Tales of Early Australia*, XIII.
The First Fleet Piano: A Musician’s View

George Bouchier Worgan’s Piano Escapes Destruction for the Second Time

On Saturday, 26 January 1805—10 months after Worgan’s piano had escaped destruction by fire during the Irish convict uprising—Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck square piano once again narrowly escaped a raging conflagration. The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Sunday, 27 January 1805 reports that when fire broke out in the detached kitchen of Elizabeth Farm cottage, annihilation of the residential section of the house was narrowly prevented:

Yesterday, between the hours of twelve and one at noon, a fire broke out on the farm of Mrs. M’Arthur, at Parramatta, by which a detached kitchen was in a short time destroyed. From the direction of the wind the flame several times reached the dwelling-house, but was happily extinguished every time with scarce perceptible damage by the military detachment on duty at Parramatta, whose active exertions prevailed in subduing the fire, and limiting its ravage to the former building [that is, the kitchen], which was however totally consumed.\(^{181}\)

Elizabeth Macarthur Purchases Thomas Laycock’s Piano

James Broadbent states that in 1810, ‘Elizabeth Macarthur appears to have replaced Worgan’s piano with a larger and finer instrument (perhaps a piano in upright form) that was purchased at auction in Sydney from the estate of Thomas Laycock [1756?–1809] for the then substantial sum of £85’\(^{182}\) (approximately four times the price of a new square piano in London). Elizabeth may have used Worgan’s piano as part payment for her ‘new’ piano; such a transaction would have been regarded as a viable part of purchasing a second-hand instrument. There is, however, no evidence suggesting that Elizabeth actually got rid of Worgan’s piano in 1810. Even though it is logical to propose that Elizabeth’s new piano was ‘larger’ and ‘finer’ than Worgan’s piano, we do not know exactly how it differed from Worgan’s piano.\(^{183}\) Furthermore, there is no evidence that Thomas Laycock’s piano was an instrument in upright form.

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183 See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
‘Structural problems inherent in square piano fabrication, as the makers strove for a more powerful tone, [and] increasing string tensions while at the same time widening the case to accommodate extended keyboards caused many [piano makers] … to ponder the merits of a new type of piano in upright form.’184 (Many design difficulties specific to the upright piano were successfully overcome by late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century makers; in 1811, the Viennese piano maker J. F. Bleyer, on examining an upright piano, wrote: ‘When we examine this action closely, we observe the drops of sweat shed by its inventor.’)185

That an upright piano would have found its way to Australia so soon after its invention in London is unlikely. Significant dates pertinent to the development of the upright piano are listed below.

- 1795: Patent for Robert Stodart’s ‘upright grand piano-forte in the form of a bookcase’—commonly referred to as an ‘upright grand’ (Plates 2, 130 and 131).186
- December 1798: Patent for William Southwell’s ‘upright square’ piano.187
- 1800: John Isaac Hawkins’ (1772–1855) small upright piano (‘patent portable grand’).188
- 1811: Patent for the inventive William Southwell’s ‘cabinet piano’ (Plate 132).189
- ca 1811: Broadwood begins to make cabinet pianos.190
- 1811: Robert Wornum’s (1780–1852) ‘cottage upright’.191

If Laycock’s piano arrived with him in September 1791 on board the Gorgon, the instrument could not have been in upright form—such pianos were not invented until 1795. There remains the possibility that Laycock imported an upright instrument into the colony sometime after 1795 and before his death.

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184 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 96.
187 Patent no. 2264, registered Thursday, 6 December 1798. See ibid., p. 250, fn. 43.
190 See Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 97.
191 The height of Wornum’s ‘cottage upright’ was approximately 1.5 metres. By the mid-1830s, ‘the square piano was being replaced by the [cottage] upright … which took up even less room and became the favourite domestic instrument of the Victorian household’. Goold, Mr. Langshaw’s Square Piano, p. 273.
on Wednesday, 27 December 1809. If his piano (after Thursday, 4 January 1810, Elizabeth Macarthur’s piano) had been such a rare and innovative type of instrument (and this within the contexts both of English and of colonial culture), remarks would certainly have been made by contemporaneous colonial commentators, who remain silent on the matter.

Left: Plate 130 Upright grand piano by John Broadwood & Sons (London, 1815).

Source: Ralph Schureck Collection, Sydney. Reproduced with permission of Ralph Schureck. Photos by the author.
It did not take too long, however, for upright pianos to find their way to the colony. The first mention in the antipodean press of an upright piano appears in an advertisement published in the Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen’s Land Advertiser on Friday, 9 April 1824.\footnote{See Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen’s Land Advertiser, 9 April 1824, No. 414, p. 4, Trove, National Library of Australia.} The first mention of an upright piano in the Sydney press appears in an advertisement for the raffling of ‘an elegant patent upright piano-forte, by Wornum’, published in The Australian on Wednesday, 18 April 1827.\footnote{The Australian, 18 April 1827, No. 188, p. 2, Trove, National Library of Australia.} In both instances, these advertisements appear more than a decade after Elizabeth Macarthur purchased Thomas Laycock’s piano at his estate auction on Thursday, 4 January 1810.
A portrait of the merchant, pastoralist, politician and philanthropist Robert Campbell at Wharf House, Sydney, painted by Charles Rodius in 1834, shows Campbell ‘seated on a gilt japanned chair beside a table … In the background can be seen an upright grand piano’ (or, because the instrument’s proportions are inaccurately depicted, perhaps a cabinet piano), with a typical ‘pleated silk front’ panel (commonly known as the ‘sunburst’ or ‘cloudburst’ design) in the upper section.\(^{194}\)

Approximately one year after Campbell’s portrait was painted, the pianoforte maker John Benham\(^ {195}\) designed(?) and produced the first Australian-made piano. This extant instrument is in upright form (a ‘cottage’ piano).\(^ {196}\)

Having bought a piano from Thomas Laycock’s estate, Elizabeth Macarthur may have held onto Worgan’s piano for sentimental reasons (it would be surprising if Elizabeth had not formed at least some degree of attachment to Worgan’s piano), having in her possession (for a time at least) two pianos at Elizabeth Farm cottage. If this was the case (there is no documentary evidence to support the notion), Elizabeth may not have been the only colonist to have had two pianos in her home. The ‘sale of the contents of John Palmer’s [1760–1833] Woolloomooloo House in 1816\(^ {197}\) … included two pianofortes’.\(^ {198}\) (‘John Palmer arrived in New South Wales with the First Fleet … as purser of [the] … Sirius.’)\(^ {199}\)

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for families who owned two pianos, one piano usually functioned as a practice instrument. Normally, the practice piano had been in the family’s possession for some years, and was the older of the two pianos.

If Elizabeth held onto Worgan’s piano when she acquired her ‘new’ piano from Laycock’s estate, Worgan’s piano—as an ‘old-fashioned’ practice instrument—may have been relegated to an ‘unimportant’ room. Elizabeth’s new, more fashionable piano would have taken pride of place in the drawing room of Elizabeth Farm cottage.

\(^{194}\) Fahy, ‘Furniture and Furniture-Makers’, p. 123.
\(^{195}\) Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser, 9 July 1835, p. 3.
\(^{196}\) This instrument is part of the Powerhouse Museum Collection, Registration no. H8405.
\(^{197}\) Woolloomooloo House, ‘mortgaged for over £13,000, was eventually sold to’ the merchant and pastoralist Edward Riley (1784–1825) ‘for £2,290 in May 1822, though the stock and furnishings were auctioned in 1816’. J. Conway, ‘Riley, Edward (1784–1825)’, in Australian Dictionary of Biography Online (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University) [First published in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 1967], Vol. 2.
\(^{198}\) Fahy, ‘Furniture and Furniture-Makers’, p. 123.
What is certain is that on Thursday, 4 January 1810 Elizabeth purchased a piano from the estate of Thomas Laycock for the seemingly extortionate sum of £85.\textsuperscript{200} Reckoned in today’s monetary values, Elizabeth’s new piano cost approximately £2900 (A$5000).\textsuperscript{201} There are several explanations for why Elizabeth Macarthur paid the not inconsiderable sum of £85 for Laycock’s piano.\textsuperscript{202} Perhaps she was an unfortunate victim of the financial opportunism that sometimes existed in relation to the cost of square pianos sold by Sydney residents to other citizens of that city; after all, the population of the colony was relatively small, and pianos were a rare and desirable commodity. On Sunday, 24 July 1803, for example, a piano (presumably square) was advertised for sale in the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser};\textsuperscript{203} the asking price was an exorbitant 60 guineas (approximately three times the price of a new square piano in London). Judge Advocate Ellis Bent provides another example of the unprincipled practice. In a letter dated Friday, 27 April 1810, Bent, writing from Sydney to his mother in England, recounts:

Mrs. Paterson had a small pianoforte [that is, a square piano] but she asked for it £40. and the sounding board was broken [a testament perhaps to the extremes of temperature and humidity in Sydney], and the instrument was in other respects not a good one. I offered her £26 for it, but it was not accepted, tho’ it did not cost her more than £25 and she had used it for ten years.\textsuperscript{204}

Mrs Paterson ‘was the wife of the lieutenant-colonel of the New South Wales Corps and had arrived with her husband in 1791. At the time Bent wrote she was packing to leave for England.’\textsuperscript{205}

One assumes that the piano purchased by Elizabeth Macarthur at Thomas Laycock’s estate auction on Thursday, 4 January 1810 was, unlike Mrs Paterson’s square piano, in good condition. ‘Either Mrs Macarthur had been practising assiduously since Worgan’s departure, or she was determined to give her daughters the early opportunities she herself had lacked.’\textsuperscript{206} One also assumes that Elizabeth was so drawn to the instrument that she was prepared to spend £85 to acquire it.

\textsuperscript{200} Macarthur Papers, pp. 9, 11. See Broadbent, \textit{Elizabeth Farm Parramatta}, p. 38. See also ‘The Allure, for Elizabeth Macarthur, of Laycock’s Longman & Broderip(?) Piano: Summary’ in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.

\textsuperscript{201} Currency conversion via the National Archives; and Universal Currency Converter.

\textsuperscript{202} See ‘Brian Barrow’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano: Elizabeth Macarthur’s Second Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.

\textsuperscript{203} \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}, 24 July 1803, Vol. 1, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{204} Bent, ‘Letter to His Mother’, 27 April 1810. See \textit{Ellis Bent Correspondence} (Canberra: National Library of Australia), MS 195, pp. 147–8.


\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
Thomas Laycock

Thomas Laycock had been quartermaster to the NSW Corps. He arrived in Sydney on the *Gorgon* in September 1791. In February 1793, Laycock was granted 32 hectares ‘at Parsley Bay, later the site of Vaucluse House … [and] by 1807’ he held a total of 670 hectares.207 Given Elizabeth’s social aspirations and pretentions, it is not surprising that she bought a piano that had belonged to one of Sydney’s most eminent gentlemen and owner of one of the largest flocks of sheep in New South Wales.

By 1810, Elizabeth Farm was ‘well established and well ordered with its comfortable cottage, its gardens and orchard’.208 At this time, Governor Lachlan Macquarie spoke of Elizabeth Farm: ‘This [has] … by far the finest soil and best pasturage I have yet seen in the colony; the grounds are beautiful and bounded by a large creek … I saw some fields of fine promising wheat and several numerous flocks of sheep and herds of horned cattle.’209

Because of Thomas Laycock’s wealth, it was almost inevitable that (even as a second-hand instrument) his ‘elegant piano-forte’210 was likely to be an expensive item to purchase at his estate auction. (Laycock had already contributed to Elizabeth Macarthur’s pianistic aspirations; it was he who led the detachment of soldiers that suppressed the Irish convict uprising of 1804. The Irish rebels had threatened Worgan’s piano with destruction by fire, and Laycock’s actions had inadvertently preserved the instrument from damage.)

In 1805—the year after Laycock had helped subdue the Irish convict uprising—a letter was written by one officer of the NSW Corps to another concerning the scandalous behaviour of Thomas Laycock:

> It gives me extreme uneasiness to relate to you unpleasant news concerning … Mr. Laycock … whose conduct has been so extremely improper since his wife has left the colony as to be noticed by almost every person and if possible every succeeding day has been marked in him with some fresh act of folly, indecency or un-officer-like behaviour … It is with regret that I add the father’s bad example has been follow’d by the son [Thomas Laycock, 1786?–1823]—You will perhaps scarcely credit that L’ Laycock escorted his fathers convict whore through the

208 King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World*, p. 56.
streets arm and arm on duty in full regimentals & had the indecency to walk with her on the public parade last Sunday whilst the band of the regiment was playing.211

Four years after this letter of condemnation was penned, Laycock’s son was struck by lightning whilst picnicking at South Head.

[O]n Sunday 15 January 1809, a ‘genteel pleasure party’ of fourteen officers and ‘ladies’ went to the South Head where, between 3 and 4 o’clock in the afternoon, they were preparing to take a cold collation beneath a fig tree. They had tables set up, with knives and forks, and it was supposed that the cutlery attracted the lightning which, without warning, suddenly struck the picnic party. No one was killed but a young lady had her hair set ablaze, Mr [John] Harris [1754–1838] and Mr Sloane were knocked down, Lieutenant Laycock was lamed, Captain Porteous felt the shock and Mr Gregory Blaxland [1778–1853], who later, with [William] Lawson [1774–1850] and [William Charles] Wentworth [1790–1872], found a way across the Blue Mountains, had a bottle knocked out of his hand but escaped injury.212

Eleven months later, Thomas Laycock the elder died—mentally deranged and unable to manage his affairs—’at his house in Pitt’s Row’,213 on Wednesday, 27 December 1809.

It appears that Thomas Laycock, jr, had no wish to keep his father’s piano. Perhaps Thomas, jr, having married Isabella Bunker on Thursday, 1 June in 1809, already owned a piano himself, or perhaps he simply ‘was not sufficiently interested [in music] to retain … [the piano] of his father’.214

**Thomas Laycock’s Estate Auction**

Four days after the death of Thomas Laycock, sr, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Sunday, 31 December 1809 advertised the auctioning of his estate:

**Sale by Auction, by Mr. Bevan,**

On Thursday next the 4th of January, 1810, on the premises of Mr. Laycock, deceased, in Pitt’s Row, at ten o’clock in the forenoon, all

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213 Ibid., p. 105.
214 Ibid., p. 105.
the neat household furniture, consisting of bedsteads, beds, bolsters, blankets, and mattrasses, tables and chairs, table linen, sheeting, a small quantity of plate, knives, forks, and all kinds of kitchen furniture, a quantity of wearing apparel, some fine Hyson tea, sugar, wine and spirits, an elegant piano-forte with music books.215

The auctioneer, David Bevan, owned sales rooms in George Street. Bevan’s description of Laycock’s piano as ‘elegant’ may have carried a very specific implication.

From at least 1815 Broadwood price lists offered certain pianos with an optional ‘Elegant’ decoration.

For example, in 1815, Broadwood offered a ‘Square, elegant’ for £26 … a ‘Square with single action’ for £17 6s [and] … a ‘Square with double action’ for £18 3s.

What was so special about the ‘Elegant’ that it should cost more than any other square piano.216

William Frederick Collard (1776–1866) used the same description, at least until 1832, as did Robert Wornum, at least until 1838.

Collard offered a square ‘elegant, with rounded corners’ for £40 … this was more expensive than six other sorts of square piano and less expensive than three other types.

Wornum’s ‘Elegant … from 46 to 50 guineas’ [was the most expensive of six types].

How do we de-code their use of the word ‘Elegant’? Could it, for example, have meant buhl [boulle] or other inlay?217

Although this seems likely, the perplexing problem of ‘elegant’ pianos remains as a tantalising goad to the cryptologist. What is obvious is that ‘elegant’ pianos were intended for higher-end customers.

That Elizabeth Macarthur travelled from Elizabeth Farm to Sydney to attend the auction of Thomas Laycock’s estate indicates the degree of her resolve to acquire another piano (and perhaps an ‘elegant’ one at that). That she acquired the piano of the eventually disreputable Thomas Laycock, sr, is astonishing, given her tendency towards snobbery. That she could make time to travel to the auction is remarkable; Elizabeth constantly worked to ensure that Elizabeth

217  Ibid., p. 184.
Farm did not fail. Writing to the wealthy Sydney merchant and trader Garnham Blaxcell (1778–1817) on Saturday, 20 May 1809, Elizabeth confessed that ‘every day I feel such an accumulated weight of responsibility and care, that whatever tends to lighten any part of it is desirable’.\(^{218}\) Perhaps Elizabeth hoped that the purchase of a ‘new’ and ‘elegant’ piano from the estate of Thomas Laycock would catalyze the creation of music-making contexts within which her ‘accumulated weight of responsibility and care’ might be lightened.

A letter written by John Macarthur—who was into his second year of what was to become an eight-year absence in England—to Elizabeth on Friday, 3 August 1810, reveals that he knew that his wife was constantly pressured by the decision-making and day-to-day activities associated with running the farm. He writes:

> I am perfectly aware, my beloved wife of the difficulties you have to contend with, and fully convinced that not one woman in a thousand, (no one that I know) would have resolution and perseverance to contend with them all, much more to surmount them in the manner that you have so happily done. That I am grateful and delighted with your conduct I think it is needless for me to say.\(^{219}\)

Elizabeth appears determined to be financially successful, presumably in order both that her family could enjoy the benefits of a prosperous life and that she would never again be poor (memories of her youthful status as a ‘charity child’ would doubtless have strengthened her resolve). At the time, poverty was regarded as the result of a deficient character,\(^{220}\) and Elizabeth would have done all in her power to avoid being regarded in such a way. ‘A common upper-class view was that poverty was a product of indolence and that the indigent poor had only themselves to blame.’\(^{221}\)

Elizabeth’s purchase of a piano from Laycock’s estate on Thursday, 4 January 1810 suggests that music-making may still have been a part of her life, perhaps a pleasurable and contemplative foil to the daily pressures associated with her running of the farm. It is possible that since Worgan’s departure in 1791, she

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\(^{220}\) Attitudes have not changed. Dr John Falzon, Chief Executive of St Vincent de Paul Society’s National Council and a member of the Australian Social Inclusion Board, and Sally Cowling, Research Manager, UnitingCare Burnside, state in an essay written to mark the start of Anti-Poverty Week: ‘For nearly 15 years, welfare reform in Australia has been driven by breathless enthusiasm for America’s “new Paternalism” and its “close supervision of the poor”. It presumes people “doing it tough” are living examples of moral failure.’ J. Falzon and S. Cowling, ‘Poverty of Ideas in Welfare Crackdown’, Sydney Morning Herald, 18 October 2010, [Opinion], p. 13.

\(^{221}\) Bridges, Foundations of Identity, p. 23.
had continued to practise the piano, and despite her concerns (‘but I fear that without my master [George Worgan] I shall not make any great proficiency’), the standard of her playing had improved.

### Music Books

The advertisement published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Sunday, 31 December 1809 for the auctioning of Laycock’s estate mentions the inclusion of ‘music books’ with the ‘elegant piano-forte’. The addition of music books would certainly have made the lot more attractive to potential buyers. This was because

> Australia was a captive local retail music market, perpetually kept waiting and hungry by its geographical isolation for new imported, usually printed, musical product from homeland Britain and Europe. Imagining how limited the available repertoire was, is not hard; emigrants—professional and amateur—may well have brought their own music collections with them on the voyage out ... once here, they were literally stuck with their ‘desert island’ selection, save for periodic arrival of shipments of ‘new music’ from home (always prominently advertised by music-sellers).

It is not known whether or not Elizabeth could play the pieces contained in the music books that were sold along with Laycock’s piano at David Bevin’s George Street sales rooms, nor is it known specifically what repertoire these music books contained. The books may have contained works by composers listed in a letter dated Tuesday, 9 December 1806, written by the explorer Matthew Flinders to his mother-in-law:

> Have you a piano forte in the house for them: if you have, be so good as to lay out two guineas for me in music and present to them in my name: it will be proper to get some friend in London to chuse the newest and best ... [Ignaz] Pleyel, [Daniel] Steibelt, [Joseph] Mazinghi and [Joseph] Heydn [Haydn] are amongst the best authors.

Or perhaps the music books that Elizabeth Macarthur purchased contained works by the composers listed in a letter dated Friday, 27 April 1810, written in Sydney by judge advocate Ellis Bent to his mother:

> If the piano should be sent

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I should like a few books of well selected music, to be sent with it including, songs, operas, sonatas, lessons etc’, of Joseph Mazzinghi, Louis von Esch (d. ca 1819), James Hook, Joseph Haydn, Ignaz Pleyel and others. 226

**Why Did Elizabeth Macarthur Purchase Thomas Laycock’s Piano?**

The acquisition in 1810 of an ‘elegant’, and possibly more ‘modern’, piano 227 may have represented Elizabeth’s desire to appear cultured, wealthy and up-to-date (in 1810, Worgan’s 1780/86? Beck piano would have been decidedly old-fashioned). By 1810, Sydney was a culturally self-confident city and Elizabeth Macarthur one of the burgeoning colony’s more prominent citizens. As surgeon Joseph Arnold (1782–1818) wrote to his brother on Sunday, 18 March 1810:

[A] person coming into Sydney cove would think himself in the midst of a large city. If he dines out here he finds all the luxury and elegance of the first English tables: and elegant equipages are often observed in the streets: the accommodations at the inns are as good as any where in England and you may have wines of almost every kind. 228

Elizabeth Macarthur’s ownership of a piano was a status symbol. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the piano attracted attention as a status symbol to an even greater extent than had been the case with the harpsichord. An expensive, attractively decorated piano implied a certain economic and social standing; a small shabby instrument might well be taken as evidence of the limited means of its owner. There was every incentive to be seen to be able to afford the latest and most fashionable type. Yet it was not merely a question of physical appearance; the pianoforte was undergoing rapid development, and there were thus good musical reasons for constantly updating one’s model … Pianos ‘with additional keys’ were often advertised, and they were keenly sought by players. 229

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226 I am indebted to Stewart Symonds for making his transcription of this letter available.
227 See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
Pianos ‘with additional keys’

John Broadwood was the first piano maker to extend the keyboard compass of the English grand piano to 5.5 octaves. ‘Until 1790 all known pianos sold by Broadwood were of 5 octaves’ (FF–f3). [T]hese 61-note [fully chromatic] keyboards correspond exactly with the resources required by all published music of the period’,230 and represent the keyboard compass commonly encountered throughout most of late eighteenth-century Europe. From 1790, Broadwood added (for some grand pianos) an extra half-octave in the treble. This resulted in a compass of FF–c4. Broadwood added the extra notes in response to a request from the pianist-composer Jan Ladislav Dussek, who asked that they be incorporated for ‘dramatic sparkle’.231 The extra treble notes were soon commonly referred to as ‘additional keys’.

The inventive Irish harpsichord, piano and harp maker William Southwell had already made the first extended compass square piano during the early 1780s.232 The ‘earliest known square piano with a five-and-a-half-octave keyboard is … inscribed “Southwell Fecit 1784”’.233 This is the earliest known piano of any kind to have a 5.5-octave keyboard.234

In order to incorporate the additional keys into the limited space available in a square piano, Southwell extended ‘the soundboard to the left, above the treble keys’, and lengthened ‘the bridge into a recurving U-shape’.235 The hammers for the additional notes struck ‘a separate order of strings’236 (attached to a new little hitch-pin block fastened to the back of the case) through a slot ‘cut in the far edge of the soundboard … [The] top eight keys and hammers (f3–c4)’237 were ‘fitted to a separate keyframe so that the mechanism’ did not need to be curtailed, and passed ‘right underneath the soundboard’.238

Around the 1830s, additional keys in square pianos were added by lengthening the entire instrument, and having ‘all the notes in one run’239 without any need for ‘a slot [to be] cut in the … soundboard for the extra hammers to rise through’.240

230 Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 69. ‘In Spain the standard keyboard was usually GG to g3.’ Ibid., p. 69, fn. 51.
232 See Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, p. 70.
233 Cole, The Pianoforte in the Classical Era, p. 73.
234 See ibid., caption for Plate 5, between p. 210 and p. 211.
235 Ibid., p. 105.
236 Bozarth and Debenham, ‘Piano Wars’, p. 58.
237 Ibid., p. 58.
Square pianos with additional keys began to appear frequently during the early 1790s. It is reasonable to assume that Southwell’s belated patent for the idea (number 2017, granted in London on Saturday, 18 October 1794) was conceded by all other piano makers. Those who incorporated additional keys into their instruments may have paid Southwell a fee for the use of his invention.

In 1793, Culliford, Rolfe & Barrow made and sold three square pianos with additional keys—violating their Monday, 2 January 1786 14-year exclusive contract with Longman & Broderip, in which they had agreed not to make or sell pianos on their own. Broadwood began making 5.5-octave square pianos in 1793.

The fact that by 1793 the extended keyboard compass was being used—with or without Southwell’s permission—by esteemed piano makers may have caused the inventor to seek a patent in 1794. The demand for pianos with additional keys gave rise to music composed especially for such instruments. For example, on Tuesday, 19 November 1793, Longman & Broderip published ‘A Sonata for the Grand and Small Piano Forte with Additional Keys. Composed, and Dedicated to Mrs Chinnery, by J. L. Dussek. Op. 24’. Another work in which the extended keyboard compass was exploited followed from their press, on Friday, 4 April 1794, and ‘by that autumn Longman & Broderip were ready to enter the market of building and selling pianos on which to play this music’.

The earliest extant Longman & Broderip 5.5-octave square piano is dated 1796 (serial number 306). Five-and-a-half-octave Longman & Broderip square pianos were subject to a serial number series that ‘ran from approximately 1795 to 1798 and [to] a serial number of approximately 900’.

Thomas Laycock arrived in Sydney in 1791. If he brought a piano with him, and if the instrument was a square piano, it may have had additional keys. If this was so, that fact may have enticed Elizabeth Macarthur to purchase the instrument at Laycock’s estate auction. Given that eminent and fashionable makers such as

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242 See Cole, Broadwood Square Pianos, pp. 70–1.
243 See Bozarth and Debenham, ‘Piano Wars’, pp. 50–1, 82. See ‘9) Thomas Culliford (1747–1821)’, in Appendix E, Volume 2 of this publication.
244 See Bozarth and Debenham, ‘Piano Wars’, p. 59, fn. 39.
249 See ibid.
Broadwood began making 5.5-octave square pianos in 1793 (three years after Laycock arrived in Sydney), and Longman & Broderip in ca 1794, it seems unlikely, however, that Laycock’s instrument had additional keys.

An advertisement published on Saturday, 30 October 1813 in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* lists ‘[f]or sale, a capital piano forte, with the additional keys, made by Bolton’.\(^{250}\) This is the first advertisement appearing in the Sydney press in which a piano with additional keys is described. It is reasonable to assume that this Bolton instrument was a square piano.

(Bolton’s identity remains a mystery. He may have been the ‘T. Bolton’ who composed ‘Six Waltzes, Composed and Adapted as Lessons for the Piano Forte, with Accompaniments for a Tambourine and Triangle (ad libitum); And Instructions for Performing on the Tambourine’.\(^{251}\) An anonymous critic writing in *The Monthly Magazine; Or, British Register* of Tuesday, 1 April 1800 described Bolton’s ‘Six Waltzes’ in the following way: ‘lovers of tambourine music will find a variety of useful hints. The flamps, semi-flamps, the travale, the double-travale, the gigles, the bass, the turn, and other necessary particulars, are explained. The waltzes are, for the most part, uncommonly pleasing, and well calculated for tambourine and triangle accompaniments.’\(^{252}\)

The advertisement for the Bolton piano with additional keys (appearing in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 30 October 1813) was published only three years after Elizabeth Macarthur had purchased Laycock’s pianoforte\(^ {253}\) at David Bevin’s, on Thursday, 14 January 1810.

Whilst it is possible that Laycock’s piano was an instrument with additional keys, there is no documentary evidence to support the notion. If the instrument had additional keys, David Bevan did not need to mention the fact in his advertisement for the piano’s sale at Laycock’s estate auction (published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* on Sunday, 31 December 1809). By 1809, a 68-note keyboard compass (5.5 octaves: FF–c\(^4\)) was nothing special.

The casework and/or nameboard of Laycock’s ‘elegant’ piano was probably more opulently and/or intricately ornamented than that of Worgan’s Beck piano\(^ {254}\)—

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251 T. Bolton, *Six Waltzes, Composed and Adapted as Lessons for the Piano Forte, with Accompaniments for a Tambourine and Triangle (ad libitum); And Instructions for Performing on the Tambourine* (London: Goulding, Phipps & d’Almaine, n.d.).


254 Concerning the meaning of the term ‘elegant’ in relation to pianos, see ‘Thomas Laycock’s Estate Auction’, above.
this being a factor that enticed Elizabeth Macarthur to buy. Although Elizabeth may have been eager to display her ‘wealth in a material way … unlike [some] … who rode the wave of pastoral prosperity … [she] was never vulgar. When [the] … newly acquired wealth [of others] resulted in flashy opulence, [Elizabeth was] … “of the best polish.” The maintenance of her good taste may have been supported by the fact that she and her children kept ‘more clear of the mob than any family in the colony’. Regardless of the intricacy of the casework on Laycock’s piano, the instrument’s possible modernity—when compared with Worgan’s Beck piano—may have made it desirable to Elizabeth.

It is at this point—that Elizabeth Macarthur ceases to be part of the history of Worgan’s square piano. Unfortunately, Elizabeth Macarthur subsequently endured a great sadness.

Early in 1817, after what must have been a wrenching eight-year sojourn in London, John Macarthur returned to New South Wales.

Eight years is a long time for any couple to be apart. All we know about their long anticipated reunion is the fact that it was not always a happy one …

John was more irascible and high-handed while Elizabeth had lost any trace of shyness. She had become a woman of property, used to giving orders and being obeyed by her staff.

Late in life, John Macarthur succumbed to insanity (today, he would probably have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder). He seesawed between bursts of great energy and deep depressions leading finally to madness. He accused Elizabeth of adultery and wanton behavior and as a punishment banished her from the family home [at Camden Park]. Elizabeth hoped this separation [she lived at Elizabeth Farm cottage] was only for a short time, but she never saw John again, he died … [on Friday, 11 April] 1834 at the age of sixty-seven; his wife was in Sydney assisting her daughter Mary give birth when the news reached her. Elizabeth grieved in private and stoically showed no indication of the

255 See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication.
256 Broadbent, Elizabeth Farm Parramatta, pp. 38–9.
258 See ‘Elizabeth Macarthur’s Longman & Broderip Square Piano?’, in Appendix B, Volume 2 of this publication. No documentary evidence exists to support the notion that Laycock’s piano had additional keys.
pain she must have felt when told her husband never spoke of her again. However, a letter to her son Edward in England is said to have carried a mark where a tear had fallen.260

‘To her credit Elizabeth continued to be respected by many of the leading colonial families, even when [John] Macarthur’s psychosis developed, by June 1832, to the point that physical restraint was necessary.’261 (She confided to her son Edward: ‘Let us be thankful to the Almighty, that a wholesome restraint was placed upon your beloved father before his malady had induced him to acts of greater violence.’)262

John Macarthur Dies

The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Tuesday, 15 April 1834 published John Macarthur’s obituary. It contains some of ‘the conventional (and somewhat empty) eulogistic pieties of the day’:263

Died

At Camden, on Friday last, John McArther, Esq. M. C. This gentleman in political life, advocated the imperious principle of confining all offices and civic honours to emigrants. In private society he united the highest qualities. His prisoner servants never had occasion to complain of deficient sustenance: and it is much to be regretted that strong political prejudices should have so much sullied the otherwise excellent disposition of such a man.264

Perhaps an observation made in 1822 by the colonist Robert Scott (1799–1844) represents a more complete insight into John Macarthur’s personality: ‘the leading man in the colony … very clever, shrewd calculating man, with an extraordinary degree of perseverance and foresight, but a man of the most violent passions, his friendship strong and his hatred invincible.’265

260 Kennedy, ‘Elizabeth Macarthur (1766–1850)’.
261 Geraghty, *A Change in Circumstance*, p. 25.
262 Quoted in King, *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World*, p. 154.
Although Elizabeth deeply mourned the death of her fractious husband, life at Elizabeth Farm was pleasant. As a widow she had more visitors than as the wife of a very quarrelsome man, and she enjoyed their conversation.

She accepted without question that her sons would in future make the major decisions within the family. In her widowhood, they sometimes consulted her but, while she remained the centre of her family’s affections, she was never its head.

Elizabeth Macarthur Dies

Sixteen years after the death of John Macarthur, Elizabeth Macarthur died, aged 83, on Saturday, 9 February 1850, on the eve of the discovery of gold in Australia. She was ‘beloved and revered by all who knew her’. One of Elizabeth’s greatest strengths ‘was her ability to build and maintain a strong and harmonious family life, even through the long absences of her husband … and the innumerable demands of farm life’. Elizabeth appears to have regarded her main roles in the colony ‘as … setting … social standards and … nurturing … a society of responsible people’. Perhaps her ‘most remarkable achievement was her management of the Macarthurs’ complex agricultural and business empire’. She was a woman of ‘energy, endurance and culture who provided a background of solid worth and modest cultivation [both] for … [her] menfolk and for … [colonial] society as a whole’.

The Sydney Morning Herald of Saturday, 16 February 1850 announced Elizabeth Macarthur’s death in a perfunctory way, seemingly insensible to her lifelong courage, vision and tenacity: ‘Died. On the 9th instant, at Clovelly, the residence of H. Watson Parker, Esq., Elizabeth, widow of the late John Macarthur, Esq., of Camden, aged 83 years.’

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266 Atkinson and Aveling, Australians, p. 114.
270 Clarke and Spender, Life Lines, p. 21.
271 Ibid., p. 29.
272 Cumes, Their Chastity Was Not Too Rigid, p. 27.