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THE HISTORY

OF

THE WALKER AND ARCHER FAMILIES IN AUSTRALIA

1813 -1868

by

Bernard Henry Crew

A Thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.
N.B. This genealogical table is designed merely to show the family relationships relevant to this thesis and many names are omitted. It is based on family trees among the "Archer Papers" in the Mitchell Library, other miscellaneous documents and information from surviving members of both families.
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INTRODUCTION

The pastoral industry of New South Wales began a period of rapid expansion in 1820 and wool soon became the leading article of colonial export. Wool production had important effects on the social, political and economic development of Australia. It exerted a considerable influence on exploration and settlement in eastern Australia; on the growth of inland towns and sea-ports; on the development of transport services and communications; and on the establishment of merchant houses and banking institutions and a system of overseas marketing.

This thesis is an attempt to describe the history of the Walker and Archer families in relation to pastoral expansion. This is possible because aspects of the history of the families are clearly related to the development of the pastoral industry. William Walker, for example, first arrived in Sydney in 1813, the year after John Macarthur had at last established beyond doubt that wool grown in Australia could be sold profitably on the English market and only a few weeks after Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth returned from their discovery of a track across the Blue Mountains. Walker came to Australia as agent for a firm of Calcutta merchants and later set up in business on his own account. His attention was given mainly to his mercantile interests but his holdings of land and stock were considerable, he played a part in flock improvement during the eighteen-twenties and he engaged in the shipping and marketing of wool as well as in its production. His
brother, James, who migrated to New South Wales in 1823, received a grant of land in the Blue Mountains district on his arrival in the colony and concentrated his attention upon wool growing - an indication of the increased importance of the pastoral industry. The main movement of stock from the restricted area around Sydney was just getting under way at this time and settlement of the Bathurst, Argyle and Hunter Valley districts proceeded rapidly during the twenties. In the thirties there was a further movement of stock from the nineteen counties out into the apparently unlimited regions beyond the boundaries of location. During this period James Walker extended his holdings north to Lue in the Mudgee district and then further out still to the northwest on to the upper Castlereagh River and so outside the settled districts. His runs on the Castlereagh were held under depasturing licenses so that he was a "landholder" in the earlier sense in respect of Wallerawang and Lue and a "squatter" in respect of his runs along the Castlereagh.

At the beginning of this squatting period David Archer settled in New South Wales. Arriving in 1834 he gained experience on the properties of his uncle, James Walker. In 1839 he formed a partnership in a squatting venture with his cousin Edward, eldest son of William Walker. With a small party, which included two of his brothers, David Archer drove a flock of sheep from the Castlereagh district to Moreton Bay where he occupied a run at Durundur, sixty miles north of Brisbane. This proved unsuitable for sheep so in 1845 he moved his
flocks sixty miles further inland to runs on Emu and Cooyar Creeks on the western side of the Brisbane Valley. Exploring trips by his brother Tom resulted in the discovery of better country to the north on the upper Burnett River and the Archer brothers established themselves on two adjoining runs in the Burnett district in 1848. More extensive exploration by Charles Archer led the brothers to move north once again and in 1855 they occupied a very large area of country on the Fitzroy River near the present city of Rockhampton. Members of the family still live on Gracemere, the first run taken up on the Fitzroy River.

A great deal of information about the period under review is contained in family letters, business papers and other records which have been preserved. There are gaps in the records and some of the material is merely personal - portions of it even trivial- but on the whole these papers contain a great deal of useful historical material. The illustrations they provide of events in family history also throw light on conditions and events during the squatting era. In particular they provide valuable information about conditions of settlement on the squatting frontier, since the Archers occupied runs on the northern pioneering fringe of settlement from 1840 to 1860 as they moved with their flocks and herds by stages from the Castlereagh district to the banks of the Fitzroy River. The main emphasis of the thesis is on this movement. Squatting on this moving frontier of settlement is contrasted on one hand with conditions of settlement before 1840 in the middle district of New
South Wales where James Walker had his runs and on the other with conditions in Central Queensland after 1860 where the Archers remained at Gracemere while the squatting frontier moved beyond the Fitzroy River far to the north and west.

The treatment is chronological. A sketch of the Scottish background of the families is followed by an outline of William Walker's career as a merchant in Sydney and London and an examination of his activities in wool production and marketing. This is followed by a description of Wallerawang and other Walker stations and of the pastoral industry during the eighteen-twenties and eighteen-thirties under a system of land grants and assigned labour. From 1840 attention is given mainly to the Archer runs - a chapter to each. The developments after 1860 mark a new phase in the pastoral industry. At that period in Central Queensland an important change occurred in pastoral technology. The older extensive system of large runs, shepherds and exploitation of natural resources gave way to an intensive system based on smaller areas, fences and boundary riders and methods of improving flocks and runs.

At each stage attention will be given to such topics as exploration and settlement; the establishment of new runs; the impact of the settlers on the aboriginal inhabitants of the region; transport and communications; the supply of labour; pastoral technology; the accumulation of capital; the social conditions of squatting life; the effect of land legislation on the squatters in the outside districts; and the effect of their strange, new environment on the attitudes and characteristics of the squatters.
In spite of their initial lack of capital the Archers were successful as squatters. The thesis that will be maintained is that this success was the outcome of their family background and strong family ties; their technical training; the opportunities they had of gaining pastoral experience in the colony before striking out on their own; and the personal qualities and ability which enabled them to adapt themselves to their new way of life.
CHAPTER 1.

THE SCOTTISH AND AUSTRALIAN BACKGROUND

The ancient Scottish city of Perth was the home of both the Walker and the Archer families during the eighteenth century. The city had an old-established trade with the Continent and from the middle of the century its merchants shared in the increasing trade between Scotland and England. The city grew rapidly, its population increasing from 9,019 in 1755 to 19,871 forty years later\(^1\). Its increasing trade and manufactures brought wealth to its merchants and operatives. Perth was a city 'where the opulent lived genteely without exceeding their expenses' and even during the bad year of 1793, where there were many financial failures elsewhere, there were none of any consequence in Perth.\(^2\)

The Archers were old residents of the city, members of the powerful and exclusive Incorporation of Glovers since 1672. In the eighteenth century, although retaining hereditary rights in the glovers' guild, they had become prosperous merchants, trading in timber from the Baltic countries. William Archer, father of the Australian pioneers, was born in 1786. In the early years of the nineteenth century he was the junior partner in his father's merchant business.\(^3\) He was

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2. ibid, vol.18 (1796) pp. 510-539.
3. C. Archer: "William Archer: Life, Work and Friendships" (1931). This is an account of a grandson of the William Archer referred to in the text.
almost the same age as James and William Walker, the younger sons of a prosperous Perth merchant, and only a little older than Julia Walker, the daughter of their eldest brother. The Archers and the Walkers became friendly and the ties between them were strengthened when William Archer married Julia Walker in 1810. The young couple lived in Perth for only a few years. The French wars and the unsettled conditions afterwards made trade with the Baltic difficult. When William Archer succeeded to his father's business he found himself hampered by lack of capital and facing strong competition from continental shipping. Even when allowance is made for these difficulties he does not seem to have been a very good merchant. He was certainly not a successful one, although he made several moves to improve his business. In 1813 or 1814 he went from Perth to Newburgh, its deepwater port lower down the Tay, and a busier trading centre in spite of its smaller population. After eight or nine years he moved to Glasgow, one of Scotland's busiest ports and industrial cities. From there, in 1825, he migrated to Norway.

He had heard of an opening in the lobster trade at Larvik, a small town on the south-east coast, and knew that living in Norway was cheap. He was also attracted by Larvik's "romantic" scenery. This was the Romantic Age and the town's beautiful little fiord backed by forests and towering granite mountains had appealed to him greatly when he was on a business trip to Norway six years earlier. Fitting out a small schooner he sailed to Larvik in the autumn and soon afterwards bought a large, old, wooden house with a high-pitched tiled roof facing south towards

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the entrance to the fiord. The house stood on a promontory of tumbled rocks and garden ground jutting out from the north-east curve of the bay near the customs house. It was from this promontory that the house derived its name of "Tolderodden".  

Larvik was a boys' paradise. A great variety of sailing craft enlivened the scene across the fiord. At the back of the house were the great granite rocks of the mountains, many of them carved with names commemorating the visits of old Danish kings. The Archer boys could have their fill of boating, swimming, skating, ski-ing and scrambling among the rocks. The fiord bounded Tolderodden on three sides and even the youngest members of the family could paddle in the shallow pool which formed a boat harbour at the foot of the garden.

William Archer had a keen appreciation of fine scenery, and in laying out his property and developing its natural features he displayed a fine taste in landscape gardening. The new ideas gained from England and Europe about agricultural methods had been accompanied in Scotland by a great interest in tree planting. This became almost a passion and resulted in the re-planting of much of the bare surface of the country. William Archer shared in this national passion. The garden ground at Tolderodden was at first a wilderness but, by his own labours and with the assistance of his sons, he transformed it into one of the beauty spots of the southern coast of Norway.

The Archers became very fond of Norway. The younger children, especially those who were born in the country,

5. toll = toll or customs duty; odden = promontory
spoke Norwegian almost as their mother tongue. They adopted many Norwegian customs and took a great interest in Norwegian events and in the country's historic past. Two of the girls and one boy married Norwegians. The sons who settled in Australia often used Norwegian expressions in their letters home and gave many Norwegian names to the places they discovered on their exploring trips. Their strong affection for their family and for their old home was a powerful motive urging them to make a success of their squatting ventures, since financial success would ensure the support of the family in Larvik, the maintenance of the house and the possibility of a long-desired visit home. As Thomas Archer wrote:

"Laurvig contains almost all in which I have any interest, out of this Colony."\(^7\)

For some of his brothers Perth was another place where they had interests since they were always welcome at their mother's old home there. Charles, the eldest brother, was the only one who was educated wholly in Scotland. Most of the others attended the elementary and the "middle" school in Larvik and then went to Perth for a course of training in some engineering or timber trade. This practical technical training was of the greatest value to the Archers since they all went overseas to engage in some colonial occupation, and were able to make good use of the skills they had learnt. Charles went to a West Indian sugar plantation but John became a sailor in a ship owned by William Walker and David, William and Thomas were employed on James Walker's sheep runs in New South Wales.

William Walker joined the London branch of a Scottish bank in 1803, but after a few years joined Fairlie, Ferguson & Co., a firm of merchants with their headquarters in

\(^7\) This is the old spelling of Larvik.
\(^8\) Thomas Archer: Letter to his mother, 24 May, 1842.
at Calcutta, nine ships engaged in the eastern trade and a branch office in London. William Walker probably joined the firm in London but he was soon sent to Calcutta. By 1813 he was experienced enough to be sent to Sydney to act as agent for his firm. His immediate task was to collect debts owing to the firm by Robert Campbell. He seems to have carried out this part of his duties with a great deal of tact for he became very friendly with Campbell when the latter returned to Sydney in 1814 and he and his wife became frequent visitors to Campbell's home. Walker seems to have identified himself quickly with the affairs of the colony. He subscribed regularly to the Philanthropic Society, for example, and was an original shareholder in the Bank of New South Wales. In 1817 he returned to Calcutta. After little more than a year he resigned his position with Fairlie, Ferguson & Co., went back to Sydney (where he continued to act on behalf of his former employers) and in 1819 became the junior partner in the merchant firm of Jones, Riley & Walker.

This firm had been founded by Alexander Riley in 1809.

10. Sydney Gazette, 3 July, 1813.
His brother, Edward, joined him in Sydney but in 1811 he went to Calcutta to buy goods for sale in New South Wales. The Rileys soon had a ship trading between Calcutta and Sydney and engaged in whaling and sealing when trade was slack. In 1815 they were joined by Richard Jones who had been a merchant in Sydney since 1809. In 1817 Alexander Riley left Sydney to return to England and Edward Riley took his place in Sydney. In 1819 William Walker joined Jones and Riley and continued his partnership with Riley when Jones withdrew from the firm in 1822. Edward Riley died in 1825. Walker appears to have been associated once again with Jones for a few years but later established his own business under the name of William Walker & Co. By this time his elder brother, James, and two young nephews, Thomas and Archibald Walker, had come to New South Wales. These all brought substantial capital with them and they all had some share in the new firm.

William Walker built a residence in Lower Fort Street and nearby, on the western side of Dawes Point adjoining the battery, he built a wharf and warehouse. The value of these buildings totalled about £10,000. William Walker also had a number of ships engaged in overseas and


coastal trading and in whaling. Walker knew condi-
tions in the colony and both he and Edward Riley had
lived for a number of years in Calcutta and gained first-
hand experience of the Eastern trade. Edward Riley was
kept informed about business conditions in London by his
brother, Alexander, and William Walker also had influen-
tial friends and relatives in London. Richard Jones
spent a considerable part of the period between 1818 and
1825 in London and Walker himself was in London for a
long visit during 1827. Experience such as this and
up-to-date information about conditions in England and
India was of the greatest value to a colonial merchant
and it is not surprising that Walker was able to accumu-
late a capital of £25,000 by 1826. Early in 1831 he
left Sydney to establish a branch of his business in
London in partnership with his brother, James, who accom-
panied him from New South Wales. At the farewell dinner
given to him by his friends William Walker was described
as 'a distinguished member of the merchant body' and as
'wealthy, intelligent and respectable'. It was reported
that he was 'retiring after accumulating a handsome for-
tune by honourable commerce' but that he retained 'a
large stake in soil and commerce'.

19. The New South Wales Calendar and General Post Office
Directory (1836) lists the following ships owned by
W. Walker: Lynx, barque, 180 tons; Lady Leith, brig,
153 tons; Woodlark, barque, 245 tons; Earl Stanhope,
barque, 295 tons; Wolf, barque, 265 tons; Pocklington,
barque, 202 tons. Lowe's City of Sydney Direc-
tory for 1844-5 lists "Caroline", barque, 198 tons and
"Clarence", schooner, 73 tons and, in addition, "Avon"
barque, 263 tons (in partnership with T. Walker).
"Samuel", schooner, and "Mercury", brig, are recorded
as belonging to Walker (See Sydney Gazette, 20 Nov.1821
and 8 Feb. 1831.

made for considerable exaggeration in farewell speeches, but there seems to be justification for these expressions. He was one of the early chairmen of Sydney's first Chamber of Commerce and was recommended by Macquarie as one of the ten members to form the first Legislative Council in New South Wales. Although he does not seem to have taken a leading part in public affairs or on political issues, devoting most of his time and energy to business affairs, one is still left with the impression that he played a part of some importance in the development of commercial life in Sydney between 1819 and 1831.

He also played a part in the early development of the pastoral industry in New South Wales, although his activities as a merchant-shipowner were always more important than his pastoral activities. When he first arrived in Sydney wool was a lively topic of conversation among the colonists. In 1812 Macarthur, Marsden and Riley had sent their wool to London in the first general shipment from the colony. Only a few weeks before Walker's ship sailed into Port Jackson the Blue Mountains had been crossed and within the next two years a road had been built across the Dividing Range to Bathurst. Alexander Riley's wool in that shipment had averaged 2/9 a lb. while some of his best fleeces had brought 5/9. Yet there was only a trifling amount of Spanish blood in his flocks consisting as they did of the hairy Bengal sheep.

22. H.R.A. I. 11 p. 406, Notes 915, 924. Walker's name was ninth on Macquarie's list. The Council was eventually made smaller than this and Walker was not nominated.

23. Walker arrived in Sydney on 3 July, 1813 (see Sydney Gazette, 3 July 1813). Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth returned from their journey on 6 June, 1813.
mixed with a small number of sheep with merino blood which he had bought between 1809 and 1811 to improve his stock. These sheep were running on Raby, Riley's 3,000 acre grant near Liverpool. In 1814 Alexander Riley wrote to his brother Edward, in Calcutta telling of his purchase of six rams from Mrs. Macarthur for 108 guineas and asking Edward to inquire about sheep in Tibet and Kashmir. He also wrote to Thomas Southey, the British expert on merino sheep, asking his advice about crossing the hairy Bengal sheep with merinos and about the comparative merits of merinos from Spain and from Saxony. As a result of the improvement of his flocks and the care he took in their management Riley was able to ship 200 bales of superior wool to England in 1817. This weighed 50,000 lbs. and was estimated to be worth between £7,000 and £8,000.

Riley was a merchant as well as being a landholder and wool was a valuable addition to the cedar and sandalwood the whale-oil and the sealskins which made up the small list of exports from the colony. He and his partner, Richard Jones, began to buy wool for export, paying 10d. to 1/- for inferior fleeces and 1/3 to 1/6 for wool of good quality.

In spite of this early promise wool production laboured under disadvantages. Macquarie favoured the development of small-scale agriculture and was opposed to the extension of stock-raising by "gentlemen-settlers". His land policy prevented the use of the good grazing land opened up by the road over the Blue Mountains and even of large areas of the cowpastures, in spite of periodic droughts which caused settlers in the coastal areas a great deal of trouble, especially when their stock increased in numbers. These difficulties made Alexander Riley sell his
stock in 1817. By the end of the year, as we have already seen, he had left the colony. 24

On William Walker's return to New South Wales towards the end of 1819 the pastoralists formed a strong economic and social section of the community. But they still faced the same difficulties that were present in 1817. Most of the large sheep properties were to be found around Parramatta and Liverpool. Wentworth with 27,350 acres, Macarthur with 9,600 acres and Marsden with 4,500 acres were the largest landholders. Most of the other wool growers had estates of between 2,000 and 3,000 acres comparable in size to Raby. In 1813 Blaxland had been spurred on by the hope of finding new grazing country for this increasing number of his stock. Six years later the need for new grazing areas was even more acute, yet only a few men had been allowed to take their flocks across the range. On the narrow coastal area between Sydney and the Hawkesbury River the increase of flocks had been checked by lack of new land and scarcity of grass. In these circumstances it is not surprising that William Walker gave all his attention at first to his business as a merchant. But in little more than a year those circumstances were to undergo considerable changes.

In September, 1819, John Thomas Bigge arrived in New South Wales with a commission to inquire into conditions in the colony. Bigge found that the colonial market for

24. The Riley Papers, MS collection in the Mitchell Library, give details of the activities of Alexander and Edward Riley. The latter gave evidence before Bigge during his Enquiry. (see C.O. 201/129 Evidence of Edward Riley).
grain and meat was uncertain but that cattle and sheep multiplied easily. He considered that it would be expedient to promote the growth of fine wool in the colony as this would create a valuable export and was the principal if not the only product of the colony which could repay advances from England or pay for the import of foreign manufactures needed in the colony. In other words Bigge declared against Macquarie's policy of small-scale agriculture and in favour of giving pastoralists extensive grants or allowing them to make purchases at Bathurst or in the new country beyond the Cowpastures. This new policy was put into effect during the term of Governor Brisbane. Land was thrown open for settlement at Bathurst, in the south-west and in the Hunter Valley and the immigration of free settlers, especially those with capital, was encouraged. The result was the first great expansion of pastoral settlement.

This pastoral expansion has features similar to the squatting expansion of the mid-thirties and later. It was preceded by the discoveries of the explorers - Blaxland and his companions in 1813, Throsby, Hume and Meehan later in the south-west and Howe north from Windsor to the Hunter River. This exploration was followed by the journeys of the pastoralists who went out along the explorers' tracks looking for areas suitable for their stock, even before Macquarie had left the colony. James Macarthur made an "excursion" into Westmoreland in 1820.25

and Edward Riley also went out to have a look at this new country. The next step was the occupation of the available country. Throsby moved his stock to Sutton Forest; Hannibal Macarthur had sheep on the Wallondilly River when Macquarie made his tour of inspection to the southern and western districts in 1820;26 and settlers quickly took up the country around Bathurst. A fourth aspect of later expansion was the sale of breeding stock by settlers established in the older districts to those who wanted to increase their flocks or to occupy new country. In 1820 only John Macarthur had a large number of pure-bred merino stock, and as he was also the only settler who had an appreciable number of breeding stock available for sale, the sheep he offered sold readily at high prices, a sharp contrast to conditions in 1818 when he could not sell two a year,27 a vindication of his faith in "wool-farming" and in the merino breed and a fortunate circumstance for those far-sighted settlers who realised that they needed improved stock if they were to take advantage of their opportunities.

Few settlers knew anything about stock-breeding. Many attributed the improvement of the wool to the Australian climate alone. Others bought pure-bred stock but attempted to breed from their own cross-bred rams so

26. Governor Macquarie: Journal of a Tour of Inspection of the Western and Southern Countries some time since discovered by Chas. Throsby Esqr. in Octr. & Novr. 1820. Entry for Friday, 20th Octr. 1820.

that, after an initial improvement, their stock deteriorated. 28 To overcome this lack of knowledge and experience an Agricultural Society was formed in 1822. By the end of the first year it had a membership of 116 and had secured the services in England of Thomas Fowell Buxton as "Protector of the Parliamentary Interests of the Society". A group of 35 members subscribed to a special Stock Fund to import pure-bred stock. This fund was made up of shares of £25 each. William Walker subscribed £50, a sum equalled only by Berry and Wollstonecraft and exceeded only by Goulburn and Jamison. 29 By this time William Walker was beginning to show great interest in the development of the wool industry, an interest influenced greatly by his association with Richard Jones and Edward Riley. Jones and the Riley brothers (Alexander in London and Edward in Sydney) played a very important part in the development of the wool industry in the twenties. They took a leading part in introducing pure-bred Saxon merino sheep into New South Wales and this new strain had a great influence on the improvement of the wool produced in Australia after 1825.

29. First Anniversary Address (By the President); List of Members; and Rules and Regulations of the Agricultural Society of New South Wales instituted on the 5th of July, 1822 (1823). See Also Sydney Gazette, 10 July 1823.
Macarthur was one of the earliest to benefit from the expansion of the wool industry in 1820. In 1820 he sold 300 rams to the government for shipment to settlers in Tasmania and in October of the same year he exhibited sheep at the Parramatta Fair, selling 36 by auction for £510/16/6 and twelve privately for £128. Settlers wishing to improve their flocks were eager to buy the sheep he offered. In addition they imported merinos from such well-known flocks as those of the Marquis of Londonderry, Lord Western and Thomas Henty. The losses incurred in these early importations were heavy. The voyage was long, space was limited, the ships were damp below decks and sheep kept on deck ran a risk of being drowned during heavy weather. It was not until 1824 that a shipment reached New South Wales without loss.

William Walker's partner, Richard Jones, and the former head of his firm, Alexander Riley, were attracted to this new development of the pastoral industry. They were responsible for introducing a new merino strain into the New South Wales flocks. Macarthur's sheep were Spanish merinos; so were the sheep imported from famous English flocks in the early twenties. But Saxon breeders had evolved from original Spanish stock a special merino strain bearing a fine, silky wool superior even to Spanish wool. These German sheep-farmers attended universities and made a special study of botany since they considered correct feeding and the provision of artificial pastures an

30. ibid: pp. 325-327, 341-344.
32. ibid: 29 Nov. 1822, 23 Oct. 1823, 7 April 1825.
33. ibid: 23 Oct. 1823. Only half of the 34 merinos belonging to Robert Harrison reached Sydney.
important factor in good wool production. They housed, and sometimes rugged their sheep in winter and at night, exercised them and selected rams for breeding with the greatest care.\textsuperscript{34} In 1825 from flocks such as these Jones imported twenty pure bred rams\textsuperscript{35} and established these at Collaroy, which he owned in partnership with Walter Davidson, a close friend of John Macarthur. These sheep, with 100 ewes he imported later, constituted the first pure Saxon merino flock in Australia. Jones sent his first consignment of wool from this flock in 1826. Its beauty and fineness excited a great deal of interest when it appeared on the London market and German wool merchants began to fear that they might now have a serious rival in the production of fine wool. Settlers in New South Wales were so impressed that they bought Saxon merinos from him at £20 a head.\textsuperscript{36} His Saxons did not get the attention they would have been given in Germany yet, as Jones' success demonstrated, they thrived in the mild Australian climate.

Jones was the first to import Saxon merinos but the largest importer was Alexander Riley. He had been interested in Saxon merinos as early as 1814. When he returned to London in 1818 he became a partner in the firm of Donaldson, Wilkinson and Company, importers of colonial and German wool, and was able to compare wool sent to London by Macarthur, Lawson, the Coxes and other Australian pastoralists with the wool sent to London by German wool producers. Even before Riley saw Jones' first consignment

\textsuperscript{34} Onslow: op.cit. pp.396-398.
\textsuperscript{35} Sydney Gazette: 7 April 1825.
\textsuperscript{36} Macarthur Papers, vol.3, p.173a.
of Australian Saxon wool he had bought 20 pure-bred
Saxon rams and 178 pure-bred Saxon ewes. He sent these to
Sydney in charge of his nephew, young Edward Riley.37 It was
not until young Riley reached Sydney at the end of 1825
that he heard the news of his father's unexpected death. In
these circumstances the full responsibility of conducting
the family affairs in New South Wales fell to him. Alexander
Riley still held Raby and young Riley established the Saxons
there.

He was young and inexperienced but Alexander Riley,
drawing on his colonial experience and the knowledge he had
gained in the London market and from conversations with
German wool merchants, was able to send him advice about
the management of the sheep and of convict labour, and the
handling of the wool clip. He also had the assistance of
William Dutton in the management of the flocks. Dutton was
an expert on Saxon merinos; he had spent some years in
Germany and had selected these sheep for Alexander Riley.
The first consignment from Raby disappointed Alexander Riley.
It was badly washed, ill-sorted and had been spoilt to some
extent during the voyage. But this was only a temporary set-
back. Riley had already received the Agricultural Society's
medal for the largest importation of merinos. Early in 1827
Edward Riley was able to tell the members of the society
that the wool of the Raby sheep had already improved in fine-
ness and elasticity and that he expected fleece weights of
3½ lbs. compared with an average of 2¾ lbs. from Spanish
merinos.38

His expectations were justified. In 1827 Riley Saxons won the medals of the Agricultural Society and maintained their leading position until 1830. Even allowing for the fact that Macarthur did not exhibit during these years, this was a great achievement. There was such a demand in the colony for these early Saxons that Jones sold a dozen rams in 1827 for £70-80 a head and in the same year thirty of the Ruby Saxons brought £40 a head.

In 1828 wool from Jones and Riley was chosen for exhibition before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the British Wool Trade. In this year Alexander Riley sent out another hundred Saxons in charge of his son, William, and for this he received a grant of a further 1,000 acres near the Murrumbidgee River north of Lake George.

With Jones making a fortune out of his Saxon merinos and Riley building up one of the best flocks in the colony it was natural enough that William Walker should also take an interest in these sheep. He had a grant of 1,000 acres from Governor Macquarie and another of 1,000 acres from Brisbane. While he was in London in 1827 he arranged for 160 pure-bred Saxon merinos to be bought for him in Stettin. On his return to Sydney he took these with him in his own ship. Before he left London he pointed out the benefit he was conferring on the colony and asked that his land grants be increased to 5,000 acres to bring them up to the areas granted to Riley and Jones. He was successful.

39. ibid., 21 Feb. 1827.
obtaining a further grant of 1,000 acres and later held large areas in the central district and at Twofold Bay.

In his application for this increased grant Walker had stated that he had a capital of £25,000. Without substantial capital it would not have been possible for him to undertake the importing of pure-bred sheep. It had cost Alexander Riley £3,600 to send his first shipment of Saxons to New South Wales and he still had to spend a good deal on Raby to make it suitable for fine wool production. In 1831 he claimed that he had £20,000 invested in commerce in the colony and still more in the firm of Donaldson, Wilkinson and Company, that he had spent £10,000 on building and improvements to the lands he held by grant and purchase in New South Wales and that the importation of pure-bred merinos had cost him £6,000. From this it seems clear that an appreciable part of the capital that Riley had accumulated from his mercantile and agricultural pursuits in New South Wales was used in this second venture into wool growing during the twenties and thirties. This would apply also to Jones and Walker and it explains why these and such men as the Coxes, Marsden, Lawson and Jamison played a leading part in this period of pastoral expansion.
Settlers with capital were favoured by the land and immigration regulations of the eighteen-twenties, since these "capitalists" could support themselves and relieve the government of expenditure by employing convicts. As a result half-pay navy and army officers and well-to-do middle-class merchants and farmers formed an increasing proportion of the population of New South Wales during the twenties. Among these was William Walker's brother, James. His career had been in the navy until 1822, when he had been retired on half-pay at a time when Britain was reducing the armed forces she had built up during the long wars against France. William Walker was prospering in New South Wales, Wentworth's book describing the colony and emphasising the prospects of sheep-farming there by men with capital to invest had been published in London in 1819 and the first part of Commissioner Bigge's report on the state of the colony had aroused a great deal of interest in Britain as well as in New South Wales.

James Walker made up his mind to become a pastoralist in New South Wales rather than to join his brother in commercial life. He was then thirty-seven years old with no experience of agriculture but he took with him a free


2. W.C. Wentworth: "A Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales" (1819).
labourer named Andrew Brown who had been born at
Tibbermuir near Perth and was then twenty-five years
old. Walker reached Sydney on 24th September, 1823.4
His first task was to choose land, and the choice was
wide. Other settlers had followed Hannibal Macarthur
and Throsby to the lands of the southern and western
districts. The favoured few at Bathurst — men such as
Cox and Lawson — had been joined by the free settlers
making their way across the mountains to Bathurst in
increasing numbers so that settlement was already
reaching out to Mudgee and the Wellington Valley. The
convicts had been moved from Newcastle to Port Macquarie
and the rich lands along the Hunter River had been thrown
open to free settlers.5

It did not take James Walker long to select the site
of his grant. Ninety-five miles west of Sydney the road
over the Blue Mountains dropped down to the Vale of Clwydd
at the foot of Mt. York before it crossed Cox's River and
then climbed once more across the Dividing Range to the
Bathurst Plains. Nine miles north of the Cox's River

3. Leslie: op.cit. Report of the Select Committee on
Secondary Punishments. P.P. 1831, VII, 276. Evidence
of James Walker pp.56-63.
5. T.M. Perry: "The Spread of Rural Settlement in New
South Wales, 1788-1826" in "Historical Studies,
Australia and New Zealand", Vol.6, No.24 (May, 1955)
pp.376-395.
crossing James Walker found land that suited him - good grass in abundance, fertile flats along the river banks and forest so open that a horseman could gallop through it with ease. This was not as good a district as the plains around Bathurst but it was nearly forty miles nearer to Sydney and transport to it would be easier and quicker and there would be some saving of costs. By 11th November James Walker was back in Sydney and had received from Governor Brisbane a promise of 2,000 acres (the usual grant of the period) at the site he had selected and which was known by the aboriginal name of Wallerawang.

When James Walker bought sheep for his property he found his brother's experience in the colony of great assistance. William Walker had lived in New South Wales for the greater part of ten years. He was acquainted with the leading stock owners and for some years his firm had been engaged in buying wool in the colony for sale in London. As a member of the Agricultural Society he was brought into touch with all those interested in the development of wool production in New South Wales. Through Edward Riley's brother, Alexander, he heard of developments in the London wool market. The help he gave to James Walker enabled him to get together as good a flock as possible under prevailing conditions. They were mostly cross-bred

merinos but with some good rams and ewes as the basis of a breeding flock. At the end of 1823 and the early part of 1824 there were few pure-bred merinos available for purchase.

It was easier to get labour since land was granted on condition that the recipient would take convicts off the hands of the government - one convict to be assigned to the landholder for every hundred acres of his grant. These were issued with clothing and rations - two suits of clothes a year, 8lb. of beef and 10lb. of flour each week, and supplies of tea and sugar. James Walker later substituted a quart of milk each day and an ounce of tobacco a week. Walker built his homestead at Wallerawang on rising ground overlooking a large flat stretch in a bend of Cox's River. On this flat the convicts grew enough wheat to provide flour for the establishment. From this flour the convicts baked their own bread. Their huts were made of turf, roofed with thatch. They were each provided with a blanket and a bed but the men often substituted sheep-skins. The establishment was self-supporting to a large extent, but any stores required in addition to those grown on the property were brought from Sydney in Walker's own drays.

Most of these assigned convicts had no knowledge of farm work except what they may have learnt in the colony. A few were from agricultural districts in England but most of them were London thieves. The rest were from Ireland with a few from Scotland. There was frequent pilfering, as one would expect, but there was little violence among the men and Walker found them not very difficult to manage. Indeed, he considered that prisoners were better than free labourers. By 1831 there were usually from three to six
free labourers employed at Wallerawang in addition to a force of assigned servants varying in number from twenty-five to thirty-five. Charles Darwin visited Wallerawang in January, 1836, and found that the usual number of assigned convicts was about forty, although at the time of his visit additional convicts were employed to help with the harvesting of the wheat crop.

Darwin could not reconcile himself to the sight of convicts working on the farms, and noted in his diary:

"The sunset of a fine day will generally cast an air of happy contentment on any scene; but here, at this retired farm-house, the brightest tints on the surrounding woods could not make me forget that forty hardened, profligate men were ceasing from their daily labours, like the slaves of Africa, yet without their holy claim for compassion." 9

In the latter part of the thirties management of assigned convicts was more difficult, and some ugly incidents accompanied by violence occurred in the district. Some men from Wallerawang were involved in these incidents. By 1839 only a minority of the men employed on James Walker's properties were assigned convicts but even those few were troublesome if we can judge from a letter written by James Walker's nephew.

"I am...left in charge of the Farm...which is at present not so difficult as most of the men are free, and I have not to deal with such a mob of vagabonds as I would otherwise have had."¹⁰

In the year following this nephew was at a Walker property north of Wallerawang. It is clear from a letter he wrote at this time that the power of a magistrate to punish assigned convicts was an important factor in maintaining discipline, and he leaves us in no doubt about his opinion of assigned convicts.

"...prisoners...are a great pest. I have got three of them here just now, and find them determined to try it on (that is) to try how little work and how much mischief they can do. This arises from there having been no magistrate in the district for a long time. Now there is one within twenty miles and they are getting rather better, but when I first came here about a fortnight ago they would scarcely do a hand's turn. I have unfortunately got no handcuffs or I would quickly bring some of them to reason."¹¹

With Andrew Brown as his right-hand man and with twenty assigned servants, James Walker occupied Wallerawang early in 1824. Arrangements for the sheep were quickly made—a shepherd's hut, light hurdles for a sheep-pen and a small, wooden shelter for the night-watchman, portable like the hurdles so that the sheep could be folded in a different spot every few nights.¹² At the homestead site there was

¹⁰. Thomas Archer: Letter to his father, 14 April 1839
¹¹. Thomas Archer: Letter to his father, 9 June 1840.
¹². Peter Cunningham: "Two Years in New South Wales" (2nd. ed. 1827) Chapter 15.
a wooden hut for James Walker and Andrew Brown and turf huts nearby for the convicts. Below these on the river bank a flat area was cleared, fenced and cultivated and a barn was built to store the grain. In 1836 Darwin described Wallerawang as "an example of one of the large farming, or rather sheep-grazing establishments of the colony," and noted that, although the farm was well-stocked with every necessity, there was an apparent absence of comfort; and not one single woman resided there.\(^{13}\) A year later Thomas Walker drew a contrast between stations occupied by bachelors and those where a married man lived with his family. In the one case he found "a comfortless, naked hut, devoid of almost the necessities of life, in the other, abundance and cheerfulness generally prevailed."\(^{14}\)

In 1829 at his own cost James Walker built a church with a massive stone hall and a huge fireplace at one end, and a little two-storey residence for a clergyman or a teacher.\(^{15}\) In the thirties a brick residence was built and the whole establishment was enlarged. Later still a large coach-house, stone stables and quarters for grooms and other servants were added.

Management of the flocks was a simple matter, and rather primitive. The need to take better care of the sheep and to pay more attention to shearing and to the packing of the wool was only beginning to be realised.\(^{16}\) The sheep were shorn in November after washing in the river. The fleeces

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15. Church Standard, 5 Nov. 1948.
were roughly sorted into bins and pressed with a wooden screw. They were carried to Sydney in Walker's own drays. There his brother's firm received the wool and arranged for its shipment and its sale in London. The average weight of a fleece was 2½ lbs. and the average price in London about 2/6 a lb. At this time money from the wool clip was reckoned as clear gain since other returns from a farm, after an initial period of three or four years, would cover ordinary expenses. Since 6d. covered the cost of shearing, packing, freight, insurance and brokerage a profit of 2/- a lb. could be reckoned on.\textsuperscript{17}

From 1824 to 1826 or 1827 James Walker was occupied establishing himself and his flocks on Wallerawang. It was during these years that Jones and Riley successfully imported the first Saxon merinos. The sale prices of wool from these sheep in spite of a drastic drop in the London market after 1825 was enough to convince even sceptical colonists that only fine wool could give an assured return. The importance of these developments for James Walker was enhanced by the arrival in July, 1828, of his brother, William, with the 160 pure-bred Saxon ewes he had imported direct from Stettin. These were sent to Wolgan, only seven miles north of Wallerawang, where in August William Walker was given an additional grant of 1,000 acres.\textsuperscript{18} Some of the valleys at Wallerawang were low-lying and became swampy in wet weather. This resulted in a coarse pasture more suitable for cattle and horses than for sheep,\textsuperscript{19} so in 1830 most of the sheep from Wallerawang and Wolgan were moved seventy miles north to Lue, near Mudgee. William Walker had held a grant of 1,000 acres

\textsuperscript{17} Cunningham: loc.cit.
\textsuperscript{18} Sydney Gazette, 7 July 1828. H.R.A. I. 14 pp. 282, 283, 672.
\textsuperscript{19} Darwin: loc.cit.
there since 1825 and James Walker was given 240 acres there in 1830. His flocks appear to have been moved up to Lue without delay since he received leases over three sections there (a total of 1,920 acres) in 1831. For these he paid an annual rental of £1 for each section. He bought some of the Saxons from his brother and in 1835 he himself, in association with William Riley, imported more pure-bred stock from Germany. The sheep did well in the Mudgee district and James Walker gradually built up a famous flock of pure-bred merinos.

The establishment of Lue was carried out by Andrew Brown, who was left in charge of Walker's stations when James Walker left Sydney in February, 1831, for a visit home. James Walker had no intention of remaining away from New South Wales for very long, but while he was in Scotland he married and this led him to alter his plans. He went to live in London and remained there until 1838. Most of his income was derived from his properties in New South Wales and his long absence indicates that the returns from these were substantial.

William Walker had gone to London to set up a branch of his business there. His ships had discharged their whale-oil, timber and wool at London for some years. The Wool consignments in particular were increasing in importance, and there was a considerable increase in the volume of

goods exported from London to New South Wales. William Walker considered that a London branch could be a profitable venture. His nephews, Thomas and Archibald Walker, were now well versed in details of the Sydney business and both had a financial interest in it. They may also have had some financial interest in the London Branch. James Walker had a considerable share in the business although it was not intended that he should take an active part in its management. Some of William Walker's relatives and friends were living in London at this time and they also may have had an interest in the new firm, which was named Walker Brothers and Company.

This new venture was opportune for the Archer family. James Walker kept in close touch with his relatives in Perth and with Julia and William Archer in Norway. William Archer's sons were reaching an age when he had to think about placing them in positions, and the colonies offered more opportunities for young men than they could find in Britain or Norway. Charles, the eldest of William Archer's sons, had already gone to the West Indies but William Walker found the next son, John, a position on one of his ships which reached Australia on a whaling voyage in 1833. In 1834 the third son, David, went out to New

22. Thomas Walker arrived in Sydney in 1822, his brother Archibald a few years later.
24. Charles Archer: Letter to his father, 10 June 1835.
South Wales to work on James Walker's properties there. 26

At this time most of the sheep belonging to James Walker, including his pure-bred Saxon flock, were at Lue on the western slopes of the Dividing Range. Lue was well-established, the flocks were increasing quickly and Andrew Brown, the superintendent, was already moving some of the stock further out to the north-west on to the upper Castlereagh River. This marked an important development in settlement since it took Walker's stock beyond "the boundaries of location." The line bounding the Nineteen Counties proclaimed in 1829 ran from Wellington on the Macquarie River north-east to the Liverpool Range, 27 so that the stock moved north had occupied a district where it was illegal to settle and Walker had become a "squat ter". Unfortunately, the records give meagre information about this development. Among the reasons for the move were the increase of the stock numbers, reports of good grass land and water to the north and confirmation of these reports by Brown on an exploring trip to the Castlereagh. The first settler on the Castlereagh was one of James Walker's assigned servants who was put in charge of a flock of sheep at Biamble, more than eighty miles from Lue. 28 By 1837 there were Walker stations also at Warrumbungle, fifty miles from Biamble, and at Goondea (location unknown). 29

In this year Bourke regulated this unauthorised occupation

by issuing licenses to depasture stock beyond the boundaries of counties. By 1838 there were Walker stations along the Castlereagh for sixty miles from Biamble and for more than sixty miles north to Baradine. The number of stations and the size of the flocks and herds represented a considerable expansion which was made possible by the increasing number of immigrants during the thirties. Before he left Sydney in 1831 James Walker had stated that one of the principal objects of his visit to England was to encourage emigration to New South Wales, to spread information about the colony and to confer with those distinguished people in England who were interesting themselves in British migration. The report in the "Sydney Gazette" mentioned that James Walker would have the aid of his influential brother and his wealthy London friends.

He was successful in his efforts. In his letters he wrote of sending out four Highland shepherds, three of them married, of sending more emigrants from Ayrshire, of spending a good deal of time in making arrangements for shipping emigrants to Sydney; and he expressed his astonishment at the numbers that were going and applying. When the bounty system was introduced William Walker engaged in shipping migrants as part of his business.

31. These increased from 1,242 in 1830 to 15,786 in 1839. (See table on p.214 C.M.H. Clark: Select Documents in Australian History 1788-1850, (1950).
32. Sydney Gazettes, 5, 15, 19 February, 1831.
33. James Walker: Letters 13 September 1836, 4 April 1837, 5 May 1838, 1 September 1838.
Since there was no pool of labour to draw on individual landholders had to make their own arrangements to get the men they needed. James Walker was moving about Britain persuading possible migrants to go out to New South Wales, his brother was transporting these and others to Sydney and Thomas Walker and his brother were making arrangements for settlers to engage these immigrants on their arrival. It is hardly to be wondered at, in these circumstances, that Andrew Brown was able to engage labourers for the Walker stations with little difficulty. There are references to "Airshire emigrants" at Wallerawang and "highland shepherds" at Lue in 1838 and 1839. With a supply of labour assured Brown was able to push out into new country with some of the more experienced and reliable assigned servants.

This expansion was beginning to get under way when David Archer arrived at Wallerawang early in 1834. It gave him a particularly good opportunity to gain experience on stations at three stages of development. Wallerawang was an old-established property, Lue was recently established, while a number of the Castlereagh runs were formed after he arrived. David Archer evidently showed a good deal of ability under Brown's training since he was made joint superintendent in 1836 and took full charge at the end of 1837 when Brown left Walker's employment to look after his own properties at Cooerwall near Wallerawang and on the Castlereagh.

In 1837 two more of the Archers went to New South Wales. William Archer, Junior, then aged nineteen, finished his training as a carpenter in Perth in that year and it was decided that he should join his brother, David,

35. William Archer: Letters to his father, January, 1838; 21 June, 1839.
in New South Wales. The fifth son, Archibald, was still training to be an engineer in Perth while Thomas, the next son, then fourteen years old, had completed only the first year of "middle school" in Larvik. On the advice of James and William Walker his parents decided to send Thomas to New South Wales with William. They reached Sydney at the end of 1837 and Wallerawang early in January, 1838, where they helped to reap the wheat that was being harvested and then were employed at various jobs. William Archer had trained as a carpenter so he was given the job of building a hut. Although bush carpentry and bush timbers were new to him, the work itself and the tools he used were similar so his trade training was of help to him and he managed without much difficulty.36

Thomas Archer had no trade training so David began to train him in bush and station work. Both young men had to learn to ride and to manage stock. Thomas, in particular, spent a great deal of his time on horseback riding about looking after the cattle and brood mares, driving weaners to the fattening station and bringing bullocks in to the homestead for killing.

Until the end of 1838 Lue had consisted of a number of scattered sheep stations. At each of these stations there was only a hut for the shepherds and the night watchman. The flocks consisted of up to 300 breeding ewes and up to 400 wethers or other sheep, each in charge of a shepherd during the day, but put into pens at night under the care of one man who acted as cook for the station as well as night watchman for the flocks.

There were usually two, or perhaps three, flocks on each sheep station so that there were at least a dozen of these to serve the 8,000 sheep on Lue. Early in 1839 David

Archer decided to build a head station at Lue to make the run self-contained, to make it easier to keep in touch with the sheep-stations there and to serve as a base for the out-stations on the Castlereagh. He sent brick-makers to put up a new brick residence and kitchen and a brick barn, sawyers to cut timber needed for these buildings and for the store-house, stables, wool shed, blacksmith's shop, carpenter's shop, cottages for the free immigrant labourers and huts for the convicts. Labourers were sent to clear and fence ground for a wheat paddock and put up yards for the sheep and cattle. These replaced the rough, temporary structures which had served at Lue from its early occupation. Young William Archer was put in charge of some of this work.\(^{37}\)

At the end of 1838 James Walker decided to return to Wallerawang. After a stormy six-months voyage he reached Sydney with his wife and family in April, 1839.\(^{38}\) A little more than a year before William and Thomas Archer had remarked on the sterile, parched appearance of the land. The drought that they had experienced had continued and the journey across the mountains was very difficult. Thomas Archer wrote:

"...grass is so bad that the oxen can hardly do their work, and horse forage is so scarce and dear that it requires an immense outlay to keep horse-teams upon the road, so that Mrs. Walker is very ill off for kitchen utensils, cloathes and a number of other necessaries, which in any common season would easily be got from Sydney. When they left

\(^{37}\) William Archer: Letter to his father, 21 June 1839. His letter written on 20 Sept. 1838 describes some earlier work he did at Lue.

\(^{38}\) Sydney Herald, 5 April 1839. James Walker: Letter to David Archer, 1 Sept. 1838.
Sydney they took a dray with them loaded with those things, but the horses knocked up (that is) they got so weak from heavy work and starvation that the driver had to leave some of the things behind, on the blue mountains, about 30 miles from here, and although it is now six weeks ago we have been unable to bring up any things. 39

Wallerawang until this time had been a bachelor establishment and it must have appeared very bare and comfortless to her eyes as well as being remote and lonely. James Walker, on the other hand, found most things to his satisfaction. The effect of three years of bad seasons was plain but the swampy valleys had been a good stand-by during the dry periods and Wolgan had proved to be an excellent asylum for all the horses and most of the breeding cattle. 40 This was a valley only seven miles from Wallerawang, watered by the Wolgan River. It was twenty miles long but only three or four miles wide at its greatest extent, with precipitous sides varying in height from 200 to 500 feet. The aborigines scrambled down these cliffs at one or two places but white men and stock found them too steep to scale. The river flowed out of this valley where it narrowed to a deep, rocky gorge so that the depression formed a natural enclosure for stock. Halfway along the side nearer to Wallerawang the cliffs were lower than in other places. At this point there was a rough path (partly natural and partly constructed by James Walker's men) which provided the only means of access to the valley. 41 Slip-rails across

39. Thomas Archer: Letter to his mother, 7 June 1839.
41. Darwin: op.cit.
this path turned the valley into a valuable stock-yard for a herd of cattle and forty brood mares. The valley was sheltered and well-watered and the thickly grassed floor of the valley was very little affected by drought periods.

An old emancipated convict lived in a hut in Wolgan with his wife and young grand-daughter and kept an eye on the stock there. This man had stayed on at Wallerawang since he was too fond of drink to be able to save enough to take up land for himself, as some of his fellows had done. He got his rations each week from Wallerawang, and some one from the head station visited the valley periodically to check that all was well and to carry out an occasional muster of the stock. 42

James Walker was pleased with the Archers. He thought that William and Thomas were learning the work of the station well, and was particularly well pleased with David, who had shown no ordinary degree of ability and good sense in his management of the stations during a difficult period, 43 made even more difficult by the prolonged drought.

Bushrangers added to the difficulties caused by the dry seasons of 1837-38-39. Flour was very scarce and dear at the time and the bushrangers created a great nuisance since they frequently held up and robbed drays carrying stores. 44 Most of these bushrangers were convicts who ran away and hid in the bush—something that was very easy to do in the hilly, timbered, sparsely-settled region of the

42. Thomas Archer: "Recollections of a Rambling Life" (1895).
44. Thomas Archer: Letter to his mother, 28 July 1839.
Blue Mountains. 45 Thomas Archer described the capture of one of these runaways on Wallerawang.

"I have just got word that one of our men has taken a bushranger about two miles from here. There were three of them in a cavern just above his hut. The man loaded his gun with buttons for want of lead, and went up to their fire, when two of them ran away and he succeeded in stopping the third. If there is no heavy charge against the fellow he will get fifty lashes and be returned to where he left." 46

Thomas Archer himself was responsible for the capture of two runaways. He was walking along the side of a rocky gully about a mile from the station when he saw a thin wreath of smoke curling up from between two big boulders suspended across the mouth of a small gully and forming a kind of cave. As there had been no aborigines about for some time he concluded that the smoke must come from a bushranger's fire. Withdrawing quietly, he ran back to Wallerawang. David was away on one of his trips to the outstations, but William armed himself and Thomas and called on the convict carpenter to go with them. They rushed to the foot of the gully and moved quietly up to the cave. When they were within fifty yards of it two men jumped out, but these were unarmed and so were easily captured. It turned out later that they had run away from one of the Walker outstations and had lain hidden in their retreat for several days before their capture. Their fellow-convicts on Wallerawang had smuggled provisions out to them and they were waiting for a favourable opportunity to start their

45. Darwin: op.cit.
46. Thomas Archer: Letter to his father, Aug. 1838.
bushranging career when Thomas discovered them.47

One of them, named Lynch, afterwards proved himself a very ugly customer. He managed to escape from custody later and again took to the bush where he was joined by two other runaways. These three managed to steal horses and arms and began a bushranging career on the upper reaches of the Castlereagh, robbing stations and drays. One afternoon they appeared suddenly at Biamble, stuck up the half-dozen men about the place and put them under guard in a hut. The others rifled the store, smashed the arms they did not want for themselves, stole all the ammunition they could find, and then ordered the storekeeper's wife to prepare a meal. While Lynch kept guard outside the hut, the other two sat down at the table with their guns between their knees.

The overseer at Biamble was Simon Scott, a young man who had entered James Walker's employment after becoming friendly with him on the voyage to Australia. He caught the eye of a convict named Patterson and one or two of the other men and quietly exchanged signals. Taking an opportunity when the two bushrangers were distracted, Scott suddenly jumped up. Followed by Patterson and two others he rushed the bushrangers and overpowered them.

Patterson ran outside, knocked Lynch over and struggled with him on the ground. Wrenching the pistol from Lynch's hand Patterson fired it in his face and the bushranger turned over and lay still. Patterson went back into the hut to assist in securing the other two bushrangers but when he came out again Lynch was gone. The pistol had been loaded with blank cartridges and, as soon as the coast

47. ibid Thomas Archer: Letter to his father, Aug. 1838.
was clear, Lynch had jumped up and escaped.

The other two were handcuffed together and Scott and Patterson started off with them to the nearest gaol, at Kudgee about seventy miles away. During the night they took turn about to sleep. In Scott's watch one of them, who was very slightly built, managed to slip the handcuffs off his wrist. Then both the bushrangers rushed Scott, disarmed him and escaped. They joined Lynch and again began to rob stations and drays.

David Archer mustered a party of armed men and, with a black-tracker, went in search of this gang. For several days he followed them from one station to another, gaining on them since they lost time "bailing-up" the stations. At length they reached a station where the bushrangers had spent the previous night and had left only a short time before. After David had followed the fresh tracks for some time shots were heard ahead. These came from one of James Walker's stations in Wellington Valley. Soon afterwards the bushrangers were seen returning on their own tracks at a pace which quickly brought the two parties face to face. They exchanged shots but when one bushranger was shot in the shoulder the others surrendered. At the station they found that the only man there had defended himself against the bushrangers but, on their promise to let him go unharmed, had come out of his hut. He was then shot in cold blood by Powell and was dead when David's party arrived. The three prisoners were taken to the police station at Wellington and later sent to Sydney, convicted of murder and hanged.48

At the end of 1839 Thomas Archer wrote, "The whole Colony is overrun with bushrangers still...I hear there are still a great many about Bathurst. They murdered and robbed a woman there the other day, and Mrs. Walker is so frightened that Mr. Walker cannot leave her to go to the shearing at Biambil."

One gang of three bushrangers led by a runaway named Lambert was robbing drays and homesteads in the district between Wallerawang and Lue and hardly one of Walker's drays escaped.

James Walker was a kind-hearted man but he showed great firmness in carrying out what he believed to be his duty. His service in the navy had given him experience in leadership and command of men and he took a leading part in capturing Lambert and his gang. One evening in September two mounted police came past Wallerawang homestead on their way to Piper's Flat a few miles away where Lambert and his gang had robbed a dray that morning. On hearing that neither of the police knew the country about Piper's Flat, and knowing that Thomas did, James Walker instantly took command and began to formulate a plan of campaign. He told the troopers to camp at the waterhole at the foot of Piper's Flat and he would join them before daylight with a black-tracker and someone who knew the country. Then he ordered Thomas to yard horses ready for the morning, and get one of the old aboriginals to come up from his camp so that he would be ready to go with them in the morning. After this was done and while they were getting arms and ammunition ready James Walker questioned Thomas closely about the lay of the land at Piper's Flat.

49. Thomas Archer: Letter to his father, 7 Dec. 1839. (This is the usual spelling of the time for "Biamble").
Thomas explained that the bushrangers would have to pass through a gap in the range of hills running parallel with Piper's Flat on their way to their haunts near Cherry Tree Hill. Near the head of the pass was a small water-hole where the bushrangers would probably camp. James Walker decided to move along the top of this range so that they could cut the bushrangers' tracks in the pass and so run them down.

In the morning, before dawn, they found that one of the horses had lifted the rails of the stockyard and all the horses had got out. The heavy mist obscured them in the outer paddock so James Walker determined to go on foot leaving one of the men to round up the horses and follow. Since he was far from robust and suffered severely from attacks of asthma, his determination made a great impression on Thomas. Approaching the pass cautiously they saw the three bushrangers below. The horses were so heavily laden that Lambert and another man were on foot leading them. James Walker ordered the mounted troopers to go round behind the bushrangers and charge them from the rear, while the rest of the party kept abreast of the bushrangers and charged them from the flank. This strategy proved successful and the bushrangers surrendered. James Walker came up just in time to prevent the senior trooper from shooting Lambert dead on the spot. The captives were taken back to Wallerawang and on to Hartley lock-up.50

In October three armed men rushed into Bowman's homestead near Mudgee and fired at the superintendent. After robbing the house and store of all they could pack upon their horses they destroyed a good deal of other

property. The police had left this homestead only that morning, and the bushrangers had evidently watched them leave and then robbed the station as soon as they considered that the police were far enough away. This same gang held up Brown's station a short time later. They ransacked the house, robbed the women of their money and trinkets and stayed at the station overnight. The sergeant of police and a trooper were notified and set off in pursuit. Their track led past Wallerawang and again James Walker lent his aid. These bushrangers were captured near Piper's Flat, after one of them had been shot dead in a fight.

The capture of these gangs ended bushranging raids in the neighbourhood of Wallerawang for several years.\textsuperscript{51}

Soon after the capture of Lambert's gang Walker went with David Archer on a tour of inspection of the Castlereagh stations. One of his men had heard of rich pastures thirty miles down the river from Brown's furthest-out station. The drought years had depleted the grazing lands at Wallerawang, Lue and the upper Castlereagh so reports of a region comparatively unaffected by the dry seasons were worth investigating. Walker thought that this district was too far away from Sydney to be profitable but his trip confirmed the good reports and he was persuaded to establish runs in this new district. Patterson, the ticket-of-leave convict who had distinguished himself in the capture of the bushrangers at Bimble, had received an unconditional pardon on David Archer's recommendation.\textsuperscript{52} Early in 1840 he took some young stock and, with a party of three assigned servants and an aboriginal guide he

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} Sydney Herald, 28 Oct. 1839; 4 Nov. 1839.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Sydney Herald, 27 Nov. 1839.
\end{itemize}
occupied runs at Eurimie and Coonamble. Another run was occupied later at Yoolandy.

Walker and Brown were the big men along the Castlereagh and in the district between the river and the Warrumbungle Ranges during the thirties and forties. In 1844 Walker was running 13,000 sheep and 3,000 cattle on 27 stations in the Bligh squatting district alone. These runs comprised 5,184,000 acres all held under a single licence at a fee of £10 a year.\(^5^3\) Comparing the number of stock with the number of runs and their areas one can see that these runs were really sheep and cattle "stations", that is, places where a couple of flocks or a herd of cattle were run on good grass within handy reach of a good supply of water. Coonamble, for example, was a run of 50,000 acres capable of carrying 15,000 head of cattle. Yet Walker had only 3,000 cattle in the whole of the Castlereagh district, and in 1841 there was only one assigned convict on Coonamble, living in a solitary slab hut. The distances of the lower Castlereagh were too great for sheep to be run profitably but a herd of cattle on good grass in a lightly-stocked area and in charge of one man raised no great difficulties about supplies and when the cattle were fattened they could be walked back by easy stages to the market. The occupation of runs like these was a matter of balancing the return from good grazing against the costs and difficulties caused by the great distance.

There are only brief indications in the records of conditions on Wallerawang and other Walker stations. It is plain that there was a great deal of loneliness. The one brief mention of the hut-keeper on Coonamble conjures

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up a picture of a man whose only companions were his stock and the aborigines who lived round about, and who saw other white men for no more than a day or two in several weeks. There was less loneliness on the small sheep stations where two or three men worked together, or at the head stations such as Biamble or Lue which were the acting centres of a group of small stations. But even on Wallerawang Mrs. Walker could feel lonely and afraid. After all, there were convicts working on the station and living in the huts, wild natives camped nearby and bushrangers roaming the district. James Walker might write with a slight touch of irony that Mrs. Walker "[does] not like to be at the mercy of so many convicts in (what she calls) a lone place, though she has great confidence in Thomas whose size alone is not without value here," but to Mrs. Walker the dangers were real enough.

The work of the stations involved a great deal of solitary travelling. David Archer, as superintendent, made a monthly tour of the outstations and this involved travelling alone for long distances and sometimes camping alone. Some of this loneliness was voluntary - imposed by social convention. James Walker as owner, David Archer as superintendent and people such as William and Thomas Archer and Simon Scott (who would later be called jackeroos) maintained a social distinction between themselves and the assigned convict servants, emancipated

54. Thomas Archer: "Recollections".
labourers and even, sometimes, free immigrant labourers. The bush life did not destroy social distinctions although the thirties were probably less socially conscious than the twenties, and in the bush some distinctions became blurred. Andrew Brown, for example, was brought to Australia by James Walker as a free labourer, that is, the relation between the two men was that of master and servant. Brown later became Walker's superintendent and then a landholder and squatter. He and Walker became firm friends and the Browns became one of the leading families of the district. Even some of the convicts became landholders and won a place in the community for themselves and their children. Walker's convict servant, Patterson, the hutkeeper at Coonamble, Brown's cook and others were among this group.

The life of the bush itself became enjoyable. William and Thomas Archer both speak of their early bush journeys with pleasure. James Walker enjoyed "roughing it" on bush journeys and William Archer wrote that he was "seldom two nights in one place" and that from long habit he had become so used to his migratory life that he felt uneasy, almost uncomfortable, when he had to remain in one place for any length of time.

"When spreading my opossum cloak for the night, by a blazing bush fire, under our beautiful climate, I often reflect with thankfulness that I am engaged in a pursuit so congenial to my taste and conducive to health, with the prospect of earning an honest livelihood."56

56. William Archer: Letter to his father, 30 June 1842.
In spite of the prosy moralising there is genuine feeling in this description, and a genuine liking for his way of life is clear.

Some of the loneliness was caused by a lack of any common interests, and not merely by snobbishness. In the middle of 1839 William Archer was working on the new building at Lue and complained:

"The greatest want I feel here is having no society. Surrounded by convicts, occasionally not very easy to manage, and a few illiterate highland shepherds, a person with whom I could converse at mealtimes and leisure hours would be a great acquisition."  

Thomas Archer complained about the same lack of congenial companionship at Lue twelve months later when one of these Highland shepherds had been promoted to overseer there.

There is little mention of recreation in the documents of this period. There was probably very little recreation apart from the riding and bush journeys which are usually referred to with pleasure. Thomas Archer spent six months in William Walker's counting house during 1839 and his letters from Sydney refer to balls, to racing in a four-oared gig and sailing on the harbour, and to the numerous opportunities for hearing music. These references indicate a keen enjoyment of these recreations, probably as a reaction to the lack of amusements in the bush.

57. ibid, 21 June 1839.
58. Thomas Archer: "Recollections".
59. ibid. Letter to his father, 7 Dec. 1839. He refers to these also in his "Recollections".
There are references also to Sydney visits by James Walker and David Archer. These were usually connected with the business of the station though David and Thomas both refer to journeys to Sydney to see their brother, John, on the rare occasions when his ship called at Sydney. James Walker, describing a family visit to Sydney in 1841, wrote of "our annual visit" so this may be reckoned as a holiday.

Just as Thomas Archer had tired of Sydney and had begun to long for the bush, so the Walkers, young and old, soon began to wish for home once again — in spite of the glories of a ball and a court and the lighting of Sydney by gas for the first time. James Walker found this "agreeable" for to him,

"Wallerawang is such a nice place...it is so rural, so romantic — so unlike what you all live in, in that strange place Britain. I daresay I shall be accused of affectation or an attempt at singularity — but I am perfectly sincere when I tell you I look forward with more pleasure to struggling over the Blue Mountains next week — with our humble vehicle and good horses — than if I had to step into a railway train — to leave one town and find myself in another, without that necessary process for fitting the mend for such a change — which the old process of travelling enabled us to do."  

There is apparent in this letter and in those of the Archers at this time an acceptance of their new Australian environment which provided them with a way of life as well as a way of earning a livelihood.

61. ibid.
CHAPTER 3
D. ARCHER & CO.
(1839-1841)

The rapid spread of settlement into the Castlereagh district during the thirties and forties by Walker, Brown and other squatters was only part of a general movement beyond the boundaries. This study deals only with the movement to the northern district. Oxley had discovered the fertile Liverpool Plains in 1818 and Cunningham's discovery of Pandora's Pass had opened the way to these plains from Bathurst. In 1827 Cunningham explored north from the Hunter over the New England Tableland to the rich Darling Downs less than a hundred miles from Brisbane and accessible through Cunningham's Gap. In the twenties the Hunter Valley was the most closely settled district in the colony outside the county of Cumberland, but the Liverpool Range and the rugged coastal ranges to the north checked the spread of settlement and it was not until 1832 that Semphill occupied Walcha. In 1833 the Australian Agricultural Company took up two large areas near the Peel River. By 1839 squatters had pushed as far north as Tenterfield.

North of this were the Darling Downs and Moreton Bay. Brisbane, a penal station since 1824, and the country within fifty miles of it were forbidden to free settlers, but in 1839 the penal station was being abandoned and the region was being surveyed before being thrown open for settlement. The country outside the fifty mile limit was unsettled in 1839 but open for occupation under

squatting license. David Archer decided to strike out for himself as an independent squatter in this new northern district.

Three factors seem to have been important in his decision — the return of James Walker, the arrival of Edward Walker and the opportunities open to squatters in the northern district.

Soon after James Walker reached Wallerawang he wrote to Julia Archer telling her of his satisfaction with her sons. He added that he might not require all of them in his employment but that he would ensure that whichever sons left him obtained a position with good prospects of advancement. James Walker did not mention this possibility to anyone, not even to David Archer, but David was experienced enough by this time to realise that only two courses were open to anyone wishing to advance in the pastoral industry — to gain the position of superintendent or to strike out as a squatter; and that the first course was, preferably, only a stepping stone to independence.

The arrival of Edward Walker was opportune for David. He was the eldest son of William Walker and had been David's constant companion in Perth before David left for New South Wales. The two young men had renewed their friendship at the end of 1836 when Edward and his younger brother, William, arrived in New South Wales. They were met by David who took them into the interior visiting

4. ibid, 13 September 1836.
5. ibid, 21 June 1837.
stations owned by James Walker and by their father. On this occasion Edward visited some of the runs on the Castlereagh (he mentions Biamble, Warrumbungle and Goondea in a letter).\(^6\) It was intended that Edward and William should stay in Sydney for three years,\(^7\) but Edward stayed only half that time; by the middle of 1838 he was in England once again. In August he married and in November he left with his young wife accompanying James Walker and his family to Wallerawang. It was his father's wish that he should become a wool-grower and breeder of cattle in New South Wales, and with this end in view his father had given him 1,000 acres in the county of Argyle and arranged for James Walker to select stock for him when they reached the colony. These were to be depastured on William Walker's property adjoining Lue until Edward decided where he would have his own station. As Lue had been made into a head station Edward Walker and his wife went to live there temporarily.\(^8\)

This gave David Archer and Edward Walker a chance to renew their friendship, and revive memories of Perth and of their previous visits to the out-stations. Within a few months the two young men began to discuss a possible partnership in a squatting venture.\(^9\) Reports of the Moreton Bay district during 1839 gave promise of success for such a venture. Surveyors had been at work there early in the year\(^10\) and in September the "Herald" advised newcomers:

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to inspect Moreton Bay before making up their minds about where they would settle, and stressed the districts rich, well-watered soil and the ease of driving sheep and cattle there from the northern stations. The "Herald" forecast that when Moreton Bay was thrown open for free settlement and a weekly steamer began to ply between Sydney and Brisbane, the district would rival Fort Phillip. In September, also, a party from Brisbane found their way through a pass in the Dividing Range to the stations on the Macintyre River. They estimated that the distance from the northern stations to Moreton Bay was only a hundred and fifty miles, and stated that there would be no difficulty about finding a good road across the low ranges and open, well-watered plains.

All this was heartening news for the two young men. The partnership is first mentioned in a letter on 3rd August, 1839 and a draft memorandum of the terms was compiled on 1st October. It is clear from this that David Archer was to manage the undertaking and that Edward Walker was not going to take an active part. By this time he had made up his mind that he was not suited to bush life and would return to England for training as a minister of religion. Knowing William Walker's desire that Edward should follow the career of a stock-owner James Walker opposed the partnership. As an alternative he offered David Archer a position as manager of Biamble which would then become the head station for all the Castlereagh runs.

11. ibid, 30 September 1839.
12. ibid, 7 October, 11 October, 1839.
13. Copy of the original memorandum of a Conversation between David Archer and Edward Walker at Wallerawang.
This was not accepted by David Archer. Edward Walker was a determined young man and at the end of the year he sailed for London\textsuperscript{15} where he was able to persuade his father to agree to the partnership\textsuperscript{16} and to allow him to study for the ministry.\textsuperscript{17} David Archer's original intention had been to set out for Moreton Bay in January, 1840.\textsuperscript{18} He had even gone to Maitland\textsuperscript{19} to arrange about buying drays and stores for the overland journey. James Walker's opposition to the partnership made him delay his start until June. In May the partnership was drawn up and sent to Edward Walker,\textsuperscript{20} and David Archer ended his employment with James Walker.

Edward Walker had been given £2,000 by his father to give him a start as a stock-owner, and in addition he had £500 in cash.\textsuperscript{21} His wife had £750 of her own money. David Archer's assets were much less than those of Edward Walker and he could expect no help from his father. Willia Archer had undertaken a lobster-fishing venture for the London market, but this was a failure financially.\textsuperscript{22} During the severe winter of 1837-38 he had to burn his old boat\textsuperscript{23} and there was even a risk that he might have to sell

\begin{itemize}
\item[15.] The Sydney Herald: 10 January 1840. Thomas Archer: Letter, 7 December 1839.
\item[16.] Edward Walker: Letter, 24 July 1840.
\item[17.] ibid, 18 September 1840.
\item[18.] Memorandum of Agreement, note 13.
\item[19.] Edward Walker: Letter, 24 July 1840.
\item[20.] Edward Walker: Letter, 2 November 1840.
\item[21.] Memorandum of agreement.
\item[23.] Thomas Archer: Letter, 16 September 1838.
\end{itemize}
his house. David's early financial position was probably similar to that of his brother, William, who found that he could not help his father in any way during his first few years in New South Wales. He had to repay James Walker for advancing the cost of his outfit and his fare to Wallerawang. These repayments took all his wages for the first two years and it was not until the end of 1840 that he was able to clear his debt to James Walker. Thomas Archer, after eighteen months on Wallerawang, found that he was still £54 in debt to James Walker.

David Archer became joint superintendent on Wallerawang at the end of his second year. His salary then was higher than either William or Thomas could expect, and was increased again when he assumed full control at the end of 1837. In 1838 he was able to send his father a remittance in July and to place another £50 to his father's credit in London at the end of the year. This second remittance was part of the proceeds of his wool. By the middle of 1839 he was receiving a salary of £200 a year. The reference to the proceeds of his wool shows that, in accordance with a common practice of the time, he had taken part of his wages in sheep, with the right to run these and their increase on Walker's properties. Since he had sent money to his father and had borne all the expenses of Thomas Archer's stay in Sydney, these sheep, worth £1,000, were his only capital, and he had to buy sheep on

27. David Archer: Letter, 29 December 1838.
credit to the value of £1,000 from James Walker to bring his share of the partnership up to the same value as that of his cousin. The new partnership was given the name of D. Archer & Co.

There were many pitfalls for those newcomers to New South Wales who took up squatting. As Thomas Archer wrote:

"...a great number of young men come out here with a few thousand pounds and fight away for a year or two, and when they find it is no use they very often take to the Bottle, and then it is all over with them, the knowing hands fleece them on all hands, and they are glad to give it up." 30

In spite of such failures there seemed to be reasonable prospects for success in David's venture. David Archer and his brothers had gained experience on an old establishment before they began. On the Castlereagh David had gained a sound knowledge of the way in which new stations should be established. He knew a good deal about sheep and their management and was hardly likely to start off with poor quality stock or flocks ill-selected with regard to ages, sex or condition. On the contrary, since these sheep were related to, or selected from, the Lue flocks they were probably of very good quality. In addition to the sheep the new firm had £500 in cash, invested by Edward Walker at the ruling rate of 10%, 31 and available for the purchase of stores and equipment and for the payment of wages.

Another advantage the partners enjoyed was their personal relationship to William Walker and his nephews.

31. Memorandum of agreement, 1 October 1839.
Through W. Walker & Co. they could arrange for the purchase of goods, the Sydney firm would receive their wool and ship it to London, where Walker Bros. & Co. would arrange for its sale and for the remittance of the proceeds. It is true that Walker & Co. charged the usual commissions on these transactions, but David Archer could be assured that the business side of his activities was being looked after by those with a friendly interest in the success of his undertaking, and with a long experience in these matters. The merchant houses were important in the marketing of wool since the banks tended to avoid settlers' accounts. In effect, the merchants provided a banking service for the squatters and acted as marketing agents for their wool. Walker & Co. provided these services for D. Archer & Co.

David Archer had three main tasks ahead of him - to recruit a labour force, to gather his flocks together at some suitable starting place and to get his stores and equipment to the same point. William Archer had made up his mind to stay with James Walker, taking David's place as superintendent. He seems to have felt that this was wise until David became established at Moreton Bay. Thomas Archer had returned to Wallerawang from Sydney in April, 1840, and was given the position of overseer. He gave details of his engagement in a letter written soon afterwards:

"I am engaged for four years, with wages for the first year of £50, the second year £65, the third year £80 and the fourth year £100 with bed, board and lodging also keep of any stock and their increase purchased for my wages. This is not bad, and I hope in less than Ten years to be pretty independent." 32

It is plain that Thomas Archer had no expectations of a meteoric rise to a position of affluence. He was only seventeen years old at this time, but many overseers of the period and many squatters were very young. His first job as overseer was to go to Lue and draft into separate flocks the sheep belonging to David Archer and Edward Walker, earmark them and then drive these to join the rest of the sheep belonging to D. Archer & Co. at Biamble, where David would join him with the drays.

While he was waiting at Lue for word from David to start the flocks, Thomas Archer found time hang heavy, especially during the evenings. There were no newspapers books were scarce and his only companion was one of the illiterate Highland shepherds who had taken William Archer's place as overseer at Lue. Thomas was glad to make the acquaintance of Ned Hawkins who, with his brother had a run adjoining Lue. Hawkins had come out to New South Wales as a child. His father, a retired naval officer, was one of the early settlers at Bathurst. A good shot and a splendid horseman, Hawkins introduced Thomas Archer to the sport of hunting dingoes with his pack of kangaroo dogs. Thomas Archer had trapped dingoes on Wallerawang but this was a new experience for him. He and Hawkins became firm friends - a friendship renewed later in the northern district. 33

While Thomas Archer was at Lue news came of Patrick Leslie's discovery of splendid new country near Moreton Bay. Leslie had left Collaroy station in the upper Hunter Valley about eighty miles south-east of Biamble, and had ridden north in search of new country. On the 20th March he re-discovered the Darling Downs described as free from timber, splendidly watered, of the richest friable mould and extending to the west and south-west as

33. Thomas Archer: "Recollections."
as far as eye could reach.

This news reached David Archer just as he was making final preparations for his own journey north. The description of the new country, the practicability of a track all the way for laden drays and its easy access to the settlement at Moreton Bay were all stressed\(^34\) and these opened up exciting prospects for the Archers. They opened up prospects for other settlers as well. Leslie and his brother, George, moved their sheep north immediately after his return to Collaroy. On 4 June they reached the Condamine and occupied a station near the present site of Warwick. They were quickly followed by others. On 6 July George Leslie wrote to a friend:

"There are an immense number of people started with stock for Moreton Bay since Pat showed them the example."\(^35\)

David Archer expected to be among the first of these overlanders to the Darling Downs. At the end of May he went to Maitland to load the drays with stores for the trip and send them by way of the Hunter Valley and Cassilis to Biamble. By mid-June Thomas Archer had received word from David to take the two Lue flocks to Biamble. He sent them off in charge of an old shepherd and another man, with a packhorse to carry bedding and rations. At Biamble he drafted the rest of the sheep. Everything was now ready for a start as soon as the drays arrived.

The start was not made. When David arrived he found himself faced with an outbreak of "scab" among the flocks. This was a skin disease caused by a mite which burrowed into the skin, causing the affected sheep a great deal of irritation. In an effort to ease this

\(^{34}\) Sydney Herald: 1 May 1840.
\(^{35}\) George Leslie: Letter 6 July 1840.
they rubbed themselves against tree-trunks and rocks, doing themselves a good deal of harm in the process and losing their wool in unsightly patches. This was a major disaster. Since the disease was highly contagious and many of the sheep were affected it was necessary to separate these from the sound sheep and to dress and cure those with scab. This was a long, unpleasant and costly process, but until the diseased sheep were reduced to manageable numbers, travelling would involve the risk of losing most of the flocks.

It was a bitter disappointment to the Archers to find that they could not join in the first rush of squatters to the Downs. David accepted this blow to his hopes with his usual evenness of disposition and set to work to combat the disease. But the delay caused by the outbreak of scab in the flocks dragged on, and as the months passed, one sentence in the "Herald" report took on great significance.

"The advantages this fine district possesses must speedily render it an object of attraction to settlers; and we entertain no doubt that before a year elapses we shall see its best sites occupied."  

The state of the flocks made it apparent that a long time would elapse before David could hope to make a start for the Darling Downs. The affected sheep had first to be moved to a section of unoccupied country where Thomas Archer formed a temporary station at a place called by the blacks Birallan. He took a horse-load of provisions and set a dozen blackfellows stripping bark for huts and a woolshed. It took a week to strip enough bark, but the building of sheep-years, huts and woolshed took several months of hard work. At Birallan the diseased sheep had

to be shorn and dressed. At that time it was the custom in Australia to wash wool on the sheep's back and this washing was done before the sheep were shorn. The method was simple, even if not particularly effective. About twenty sheep were held in a yard on the bank of a creek. One man threw these sheep, one by one, into the water where three or four men ducked each sheep and rubbed its fleece as he passed it on to the man beside him. Standing waist-deep in water for several hours a day gave the men cramps and, on one occasion, one of them had to be dragged, nearly fainting, to the bank and rubbed down in front of the fire.

The dressing which followed the shearing was even more unpleasant. David had got arsenic up from Sydney. A solution of this was put into tubs, and each sheep had to be lifted up bodily, kicking and struggling, and dipped into this poisonous mixture. As their finger-tips swelled and their nails turned black the men became frightened and would not stay long at the tubs. Only David's firm handling of the men, and his own example and that of Thomas, prevented a complete stoppage, but at last David prevailed and the men carried on.

At Birallan Thomas had his first experience as a shepherd. At one outstation about three miles from Birallan the convict shepherd was a quiet, decent man but a poor bushman. He was so afraid of losing himself that he kept his flock of 1,200 sheep huddled along the creek. At every opportunity the hungry sheep scattered in search of grass. The dingoes, which were in great numbers, attacked the flock and scattered it even more. David sent Thomas to look after this flock. He took them on good grass away from the creek, taking drinking water in a bottle for himself and his dog, a Scotch collie called Yarrow, and kept them out until it was nearly dark. For a couple of weeks,
he had a hard job with the sheep but after a month on
good feed his job became easier and he was even able to
do a good deal of reading, since his dog was able to
keep the sheep in order and David had brought a good
supply of books for their intended journey.

John Archer joined his brothers at Birallan in January
1841. He was twenty-six years old at this time, two years
older than David. Since August, 1839, he had been master
of a coastal vessel belonging to Mrs. William Walker's
brother. This vessel traded between Sydney, Launceston,
Port Phillip, Port Fairy and the Swan River carrying stock
passengers and merchandise. If David Archer had left for
Moreton Bay, as he intended, in June, 1840, it is unlikely
that John Archer would have joined him; but the outbreak
of scab delayed the overland journey, coastal trading
became very dull and, towards the end of 1840, John Archer
decided to leave the sea and try squatting. He was in-
experienced in bush life and in handling sheep, and as he
himself admitted, he was "rather deficient in the grand
accomplishments of a bushman, riding and walking." In
spite of this David was glad to have his brother's
help since he was very short of men, especially for the
overland trip to Moreton Bay.

When David Archer finally started for the Darling
Downs in 1841 his prospects were decidedly worse than they
had been eighteen months before. Then he had confidently
expected that Edward Walker's share of the first year's
profits would be £150 and that this would increase to £200

37. Thomas Archer: Letter to his father, 9 June 1840.
or £300 in the second year. 39 The outbreak of scab ended that expectation. David sold off the worst sheep and the flocks began to improve, but even after a good lambing he had to revise his estimate again in February, 18 Edward Walker, he thought, could expect £100 on the first year's operations. 42 A further outbreak of scab, with serious losses among the flocks, turned this expected profit into a loss of £150. That was the position in June, 1841 as he made his final preparations for his overland journey to Moreton Bay. 43

In April Thomas Archer took part of the sheep from Birallan to Baradine. This was the most northerly of Walker's stations and was seventy miles from Biamble, which was to have been their starting point the year before. I was forty miles east of Birallan, the temporary station established after the outbreak of scab. John Archer followed Thomas with the rest of the sheep in June. David Archer had already engaged shepherds, hutkeepers and a bullock-driver. He had bought a bullock dray with a team of ten bullocks and their harness, a light cart with the

39. Edward Walker: Letter, 9 Dec.1839. Very few of David Archer's letters to Edward Walker have been preserved but Edward Walker had a habit of quoting the main point of a letter in his reply, a habit of great use to anyone attempting to reconstruct the details of the partnership. It is very difficult to reconstruct the rough balance sheets on which David Archer based these and the following estimates.

40. ibid, 15 March 1841.
41. ibid, 22 July 1841 (quoting David Archer's letter, 18 Jan.1841).
42. ibid, (quoting David Archer's letter, 22 Feb.1841).
43. ibid, 12 Nov.1841 (quoting David Archer's letter, 8 June 1841).
necessary horse harness and stores and equipment for a
dozen men for a period of six months. He brought these
stores from Maitland through the Hunter Valley to
Baradine, a distance of two hundred miles.

The party consisted of David Archer as leader,
Thomas Archer as overseer, John Archer as storekeeper,
Paddy Hogan the bullock-driver, four shepherds, two
cooks who also acted as hutkeepers and nightwatchmen
and two aboriginals from the local Wiradjuri tribe.
Paddy Hogan and the shepherds were emancipated convicts,
the two cooks were free immigrants. Nearly all were
Irish. They were a quiet lot except for the bullock-
driver who was cross-grained and surly, perpetually
grumbling and trying to rouse discontent among the men.
Thomas Archer had hoped to avoid taking any convicts
as he had found them hard to manage. He was hoping to
get free immigrants. Failing these he thought he might
try to recruit some of the aboriginals. He finished
up with a mixture of all three, although he was able to
avoid convicts who were still serving their sentence.

"We make the journey in a very primitive style", wrote John Archer, "wandering about the 'bushes' - as
Charlie says in one of his letters - living in tents
and subsisting by hunting. If the Philosophers are
right in saying that the life of the hunter is only the
first advance from a savage life and that of a keeper of
flocks and herds is the next, we are fast relapsing into
barbarism. I begin already to feel a horrible propen-
sity for underdone beef and mutton - a savage symptom."  

David Archer had to lead his party from Baradine to
Moreton Bay, a distance not known for certain but reckon-
ed to be at least four hundred miles. Since the sheep

45. It was actually about 600 miles.
could travel no more than five or six miles a day the journey would last about three months. On the way they would have to cross rivers and mountains and circumvent scrubs and broken country, sometimes following dray tracks but often travelling over trackless country. The most northerly part of their journey would be through country only recently occupied. Their journey would not end until they had discovered new country suitable for a sheep run. John Archer, writing soon after their journey had ended, summed up in these words:

"An expedition of that sort requires to be conducted by a person of considerable skill, energy and forethought, all of which David appears to possess in an eminent degree." 46

The Archers had a small party for the 8,000 sheep they took. 47 Patrick Leslie had travelled to the Darling Downs in 1840 with 5,700 sheep. His brother went with him and the rest of the party comprised twenty-two men on ticket-of-leave. He had two bullock drays each with a

46. T. Archer in his "Recollections" gives the number as 5,000. So does William Clarke in the Queensland Historical Journal, vol. 1. Edward Walker's £2,000 would have bought 2,700 sheep, David Archer's sheep were reckoned to be worth £1,000 and this would mean 1,350 sheep with another 1,350 bought on terms from James Walker. A total that agrees with the above statements. Against this must be set David's letter to Edward Walker 22 Feb. 1841: in which he gave the stock as 8,000 sheep and 9 horses, his stock return of 1 Feb. 1841 giving the figure as 7,878 sheep, and his stock return of 1 July, 1843 giving a figure of 8,974 sheep. It is difficult to arrive at the real number of sheep since no figures are available for lambs in 1840, 1841, 1842 and 1843 nor for the losses from scab during the period June, 1840, to June, 1841. Durundur proved unsuitable for sheep and the flocks, according to T. Archer's "Recollections", increased very little during 1841, 1842 and 1843. The "Recollections" were published in 1895 and Clarke's paper was read in 1917, so the weight of probability lies with the contemporary figure even though these are incomplete.
team of seven bullocks, a dray drawn by a horse team, and ten saddle horses. Compared with this the Archer's party was small and only moderately well equipped. It was a poor man's party, and David Archer was relying heavily on his own experience and his brother's to compensate for smallness of numbers.

David Archer left Baradine in July. William Archer was there to see him off and so was James Walker, fresh from the gaieties of Sydney. The contrast must have struck James Walker forcibly. His annual visit to the city with all his family had been so close to the Queen's birthday that he had yielded to the wishes of his wife and Archibald Walker and had stayed for the Governor's levee and ball, giving his wife an opportunity to air the family jewels and satin. On this occasion Sydney was lit for the first time by gas lights. He had remarked then upon the great change from the grass and gum-trees of Wallerawang to the busy city. The contrast between Sydney with its vice-regal court and the primitive scene at Baradine was even more forcible. In spite of his early opposition to David Archer's venture James Walker took a great interest in it and hoped it would turn out well after its unfortunate beginning.


49. Sydney Herald, 25 April, 1841.
This time, at least, nothing prevented David Archer from making a start. The track was easterly at first, to the Namoi River. The party soon settled down to a daily routine, making an ordered pattern of life for themselves in the wilderness. Each day at dawn everyone was awake and stirring. One of the aboriginals went off through the frost laden grass to round up the horses and the bullocks. The cooks got water boiling and mutton sizzling over the coals, and all hands turned to for a hearty breakfast of mutton, damper and tea. An hour after sunrise the shepherds started their flocks, camp was struck, the tents were folded and the drays were loaded once again. Paddy Hogan yoked his bullocks, the horse was harnessed into the cart, and soon only trampled grass and smouldering logs were left to mark their stay. David and Thomas were the last to leave each morning, but they soon overtook the slow-moving sheep and rode ahead to mark out a track and find water and grass for the next night's camp. As soon as the drays came up the tents were pitched (one for the Archers and a second, larger one for the men) and camp was made, ready for the arrival of the flocks.

At the Namoi River, Billy Grey, a native of the Kamilaroi tribe, joined the party as off-sider to the bullock-driver. Here Thomas Archer left the main party and rode into Tamworth to post mail and pick up any letters from Sydney. This meant a detour of a hundred miles for him, and indicates that David Archer took his party well to the east before turning north. No detailed account of the journey remains but Thomas Archer wrote from Tamworth to say that they were doing well, with every prospect of a safe and speedy termination to their journey.50 The most likely track of the party was east

50. William Archer: Letter, 7 October 1841 (quoting this letter).
from Baradine to the Namoi, north across the Gwydir to the Macintyre and then down that river and across the Severn following Leslie's marked tree line to the Condamine.

It was lucky for David Archer that he started when he did. The dry season developed into a severe drought. Out of eighteen stations belonging to James Walker in the district of Bligh only ten could carry stock by October. All his stock had to be thrown on to permanently watered stations or into the market at a great sacrifice. There had been a drought on the Mooki (a tributary of the Namoi) since December, 1840. This persisted and spread until in November, 1841, and in the early part of December it became so severe that stock could not be moved. Before this, probably during August, the Archers had reached the Severn.

Crossing the river at the site of a station abandoned only a short time before on account of aboriginal attacks, the Archers found themselves on the edge of the country where they hoped to find their run. David decided to go on ahead of the main party with Thomas, exploring for a site for this run. They took one of the Castlereagh aboriginals with them, and one night, as Thomas lay awake, he noticed this man stir and wake. Raising his head slowly he glanced around. The firelight flickered on his dark face as he strained eyes and ears to catch any signs of danger. After a few seconds, reassured that all was well, he settled back once more to sleep. This brief scene impressed itself vividly on Thomas and made him realize that they were now in country

51. now known as the Dumaresq.
where they might be attacked by wild natives. For fifteen miles they followed the Darling Downs road through dense tea-tree scrub and then struck to the right exploring for a station. For two days they rode over very inferior iron-bark ridges, quite unfit for sheep, and then came out once again on the dray road. Here they met two parties looking for country and learnt that all of the well-watered eastern part of the Darling Downs was already taken up and squatters were moving down on to the eastern side of the range where there was some fine country.

David took the horses and pushed on with the aboriginal, leaving Thomas to go back on foot and hurry the sheep, which were about twenty miles behind. Thomas passed two more parties on his way. Back at his own camp he found that the horses and bullocks had strayed and a shepherd was missing with his flock. A day was lost getting the party together but on the following day they were able to set off once again. The next day a dozen aboriginals suddenly appeared on the side of a hill beside the track but, although they made threatening gestures, they did not attack. This incident made everybody in the party relieved when at last they drew clear of the thick timber on to the open, grassy, and more lightly timbered ridges which stretched to the Condamine River.

Across the river on the edge of a wide plain a strong, bitterly cold wind drove a wall of fire through the tall grass. One night this fire came so close that it threatened the sheep but hard work by everybody checked it just in time.

At Hodgson's station, Eton Vale, consisting of a single slab hut, they came on the dray road leading to a gap through the range. At the Springs they were

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55. This later became the township of Drayton.
joined by David who had found country for a run a hundred miles away on the head waters of the Brisbane River. The next day they started down the gap. This was the gap first used by Hodgson, not Cunningham's Gap which was thirty miles further south and too steep and rugged for the drays.

This road through the gap was very bad. It made a sudden plunge down a steep hill several hundred yards long, then ran along the side of the mountain. This section ran at so steep an angle that the men had to lash saplings across the horse cart and hold on to the upper ends to prevent the cart from somersaulting down the steep gully below the road. The two-wheeled bullock dray was an awkward vehicle to take down this steep, rough track. The load had to be adjusted 'light on' (that is, towards the back) to prevent the bullocks from being crushed as the dray tilted forward. Only the bullock-driver's judgment and experience could guide him in this regulation of the load. A heavy branch was tied behind the dray to steady it down the steep slope. In spite of these precautions the dray overturned on one particularly steep section and bags of flour and sugar, chests of tea, boxes of soap and tin trunks full of clothes went rolling down to the bottom of the deep gully. All these had to be carried up the slope again on the men's backs and loaded once again on to the dray. After this section the road plunged down another steep slope into a rocky creek and then over steep spurs of the range separated by deep, rocky gullies. This road was known as the Hell Hole.

From the foot of the range the Archers struck north-east to the Brisbane River, past stations recently occupied by McConnel at Cressbrook, Balfour at Colinton and Mackenzie at Kilcoy and then on through a dense vine scrub to their new station on the upper Stanley River.56 This was

56. T. Archer: "Recollections".
as far as David Archer had come on his scouting trip ahead of the main party, but he had camped one night with Andrew Petrie who had been exploring from Brisbane north to the Maroochy River. There, he said, was some very good country. Before settling on the Stanley David Archer led a party consisting of his brother, Thomas Frederick Bigge and an aboriginal to explore the Maroochy country. They travelled past Mt. Beerwah and the rest of the Glasshouse Mountains, through swamps and boggy creeks to the Maroochy River. The fifty mile journey took them ten days so they returned by a more direct route over a range of high mountains. This track avoided the low-lying coastal country but it took them through dense vine scrub. The journey took much longer than it should have taken, they ran very short of food, and for all their trouble they found only poor, sandy, densely-timbered ridges, boggy flats and areas of scrub, country, in David's opinion, "not fit to feed a bandicoot."  

After a few days rest David set off again to explore the country inland from the Maroochy district. At Kilcoy he met a party of squatters who had been exploring north-west from Kilcoy without discovering any good country. One of these was Ned Hawkins who had come overland from his station near Lue. David Archer, with Bigge and Colin Mackenzie, crossed the high, broken, scrub-covered ranges north of Kilcoy and came on the head waters of a large river. He followed this down for about a hundred miles without finding any country suitable for sheep.

59. later named the Mary.
59. to about the present position of Gympie.
From Hawkin's report and his own explorations David Archer was convinced that there was no sheep country north of the ranges which formed the watershed of the Brisbane, so he decided to stay on the Stanley. Hawkins had gone to look at the district south of Brisbane and found good country on the Logan River where he formed a run. Bigge decided to occupy Mt. Brisbane, although this country was probably within fifty miles of Brisbane and so in the district where settlement was prohibited.

At this time Brisbane was occupied only by government officials remaining after the breaking-up of the penal settlement. The squatters on the Darling Downs and on the Brisbane River had to get their merchants to send stores by sea to Brisbane. These supplies were kept in the Government Stores until picked up by the squatters. The dray roads came from the Darling Downs through Hodgson's Gap and down the Brisbane valley from the Stanley to Ipswich. Here there was a government station in charge of George Thorn. From Ipswich the road went to the south bank of the Brisbane opposite the Government store. Here the squatters camped their bullock teams and horses while they got their supplies from the storekeeper and had them ferried across the river. Since there was no inn at "the Settlement" on the north bank the handful of officials often found themselves acting as hosts to the squatters. A guest house was later built at Petrie's Bight and soon hotels and shops were built as free settlers came to Brisbane as well as to the inland districts.

CHAPTER 4

DURUNDUR
(1841-1845)

The new run comprised sixty square miles along the Stanley River. David's application to the Commissioner for Crown Lands describes it as follows:

"The run commences about 5 miles West of Mt. Beerwah. Extends West about 11 miles by a breadth of 3 to 5 miles, is watered by the NE head of the Brisbane which flows through it from E to West, on which side the run is bounded by Messrs. McKenzie's"

David Archer."¹

The Archers found this country very beautiful. The grass formed a regular sward instead of being scattered in tufts, and along the banks of the creeks and up the sides of the ranges grew the dense scrubs which gave the place its aboriginal name of Durundur, "the place of scrubs."² The country had quite a tropical appearance and reminded John Archer of some of the islands he had visited with so much pleasure during the whaling voyages in the Pacific.³ Interwoven among the trees were numerous rattans and vines. Some of these vines were as fine as thread, others as thick as a ship's hawser. Since many of them were covered with formidable prickles a horseman could not ride through them and even on foot a man would find them difficult to penetrate, as Charles Archer found from his own experience:

"I myself have entered a scrub a very decently

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¹ From the original document preserved at Gracemere Station, now in the Mitchell Library; N.S.W. G.G. No.49, 11 May, 1848.
² University of Queensland Historical Place Names Committee.
³ John Archer; Letter to his father; 8 Nov. 1841.
"dressed bushman and returned almost in a state of nudity with my shirt and other garments torn into strips which fluttered gracefully (like so many streamers) in the breeze. Happy is the man who escapes with sound back and arms, which are sometimes lacerated as if the unfortunate wight had done battle with an army of cats. All scrubs are not quite as bad as this, but until a road is cut, neither sheep, cattle nor horses can pass through them." 4

Apart from the scrubs the country consisted of open forest land and some areas clear of trees and varying in circumference from one mile to three or four miles. 5 Through this country ran the Stanley and its tributaries, not mere "chains of ponds" but real running streams. At Durundur head station the creek was about twenty feet deep from the bank, with a stream of water about four feet deep and twenty yards wide. 6

This head station was on a low, sloping ridge a few miles upstream from the Archers' first temporary camp. The scattered gum trees on this ridge had to be cleared and huts and yards erected. Clearing and burning-off; cross-cut sawing and splitting of posts, slabs and rails; and the erection of huts and fences were the principal occupations on the new station for many months, 7 but even after three months the head station began to show evidence of the work done. John described their life at this time in one of his letters.

"We reside at present in a hut, over which is built a bark roof projecting several feet in front, so as to form a sort of

7. T. Archer; "Recollections".
"verandah which is our sitting room, the hut being our bedroom. Our furniture consists of a table made of slabs split from the tree and fixed upon posts sunk in the ground, three three-legged stools of the same material, and one shelf. Our cooking is performed in large three-legged cast-iron pots, and our crockery consists of tin-plates, dishes of the same material, and three iron spoons. Our knives we carry in our pockets, and when there are Fremmede here we make forks of wooden skewers; when we are by ourselves this is considered an unnecessary refinement. We eat mutton and damper (bread baked in the ashes) and drink, three times a day, a quart each time."  

Charles Archer sketched the head station in July, 1843, and described his sketch in an accompanying letter. At that time the station consisted of a store, a dwelling hut and a kitchen—all built of slabs and roofed with sheets of stringy-bark. In addition there was an outdoor oven and a fowl-house.

It was not usual for squatters to concern themselves with crops or even with a vegetable garden, but the Archers established both a garden and a cultivation paddock at Durundur. The success of the garden was due mainly to the efforts of David and John, aided by the rich black soil, the warm climate and the good rainfall of the region.

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8. strangers.
9. John Archer: Letter to his sister, Kate; 2 Jan. 1842
10. This has been preserved. My copy is a photograph taken by Mr. J.L. Archer from the original. An ink drawing made by F.A. Wood in 1877 was reproduced in the Brisbane "Courier" and there is a copy of this in the Oxley Library. The homestead, with all its books and records, was destroyed by fire in October, 1879.
Durundur Head Station in 1843.
Drawn by Charles Archer.
Note on Charles Archer's Sketch of Durundur.

Charles Archer arrived at Durundur on 30th July, 1843. The following morning he drew this sketch and wrote to his sister Kate in Norway to explain it:

"...Look to the left...and you will behold John Archer working at his canoe. The building behind him is the store - the centre building is the dwelling hut - then comes the oven, next the fowl house, and the building on the extreme right, of which an end is seen, is the kitchen. The gentleman with the spade in his hand is no less a person than the laird of Durundur himself, but he attests it to be a libel on his personal appearance, so we will call it Sandy the gardener..."

Charles Archer mentions a group of aborigines in the foreground so it appears that about half an inch from the foreground of this drawing has been trimmed away.

(From a photograph copy in the Mitchell Library. Original at Tolderodden, Norway).
Within a few months of their arrival sweet potatoes, cabbages, melons and pumpkins were growing and these soon provided them with a welcome addition to their monotonous diet of mutton and damper. Early in 1842 they obtained a plough, and before the end of that year eight or ten acres of cultivation were enclosed. They seem to have found the sweet potato, introduced from the South Sea islands, nutritious and palatable, productive and easily cultivated. The region was too warm and the rainfall too heavy for wheat but maize grew well, and John Archer wrote of his hopes for sugar and rice. There were several thousand acres of rich black soil along the banks of the river and John was right in prophesying that the region would, in time, become populous and highly productive but that time was in the future; the Archers' prosperity at Durundur was bound up with the productivity of their flocks.

These were soon established on sheep stations on the run. The nearest of these was only half a mile from the head station, the most distant was six miles away. Each station was occupied by two shepherds, each with a flock of sheep, and a hutkeeper who acted as cook and night watchman. The flocks were much larger than at Lue, often 1,000 sheep in a single flock and sometimes as many as 1,500. A slab hut roofed with bark was built at each of these sheep stations for the three men. After breakfast each morning, usually not much later than an hour after sunrise, each

13. Tom Archer: Letter to his mother, 10 April, 1842.
   (postscript dated 20 July, 1842)
15. ibid: 15 Sept. 1842.
16. T. Archer: "Recollections".
shepherd would take this flock to graze. By the afternoon the flocks would have made their way back to the hut where each would be put in a fold. This was not a permanent yard. It was made of light hurdles 6 ft. long by 3 ft. 6 in. high. Each hurdle was made of four or five thin saplings, and forty or fifty of these lashed together made a movable pen for each flock. The watchman slept in a sentry-box 6 feet by 3 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in. built on four legs and placed between the two folds. This had two projecting handles so that it could be moved when the hurdles were taken down and erected in a new place. The hurdles were moved every few days, since it was believed that moving the sheep helped to prevent foot-rot.

Each week someone from the head station rode round the sheep stations taking rations for the men. This was often Thomas's job at Durundur. At each station he would count the sheep, checking these against the marked ears of any sheep that had died. These earmarks were kept by the shepherd as proof that the sheep had not been lost, and were burnt after the flocks had been checked.

A dray road to the nearest port had to be found as early as possible after the run had been occupied, since each squatter had to bring up his own supplies from this port and cart his own wool there to be shipped away to Sydney, and from there to Britain. At first the Archers took their dray down the Brisbane Valley to Limestone and the south bank of the Brisbane River opposite the "Settlement". Stores were ferried across the river at this point.

This was a roundabout route from Kilcoy and Durundur, so David Archer and Evan Mackenzie looked for a shorter, more direct road by way of the coast. David took a dray with Billy Grey in charge while Mackenzie took two drays
and several men. Keeping the D'Aguilar Range on their right they crossed several creeks above tidewater coming out at the German Mission Station and then going by way of the mission road past Eagle Farm and over the Breakfast Creek bridge to Brisbane.

As supplies were short David intended to load the dray and return. This was summer, the rainy season at Moreton Bay. The dray bogged at the North Pine River and David and Billy Grey had to unload it and carry the bags of flour and sugar on their backs to a ridge three miles away. The heavy showers continued and for the next three days the dray had to be unloaded and loaded at every bog. On the fourth day, when the dray was still thirty miles from Durundur, the rain became a heavy downpour. The loaded dray could be brought no farther, and for a week the rations had to be packed in to Durundur on horseback.17

This heavy rain continued for several months. It brought the Stanley down in full flood, cut Durundur off from Brisbane, made it difficult to reach some of the out-lying sheep stations and led to some serious accidents. In one of these the best pole bullock broke its neck when it fell down the steep bank of the creek. In another David, teaching Thomas to drive the bullock-dray, upset the dray in the creek. The saturated bales had to be rolled up the bank and ripped open so that the wool could be spread out to dry before being baled for the second time.18 At last David decided to bridge the creek.

This was a formidable undertaking, since the creek was 20 feet deep and 54 feet from bank to bank. A pier

17. T. Archer: "Recollections".
18. ibid.
built out from one bank took 12 feet off this span but the timber available was so heavy that some of the logs could be got across the creek only by using blocks and tackle worked by the bullock team. In this construction John's sea-faring experience proved invaluable. Although he could command the power of only nine bullocks and three or four men be built a strong bridge which lasted for many years, and proved of the greatest value not only to the Archers but also to their neighbours, the Mackenzies and the Balfours, who all used the coastal road. 19

The road from Durundur to Brisbane was also improved when the Archers found tracks which avoided the worst sections across the flats and over the creeks. 20 They even looked for a site for a port on Deception Bay in an attempt to shorten the road distance. 21 This port was never established but the attempt indicates the importance squatters gave to short and easy access from their runs to a port. This importance had been emphasized during the pastoral expansion of the thirties. As the squatters moved beyond the boundaries many of them found that, as the distance from Sydney lengthened, their cartage costs rose, their communications became more difficult to maintain, they found increasing difficulty in recruiting labour and they had to pay higher wages.

On James Walker's runs most of the free men he employed were on Wallerawang or Lue while on the Castlereagh runs (and especially on the runs lower down the river) most of the employees were convicts or those recently emancipated.

20. The Durundur Diary: Typescript in Oxley Library, 26, 29 June; 31 August: 28 October 1843.
Walker was reluctant to occupy Coonamble (in spite of its good grass and water) since he was afraid that it might be too far out to be worked profitably. This difficulty of distance explains why David Archer was willing to travel 600 miles to the Moreton Bay country, where the runs were within a hundred miles of the port of Brisbane, in preference to looking for a run on the Castlereagh or nearby and why many squatters went north from the Bathurst district to Moreton Bay rather than westward further out from the port of Sydney.

By the middle of 1842 the Archers could consider themselves settled at Moreton Bay - a run taken up under licence, a head station built, the position of sheep stations decided and a line of communication established between Durundur and Brisbane. Their difficulties did not end with their settlement at Durundur. Two major problems confronted them immediately; indeed, these problems arose even before they moved to Moreton Bay.

One of the problems was their relationship with the aboriginals. At Wallerawang there had been few natives. The Archers were brought into close relationship with the aboriginals during their enforced stay on the Castlereagh, but the tribe there was a gentle, peaceful people with no record of violence in their relations with the white settlers. The northern tribes were very different. Before the Archers arrived at Durundur they heard that the natives were troublesome. One man was killed at Grantham and another at Helidon. On the Brisbane

22. L. J. Gibson: op. cit.
23. T. Archer: "Recollections"; J. Walker, 12 June 1841, reply to Governor's circular 41/4 MS in Mitchell Library and included in his evidence before the Immigration Committee, 8 July, 1841; Sydney Morning Herald: 3 Oct. 1841.
River the natives speared Mackenzie's and McConnel's men and one of these was so badly wounded that he had to be taken to the hospital at Brisbane. John Balfour was attacked at Colinton on 27th September. He lost 300 ewes and 1,200 lambs in these attacks and had to take his men to McConnel's station until the aboriginals moved away from the neighbourhood. 

John Archer's letter mentioning these attacks does not lay the blame on the aboriginals. 

"I suppose, as usual, these were occasioned by the misconduct of the whites, who seem to imagine that the blacks will allow themselves to be ill used without attempting revenge." 

Some months later he wrote that the whites were "in general inimical to the blacks." Charles Archer looked upon them as "this unfortunate Race." The two Castlereagh natives who had come overland with the Archers returned to their own country in March, 1842. Thomas took them with him on a dray trip to Brisbane and saw them safely on board a ship to Sydney. His description of their departure, and the general tone of his references to these particular natives in his letters and in his "Recollections" written nearly fifty years later show clearly that he had a real affection for them. Describing their departure he wrote: 

"As everything was new to them they afforded me and everyone on board a great deal of amusement


25. John Archer: Letter to his father, 8 Nov. 1841.

26. ibid, 14 June, 1842.

27. Charles Archer: Letter to his father, 29 Apr. 1845.
"by their remarks on everything. We considered them more in the light of friends than dependants and parted with much regret on both sides." 28

David's policy was to distinguish between the local aboriginals at Durundur and those from distant tribes. These strangers were never allowed to camp close to the head station, but there were a few serious incidents in the early period. In one all the clothing and food at a hut were stolen. Thomas led a party in pursuit, caught up with the raiding party and retrieved the stolen goods. At about the same time on the neighbouring station of Kilcoy, the Mackenzies had two of their shepherds killed by natives from a northern tribe. A little later two aboriginals from a coastal tribe speared a shepherd at his hut. David took Thomas, the wounded man's mate and two of the Durundur aboriginals in pursuit. They had to send their horses back when they reached the boggy coastal region. From there the trail led to the foot of Mt. Beerwah where they surprised the natives at their camp. One escaped but after a sharp struggle the other was captured and taken to Brisbane to be sent on to Sydney to stand his trial. The escaped native, Dandalli, became notorious for his attacks on white settlers. He killed a great many before he was captured in 1854 and executed. Thomas Archer wrote later that this was the rashest adventure he ever took part in. If the natives had been more aware of their own strength, and more familiar with the ways of the white settlers, they would not have been so easily over-awed. As it was, the prompt measures taken by the Archers inspired fear among the tribes and kept.

28. Thomas Archer: Letter to his mother, 10 Apr. 1842; T. Archer: "Recollections".
them quiet for many years. 29

The Archers established friendly relations with the Durundur natives soon after they arrived on the Stanley River. John Archer was able to get the assistance of these natives in stripping bark for the first rough huts. They showed their friendliness by bringing him gifts of yams. When the head station was being established the natives helped to clear the site and hoed part of the ground for the garden. They were also useful in carrying rations to the sheep stations. As far as possible the Archers prevented the natives from having any kind of intercourse with their men; they would not allow the natives to carry their weapons in the vicinity of the head station; and they maintained liaison with the local tribe through one or more of its more prominent members. For their services the natives were paid in rice, flour, meat and as much sweet potatoes or corn as they could eat. They were also given occasional gifts of a shirt or tobacco. When there was no employment for them on the station they were sent off into the bush to hunt for food in their normal way. 30

Simpson, the Commissioner for Crown Lands at Moreton Bay, reported on the success of David Archer's policy in a letter to the Governor dated 10 January, 1844. He stated that the plan that the Archers had first fairly carried out was followed by the squatters south of Brisbane and proved successful in each instance. 31

In 1845

30. Letters: John Archer to his father, 8 Nov. 1841. Thomas Archer to his father, 10 Sept. 1843. Charles Archer to his father, 29 Apr. 1845. T. Archer: "Recollections".
31. HRA. I.xxiv, pp.258-9, Gipps to Stanley, encl.1.
Charles Archer was able to write with some pardonable satisfaction:

"While our neighbours the Mackenzies are frequently annoyed by attacks, both upon their flocks and their shepherds, I do not think there has been a single sheep stolen here by the Blacks since I came to the station and I believe for a long time previous."\(^{32}\)

One important feature of the Archers' attitude towards the aboriginals was their assumption of responsibility for those they employed. This may be illustrated by an incident that took place while Thomas was in charge of a sheep station between Durundur and Kilcoy. A young aboriginal he sent with a message to Colin Mackenzie was bitten on his big toe by a snake. A dozen natives crowded round this young aboriginal on his return. The men tore their hair; the women cut their heads with sharp flints. All began to shriek and howl. An old man took a piece of snake skin and some fangs from a dilly-bag and passed these over the punctures, chanting as he did so. Thomas got a knife, but he had to screw up his resolution before he could cut the punctures and suck the poison from the wound. This young man was not one of the Durundur natives and Thomas cared little for him, but he had sent this native on the errand and felt that he was responsible for what had happened to him.\(^{33}\)

This practical and humane policy was not carried out by many squatters. This makes it worth mentioning in connection with David Archer. But it was his attitude towards the aboriginals that was really distinc-

\(^{32}\) Charles Archer: *Letter to his father, 29 Apr. 1845.*

\(^{33}\) T. Archer: "Recollections."
tive. He looked on the aboriginal as the hereditary owner of the soil and considered that it was an act of injustice to drive him from his hunting grounds and then punish him for stealing sheep or cattle.\textsuperscript{34} In this attitude he was influenced to some extent by James Walker, who believed that kindness and justice would attach the aboriginals to the white settlers,\textsuperscript{35} but a much stronger influence was his religious convictions. He took up this aspect of the problem of relationship between the aboriginals and the white settlers with Edward Walker, who had been ordained into the Church of England ministry.\textsuperscript{36} Have others the right to intrude on the blacks' territory? That David Archer could frame the question in this way shows that he had a much clearer insight into the aboriginal problem than most of his contemporaries. This does not mean that he fully understood the way in which the aboriginals had come to terms with a country poorly supplied with indigenous plants capable of cultivation and indigenous animals capable of domestication. He probably realised only vaguely how the aboriginals existed without dangerously depleting the meagre resources of the country, but he did realize that the white settlers' sheep and cattle deprived the natives of their normal means of existence, and the moral issue involved troubled him. Edward Walker was not able to offer him a solution. The problem presented itself in a form that was almost insoluble. Even in our more enlightened age we have made little progress in solving it.

The financial crisis of 1841-43 coming so soon after David Archer's heavy initial expenses and the losses

\textsuperscript{34} Charles Archer: Letter to his father, 29 Apr. 1845.
\textsuperscript{35} J. Walker, see ref. 23; Sydney Morning Herald 3 Oct. 1841.
\textsuperscript{36} Edward Walker: Letter 20 Aug. 1845.
caused by the outbreak of scab involved him in serious financial difficulties. In 1845 after six years of colonial experience J. O. Balfour wrote that wool-growing, a quick and certain way of making a fortune before 1841 under the assignment system, had become unprofitable in 1841. Before 1841, he estimated, a grazier could expect to make a profit of £200 a year from every thousand sheep; in 1841 he could expect to make no more than £11 a year from the same number. Balfour's calculations were based on the drop in the prices of wool and of sheep and the increase in wages.37

William Archer summed up his view of the situation in a succinct paragraph.

"The low price of wool, our only staple in the English market, excessive speculation raising the price of land to a fictitious value, the unbounded system of credit, a succession of bad seasons, with a scarcity of labour and consequent high rates of wages, has brought many of our largest proprietors to the verge of ruin and deterred newly arrived capitalists from investing their money in the pursuits of the Colony".38

The price of land did not affect the squatters beyond the boundaries since they paid licence fees and assessment on their stock irrespective of the land they occupied. William Archer's reference to the drying up of investment, on the other hand, is particularly relevant to a consideration of the financial crisis.

Economists disagree about the causes of the crisis\textsuperscript{39} but the primary slump was in the wool industry itself. Sheep raising in the thirties was based on the exploitation of available grass and water. At the end of the thirties most of the good grassland in the high rainfall areas had been occupied and the squatters lacked the techniques necessary to make use of the grasslands in the lower rainfall areas farther west. Walker and Brown had their sheep on the upper Castlereagh; their runs lower down the river and further north were used for cattle. The occupation of the New England Tableland was on the eastern edge along the line from Tamworth through Guyra to Tenterfield. Patrick Leslie tried to find a way from the tableland down on to the Clarence River before he turned north to discover the good country he occupied on the Darling Downs. The squatters who followed him occupied the eastern Darling Downs; later arrivals turned away from the western region of the Darling Downs and moved down on to the higher rainfall areas of the Brisbane and Logan Rivers. North and south of these rivers the spread of settlement was blocked by steep ranges.

With the exhaustion of opportunities for profitable expansion in new areas at the end of the thirties there came an end to the rather extravagant hopes of the previous decade. Speculation and investment ended. Squatters such as David Archer found that there was now little hope of gaining income from sales of surplus stock to new squatters pushing out to new country. It was no longer true to say that "Wool will pay and wethers are profit."

\textsuperscript{39} Cf. R. M. Hartwell: "The Economic Development of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1850" (1954) and S. J. Butlin: "Foundations of the Australian Monetary System 1788-1851" (1953); also Historical Studies, November 1950 pp.185-197; November 1951 pp.59-67; May 1952 pp.154-159. Most of the following account is based on Butlin's views, which are consistent with the incidents recorded about the Walkers and the Archers.
In the middle of 1843 David Archer wrote, "We have property – say 9,000 sheep etc. but no market. We can live and that well, but can get no money." 40

He could not have chosen a worse time to start his career as a squatter. His initial heavy expenses in 1839 were aggravated by the outbreak of scab in 1840 and the financial crisis. His first year's work had resulted in a loss of £150. Edward Walker had expected that he would receive £300 from the partnership and, in addition, interest at 10% on his loan of £500 in cash to D. Archer & Co. He received no remittances at all. David had given up his own share of the profits as manager to his brother, John, 41 and Thomas Archer had to take all his wages in stock instead of cash. 42 In February, 1843, D. Archer & Co. owed £1,000 to W. Walker & Co. By February, 1844, this had increased to £1,556. About half of this debt comprised interest on advances and commission charges. 43 In the circumstances of the times this was a considerable debt, particularly since those who might have been able to help David Archer (his brother, William, and the Walkers) were also adversely affected by the crisis.

Even James Walker, in spite of his large, well-established runs, was affected by the crisis. He had been a landholder for twenty years. His runs were extensive, his flocks and herds numerous. He had not indulged in the extravagances of many landholders during the boom years. Yet, according to William Archer, he "had been taxing himself on account of the Archers" and had been...
forced to "reduce his establishment." Thomas Walker had been settled in the colony a year longer than his uncle and had interests in many different branches of industry and commerce, in the Port Phillip district as well as in New South Wales. In 1843 even he was talking about concentrating his interests at either Twofold Bay or Yarralumla.

William Archer had taken David's place as superintendent for James Walker at a salary of £100 a year with the right to keep his stock on James Walker's runs. He estimated that this right was worth £30 or £40 a year to him. As the crisis continued his salary was reduced to £70 a year. He also had to pay £30 a year for the keep of his stock, and this meant, in effect, a further reduction in his salary.

The merchants fared badly in the crisis. Edward Walker claimed that his father's "enormous capital had bolstered New South Wales", a reference to the part William Walker and other merchants played in the development of colonial commercial life and particularly to the expansion of the pastoral industry during the thirties. Banks were reluctant to lend to squatters who had no landed security. The merchants made advances to the squatters and acted as their bankers as well as their agents. When the squatting boom came to an end, there was a contraction of credit, a slump in land sales, a fall in prices and incomes and widespread insolvency. This hit the mer-

44. William Archer: Letters, 22 November 1841; 9 September 1843.
45. ibid, 9 September 1843.
46. ibid, 2 January 1842.
chants hard and few of those who were in business in 1840 were able to survive the crisis.⁴⁹

Richard Jones, for example, became insolvent towards the end of 1843.⁵⁰ He had been one of Sydney's leading merchants and ship-owners; he had been President of the Bank of New South Wales; he was a member of the Legislative Council; and he had been living in Sydney looking after his business affairs personally. In view of the fate of Jones it seemed very unfair of Edward Walker to complain that Thomas and Archibald Walker had mismanaged his father's business.⁵¹

This complaint arose out of the reports of losses in New South Wales that reached London during 1842, reports that included losses by W. Walker & Co. and that became so disquieting that William Walker sailed from London in the middle of 1843 to do what he could to save his business. When he reached Sydney at the end of 1843 he found his business in difficulties but in a better position than he had feared.⁵²

When he heard of William Walker's imminent arrival David Archer went to Sydney to discuss his debt and to make arrangements for improving his position. One way to improvement had already appeared. Tallow was marketable even if sheep were not. Stock became valuable for their hides or skins and the tallow they yielded, a value that could be reckoned at six or seven shillings for a sheep and £2 or £3 a head for cattle. Sick or diseased sheep could be boiled down along with the annual increase in the flocks which could not be sold.⁵³

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⁴⁹ J. O. Balfour: op. cit. p. 82.
⁵⁰ Sydney Morning Herald: 9 December 1843; 29 March 1845
Mrs. Bancroft: op. cit.
⁵¹ Edward Walker: Letter, 12 July 1843.
⁵² ibid, 15 July 1844.
yielded less than the sales of surplus stock had done but it set a minimum value on stock and gave an immediate cash return.

Edward Walker's letters during 1842 and 1843 had been mildly plaintive about the lack of remittances from New South Wales. The good news about the market for tallow, coming after the gloomy reports during 1842 and the early part of 1843 led him to pen the following doggerel:

Oh Sydney folks, good Sydney folks,
no longer look so sallow,
I tell you what, I smell a rat,
we'll melt our Sheep to tallow.

Who cares for fleece, we'll eat their grease,
no longer thus be undone.

And boil them down at Walker's Wharf
and ship them off to London.54

Unfortunately for David Archer, he had no surplus sheep to boil down in order to take advantage of this new development; since Durundur had proved unsuitable as a sheep run. This naturally raises the question why David Archer, with his experience, chose Durundur in the first instance. Although the delay caused by scab had made him too late to get a run on the Darling Downs he was among the first to move on to the Brisbane Valley, only McConnel at Cressbrook, Balfour at Colinton and Mackenzie at Kilcoy being ahead of him. He could have chosen a run west of these or north of Colinton along the main stream of the Brisbane River. All this country was unknown and difficult of access, and David's experience of Gorman's Gap and the rough country below it must have left him with a very unfavourable impression of the

country along the eastern slopes of the Dividing Range. He would also have been very conscious of the need to choose a run with a permanent supply of water. He had experienced the effects of drought at first hand. The disastrous drought of 1837-38-39 was fresh in his mind and there had been drought along the Mooki from November, 1840, to the end of 1841. At the end of that year the drought had extended so far across the Liverpool Plains and the New England Tableland that stock could not be moved. David made his overland trip before the drought was at its worst, but the country was drying behind him as he moved north.  

At Moreton Bay there was a striking contrast. The summer of 1840-41 had been wet, and in February, 1841, there had been a severe flood in the Brisbane River. The season continued wet. In September the grass at Durundur would have had a vigorous, green shoot, especially in the open forest and on the wide flats along the banks of the Stanley River. In his "Recollections" Thomas Archer described Durundur as "unpromising"; but he wrote in 1895, with his judgment matured by fifty years of experience.

In the spring of 1841 Durundur, just beyond the fifty mile limit and giving every hope of an assured supply of grass and water, must have appeared full of promise, and this is reflected in the letters which the Archers wrote during the first few years of their occupation.

The early promise was not fulfilled. This was not due to any failure of grass and water. On the contrary, it was the over-abundance of water which caused trouble.

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56. J. J. Knight: "In the Early Days" (1895)
David could not have foreseen this since the abnormally heavy rainfall is limited to a small area and is caused by the conformation of the mountains in this particular region. 57

North of Durundur the Blackall Range rises very steeply, its slopes thickly covered with trees. Cyclones moving south from tropical seas are deflected against this mountain wall by the isolated peaks of the Glasshouse Mountains. The south-easterlies also precipitate their moisture on this range. The result is an abnormally heavy rainfall at Crohamhurst and Bald Knob on the southern edge of the range and an exceptionally heavy run-off into the small valley drained by the upper reaches of the Stanley. The annual rainfall figures show this effect very clearly. Along the main stream of the Brisbane River, at Mt. Brisbane, Cressbrook and College, the rainfall is just under 40 inches a year. Even at Kilcoy it is only just a little over 40 inches. At Durundur it rises to 52 inches, at Crohamhurst to 76 inches and at Bald Knob to 90 inches. In the record wet year of 1931 98 inches fell at Crohamhurst and 114 inches at Bald Knob. It was David Archer's bad luck that he should have been forced so far up the Brisbane Valley. He could have expected the rainfall to be a little heavier than along the main valley, but he could not have foreseen just how much heavier it was.

He was doubly unfortunate in the weather that followed his occupation of Durundur. For two years the rainfall was heavy and constant; there was hardly a fortnight without rain. Flooding creeks and spreading swamps made it difficult to supply the sheep-stations with rations. The grass that covered the creek-banks in a sward became coarse.

and long and lacked the nourishment needed to keep sheep healthy and in good condition. As a consequence only half the lambs reached maturity and many of the ewes died of "bottle" and "foot-rot" or other ills at an age when they should have been in their prime. The flocks barely increased their numbers, they were in poor condition and the quality of the wool deteriorated. D. Archer & Co. had 7,678 sheep at Birallan in February, 1841. In July, 1843, after two lambings there were only 8,974 at Durundur. It was plain that Durundur was not suitable for sheep.

But what of cattle? They did well on the swampy flats of Wallerawang with their coarse pasture. They were thriving on McConnel's run at Cressbrook and on Bigge's run at Mt. Brisbane. The market for tallow indicated that cattle could be profitable if he could acquire a herd, fatten them on Durundur and boil down the increase each year.

In Sydney David Archer found that William Walker was able to overcome the financial difficulties of his own business and willing to continue extending credit to D. Archer & Co. There were few insolvencies among the squatters but there appears to have been some danger that David Archer would become insolvent. In February, 1844, William Archer wrote that there was "a prospect of D. Archer and Co. going on," implying that there had been some fear that D. Archer & Co. might not go on. William Archer was probably referring to the danger that, if William Walker's affairs were in a really bad condition, David

58. T. Archer: "Recollections."
60. William Archer: Letter, 26 February 1844.
might be forced to sell his station and stock and other property in order to meet his debt to W. Walker & Co. William Archer also wrote, in May, that David had "effected more favourable arrangements with William Walker." but he does not say what these arrangements were.

David was looking for cattle to take "on terms," that is, he would run these cattle on Durundur for their owner, taking a third of their increase for himself and a third of the proceeds of any sales of the remaining increase. William Archer did not know of any stockowner who would let David Archer have cattle on these conditions. David got them from William Walker "on good terms." The terms are not given but this could mean that he got the cattle on "halves" rather than on "thirds." He selected 500 cattle from William Walker's run at Rotherwood in the Hunter Valley in September, 1844. These were sent to Durundur in two lots. David struck some difficulty with lack of water on Liverpool Plains in December, but he arrived safely at Durundur with the second lot early in 1845.

The arrival of these cattle necessitated the building of a stockyard for their management. Extra men were employed for this work. The yard was as large and substantial as any in the colony, and it stood at Durundur until 1912.

61. ibid, 4 May 1844.
62. see note 60.
63. see note 61.
64. Edward Walker: Letter, 24 January 1845.
The head station at Durundur was made more comfortable at this time. Another room was added to the dwelling hut and this was fitted out neatly and comfortably. Durundur could not, of course, be compared favourably with those stations where the squatters had married. On a visit to Hodgson's station at the end of 1844 Thomas found that the solitary slab hut they had passed on their overland trip from the Castlereagh had given way to a cluster of buildings, including a fine, roomy cottage with a broad verandah and a garden, surrounded by fenced paddocks. The dray camp at the Springs had become the small township of Drayton. In Brisbane the first Police Magistrate had taken the place of the military commandant, and the "Settlement" had progressed to such an extent that the squatters' cabbage tree hats, flannel shirts and moleskin trousers were no longer common sights in the streets, and were usual wear only in the bush. 68 The Archers were still beyond the boundaries, but the boundary of the new County of Stanley, when it was surveyed, ran along the southern side of their run. 69 Thomas Archer drew a contrast with their life in this northern district and their life at Birallan.

"Our life here is as different as can be imagined from the one we led on the other side of the Colony. There we generally wanted the conveniences and sometimes even the necessaries of life; here the one is abundantly and the other pretty well supplied, and at three-fourths of the expense." 70

68. T. Archer: "Recollections".
70. Thomas Archer: Letter to his mother, 10 Apr. 1842.
His father had expressed some fears of the climate in the northern district, but both John and Thomas stated that they found the climate perfectly healthy, with the summer heat tempered by cool sea-breezes.\textsuperscript{71} Fevers seem to have been the most common complaint among the squatters and the bush workers,\textsuperscript{72} but the effect of these was minimised by the bush dwellers' outdoor life.

This outdoor life determined many of their recreations. As we should expect, these included riding, shooting and fishing. Since so many of the squatters were young men they engaged enthusiastically in all sorts of informal contests of physical skill and trials of strength. They also seem to have enjoyed the bush journeys which were a common feature of their occupation. Horses played an important part in this occupation and there was a general liking for horse-riding. The connection of this with horse-riding among the English gentry is obvious but there was no class monopoly of the horse in Australia. Many of those who had had little to do with horses in the old country became fine horsemen in the new. The Archers' favourite element was the sea, but most of them became skilled horsemen in Australia.\textsuperscript{73} The squatters found an exhilaration in their life and thought it, as Thomas Archer did, "one of the most independent, healthy

\textsuperscript{71} John Archer: Letter to his sister, 2 Jan. 1842; Thomas Archer: Letter to his father, 10 Sept. 1843; 24 Mar. 1845.

\textsuperscript{72} Durundur Diary, 22 June, 1843; 27 Jan. 1844.

\textsuperscript{73} Letters: William Archer to his father, 30. Jun. 1842; Charles Archer to his sister, 31 Jul. 1843; 6 Aug. 1845; to his father, 23 Nov. 1844; Thomas Archer to his sister, 2 Aug. 1844; to his mother, 10 Apr. 1842. David Archer to his father, 16 Feb. 1846.
"and rational ways a person can make his way through life." He thought that there was "a kind of independence" in the bush, and it was this independence which appealed to the squatters.

There were men of taste and education among the squatters. McConnel, for example, was considered a good judge of art and the Bigges had a good library at Mt. Brisbane. The Archers were fond of reading, and David was able to persuade some of the men engaged for the overland journey to subscribe five pounds each for a collection of books. Edward Walker selected some of the books in London, and in view of the strong religious convictions of Edward Walker and David Archer it is not surprising that this selection included a number of religious volumes. Thomas Archer's taste in literature tended towards the epic and heroic. The eldest brother, Charles, was a great reader, taking pocket volumes of Shakespeare with him even on his exploring trips.

Music was a fairly common form of recreation. The Archers had no particular musical talent although they were all fond of music. All of them, except Charles, had been brought up in Norway. They had many Scottish characteristics and sympathies, but they all loved the country of their adoption; they took an interest in the old Norse sagas and in more recent Scandinavian history; and they enjoyed singing Swedish and Norwegian melodies as well as Scottish ballads as they rode through the bush or sat around.

76: T. Archer: "Recollections".
78: David Archer: Letter, 4 Nov. 1840.
T. Archer: "Recollections".
Songs were included among the festivities when the squatters fathered at a station to celebrate Christmas and eat a more appetising dinner than their usual meal of mutton and damper. A letter written by Charles Archer describes Christmas Day at Eskdale in 1845. Eight squatters had gathered and, after a good dinner achieved by pooling their resources, they spent the evening telling yarns, singing songs and holding an impromptu mock trial. The following year Balfour invited the squatters to spend Christmas at Colinton. Charles Archer found his hands very full with the work at Durundur, where he had 2,000 head of cattle to look after and only one stockman to help him, so he decided that he would not go. "Besides he wrote, "I do not relish these bachelor parties with the same zest as formerly. They are often very stupid and dull, and although we are all very gentlemanly fellows, the want of ladies' society is becoming more and more apparent in our manners."  

During the following year he gave another account of a gay evening among the squatters. A naturalist, named Mossman, who visited Durundur turned out to be a good musician. He had even composed music for the accordion, an instrument he played with great skill. While Mossman was at Durundur some of the neighbouring squatters called, and an evening's entertainment was quickly arranged. The table was pushed back to one end of the hut and a three-legged stool placed on this became Mossman's seat where he played and sang. A visiting Highlander entertained the company with a Highland fling, a sword dance and other Scot-

81. Charles Archer: Letter to his mother, Xmas 1846.
lish national dances. As the mirth increased and the music swelled the excitement all those present joined in the dancing in a kind of wild medley.  

The description of these gatherings shows how the squatters grasped at every opportunity to engage in some sort of social life. Their free, independent, outdoor life had its own appeal but it was monotonous. Their hard, bleak, men's world lacked the pleasant graces and refinements found in a mixed society. It also shows that their environment and their way of life had a very great effect upon the squatters, although they varied among themselves as any group of men will. Thomas Archer drew a contrast between the settlers on the Castlereagh and those at Moreton Bay. At Birallan, he wrote, "We seldom met anything but swell stockmen, and those who pretended to be better were generally a parcel of profane drunkards and bullies. Here we number several gentlemen amongst our acquaintances, with whom we are on a very friendly footing - so, upon the whole, our situation is immeasurably better."  

Thomas later amplified his comments on the squatters. To his mind those who had been a long time in the colony inclined to dishonest practices which would not be tolerated in Britain. Many young men coming to New South Wales with some capital, but without friends to guide them, soon adopted the standards of those who had lived there a long time. Thomas also thought that people in Australia were more selfish and grasping than at home - a fault he found more common among the Scots than the English. He also spoke of drunkenness as a vice much more prevalent among the upper classes in New South Wales than in Britain.

82. Charles Archer: Letter to his sister, 11 April, 1847.
83. Thomas Archer: Letter to his mother, 10 April, 1842.
opinion is summed up in a sentence:

"The conduct of most people in this country calling themselves gentlemen, some of whom would be considered so at home, is far from what it ought to be." 84

The sting is in the qualification. From his general remarks Thomas excepted some of his near neighbours, but his letter gives a picture of colonial life that is far from attractive.

The tendency of the colonists to claim higher social status than they would have been entitled to in Britain had an effect on the breaking-down of class barriers in Australia. The youthfulness of the squatters made them tend to adopt the standards of the colony fairly quickly, and this indicates that colonial society brought about changes in the newcomers rather than the reverse. These are factors to be borne in mind in considering the emergence of Australian national characteristics and the development of our social life.

During 1844 prospects for the squatters became brighter. Wool remained low in price or rose only slightly, but it covered expenses and, according to J. O. Balfour, it yielded a profit of £51 a year from each thousand sheep. The years after 1843 were better than those since 1840 and Brisbane began to provide a fair market for fat stock. Balfour based his calculations on a great reduction in wages, down to as low as £15 a year for shepherds and hutkeepers. This seems to be too low a figure. In October, 1843, David Archer engaged a hutkeeper at 11/- a week and in January, 1844, he renewed agreements with six of his men for the following year at £25 a year, the same wages as for the previous year. In September, 1843, he engaged two men at 30/- a week, but these seem to have been engaged specially for the shearing, and such men commanded higher wages than more permanent

84. ibid: to his father, 22 Mar. 1846.
employees. In January, 1844, there were 18 persons on Durundur so that wages formed a considerable item in the total costs of the station.

The return from wool is difficult to assess. Simon Scott came to Australia on the same ship as James Walker in 1839 and was engaged by Walker as overseer at Biambie. Scott ran sheep on Biambie and in 1842 two bales of his greasy wool weighing 824 lbs. were sold in Sydney by Wm. Walker & Co. at 5d. a lb. In April, 1843, three bales of his washed wool weighing 824 lbs. were sold at 12d. a lb. In 1843 William Archer sold two bales of his wool in Sydney "at the highest price" for £37.10. 0. If these bales weighed about 400 lbs. each this price is just about 1ld. a lb. This is not a high price, even allowing for the lower price for wool received from Sydney sales. There are no records of the Durundur clip for the early forties but David Archer reduced his debt to Wm. Walker & Co. by £300 during 1844. Part of this may have been due to some adjustment of his account. (This is implied in the records but no details are given) A great deal of it must have been due to the improved conditions during 1844. Durundur, which had promised so well and had turned out so badly was again beginning to look promising in 1844.
CHAPTER 5
EMU CREEK AND COOYAR
(1845-1847)

David Archer had brought more than 800 cattle belon-
ging to William Walker to Moreton Bay. As he al-
ready had more than 9,000 sheep on Durundur at that
time there was not enough room to run all of these
sheep in addition to the cattle so he had to find a new
run to take the surplus sheep. The conditions he had
experienced in the Stanley valley were not unlike those
experienced by James Walker at Wallerawang valley in
1826 and the following years when very wet seasons had
caused much of the low-lying land to become water-logged
and swampy. The rain was wide-spread and the wet con-
ditions caused serious outbreaks of foot-rot and other
diseases among the flocks in the Bathurst district as
well as among those in the coastal region. The colon-
ists had little real knowledge of how to prevent or cure
these diseases and losses were heavy. One of the few
flocks which escaped losses was that on Raby where young
Edward Riley was giving all his care and attention to
his valuable Saxon merinos.

The lessons of this period were not lost on the
Walkers. The low-lying areas on Wallerawang were badly
affected and their experience of this period was an im-
portant reason for moving most of the sheep to Lue in
1830. In addition to their own experience was the ex-
perience of the Australian Agricultural Company, which
had surrendered half its grant at Port Stephens for two
large areas on the Liverpool Plains. William Walker
was an original shareholder in this company and well-
informed about its affairs and about the returns from

1. Charles Archer: Letter, 10 May 1845 (postscript 25
May 1845).
its flocks on the tableland area. David Archer himself on his visits to the Darling Downs had seen how well sheep were thriving there. All this comprised a fund of varied experience for David Archer to discuss and analyse at his meetings with James and William Walker in 1844. It was clear to David Archer that, if he wanted to produce wool profitably, he would need to find another run on higher, better-drained country further west than Durundur.  

He did not have to go far. At Colinton, on the Brisbane River, Balfour's flocks had "increased wonderfully" from his original flock of 1,800 to the 9,000 that he had when the Reverend John Gregor visited the run in 1843. These sheep were all in excellent condition and their wool had improved in quality. West of Balfour's run was one at Eskdale occupied in 1843 by David Graham and Francis Ivory. This was the most westerly of the Brisbane Valley runs but Graham told David Archer that there was some country between Eskdale and the Dividing Range that should suit him. In April, 1845, he guided David and his brother, Thomas, to the boundary of his run, about fifteen miles west of his head station, in order to point out the track to this country.

From this point the Archers dropped down on to the small but well-watered valley of Emu Creek which they explored for twenty miles up to the foot of the Main Dividing Range. The country was principally sound, well-grassed and fairly open ridges on which grew blue grass

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2. Thomas Archer: Letter, 24 March, 1845. See also his "Recollections".
and kangaroo grass greatly superior to that on Durundur and a herb called indigo which the Archers had seen growing in the Castlereagh district. Crossing a range of hills which bounded this valley to the north they came on to Cooyar Creek. Here they found abundant water and some well-grassed though rather thickly-timbered country which expanded into a wider and more open valley towards the Main Range. The Archers saw no aborigines, although they came on signs which indicated that there were some not far away. These appeared to be present in smaller numbers than those in the Durundur scrubs and in the coastal district nearby.

David Archer considered this country "little inferior to the best he had seen in the Colony" and Andrew Brown confirmed this judgment when he visited the Archers in March and April the following year. Brown thought that the country in Moreton Bay east of the Dividing Range was, in general, too heavily timbered and had too many low-lying flats to be suitable for sheep, but he considered that Emu Creek, with its granite and whinstone formations, was the best of this eastern country. David Archer applied for a run of 64,000 acres on Cooyar Creek in the name of D. Archer & Co. and another of 32,000 acres on Emu Creek in the name of Thomas Archer and began to make preparations to occupy the nearer run on Emu Creek without delay. In May, 1845, Thomas Archer left Durundur accompanied by a settler named Barker to mark out a track and at the end of the month


5. N.S.W. Government Gazette, 11 May 1848. The Archers at first gave the nearer valley the romantic name of the Vale of Avoca. Their letters later used the aboriginal name "Waroongundie". Eventually they gave it the prosaic, but typical, name of Emu Creek.
Charles Archer followed with the main party. This consisted of six men driving the sheep, two men driving drays, two splitters, two cooks, an extra man and four aborigines twenty in all.\(^6\) The sheep consisted of all Thomas Archer's flock and as many as possible of D. Archer & Co's sheep. The actual number is not given, but Emu Creek had a capacity of 9,000 sheep\(^7\) and flocks at this time were often as large as 1,000 to 1,200 sheep, so it is possible that most of the sheep were moved from Durundur.

The Brisbane River at Colinton was still high and running strongly after the summer rains and a score of sheep were drowned crossing the river. After leaving Eskdale head station the party spent two days travelling through freshly burnt grass and men, stock and equipment were soon covered with a fine layer of black. When they had passed through this burnt area they came out on to the valley of Emu Creek. Here the country had been burnt some time before and the grass was young and short. The clear air and green grass seemed good omens for the new venture. They pitched camp on the boundary of the new run while Thomas spent a week riding over it to examine it more thoroughly and fix upon sites for the head station and sheep-stations. The quality of the country and the grasses improved further up the valley so he decided to break up the camp and form the head station about eight miles higher up, at the foot of a rich, black-soil flat called by the blacks Waroongundie. Two sheep stations were established, each about three miles away from the head station but in different directions.\(^8\)

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7. N.S.W. Government Gazette No. 49.
Charles described the moving of the sheep to the new run in a letter written to his sister, Julia.

"For the last two months we have been rambling about this part of the country, sleeping sometimes with the sky (always a cloudless one) for canopy, and at other times with a few sheets of bark stuck over us. The rousing fires we were able to keep up with fallen timber—which is everywhere plentiful—prevented us from feeling any inconvenience from the cold nights, and the blazing watch fires, the bleating of the sheep, the barking of the dogs and the singing of the men taken altogether, gave our encampments quite a romantic appearance and character."

This transition period ended when the first hut on Emu Creek was finished on 5th August. This was made by putting up a ridge pole five feet high and ten feet long and resting six-foot strips of bark against it. One end of this humpy was closed in with upright bark sheets, but the other was left open. One half of it was used as a store; but Charles fitted up the other end as a dwelling room for himself and Thomas. Their table was a piece of board with one end nailed to the side of the hut and the other to a stake driven into the ground. Two blocks of wood cut from a tree and up-ended served as chairs, and their mattress was laid on two sheets of bark spread on the ground. Their household furniture consisted of a tin teapot, two tin pint pots, two large tin dishes for meat, a half-dozen each of knives, forks and spoons and two tin candlesticks. Before the entrance each night burnt an immense log fire, since this district was sixty miles farther west than Durundur and 1500 feet high and the nights were cold at that season.

Charles Archer: Letter to his sister, 6 Aug. 1845.
While Thomas had been inspecting the new run Charles had set the men to work making yards for the sheep and splitting timber for huts for themselves. The result was that when they moved to the head station they were soon fairly comfortable. Their cook was an old army man and was very tidy and clean. Charles had a great facility for any kind of work and he quickly turned out beds, tables and chairs. He even invented a type of chair which was later adopted fairly generally in the bush and known as a "squatter's chair." These were covered with kangaroo skins cured native-style. As they had brought few books with them Charles made a chess board and carved a set of chess men. He and Thomas usually played one game each evening.

The Archers were not able to enjoy their comfortable headquarters for long. The winter of 1845 was dry and the sharp frosts killed much of the grass and made it liable to catch fire. This it did and nearly all the grass on the lower part of the run was burnt out. The dry weather made water very scarce in the upper reaches of the creek. Since the sheep needed little water during the cold weather the shepherds managed to keep their flocks in fair condition, but when lambing started in September Charles and Thomas had to help with the shepherding since they could get no extra labour. Because of the lack of rain their lambing threatened to be poor. Charles and Thomas had to "Tim Shea" a flock each along the banks of the main creek down to the lower boundary of their run where the grass had begun to shoot. They let each flock wander at will and camped with them each night wherever they happened to stop, instead of bringing them back to a fold. They had to carry their rations, quart-pot and blanket with them and light fires.

round the flock at night to ensure that the lambs were not troubled by dingo attacks.

It was a month before rain fell, but when it did it came in the form of a heavy storm. Thomas later claimed that this storm marked a turning-point in their fortunes. The showers continued, the grass soon sprang up, green and succulent, and the sheep could be camped in one spot for several nights. As a reward for their hard work they were able to save many lambs that would have died under a system of folding. Many of the lambs were in such poor condition that they did die, but those that survived were soon in splendid condition.12

Before the dry winter was over the Archers found that they had established their head station where the water was not permanent. This was a result of their lack of experience of the soil and climate of the new run. The waterhole they relied on for their supplies nearly dried up and a well dug in the creek-bed did the same. Four miles away they found a larger water-hole where the soil was clayey and less porous. The comfortable hut and the kitchen had to be demolished and moved. Tom carted these to the new head station where Charles and the men re-erected them.13

In spite of the fact that 1845 was dry the sheep did well at Emu Creek. In January, 1844, David's return of stock to the Commissioner for Crown Lands showed 8,026 sheep.14 By January, 1846, after a good lambing there were 11,000.15

12. Thomas Archer: Letter to his father, 14 Oct. 1845. Charles Archer: Letter to his mother, 20 Oct. 1845. T. Archer: "Recollections". The use of the term "Tim Shea" to describe this method of management indicates that it was a practice which was used, at least occasionally, at that period.
13. T. Archer: "Recollections".
There had been a decided improvement in their appearance; their movements had become more lively; their wool was smoother and opened in furrows down the side; the wethers killed for rations showed traces of fat on the kidneys and their weight increased from the Durundur standard of 30 lbs. to 50 lbs. The mutton improved in flavour, too, on account of the superior grasses that grew everywhere and some herbs that grew abundantly on the high, stony ridges.16

The occupation of Emu Creek with its better soil and climate had made the Archers more hopeful of success. In addition the improvements in economic conditions that had begun in 1843 and extended into 1844, continued in 1845.17 At the beginning of the year David Archer's debt to the Walkers had been reduced by £300 to £1,250, and he wrote hopefully to Edward Walker of a remittance the following year.18 In April John Archer wrote to tell his father that David's prospects were improving.19 By this time wool had risen and the prices of sheep and cattle were increasing. This improvement continued for six months before prices became stationary, and it brought hopes of future prosperity to the squatters generally.20

In 1846 the Archers made another move. This came about as a result of William Archer's visit to Moreton Bay early in the year. He had always intended to join David and Thomas if Moreton Bay turned out as well as they hoped.21 The financial crisis prevented the fulfilment of that hope for some years, but with the increasing improvement in conditions William began once again to consider a move to Moreton Bay as a possibility.22 At the beginning of 1846 he had a floc

16. T. Archer: "Recollections".
of 2,000 sheep depastured on some runs on the Castlereagh. The stock running on Durundur at this time were nearly all cattle. Emu Creek could carry only 8,000 or 9,000 sheep and since David Archer had 11,000 sheep by this time and Thomas Archer had 1,000, it was plain that if William moved his sheep north another run would need to be found.

Cooyar Creek had been claimed by David the year before. He now went with William and Thomas to explore this country more thoroughly. As Cooyar Creek was only eight miles north of Emu Creek and roughly parallel to it the exploring trip presented no difficulty. They found this country much better than they had realised from their earlier and more cursory journey. The country along the eastern side of the Main Range was whinstone formation, which was considered the best kind of sheep country in New South Wales. Its disadvantage lay in the porous nature of this soil which made it ill-adapted for retaining water. This had given the Archers trouble on Emu Creek, and it was the reason for large tracts of fine country remaining unoccupied. Cooyar Creek was an exception since many of the creeks running into it were well watered, even in the whinstone country. Before William Archer left it was decided to move most of the stock belonging to D. Archer & Co. to Cooyar and make this into a new head station. A herd of cattle and some sheep were to be left at Emu Creek to retain possession of that run until William's sheep could be moved north. Thomas Archer's sheep, a flock of 1,000, were left on Emu Creek. This run was in his name and when William's sheep were brought there it was agreed that he and Thomas would form a partnership in the run.

23. A kind of basaltic rock.
No time was wasted in occupying Cooyar. In May Thomas left Emu Creek with a dray and five men. After crossing the high range which formed the watershed between the two creeks he camped about ten miles from Emu Creek station. The next day he rode on by himself to find a site for a head station. Finding one about four miles further on he brought up the rest of the party and set them to work making temporary shelters. Charles soon took his place and for the next couple of months spent most of his time at the new head station, "living in a bark hut, about ten feet square". Here he had as almost his only companions "sundry bags of flour, mats of sugar, casks of beef, boxes of tea, bags and kegs of nails with other articles too numerous to mention—so that there is barely space left for a mattress". This would seem to be an uncomfortable way of life, but it was compensated for by a sense of achievement. One of Charles Archer's letters shows that he not only adapted himself to this way of life but enjoyed it.

"I always feel much happier and better when living in this unsettled way than when things have reached a greater state of regularity. There is certainly a degree of excitement attending the settlement of new stations which does not wear off so quickly as I supposed; and there is, at least in my case, great satisfaction in seeing things progressing under my own superintendence." 25

The activity and excitement of exploring new country and of setting up a new station was a welcome relief from the drabness and monotony which formed such a large part of squatting life. Besides the satisfaction of seeing

25. Charles Archer: Letter to his father, 6 July 1846.
the progress of the new station the squatters were also able to gain a great deal of satisfaction from some of the simple comforts of life. As Charles Archer wrote to his sister, Kate:

"I have found out amongst a great many other things since I have been in the bush, that it is necessary for the enjoyment of the most ordinary comforts, occasionally to be without them - few people know as well as a squatter the luxury of clean sheets and a shirt." 26

This enjoyment of simple comforts after a denial of them was not confined to the squatters. It was shared by their workers. One of the shepherds at Durundur had become a hut-keeper at Cooyar. He was a married man and his wife gave birth to her first child during the move from Emu Creek to Cooyar. The family was camping out in the bush at this time and the baby spent the first ten days of its life under a tarpaulin in the shade of a gum tree. Charles Archer wrote that he then managed to get this hutkeeper and his family "domiciled in as snug a kitchen as can be found this side of Brisbane Town, a change of quarters they no doubt fully appreciate." 27 As the hutkeeper's wife was the only white woman on the run there is good reason to believe that she was glad to move into a home, even if this was only a bush hut which served as a kitchen as well as a dwelling house. She acted as cook for the head station and was able to supply real bread baked in an oven instead of bush dampers. A good yard and a calf pen were built and a score or two of milking cows and calves were brought up from Durundur. This enabled those on Cooyar to enjoy milk and beef - luxuries from which they had been cut off since leaving Durundur.

26. Charles Archer: Letter to his sister, Kate, 2 Aug. 184
27. ibid.
and which made a pleasant change from damper and mutton three times a day.

An incident at Cooyar illustrates one of the difficulties faced by those on the outside stations. A Roman Catholic priest riding round the stations visited the run in the middle of 1846 during the early, unsettled period described by Charles Archer. His purpose was to visit the hutkeeper and his wife and baptise their infant, but the information he had received was unreliable and he arrived a week or so before the child was born. Thomas Archer was on Cooyar at the time. He spent an evening yarning and arguing with the priest, who was a great horse fancier and full of anecdotes. Thomas considered him 'a regular Maynooth man' but 'a very good priest for all that'.

The German missionaries at Nundah were friends of the Archers, who sometimes stayed at the mission station overnight on their way to or from Brisbane. David, with Edward Walker's agreement, also did a great deal to help the mission with gifts of foodstuffs. The first religious service held at Durundur by a minister of religion was conducted by one of these missionaries who made occasional visits to the station and were held in high regard by the Archers.

Thomas Archer's opinion of the Reverend John Gregor, the first Anglican minister of religion appointed to Moreton Bay, was not favourable but this was probably influenced by his knowledge that Gregor was a convert to the Church of England from the Presbyterian Church. Gregor was one of the four itinerant ministers of the Church of England appointed to serve the needs of the 9,885 'souls' in the wide extent of country beyond the boundaries between Hervey

28. Thomas Archer: Letter to his mother, 1 July 1846.
Bay in the north to the Glenelg River on the border of South Australia. In this region, Governor Gipps reported, 'a Minister of Religion is very rarely found' and 'there is not a place of Worship, nor even a School'.

Gregor was appointed to Moreton Bay in 1843 and in August of the same year he visited the stations north of Brisbane and down the Brisbane Valley. He found the population 'thin and scattered with little hope of increase'. The station owners were courteous and kind to him on his visit to their runs. According to Gregor they set a good example by attending prayers and services, aided him and offered support for his work. He commented favourably on the appearance of the station labourers and their gratitude for the opportunity afforded them to attend a religious service. He found only one labourer 'obdurate'.

Gregor's observations may well have been correct but the rather rosy picture he conjures up needs considerable modification if we are to gain a true idea of life on the outside stations.

It is true that some owners continued the religious practices they were accustomed to — practices such as Bible reading, Sunday observance and conducting prayers for their family or for the men on the station. David McConnel followed a practice of morning family prayers and Bible reading.

The Archers, particularly David and John, were more religiously minded than most squatters and the Durundur Diary records that David Archer 'read a sermon to the people' (that is, to those on the station). They observed Sunday rather strictly as a day of rest.

In the homestead hut of

Graham and Ivory Gregor saw 'a number of excellent books showing a good and religious education not forgotten by them like so many others'.

Gregor did not give any instances of the behaviour of those who did forget their religious education but the implications of his final phrase are obvious. There is, indeed, plenty of evidence to show that lack of religious observance and a great deal of swearing, drunkenness, dishonesty and immorality existed in the squatting districts among the squatters as well as among their men. The Archer records contain little evidence of this but there is one illuminating note in the Durundur station diary for October.

Thurs. Oct. 27. The hands being mostly unfit for work, grog having been brought by the dray 47 sheep only shorn."

An improvement for the Archers was the opening up of a shorter and better road from Durundur to the western runs. The first road to Emu Creek went through Eskdale, but the Archers later found that they could get up on to the range between the two runs and along the Taromeo tableland to Colinton. There was a steep drop from the range down to the river but this was the only disadvantage. For their first shearing after the move to Emu Creek the sheep had been driven to Durundur. This saved David the expense of a wool shed but it was inconvenient. When Cooyar was occupied a wool shed was built there and it became the head station for the two western runs. These consequently became largely independent of Durundur. When the sheep were moved from Emu Creek to Cooyar a heifer station was established at Emu Creek to take some of the young cattle from Durundur. This overcame the difficulty of making full
use of Emu Creek (where water was scarce) since these cattle could range further afield than the sheep. By 1846 Durundur was used principally for cattle (with some sheep), Emu Creek was used for a small flock of sheep and the heifers from Durundur and Cooyar was used as a sheep station carrying most of the sheep belonging to D. Archer & Co.

Another feature of Cooyar which made life there more pleasant was the discovery by Thomas of a place he called the Spring. He described it as

"... a Stream of living, pure, running water, which I endeavoured to follow up to its head and in so doing ran into a scrub abounding in every kind of useful timber known here — an immense number of Pines of noble dimensions — gigantic Cedars enough to build a town, and, what added to the picturesqueness of the scene, immense numbers of a species of Palm which are seldom seen except in mountains inaccessible to a team — but here they grew in a perfectly level place and gave the valley of this little stream the most romantic appearance."

A month later Charles and David visited the Spring when they were exploring the run and Charles has left a detailed description of it.

"We struck off to the Spring, one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. The western arm rises in a scrub on the Boyne Creek Range; the eastern arm flows out of a large reedy swamp near the top of the Range but not in the scrub. The flow of water is as pure as crystal and

32. Thomas Archer: Letter to his mother, 12 June 1846.
"would fill I think a two-inch pipe. At one place it falls in one body over a granite rock eight or ten feet high into a basin several yards wide and eight or ten feet deep, so clear that minute objects can be seen at the bottom. From this pool it runs into the Boyne Creek on a very gentle descent, forming small crystal pools every few yards. The upper part of its course, which is pretty deep and from twenty to thirty yards wide, is filled with cedars and a variety of other fine trees, amongst which is a great number of Mountain-Cabbage Palms, which give the whole a tropical effect, making it altogether the most romantic spot I have seen in the country."  

The Spring became a favourite resort of the Archers during the hot summer months. Its "romantic" appearance, mentioned by both Thomas and Charles, indicates that it provided relief from the drab aspects of bush life as well as a means of physical recreation. It was also an economic asset. Thomas had found it when he was looking for pine for sawing, and the immense pines and cedars were of immediate use since they were so easy of access. Charles also found a way of using the water for washing the sheep. At this time it was the custom to wash wool on the sheep's back. A shepherd on the bank of a running creek or waterhole would throw the sheep in one by one. These were then ducked and passed from hand to hand along a row of from four to six men or the fleece of each sheep was vigorously rubbed by hand. After this they were allowed to swim ashore to be held twenty at a time in clean pens.

33. Charles Archer: Letter to his father, 6 July 1846.
for a quarter of an hour and then turned out on to clean, dry pastures. After a few days they would be ready for shearing. The water in Cooyar Creek was not suitable for sheep washing so Charles Archer built a dam at the Spring and made a bark spout to direct the water on to the backs of the sheep. This was an easier and more effective method than using a washpool. 34

The move westward brought definite advantages. Both Emu Creek and Cooyar fulfilled the Archers' expectations. The sheep sent to Cooyar gained fully twenty per cent in the weight of their fleeces and were soon very healthy and thriving. The move was fortunate since, after two years of dry seasons, the summer of 1846-47 was very wet. This caused heavy losses of sheep to all David Archer's neighbours except the Bigges who had all their sheep stations on high ground. At Emu Creek and Cooyar the sheep suffered no loss and even benefited from the wet season. 35

The move was accompanied by a few disadvantages and difficulties. Some of these were due to the move to the new runs, others arose out of the conditions of the times. One early difficulty arose out of the expenses incurred in setting up the new runs. David Archer's debt to W. Walker & Co. in January, 1846, had increased to £2,170, 36 a very high figure. A number of letters in June and July of that year contain very pessimistic references to the financial prospects of

34. Charles Archer: Letter, 25 December 1847. No reason is given for the unsuitability of the water in Cooyar Creek. The Archers did not, of course, know its chemical composition and could only judge the water from its effects on the fleeces. These effects are not described
35. Ibid, Christmas, 1846; 10 April 1847.
D. Archer & Co. There is even mention of David Archer losing all his stock and both his runs—a poor end to six years of struggle for independence. This gloom hardly seems to be justified. It is true that David's indebtedness in January was the highest it had ever been, but by May it had been reduced to £1,500 as a result of credits received for the sale of his 1845 wool clip. In January, 1846, he had 11,000 sheep and these alone would have cleared his debt to William Walker and left him with a good sum to spare. He also had his proportion of the increase of William Walker's cattle, two runs and drays, bullock-teams, horses and other pastoral equipment. In addition Thomas and William had "a nice little run" and 3,000 sheep between them. This would have given the brothers a basis for a fresh start since Thomas and William were quite willing to use their run and stock as a family asset rather than as their own exclusive property.

The records do not contain enough information to enable a sound judgment of David Archer's exact financial circumstances, but it was serious enough to send him to Sydney to discuss his affairs with both William and James Walker, who were his only creditors. Having made "a liberal satisfactory settlement" of his financial affairs, David Archer felt that he was in a position to give serious consideration to marriage. During one of his visits south in 1844 he had met and been attracted to the daughter of Major Innes of Port Macquarie. A visit on a later occasion to the young lady's home confirmed him in his feelings. In 1846 he made

up his mind to propose marriage. He was hopeful of success and Charles and Thomas began to look forward to having a family establishment at Cooyar, where they started to build "a large and commodious house." All their hopes were dashed. When David went to Port Macquarie he found that he had mistaken the state of the young lady's feelings. In the masculine world of sheep and gum trees beyond the boundaries he had exaggerated the incidents of their meetings, which all took place in an atmosphere of feminine society, and the pleasant and graceful surroundings of home life and town amusements. The young lady declared her continued friendship for David but said that she was not yet ready to marry.

David Archer's experience must have been a fairly common one at a time when there were so many young squatters living beyond the boundaries and when the scarcity of women was an ever-present difficulty in the colony. The regions beyond the boundaries were almost entirely a world of men. Even in the old settled districts within the counties men out-numbered women two to one, while beyond the boundaries they were five to one. The squatters on the pioneering fringe of settlement had little prospect of finding wives on nearby stations. They had to look in the settled districts, in Sydney or other towns, or even in Britain during a visit home. From the time that Thomas Archer left Sydney in 1839 to the middle of 1846 he had met only one young unmarried woman. By this time there were a few married squatters in the district. Their wives dispensed liberal hospitality and hunger for feminine company and a taste of home life drew the young squatters to these

41. Archer Letters: Charles to his mother, 6 Aug. 1846; Thomas to his father, 17 Aug. 1846; Thomas to his mother, 16 Mar. 1847.
42. ibid.
43. Thomas Archer: Letter, 12 June 1846.
homesteads. It even became customary for them to carry a coat and a clean shirt - symbols of the advance of civilization into the bush.

In 1842 there were still only a few women on the Darling Downs. Kate McInnes had come overland with her husband to Glengallen Creek on the party formed at Maitland by the Campbell brothers. 44 Arthur Hodgson married the daughter of Chief Justice Dowling in Sydney 45 and Patrick and George Leslie married two Macarthur sisters at Parramatta. 46 These women took the comparatively comfortable route by sea to Brisbane and then overland through Hodgson's Gap and Cunningham's Gap. At the end of 1844 Richard Jones rescued a few thousand pounds from the wreck of his bankruptcy and moved to Brisbane with his wife and family. His brother-in-law, J. S. Ferriter, had a run in the Brisbane Valley 47 and when Jones moved there his two young, unmarried daughters soon made "many desponding lovers" 48 among the Archers' neighbours, so that David Archer was not alone in his lack of matrimonial success.

His brothers appeared to think that he should not despair since he had not been rejected out of hand, but David, after a period of indecision, decided that he could not hope for ultimate success and concentrated all his attention once again on station matters. During the rest of 1846 he was busy with the new run at Gooyar and in 1847 he had to contend with a

45. ibid, p.21.
drop in wool prices. His settlement with the Walkers stood him in good stead and he managed to get through this bad year without undue difficulty. The fact that the cattle on Durundur were thriving and the sheep on Emu Creek and Cooyar were in good condition and increasing in numbers helped him considerably. During the year he sent to the boiling-down pots all the increase of the sheep and cattle which he could not sell. According to William Archer this gave him a return of £900 from skins and tallow. This figure seems high but since wool prices were down and sheep could not be sold readily "boiling-down" was an alternative method of getting a return from stock. In these circumstances David would dispose of all the stock he could spare and there is nothing in the records to indicate that William Archer's figure is not correct. It shows the extent to which squatter could use boiling down to compensate for poor returns from the sale of wool and surplus stock.

Although there is no detailed account of David Archer's financial position during 1847 there are references to William Archer's finances and these give some guide to how David fared. William Archer was running sheep on Walker's Castlereagh runs and had a flock of 800 sheep in September, 1843. When the 1844 squatting regulations were introduced James Walker found that he would have to pay a licence fee for each run. He reduced his Castlereagh runs and William Archer applied for three of these, running his sheep on them but retaining his position as James Walker's superintendent. At the beginning of 1846, when he arranged with David Archer to send his sheep north, he began to plan a visit home to Norway.

49. William Archer: Letter to his father, 5 June 1847.
51. ibid, 23 May 1845.
middle of 1847 he estimated that he would have £400 for his trip and that his expenses would amount to £200 of this. At the beginning of 1848 he made what he intended to be a farewell visit to Moreton Bay but when he returned to Sydney he found, from an account of his wool sales that had just come to hand, that there was a drop of 3d. to 4d. a lb on his previous year's wool clip, and that he could expect a reduction on the returns from his current year's clip. Altogether he estimated that the fall in wool would make a difference of £100 to his expectations. On top of this he received news that his father's lobster-fishing business had shown a loss during the previous two years. After seeking David's advice William decided to abandon his plans for a trip home for the time being. He sent his father a draft of £100 and, as he had resigned from his position with James Walker, sent to the Darling Downs to manage Eton Vale station while Arthur Hodgson was away in England.

By this time the sheep that William Archer had on James Walker's run had been sent to Emu Creek. He had struck much more difficulty in arranging for them to go overland than he had expected. His two main difficulties appear to have been the scarcity and cost of labour and his doubts about the ability of the squatters going north to manage his sheep in addition to their own. It took him more than a year to make suitable arrangements with a squatter who was taking his sheep beyond Cooyar. This man had a good complement of labour and two drays to carry stores for the whole party. William Archer hired three men (probably two shepherds and a hutkeeper to look after his flocks, paying them 15/- a week during the

52. ibid, 26 September 1847.
journey and £30 a year from the time of their arrival at Moreton Bay. The flocks left in the middle of April, 1847, and arrived at Emu Creek in mid-July. When William Archer went to Eton Vale in 1848 the Archers no longer had any interests outside the Moreton Bay district.

CHAPTER 6

EIDSVOLD AND COONAMBULA
(1848-1855)

The Archers had moved to a new run in 1846 and to another in 1847. They were on the move again in 1848, but this time it was Thomas who took the initiative. When he became David's overseer in 1840 he had looked forward to becoming independent in ten years' time. More than seven years had passed and in that time he had achieved a considerable measure of independence. The Emu Creek run had been taken up in his name and in 1846 he and William became partners, Thomas contributing his flock of 1,000 sheep and undertaking the management of the run, while William contributed 2,000 sheep and £150 in cash. ¹

Unfortunately, Emu Creek, although a good run, was too small (or rather too badly watered) to carry more than 8,000 sheep when fully stocked. This would mean that Thomas and William would have only 4,000 sheep each, too small a number to support a wife and children. Thomas had not fallen in love at this time, but he had made up his mind to set up a family establishment within the next few years. ² His brother, John, already had a wife and child and his younger sister, Julia, had been married in Larvik in 1846. David also had been considering marriage although, as we have seen, his hopes were not fulfilled. If Thomas was to achieve his objective he had to find a larger run. That meant that he would have to go exploring once again, looking for new country either to the north or the west.

1. This describes the position as it was at the beginning of 1848. The partnership was not a formal agreement, and had been subject to several changes of plan during 1846 and 1847.

He knew something of this country west of Emu Creek and Cooyar from an exploring trip he had made in May, 1845, only a week after he and his brother, Charles, arrived at Emu Creek to establish the new run. Thomas spent a week exploring Emu Creek. At the end of that time he fixed upon a site for the first sheep station. Since Charles was superintending the work at the camp Thomas found himself free for a short period. One of the aborigines at the camp had come from the district west of the Dividing Range so Thomas decided to take this aborigine as his guide and explore westward to see if he could find country there suitable for a cattle station. In this decision we can see the influence of his experience on the Walker runs. James Walker's sheep stations were at Lue and the upper Castlereagh; the cattle stations were further out to the north-west. The pattern of runs he envisaged would have been the counterpart of the Walker runs - cattle close in where the climate was wet and the country low-lying; the sheep on higher, drier country further out; and beyond this again, where the long haal made wool an uneconomic proposition, more cattle stations.

The occupation of Emu Creek brought the Archers close to the edge of the northern Darling Downs where the Dividing Range is not nearly as steep nor as high as it is further south. Thomas, with his aboriginal guide, rode a dozen miles up Emu Creek and crossed the range on to the Darling Downs without any great difficulty. He followed down a "blind", or waterless, creek for three or four miles until it ran out and lost itself in a fine, well-grassed plain. On the far side of this plain he came on a small, muddy waterhole. The plain stretched northwards but his aboriginal guide assured Thomas that there was no water in that direction so he continued westward. At dusk he came
on a camp of aborigines on the edge of a plain stretching westward as far as the eye could reach. They had passed no water since leaving the small water hole so Thomas asked the aborigines to direct him to water. This they did, but the water was only that stored in the hollow of a large box tree and obtained by dipping a wooden bowl through a hole cut by the aborigines many years before. This was dark-brown in colour, cool and not unpleasant, but only enough for the needs of the handful of aborigines and of no use to a squatter in search of a run. The aborigines assured him that there was no water for many miles to the west but told him that there were white men to the south "close up". So, reluctantly, Thomas Archer turned south. After an hour it grew too dark to ride so he camped until the moon came up. He then rode on for an hour or so until it became too cold to continue so he made a fire and camped until daylight. The barking of a dog directed him to a sheep station and so on to Jondaryan. James Andrew, the owner of this run, confirmed the aborigines' statement about the lack of water to the north, so Thomas went on to Gowrie station and then back to Emu Creek. Twelve months later he crossed the range again a few miles north of his former track. On this trip the gully he followed down from the Dividing Range became first a string of water holes and then a creek which led him to the same well-grassed plain he had seen before. But now this country was occupied by Henry Stuart Russell as his station of Rosalie Downs. Only then, too late, Thomas Archer found out that the muddy water hole of his original trip was the first of a string of water holes which later formed Myall Creek, one of the tributaries of the Condamine. The country he had missed was one of the last areas of possible occupation on the eastern Darling Downs. South of Darling Downs was Gowrie and the runs taken up in the first year of occupation; west of Rosalie Downs was Jimbou
and beyond that were extensive belts of thick brigalow scrub. He had given too much credence to the information from the aborigines on his first trip and had turned south too soon. This was just another of the missed chances that must have been common when the country was so little known.3

The other possibility for a new run was in the country north of the Brisbane watershed, but the scrub-covered ranges had proved a formidable barrier to expansion in that direction. The southern slopes of the Blackbutt, Conondale and Blackall Ranges were very steep and rugged, heavily timbered and covered with wide belts of dense rain forest or "scrub". Between the Blackall Range and the coast the low-lying parts were covered with boggy tea-tree swamps and the high parts with thick scrub. At the end of 1841 David Archer had found no good country on the Maroochy River nor in the region west of the Blackall Range for sixty miles north of the Conondale Range. Edward Hawkins had been just as unsuccessful in the country west of David Archer's track.

Andrew Petrie was more successful. In May, 1842, he sailed along the coast north from Brisbane and discovered a large river flowing into Wide Bay. Forty miles upstream he discovered good country at Tiaro. With Petrie were Joliffe, overseer for a Hunter Valley squatter named John Bales, and Stuart Russell, who had a run at Cecil Plains on the Darling Downs.4 Joliffe had brought 20,000 of Bales's sheep to the Brisbane River. He sent these by

3. Thomas Archer: Letter to his father, 13 July, 1845; T. Archer: "Recollections".
way of Kilcoy to Tiaro, and arranged for a ship to bring stores from Brisbane and take away the first wool clip. This early settlement was a failure. The track over the Conondale Range was very difficult for drays, sea carriage was expensive and the aborigines were aggressive, spearing the sheep and killing four shepherds. Jolliffe could not keep men on such an isolated station and abandoned it in 1844.

Near Tiaro Petrie had found a runaway convict named Davis who had been living among the aborigines for fourteen years. Davis had spoken of large rivers further north and good country to the north and west. In November, 1842, Russell set out from Cecil Plains to look for this country. He passed Kilcoy and found "densely bushed, dismal and uninviting country all the way" to Tiaro. He then struck out in a direction which he describes as N.W. but which appears to have been actually W.S.W. After travelling for days through rough country he came out on open plains and discovered two fine streams which he named the Stuart and the Boyne. On a second trip, travelling directly north from Cecil Plains to the Boyne he followed this down to its junction with a large stream which he traced to its junction with Degibbo Creek, not far enough to determine if it was Oxley's

7. Record Office Documents relative to Moreton Bay (1822-184 pp.582-600; Sydney Morning Herald, 2 May 1843; 12 Sept. 1843; 12 Oct.1843; 18 June, 1844.
SKETCH MAP
OF THE
BALONNE RIVER
AND COUNTRY HE HAD RIDDEN OVER
DONE AT CECIL PLAINS, AUGUST 1847
By LUDWIG LEICHHARDT
and given to me.
J. Scott Russell.
Boyne as he believed it was. In 1843 Russell established a sheep run on the upper reaches of the Boyne at Burran-dowan. He had a great deal of trouble with the aborigines at Burrandowan but he had opened a way to the north since the Dividing Range which formed the watershed between the Darling Downs and the Boyne was only a low, scrubby ridge at this point.

Another track north was found near Emu Creek and Cooyar. "We had no sooner commenced pushing out," wrote Charles Archer, "than several others followed our example, and the country for several miles beyond us is now occupied." Most of these others were squatters from the Brisbane and Logan rivers moving their flocks a little further out. Once the ridge north of Cooyar Creek was crossed these squatters dropped down on to a branch of Barambah Creek and in a few years there was a string of stations along this stream.

Still another track north had been found by Leichhardt. When he came back from Port Essington early in 1845 "with his pockets full of mountainous ranges, rivers and creeks" his discoveries sent a wave of excitement through the colony. Not only had he found a route to the north from the Darling Downs but he had come upon extensive areas of good sheep country.

Some of the first letters he wrote after his

11. L.L. Politzer: Dr. Ludwig Leichhardt's Letters from Australia (1944) p.52.
Of special interest to the squatters at Moreton Bay were his reports of good country just north of the Dawson and further north at Peak Downs. Soon the squatters were pushing out on Leichhardt's track along the Condamine and over the Dividing Range to the Dawson. The financial crisis was over, confidence was returning and squatters were beginning to make a general movement to the north. Many of these were moving out from districts as far south as the Hunter, the Liverpool Plains and the Bathurst districts.

At the end of 1846 Mitchell discovered well-grassed plains and open forest on the Balonne River. From Mt. Abundance he reported fine open country to the east as far as the eye could see. Mitchell named this splendid country Fitzroy Downs and stated in his despatch from the Salvator River that a good cart road was practicable all the way through well-watered pastoral regions of greater extent than all those occupied by the squatters of that time, with no inconvenience from heat or want of water. Mitchell's discoveries were reported in the "Moreton Bay Courier" in December, 1846.

This report was of the greatest interest to Thomas Archer. For several months before this he had been aware of the chance he had missed on his first exploring trip westward but Mitchell's discovery offered him another opportunity to establish a run on the western Darling Downs. Fitzroy

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13. Letter to David Archer; 14 May 1845; 30 Sept. 1847; 10 March 1848.
15. N.S.W. Govt. Gazette 4 Dec. 1847; Sydney Morning Herald 8 Dec. 1846; Moreton Bay Courier 12 and 26 Dec. 1846.
16. T. Archer: "Recollections".
Downs appeared to lie west of the poor country and brigalow
scrubs of the Darling Downs but not at too great a distance
to render its occupation impracticable. During the first
half of 1847 Thomas Archer was busy at Cooyar but he deter-
mined to make a trip to Fitzroy Downs as soon as he could.
At this time he was twenty-four years old. Like most of
his brothers he was tall (six feet three inches) and strong-
ly built. Ten years of colonial life had made him an
experienced bushman with a good knowledge of stock and
station life. Charles Archer had written earlier:
"He not only knows how a station ought to be
formed but can do everything himself. He is a
capital splitter (the hardest work in the bush),
an excellent shepherd and a good bullock-driver.
These are accomplishments which none of the other
Squatters in this District possess." 17

His life had made him self-reliant, resourceful, ready
to take responsibility, and possessed of plenty of initia-
tive and perseverance. His brother, William, seeing him
after six years, described him as "an immense, ugly ... 
fellow ... with an indescribable 'something' in his appear-
ance which would imply 'stand off' as distinctly as if
uttered." 18

Experienced, physically tough and strong, and with a
decided streak of stubbornness to carry him through diffi-
cult periods, Thomas Archer had the qualities for finding
a run, and making a success of it after he had found it.

Reports that overlanders were moving 100,000 sheep
through New England to the Condamine and that stations were
expanding rapidly towards the Balonne River showed that
other squatters were interested in Fitzroy Downs. He was

18. Letter to his father, 14 May, 1846.
determined not to miss the chance of a run in this western country, and in July, 1847, he rode west from Cooyar hoping to be the first to reach Fitzroy Downs. At Jimbour woolshed on 24th July he had the good luck to meet Leichhardt who had just returned from his unsuccessful second expedition. 19 Several other squatters were present at the woolshed and Leichhardt was able to learn a great deal about Mitchell's discoveries and to read an account of his expedition. With Leichhardt's help Thomas Archer was able to compare Leichhardt's discoveries with those of Mitchell. He concluded that Fitzroy Downs must lie about a hundred miles west of Leichhardt's camp on Dried Beef Creek. Allowing thirty miles for the downs to stretch eastwards Thomas reckoned that he would have to cross about seventy miles of unexplored country.

Two young squatters from Mudgee named Blyth and Chauvel were camped on the Condamine with their sheep while they searched for a run. 20 Thomas persuaded Chauvel to go with him to Fitzroy Downs and acted as leader on account of his greater age and experience. During the journey they had to battle their way through great stretches of thick scrub. Their naming of Mt. Disappointment, Mt. Deceitful, Mt. Doubtful and Mt. Horrible indicates their feelings. At last, exhausted and short of supplies, they came out of the great belts of scrub on to the edge of a wide stretch of open downs. They took this to be Fitzroy Downs and a distant peak to be Mt. Abundance, but they could spare only one day for an examination of their discovery before returning to their starting point, twenty-five days after they had set out. 21

136 a.

MAP OF ROUTE TO FITZROY DOWNS

Drawn by Thomas Archer 1847
Note on Charles Archer's Map of Thomas Archer's exploration of Fitzroy Downs.

Charles Archer's map was drawn in December, 1847. It is part of a larger map showing the connection of the Coo-yar district with the Fitzroy Downs. The portion which shows the country north of the Dividing Range is accurate enough to bear comparison with a modern map. (cf. 136a with 136c). What Charles Archer called the Dawson River is now known as Eurombah Creek, one of its main tributaries in this area, and Toss-up Creek (the Slatehill Creek of today) should be 25 miles farther west.

In Leichhardt's map (136b) Juandah Creek, a tributary of the Dawson, is shown as the Dawson itself. This is a minor error but Leichhardt was mistaken in several important respects. He confused the Lynd Range with the main Dividing Range (55 miles to the south) and believed that Robinson Creek, a tributary of the Dawson, turned south and was in reality the upper reaches of Horse Track River (the stream which Thomas Archer called the River Leichhardt). In addition, knowing that Thomas Archer had followed what he named Gregor's Creek down from its headwaters and believing that he could not have got westward of the supposed course of Horse Track River, Leichhardt identified Gregor's Creek with Sandy Creek, which is now known as Channings Creek.

These assumptions, if correct, would indicate that Thomas Archer did not travel far enough west to reach the Fitzroy Downs; but Archer's description of the open downs he explored can apply only to what he called Wellesley Downs and to Fitzroy Downs. These two are, in fact, identical.

When Thomas Archer crossed the Divide from Toss-up Creek he came on to the headwaters of Mooga Mooga Creek. This creek and the upper part of Bungil Creek form the stream he called Gregor's Creek. He then went west to Bungeworgorai Creek which formed, with the lower course of Bungil Creek, the stream he called the Leichhardt. Horse Track River was further east, and is the present Yuleba Creek.

When Leichhardt lent Thomas Archer his journal to help him mark out a track to Fitzroy Downs he also gave him a map. This probably resembled the one he drew for Russell and was no doubt used by Charles Archer when he drew his own map. It is now clear that Charles Archer, influenced by Leichhardt's mistaken ideas, was trying to reconcile irreconcilable data. This accounts for the errors in his map. When the Archers drew other maps, relying on their own observations, they were more accurate.
This hurried examination left Thomas Archer in doubt about how far these downs extended and how well they were watered. To secure these runs he needed to describe the boundaries in his application to the Crown Lands Commission. This was important since other parties of squatters were out exploring at this time. Thomas Archer was satisfied that none of these had discovered his "Eldorado," but, as he wrote to his brother Charles, "the rush to Fitzroy Downs seems to have begun, and after shearing will be fearful." These considerations made him anxious to secure the new runs without delay so, after taking a short rest and securing a fresh horse from Cooyar, he set off again, this time with Blyth. Their track on this second journey was down the Condamine and then north to Fitzroy Downs. They spent six days exploring the country and making a rough map. They found one interesting confirmation of their belief that this was the country described by Mitchell. On the hard surface of a clay pan they came on the tracks of a dray which they took to be one of those Mitchell had used. On his return to the Darling Downs Thomas was told at Drayton by Commissioner Rolleston that he did not think that his district extended as far as this new country, but he made a note of the applications. This was important since the new squatting regulations gave squatters pre-emptive rights to the runs they claimed.

Back at Cooyar Thomas Archer began to make arrangements for occupying Fitzroy Downs with his own and his brother William's sheep. As well as the share of the partnership

William Archer paid Thomas and what they expected to get from the sale of the Emu Creek run, they could count on the proceeds of the year's wool clip as the sheep would be shorn before Thomas left Cooyar. As they had only 4,000 sheep between them Thomas decided to take another three or four thousand on terms, keeping these sheep for their owner in return for half the wool and increase. This would give him a chance to invite his brother Charles to join him in his venture. He paid £56 for a team of eight bullocks, with their harness (prices were high at the time) and ordered a dray and supplies from Sydney.  

In March, 1848, Thomas still intended to go to Fitzroy Downs but soon afterwards he abandoned this plan.

Leichhardt had a great deal to do with this decision. In August, before returning to Sydney, he had gone down the Condamine to establish the connection between his discoveries and Mitchell's. On his return he wrote to David Archer saying that Fitzroy Downs was not nearly as well-watered as Mitchell had thought. He had found that a dray road from Brisbane would be practicable in the dry season, but that it would be long (his estimate of the distance was 400 miles), circuitous and difficult. The broad belts of scrub would isolate the stations and provide shelter after an attack for the aborigines, who were numerous in this district. Considering the long carriage and the high wages that would have to be paid on such remote stations, Leichhardt concluded that sheep farming would not pay.

28. L. Leichhardt: Letters to David Archer, 30 Sept. 1847; 10 Mar. 1848. (These were published in A.N.Z.A.A.S. report, vol. XX, 1931); Account of a Journey to the westward of Darling Downs, etc. (pub. in D. Bunce, op. cit.) pp. 197 et. seq.; Moreton Bay Courier, 4 Sept. 1847; Sydney Morning Herald, 7 and 21 Aug. 1847; 11 Oct. 1847.
The history of the stations that were formed in this district showed that settlement at that time was premature. There is a distinct resemblance to the occupation of Tiaro in the early 'forties. Blyth and Chauvel went ahead with their plans. They were attacked, one man was killed, Blyth was wounded and they were driven back with the loss of nearly all their lambs. McPherson had followed Mitchell's track from the south and occupied the most westerly station in 1848. From this station on the Cogoon River, Leichhardt wrote his last letter before disappearing into the interior. McPherson was attacked twice by aborigines, losing one of his own natives. Attacks such as these, added to the other difficulties, deterred settlement in this western district for about ten year, and several parties of squatters who had intended to go to Fitzroy Downs in 1847 decided to seek runs in the Dawson or Burnett districts.

By the end of 1847 Surveyor Burnett had proved that Russell's river was not Oxley's Boyne but the tributary of a larger river which flowed into Hervey Bay. This large river was named the Burnett.29 In 1846 and 1847 the country south of this river filled up rapidly,30 and the discovery of a good dray road from Boonara to Wide Bay31 provided an outlet for the wool from the Burnett stations by a

much shorter route than that down the Brisbane Valley. It was plain that Maryborough, on the Wide Bay river, would soon become an important shipping port for the whole of the Burnett stations. 32

On his way back to Cooyar after exploring Fitzroy Downs Thomas Archer had camped one night with David Perrier who was driving his sheep from Bathurst to the Burnett River where he had taken up Degilbo Station. The next night Archer camped with James Reid, also on his way to the Burnett where he had explored and applied for a run he called Ideraway. Reid had strongly urged Thomas Archer to look for a run in the unexplored country north of the Burnett before he finally decided to go to Fitzroy Downs. 33

In April, 1848, Thomas Archer followed Barambah Creek to Ban Ban, the furthest out station at that time. From there he explored up the Burnett without finding satisfactory country on the Boyne or the Auburn. Re-tracing his tracks he found Reid just settling in at Ideraway. After two days' rest he set off again with a fresh stock of provisions which he had obtained from Reid. This time he went north up Reid's Creek and then turned west to strike the Burnett once again. Here he found country which, though not as good as Fitzroy Downs, was much better than most runs on the eastern side of the Dividing Range. 34 He decided to tender for two runs on the Burnett between this point and Ideraway. The southern run was taken up in the name of D. Archer & Co. and the northern run in the name of Thomas Archer and his brother, Charles.

This partnership between Thomas and Charles was the culmination of their close association at Durundur and Emu Creek since 1843. When he first went to Durundur Charles

32. Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Aug. 1847.
33. Thomas Archer: "Recollections".
34. ibid: Letter to his mother, 14 July 1848.
Archer was thirty years old. He was a handsome man, tall and strong, with a friendly, attractive personality and an easy good-nature which made him liked by everyone. He soon proved himself adept at the various tasks connected with the management of a run, and in addition was a good fisherman, an excellent rifle shot, a competent horseman and an expert chess player. He had a good knowledge of English literature including a special interest in the works of Shakespeare and the leading dramatic writers of the eighteenth century. In 1843 Thomas Archer was twenty years old but Charles was very much impressed by his younger brother's skill and experience in the management of stock and in all bush work. The two brothers became constant companions at Durundur and Emu Creek and Thomas's admiration for his eldest brother soon developed into strong affection and hero-worship. It was this feeling which made Thomas anxious to make some arrangement which would enable Charles to join him in partnership in the northern run on the Burnett. William Archer raised no objection to this. He and Thomas continued their partnership in the Emu Creek run but he agreed to let Thomas and Charles take his sheep on terms.

No time was lost in moving the sheep to the new runs. Thomas moved all the sheep belonging to himself and William, numbering 4,300, from Emu Creek to Cooyar. There they were joined by 3,800 culls from David's flocks which Charles Archer was taking north. The Archers left Cooyar on 14th May in two parties, each with one lot of sheep, a dray with a team of ten bullocks, two shepherds, a hutkeeper, a bullock driver and a working hand. In addition there were three aborigines and a man who cooked for Thomas and Charles. The Archers had three horses and a mare with a foal for their own use while there were also several horses belonging to the men. The drays carried six months' stores. (two
tons of flour, 1500 lb. of sugar and two and a half chests of tea) as well as a full supply of bush tools and innumerable small articles which their previous experience in forming new stations had taught them would be required on this occasion. The Archers were now very experienced at overlanding and setting up new stations, and Charles Archer was doubtless quite correct when he wrote, "Few expeditions have started with a better working outfit, and fewer superfluities than this one has." 35

The total distance to be travelled was two hundred miles much less than David's overland journey seven years earlier. This party was also better equipped and more experienced than the original party had been so the journey was accomplished without undue difficulty. Their track led them down Barambah Creek past a number of stations to Ban Ban, and then through unsettled country for about forty miles along the south bank of the Burnett, where they crossed the river and established a temporary station at Mundowran. There they stayed for about a month, erecting a bark hut, spelling the bullocks and making an inspection trip of the new runs. Then they moved on across the Burnett to establish a sheep station on David Archer's run (which they named Coonambula) situated about twelve miles from Mundowran, and finally they moved fifteen miles further north to Thomas and Charles Archer's run which they called Eidsvold. 36

While they were camped at Mundowran they met about a dozen squatters looking for runs. Some disputes arose over the country claimed but these were settled fairly quickly and amicably. Henri Mort's overseer had talked of taking part of the large runs claimed by the Archers, "a breach of

35. Charles Archer: Journal, Cooyar to the Burnett, 1848.
36. This town is famous in Norwegian history as the place where the 1814 constitution, embodying the country's independence, was adopted.
Map drawn by Charles Archer in 1848 to accompany his diary of the journey from Cooyar to the Burnett River, May 13 - July 22.

On the original are the following pencilled notes:
"The coast line copied from a map in the Survey Office - the rest is our own observation. The red dots are our camps."
"Burnett falls into some part of Hervey's Bay"
"Valley of the Wide Bay Waters which I know nothing about"
From a map drawn by Charles Archer in 1848 to accompany his diary of the journey from Mundouran to Eidsvold.
EIDSVOLD STATION IN 1853.
Drawn by Charles Archer.
squatocratic etiquette" but Mort himself proved reasonable and Thomas Archer guided him to some unoccupied country on the Boyne.

The Archers had originally left some country unclaimed between their two runs. They now claimed this for William Archer and so made one block of their runs. Thomas Archer also spoke of taking four or five thousand sheep on terms as he had only 4,000 sheep on Eidsvold (which was capable of carrying 15,000) and ran the risk of losing part of it."... if anyone should come past who is blackguard enough to infringe on the code of honour laid down by the squatterocracy for its guidance in these matters."

This "code" provided the only security for the squatters since no commissioner had been appointed for the Burnett district and they held their runs only by virtue of discovery and occupation. In spite of this they went on with their improvements as if their claims were perfectly valid. This uncertainty was soon resolved. The tenders the Archers sent in for their runs were accepted early in 184939 and in the following year a commissioner was appointed.

David and William Archer, eager to see what the new runs were like, visited the Burnett in August, 1848. They were very impressed with them and decided to sell their Moreton Bay runs and move to the Burnett. William Archer sold Emu Creek soon after his return to the Darling Downs, for £250, including with the run a flock of the most inferi sheep from a flock of his own which he had built up on Eton Vale. David Archer received £50 of this for the improvements he had carried out on the run and Thomas and William got £100 each. William advanced his share to Thomas to

37. Charles Archer: Journal, Gooyar to Burnett 1848.
help him in starting on his new run. In March, 1849, David sold Cooyar (with 2,500 sheep) for £400 and in 1850 transferred the lease of Durundur to David and John McConnel probably selling them most of the cattle at the same time. The sheep and cattle he left unsold he sent to Coonambula.

The sheep did very well on the Burnett and exceeded the Archers' expectations. No figures are available for Bidsvold but on 1st May, 1849, D. Archer & Co. had 12,472 on Coonambula; on 1st January, 1850, there were 15,601 and on 1st May, 1851, there were 14,440 sheep and 200 cattle. The figures for mid-1853 are mutilated but 8,100 cattle are shown in addition to the sheep. The large number of cattle shows that David Archer had found cattle raising a useful adjunct to wool-growing and that he continued to keep cattle on the Burnett. This is still one of the best cattle districts in Queensland and it is not surprising that the cattle did well there.

Thomas Archer claimed that the facilities for "getting-up" the wool (that is, for washing it and keeping it clean after it was washed) were so good that these alone made the move to the Burnett worth while. The runs were 250 miles from Brisbane but only half that distance from the new port of Maryborough on the Wide Bay River (now called the Mary) which had been settled in 1847.

The Archers' first Burnett clip was sent by a good road to Maryborough early in 1849. Since settlement in the Burnett spread as far north as Rawbelle in 1848 and down the Burnett as far as Gin Gin and Gigoomgan in the next few years, the junction of the Maryborough and Brisbane roads became an important centre. A town named Gayndah,
four hotels, a Court House and a number of stores and bark shanties, was declared there in 1849. It soon became the headquarters of a Commissioner of Crown Lands and a police force. Its claims to become the capital of a northern colony were even put forward quite seriously by the Burnett settlers for many years.

The increasing prosperity of the Archers was due not only to the quality of their new runs. The price of wool kept up and Edward Walker wrote\(^45\) to say that the returns for the 1847/48 and the 1848/49 wool clips were satisfactory. The clip for 1847/48 yielded 67 bales, weighing 18,929 lbs. and was sold in London in February, 1849, at an average nett price of £1/1½ a lb. for the first lot and £1/2-5/ for the second - a total return of £1,133.13. 7. The 1848/49 clip yielded 62 bales weighing 16,682 lbs. and a total return of £963, 8. 6.\(^46\) In 1850 the prices at the August wool sales rose 1d. on the July prices. Edward Walker reported that there was a full attendance of home and foreign buyers and that he expected the competition to be well maintained until the sales ended on 24th September. D. Archer & Co's wool was sold on 28th August and realised prices ranging from 1/1 to 1/7½ a lb. Edward Walker did not say if these were sale prices or nett, probably the former.\(^47\) In January, 1850, Edward Walker had written, "(These amounts) will not go far to diminish the heavy debt to W. Walker & Co. but it helps."\(^48\) It helped to

\(^{45}\) Edward Walker: Letter to David Archer, 24 January 1850.
\(^{46}\) Edward Walker gives no details of weights and sale prices for 16 bales of the 1848/49 clip and this figure has been arrived at by calculating weights and prices at figures comparable to the first two shipments.
\(^{47}\) Edward Walker: Letter to David Archer, 30 August 1850.
\(^{48}\) ibid, 24 January 1850.
such an extent that by July, 1851, D. Archer & Co's account with W. Walker & Co. had been reduced to about £100. The greatest reduction had taken place between July, 1850, and July, 1851. 49

From the details given by Edward Walker we can see that 22 bales of the wool shorn at the end of 1847 left Sydney on 6th June, 1848, arrived in London on 30th November, 1848, and were sold on 19th February, 1849. The next shipment of 41 bales left Sydney on 5th July, reached London on 11th December and was sold on 23rd February. In the usual way of business W. Walker & Co. advanced David Archer 1/- a lb. on this wool. This advance amounted to £946. 9. 0 and since nearly eight months passed between the time the wool left Sydney and the time it was sold in London it will be appreciated that the interest charges on such advances was a considerable item of expense for the Archers.

From Edward Walker's figures it appears that he listed the whole of the clips for 1847/48 and 1848/49. If this is correct it appears that the fleeces averaged 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 lb. in weight. This is lower that the fleece weight given as an average figure by a number of writers of the period. Each bale weighed between 270 and 300 lbs.

The reduction of D. Archer & Co's debt had taken place before the effects of the gold discovery were felt. In spite of gloomy forebodings that gold would be "detrimental to woolgrowers", James Walker's despair at the discovery of gold at Bathurst and Edward Walker's fear that stock would fall as wages and flour rose 50 the fifties were good years for the Archers. Before the end of 1848 Charles Archer had erected a wool shed at Coonambula. This was used for

49. ibid, 19 February 1852 (quoting D. Archer's letters 17 June and 10 August, 1851.)
50 Edward Walker: Letters to David Archer 15 and 27 October 1851.
all the sheep to save the expense of another at Bidsvold. 51
It was used the first year but evidently it was not com-
pleted in all respects until the following year. By that
time they had completed nearly all the necessary improve-
ments for carrying on a grazing establishment. Their
knowledge of what was needed and their experience in setting
up new stations stood them in good stead, since they had
their runs in working order before the gold rushes had their
full effect on the supply of labour. Only a few years
later Charles Archer wrote:
"Since the gold discovery, labour has been at all
times scarce, but now that shearing is going on,
it cannot be procured for love nor money." 52
In one respect the labour situation for the Archers
had improved for they had found a way to supplement their
work force. Labour had been a constant source of anxiety
to the Moreton Bay squatters since immigrants came directly
only as far as Sydney. Dr. Lang sent a shipload of Germans
to Brisbane in 1849 but these were artisans who did nothing
to relieve the squatters' difficulties. In 1847 David
Archer was a member of a committee which tried to get labour
from Van Diemen's Land or the South Sea islands. 53 The
committee was not successful in getting either convicts or
"exiles", nor did it get any coloured labourers from either
the Pacific Islands or from India.
In 1847 it was reported that some squatters were con-
sidering the introduction of Chinese indentured labourers.
At a cost of £8 passage money, wages of from £4/16/- to
£7/4/- a year and the supply of two suits of clothes and

51. Thomas Archer: Letter to his mother, 2 December 1848.
rations this appeared to be a suitable source of cheap labour. David Archer was one of these squatters. When labour became particularly scarce in the first half of 1848 (the Archers were forming the Burnett runs at this time), and when there seemed to be no prospects of getting labour elsewhere, David Archer sent for eight Chinese to act as shepherds on Cooyar. He found them satisfactory and reckoned their cost at half that of white shepherds. In 1850 he introduced ten Chinese at a total cost of £110, and the wages book kept regularly and preserved from 1852 onwards, shows that about ten or a dozen Chinese were regularly employed by the Archers during the 'fifties. They were paid from £16 to £18 a year (compared with the usual wage of £25 or more), and seem to have supplied their own rations and employed their own cook.

In 1850 or 1851 David Archer engaged three single German immigrants and a married German couple, and continued to employ a fairly large proportion of German immigrants during the fifties and sixties.

The constant shortage of rural workers had some effect upon the attitude of the squatters towards labour. Many of those who had come to Australia in earlier years had been content to rely almost entirely upon the workmen they hired. The financial crisis of 1841–43 had diminished absenteeism among landholders and the conditions in the pioneering fringe of settlement were not conducive to any disdain of the manual work required on sheep and cattle stations. The Archers, who were Scots, middle-class, trained for various trades — and poor — had, almost of necessity, to rely a great

54. ibid, 10 April, 1847.
55. David Archer: Letter to his father, 12 Nov. 1848.
deal on their own labour; but even Bouverie, their neigh-
bour on the Burnett (who was the nephew of an earl), dressed
and worked like a dock-hand "— up to his middle in the river,
washing sheep, packing wool and going with his drays as
bullock-driver's mate." 58

The Archers were fortunate since there were usually
three of the brothers on the stations together. This helped
them considerably in times of labour shortage or when the
work of the stations was particularly heavy, at lambing and
shearing, for instance. Their Burnett runs, consisting as
they did of a single block of country were easier to manage
than the Brisbane runs (which were sixty miles apart).

The increasing prosperity of the squatters had its
effect on some of their plans. By 1850 William Archer found
that he could afford to make his long-deferred visit to Larvik.
He returned to Australia in 1852 and went to the Burnett.
This gave David Archer an opportunity to make his visit to
Norway. He left towards the end of the same year and did not
return to Australia, marrying in Britain and establishing
himself with a partner as a London merchant and wool importer.
Thomas Archer had gone off to the Californian gold diggings
with Edward Hawkins in 1849. This left Charles Archer in
charge of Eidsvold and William Archer in charge of Coonambula.
During this same year two younger Archer brothers reached
Australia. Colin Archer came to Australia from Norway by
way of California. He and Thomas met on the gold-diggings
quite by chance. Both brothers worked on separate parts of
the diggings, but a short time after their meeting Colin
Archer went on to the Sandwich Islands where he spent some
time with his brother, Archibald, and then on to Australia.
He reached the Burnett district before the end of 1852. In
the same year Alexander Archer reached Australia. At Mel-

bourne he decided to try his luck on the Victorian gold fields. Later he took a position with the Bank of New South Wales.

Before the end of 1853 Thomas Archer was back at Eidsvold. He had finally achieved a moderate degree of success in California and left America in 1852. Visiting his relatives in Perth he met and married Grace Morison. At the end of 1853 the couple reached Sydney on their way to Eidsvold. At Maryborough they were met by Charles Archer, who described their overland journey to Eidsvold.

"Our means of travelling was a spring cart, covered by a canvas tilt to keep off the sun and rain—three saddle horses for myself and the blackboys and a horse with Grace's side-saddle for her to use where the road was bad, or whenever she preferred riding to being driven in the cart."

The journey to Eidsvold took eight days. They covered about fifteen miles each day, eating their lunch under a gum tree and camping out for the first three nights. After that they were able to stay overnight at stations. Grace Archer fitted herself very easily to the simple, rough life of the station, taking a great deal of interest in the work and fitting up the hut so that it became a centre of family life. The Archers had not been able to enlarge this hut but they had lined it and, before the end of the year, they replaced the bark roof with shingles and floored the verandah. With the arrival of luggage and furniture this hut became as comfortable as possible in the circumstances. Grace Archer had managed to get her piano to Eidsvold in good time and the

60. ibid: Letter to his mother, 15 Dec. 1853.
Archers spent many enjoyable evenings together, talking, eating the meals and dainties cooked by Grace and singing the Scottish and Scandinavian melodies they loved. Unfortunately this pleasant life was only an interlude. Before the end of 1855 Grace Archer became seriously ill after a very bad confinement in which she lost her newly-born child. As Thomas Archer had been far from well at Eidsvold he and Grace decided, with the greatest reluctance, to return to Britain or Norway. They did not return to Australia until after 1872.

In some respects the end of the Burnett period marked the end of a phase in the history of the Archers. Up to this time the general management of the stations and most of the initiative for their development had rested with David Archer. His main concern for more than twelve years had been to reduce his indebtedness to James and William Walker and ensure some return to Edward Walker for his share in the partnership. These objectives seemed to be within reach at the beginning of the Burnett period. As early as June, 1848 Charles Archer had urged David to sell off as much stock as he could spare, clear his debts to the Walkers and close his partnership with Edward, making some fair arrangement about the stations and renting Edward Walker's sheep at an agreed per thousand.

In 1852 Edward Walker returned to live at Twofold Bay.

64. ibid: Letter to his father, 26 Jan., 1855.
David visited him there and discussed the changes he proposed to make. The result was that in April, 1853, D. Archer & Co. bought half of Edward Walker's sheep (4,379) for £1,094/15/- and rented the other half of his flocks. 66 David Archer then entered into partnership with his brother, William. David estimated his share of the new partnership at £4,634/2/8. This included 8,113 sheep at 5/-, 317 cattle at 20/-, 20 horse at 120/- and teams valued at £180 with some adjustment of debits and credits. William Archer's share in the new partnership "to equalize his interest in the new firm" amounted to £3,229/1/4d. made up of the value of his stock and returns from his wool clip and sales of sheep. This left him in debt to David Archer to the extent of £913/14/7d. a great deal more than the £400 or £500 debt that he had expected. In these valuations no account was taken of the value of the runs and the agreement is not given in detail so that it is difficult to account for what appear to be discrepancies in the figures but it is clear that William had a half-share in the new firm of D. Archer & Co. 67

A rough statement made out by Colin Archer in 1853 indicates that 20,000 sheep were run on Coonambula in that year. These returned £3,965/15/-. Half of this came from the wool clip and half from the sale of sheep. The expenses of the station amounted to £908 but a payment of £230 was made to James Walker and Edward Walker was paid £462 in addition to £262 for the rent of the unsold half of his sheep. We can see that, in spite of clearing off his debt to W. Walker & Co. David Archer still had to meet commitments to James and Edward Walker which exceeded the general expenses of the station. 68

66. Agreement signed at Twofold Bay, 15 April, 1853.
67. Statement of valuations, 1 April, 1853.
68. Statement of Expenses, 12 March 1853. This was drawn up by Colin Archer.
Edward Walker received no dividends from this partnership between 1840 and 1852. In 1853 he received £1,000 for half his sheep and he seems to have received £700 or £800 each year for the next few years. In 1856, for example, he was paid £870.⁶⁹ In spite of heavy payments in 1853 Colin Archer wrote from Coonambula to say that David Archer would have £1,000 at his disposal "from this poor place alone,"⁷⁰ and in 1854 Thomas Archer wrote,

"What a rich fellow you have turned out after all.
Why, it sounds fabulous that a live Archer should have such a swag."⁷¹

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⁶⁹. 1856 is the probable date of the payment mentioned. Only part of the letter has been preserved.
⁷⁰. Colin Archer: Letter to David Archer, 12 March 1853.
CHAPTER 7
GRACEMERE - THE EARLY PHASE
(1855-1867)

In 1855 the Archers moved once again and established a new run at Gracemere on the Fitzroy River. This move, like previous ones, involved the Archers in the exploration of new country and in the selection and occupation of a run. A new feature of this move was that Charles Archer assumed the family leadership in 1852 and retained it until he left Australia to visit Norway in 1857. Conditions at Gracemere during this period were similar to those on the Burnett and Moreton Bay runs earlier. Gracemere was on the northern pioneering frontier of settlement when Charles Archer handed it over to his younger brother, Colin, in 1857 and this situation was not very different in essentials when Colin, in turn, handed the run over to William Archer in 1861.

In the sixties and seventies William Archer had to face a transformation in the pastoral industry. A great expansion of squatting during the sixties carried settlement north and west far beyond the Gracemere run; gold discoveries brought an influx of population into the Fitzroy valley and caused rapid development of the port of Rockhampton; and the new colonial government at Brisbane initiated a series of land acts which had a great effect on the squatting system. Until the end of the fifties the Archers were pioneering squatters on the frontier of settlement. After 1861 they were large and comparatively wealthy squatters in a settled district. In place of the old primitive system of expansion of flocks and runs, shepherding, exploitation of natural resources and movement to new country every few years there was a trend to a more intensive system of stock and station management, a reduction in the size of runs and flocks, capital investment in
land and improvements, more attention to selective breeding and improvement of stock and the substitution of fences and boundary riders for shepherds and hutkeepers. In the case of Gracemere and other coastal runs there was, in addition, a change-over from sheep to cattle.

It is difficult to assign a precise date to such changes. The trend is discernible at Gracemere after 1868; the change was almost completely effected by the mid-seventies. I have set 1868 (the date of important land legislation) as the terminal date for this thesis and this is justifiable if it is considered as the date when the main trends of the new pastoral system began to appear at Gracemere.

Until he left Australia in 1852 David Archer had been the family leader. This was the result in part of his pastoral experience and ability in station management and in part of his personal qualities. By nature he was quiet and even-tempered and was quite undeterred by the early difficulties he encountered. As Charles Archer wrote, "He appears to have laid down a certain course which he follows in a most determined way - doing everything in his power to merit success, so that, come what may, he can always satisfy his own mind that he has acted for the best." ¹

It was David Archer who turned Durundur into a cattle station and moved the sheep to the western side of the Brisbane valley. His voice was probably the decisive one in the family conferences which selected the Burnett in preference to Fitzroy Downs. These decisions marked important changes in the family's history.

James Archer, the youngest of the family, arrived in Australia in 1855 at the age of nineteen. James was accompanied to Australia by his nephew, Simon Jorgensen.²

¹. Charles Archer; Letter to his sister, Kate, 21 Dec., 1845.
². Son of Kate, eldest of the Archer children, who had married a Norwegian. He was the same age as James Archer. Alexander Archer, who had trained as a clerk in Perth, Scotland, came to Australia in 1852. He was accompanied by David Morison (Grace Archer's brother), but both of these joined the Bank of New South Wales in Victoria.
These two and Colin Archer quickly adapted themselves to bush life and soon became useful assistants to William and Charles.

Although William Archer had greater experience of sheep and cattle than Charles Archer, it was the latter who took the more active part in the management of the stations after David left Australia. This was natural enough since he had already had eight years of experience on the Brisbane and Burnett runs and had helped to establish Eidsvold and Coonambula. William, on the other hand, had gone from Wallerawang to the Darling Downs to manage Eton Vale and from there he had gone on his visit home, so he had no first hand knowledge of the Burnett runs. In addition Charles's easy good-nature and friendly manner, his facility in most of the station tasks, his ability to command and the prestige he enjoyed as the eldest of the Archer brothers made his succession to David almost inevitable.

It had important consequences for the family. With the Burnett runs forming a compact block of country so that management was easy and economical, with both runs yielding profitable returns and with their tenures held securely against other settlers under the 1847 "Orders in Council", the Archer could have been expected to settle down to develop their holdings. Instead, the period from 1852 to 1856 is marked by more exploring activity than any previous period. Colin Archer and David Archer had both raised doubts about the wisdom of making a further move. Charles Archer gave his opinion in a letter to David in 1854.

"From the drift of your last letter ... I gathered that you did not approve of the pioneering mania which had laid hold of the family again; ... . You hope we will be content with small things and leave pioneering to younger hands, but, if we are
"to remain in this country and follow squatting as our profession, I see nothing else for it than keeping on the move. Life is hardly worth living in the humdrum routine of a settled station when better lands are to be had for the taking. You will readily believe me when I say that it is not the expectation of gain which urges me on, but Tom has got a wife and is naturally anxious to gratify her, and probably his own wish, to return to Europe as soon as possible. This can only be done by extending our operations."  

Charles Archer looked for this extension either on the Dawson River or at Peak Downs. The influence of Leichhardt's discoveries is clear. The Dawson lay west of the Burnett and at no great distance from it. The Peak Downs country lay much further to the north but Leichhardt's description of its quality and extent made it seem a very desirable prize for the squatter who reached it first. From Rawbelle, the furthest-out station at that time, the ascent on to the tableland which forms the northern watershed of the Burnett is not difficult. On the northern side the plateau drops steeply but the country is then fairly open to the north for nearly a hundred miles and the Dawson lies less than sixty miles to the west. In 1852 Charles Archer applied for runs on Kariboe and Kroombit Creeks and in March, 1853 for two more runs on the Dawson. Other squatters had also been exploring to the north, and some of these were more successful than Charles Archer. In March, 1853, Colin Archer wrote:

"Don't you think Charlie has a great deal of brass in his composition, when he, the great

"pioneer of the north has been out on the Dawson three several times, and hardly found a place worth putting sheep on; and here are the Hays, just past this with their 28,000 sheep, who, in ten days journey from Berry's, in spite of all his prognostications, stumbled across a fine, well watered run for their sheep after travelling over the very country he had seen on one of his journeys; and still he is quite cool and collected, and looks as if nothing had happened."  

This new discovery stimulated Charles Archer and on 12 April he set off with William and a blackboy, to explore the Dawson once again. From Hay's new station at Rannes they made short exploring trips to the west. To north and west was a mass of scrub and ranges, but from a high peak they saw a break in the scrub a little to the west of north. They set off in this direction, following up the course of a large creek. From the range at its head they saw a large river running through an open valley into Keppel Bay. They named this river the Fitzroy, and a large lagoon nearby Lake Farris. In July, on another exploring trip Charles Archer traced the Fitzroy up to its junction with the Dawson. Another party traced the river (which is called the Mackenzie from this point) 150 miles upstream from this junction.

4. Rawbelle Station.
5. Letter to David Archer, 12 Mar. 1853.
6. the Dee River. The Archers named it the Stanks, a Scottis word for a water-course consisting mainly of a string of small pools.
7. Charles Archer: Diary, Eidsvold to Ferris, 1853.
1835. With Native Shooting if attacked.
In May, 1854, in the course of another exploring trip, Charles Archer reached Peak Downs. These exploring trips revealed that the whole of the valley of the Mackenzie was covered with thick scrub and greatly enhanced the importance of the more open country on Peak Downs and in the lower Fitzroy valley. Each district had one serious disadvantage. Peak Downs was so remote that no squatter could move out there alone, and Farris (the original name given to the Fitzroy run) was included in the land reserved around the new settlement to be established at Port Curtis. Charles Archer was hopeful that his occupation of the Fitzroy run would be allowed, as the Government Resident at Gladstone was Maurice O'Connell, who had previously been Commissioner of Crown Lands at Gayndah and could be expected to sympathise with his claim. In March, 1854, O'Connell reported that he had received tenders for runs in the reserved district from "Messrs Archer" and two other squatters. He pointed out that the survey of the district was proceeding very slowly on account of the shortage of labour and recommended that pastoral occupation should be allowed in any part of the Port Curtis district more than twenty miles from the limits of the township of Gladstone, at £1 a section on annual lease, renewable without competition until surveyed or required for sale and with the right of pre-emption over 160 acres on which improvements had been made.

There was some opposition to Charles Archer's plan to be on the move again. Colin Archer thought that the return from the Burnett runs was adequate and that there was no need to move. This was also David Archer's opinion, as we have

seen. But Thomas was impressed by the glowing description of the Fitzroy runs. He could give Charles no personal aid since his wife was expecting their first baby at the end of the year, and he could not take her out to the new runs until everything was on a regular footing; but he felt "the old 'go ahead' leaven so strong" in him that he supported Charles in his plan to move further out once again. Charles was determined to secure the Fitzroy runs before some other squatter claimed them and decided to move some sheep north after the 1854-55 shearing was finished. But he played for safety. He tendered for a run at Peak Downs capable of carrying 40,000 sheep, not with the intention of occupying this immediately, since it was too far out at that, but as a run to fall back upon if he was turned out of Farris. If his tenure of Farris was allowed he would hold Peak Downs and sell it later as he thought that the country there was certain to become valuable as settlement spread.15

Charles Archer began his move to the Fitzroy on 2nd July, 1855. It was accomplished without undue difficulty. In his own words:

"As our ways and means are in a more flourishing state than on previous moves, there was less stringent economy in fitting out the expedition, so that I travelled with a degree of comfort not usual on such occasions. My tent was pitched every evening, I had a good mattress under me at night, and a well-cooked dinner served up every day, eaten with the instrumental accompaniments of knives and forks, instead of, as in olden

"times, camping in the open air and eating my mutton sailor fashion upon a piece of damper."  

Charles Archer himself was able to perform "only the part of commandant, instead of combining with that character the roles of shepherd, cook and watchman, as used sometimes to be the case on former occasions."

The party, which was a large one for the 6,000 sheep taken, consisted of seventeen Europeans and six aborigines, and was accompanied by two native police. Two drays were taken but these carried supplies for the journey only. The new run was on the banks of a navigable river and Charles Archer took advantage of this by arranging for the stores for the new station to be sent by sea. He bought a small ketch, of ten or twelve tons burden, in Maryborough. Colin Archer has learnt his trade of carpenter in the ship yard at Larvik, so he went to Maryborough to enlarge this vessel, fit her out for the voyage and load her with stores for the Fitzroy run. The ketch was re-named the "Ellida", after the magic ship described in one of the Norse sagas. Colin Archer, assisted probably by a man and a boy, sailed the "Ellida" to Keppel Bay and up the Fitzroy River. The alterations to the "Ellida" had taken longer than expected and the overland party had been on very short supplies for ten days when the vessel drew into the temporary landing-place on the southern bank of the Fitzroy River and they at last received the stores they had been waiting for so anxiously.

The practical advantages of fine grazing country close to easy river transport had influenced Charles Archer in his choice of the Fitzroy run, but there was a romantic tinge to

17. Letter from Charles Archer to his father, 11 Nov. 1855.  
19. the Frithiof Saga.
Hetch Eulida

First boat to sail up the Fitzroy River
to Rockhampton. — 24th September 1885. p.K.C.
his choice of a head station. Halfway along one side of the lake that he had discovered was a small peninsula on which Tolderodden was built. It was there that Charles Archer decided to build his head station. He considered that this site

"would be a beautiful place in any country, but here, where fine country hardly exists, it appears a perfect paradise to my partial eyes. The Lake from which the place takes its name is a fine sheet of water ....... with fine bold ground running down to it at some places .... There is a beautiful site near the middle of the Lake ... for a house." 20

As the discoverers of the Fitzroy and the chief occupiers of country on its banks the Archers were able to pick the eyes of the district. Charles Archer claimed a total of 200 square miles in 1854. 21 so that, instead of the usual three acres to a sheep, they had nearly twenty acres. It is not surprising that the sheep, although running in a flock three times the normal size, did very well from the start. 22 This was inadequate stocking even for a new run so another lot of sheep was brought from Eidsvold in 1856. 23 In the same year Charles Archer tendered for another 130 square miles 24 and increased this later until, within three or four years, the Archer runs stretched from the Bajool scrub and the Dee Range in the south, with the Fitzroy River forming the eastern

24. Tenders dated 3 January and 23 October 1856 (Archer Papers IX vol.1).
boundary. From the river the Archer country extended westward for thirty miles and comprised in all more than 600 square miles of country. 25

Charles Archer had named the large lagoon on the new run Lake Farris, after the lake at Larvik. He later changed this name to Gracemere as a tribute to Grace Archer. Work progressed rapidly at the new head station site and by November the drays took the first of the Gracemere clip to the river where the "Ellida" was moored to the south bank. The wool was loaded into the "Ellida" and Charles Archer sailed the vessel to the new settlement at Gladstone on Port Curtis, where it was transhipped to Sydney.

The new district developed rapidly. Maryborough had been the port for the northern runs since 1847. Even the Hays at Rannes sent their early clips through Gayndah to Maryborough, a distance of 320 miles. 26 In 1853, in spite of the abortive attempt in 1846, another settlement was planned for Port Curtis. Charles Archer, returning to Eidsvold after his second exploring trip to the Fitzroy in 1853, had found a survey party working there in August, 1853, and an enterprising storekeeper from Maryborough already established. 28 On this trip Charles Archer found a track for a dray road from Port Curtis up the Boyne River and over the coastal range to Eidsvold. He sent some of

25. Some writers have estimated the total area at 900 sq.mls. but this does not appear to be correct.
his next Eidsvold clip to Port Curtis by this road. Early in 1856 the Hays found a track for their drays from Rannes to Port Curtis. This was a difficult and dangerous road but it was less than half the distance to Maryborough.\textsuperscript{29} The first land sales for the new township of Gladstone on Port Curtis were held in Sydney,\textsuperscript{30} a decision which provoked a great deal of criticism from settlers in the northern district; a detachment of native police was stationed there; and in 1854 Sir Maurice O'Connell, Commissioner of Crown Lands at Gayndah, was appointed Government Resident for the new settlement.

In December, 1855, the "Albion", a coastal vessel trading to Gladstone, went on from Port Curtis to the Fitzroy River and carried the rest of the Gracemere clip direct to Sydney.\textsuperscript{31}

The Elliott brothers followed the Archers to the Fitzroy and reached Gracemere in September, 1855. They camped on Gracemere until their sheep were shorn and then went on to occupy Canoona and Tiplal on the northern side of the river. When the "Albion" returned in July, 1856, Captain Hardy found seven dray loads of wool from Dawson River stations awaiting shipment from the Fitzroy River—three from Rannes and two each from Camboon and Ghingindah.\textsuperscript{32}

An early visitor to Gracemere was W. H. Wiseman, Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Leichhardt district. Wiseman had been appointed to this position in December, 1854. His headquarters at Rannes consisted of a tent, stockaded against native attacks. In 1855 he received instructions to select a site for a port on the Fitzroy River and visited Gracemere in December. Charles Archer helped him to select a site for a new township, which was

30. Sydney Morning Herald, 2 November 1853.
32. W. Clark: op. cit.
named Rockhampton, on the south bank of the river. During the next year a Gladstone storekeeper opened a store in Rockhampton and in 1857 the Bush Inn was opened by an innkeeper from Gayndah.

The development of the district was not without some early difficulties. On Christmas Day, 1855, aborigines attacked Mt. Larcom station, killed all the white settlers, destroyed the stores and drove away all the sheep. These aborigines moved north and in January 1856 attacked the Elliotts' camp which was only four miles from Gracemere. The Elliotts' party was a small one and the aborigines pressed their attacks fiercely. One man was killed and one of the Ellitts was severely wounded before the attack was beaten off. The aborigines re-assembled on the northern side of the river and prepared for another attack. Charles Archer prevented this only by patrolling the river in the "Ellida" and by sending an urgent message for help from native police re-inforcements at Gladstone.

It is true to say that, in general, the aborigines posed no real general threat to the advance of settlement. This is not to say that, in the conditions of the times, they did not constitute a serious threat to individual squatters on the frontier of settlement. The record of native attacks on shepherds and hut-keepers, and on some of the Dawson runs are instances of the dangers inherent in the clash of two opposing ways of life.

Another early difficulty was drought. Charles Archer had entertained some doubt about Gracemere's nearness to the coast.

33. J. T. Hogan: op. cit. p. 200
34. Charles Archer: Letter, (not dated).
35. Sydney Morning Herald, 18 February 1856; 4 March 1856.
Kennedy Allen: The City and District of Rockhampton" (1924) M.S.
where the moist climate was generally unsuitable for sheep, but little rain fell in the Fitzroy valley from the time of the Archers' arrival until the end of the year. The next year continued dry, the lagoon dried up and a well had to be dug in its bed. The weather did not break until November, 1857, and when it did floods followed. All the low-lying country was covered with water, but the Archers suffered no serious stock losses. 36

In 1856 some important changes were made in the Archer family affairs. Charles and Thomas had arranged to sell Eidsvold to D. Archer & Co. when Gracemere was occupied and Colin Archer moved the rest of the sheep on Eidsvold to Gracemere in the middle of 1856. William Archer had been so impressed by the possibilities of Gracemere when he visited the Fitzroy district in January, 1856, that it was decided to merge the interests of the four brothers. David and William paid £2,000 for a half interest in "All the runs owned by Charles and Thomas Archer", and adjustments were made to equalise the implements and stock owned by each of the partners. 37 William Archer then arranged to sell all the Burnett runs and move any stock remaining unsold to Gracemere. In 1855 he had bought the remaining half of Edward Walker's sheep rented by D. Archer & Co., paying 8/- a head for the 4,378 sheep, and so had ended the last business connection between David Archer and his cousin.

Towards the end of 1857 Charles Archer left for a visit to Norway. As William had still not been able to dispose of the Burnett runs Colin Archer, although only twenty-four years old, managed the Gracemere run for the next five years. During

his term as manager settlement continued in the Fitzroy Valley and squatters occupied runs to north and west. In 1858 the district and the town of Rockhampton were jolted into lusty life by the discovery of gold. O'Connell, the Government Resident at Gladstone, had encouraged prospecting and in 1858 a miner named Chapple discovered rich gold at Canvona, 40 miles from Rockhampton. By the middle of the year miners were entering Rockhampton on their way to the new gold-field. Several thousands of gold-seekers were soon on their way from the south, but the field was very restricted and was worked out before the end of the year. The numerous unlucky diggers suffered a great deal of hardship. Many of them remained in the town and district and these helped to supply the labour needs of the growing district and its port. The Canvona rush and the other rushes which followed in the sixties to a number of smaller fields in the Fitzroy basin as far west as Clermont and the Peak Downs district had effects on the development of the district and the prosperity of the squatters similar to those of the southern gold discoveries of the fifties.

By 1861 Rockhampton, though built to a great extent of slabs and galvanised iron, was a thriving, bustling town, the outlet for a district that seemed boundless, the starting point for exploring and land-seeking parties going to the north and the west and the focus of the commercial life of an extensive

38. J.T.S. Bird: op.cit. Colin Archer: Journal 1858-59, 26 June; 19 July; 8 October; 18 November 1858; 27 December 1858. Rockhampton and District Historical Society, MS, 3 September 1858.

39. Gold was discovered at Peak Downs (Clermont) in 1861, Cawarral 1863, Hurley’s (Clermont) 1864, Crocodile Creek, Daisy Creek and Gavial Creek 1865, Macdonald’s Flat (Clermont), Morinish and Ridgelands 1866.
district. A weekly newspaper had begun publication, a School of Arts committee was formed under the chairmanship of Colin Archer and Anglican and Presbyterian clergy had begun their ministrations.

By the fifties a difficulty that had plagued the Archers from 1840 had been overcome. This was the scarcity and the cost of labour. In 1849 David Archer had imported a number of Chinese labourers to work on Cooyar. These proved to be a cheap and satisfactory labour force until 1855, so much so that William Archer remarked ruefully that he had to pay "enormous wages" after the agreements with the Chinese came to an end. After that time his wages bill amounted to four times as much as he had paid before. The place of the Chinese was taken by German labourers, imported by William Archer through a German firm which acted as his agent. In 1855 William Archer paid £40 a year to "immigrants from Sydney" (whom we may suppose to have been British) and only £18 (in some cases £16) to the Germans. The Canoona gold rush in 1858, after its brief initial dislocation of squatting, led to an improvement in the supply of labour. At the end of the sixties Pacific Island labourers were used at Gracemere. Thomas Archer's son, William, visited Gracemere in 1876. The account he wrote of his visit mentions "the Kanakas' huts." The use of Kanaka labour was condemned as slavery by those who opposed it. Young William Archer considered that the assistance it gave to squatters, sugar-growers and other employers was incalculable and that to call it slavery was absurdly unjust. The Kanakas were "voluntary paid labourers, and in the great majority of cases happy and contented labourers."

42. William Archer: Letter, 5 May 1855.
43. William Archer (Junior): "Visit to Australia" MS p.43.
44. Ibid.
He could hardly help being partisan in his attitude to Kanaka labour and he had no evidence about the way these labourers were recruited. Trollope also commented on the use of Kanakas and it is clear from his shrewd and impartial observations that he did not consider this to be slavery. His estimate of 10/- a week as the cost of Kanaka labour to the squatter seems to be reasonably accurate. He reckoned the cost of each return passage at £15, but the Archers paid 15/- a quarter to the Immigration Agent during the three years of an islander's term of employment that is, a total of £9 for three years. These payments were used to defray the cost of the labourers' fares. In addition the Archers paid wages of £6 a year, and they appear to have supplied rations at 1/- a day, which is rather more than Trollope's estimate of 3/9 a week. Since William Archer paid £14/10/- passage money for German immigrants it is clear that the Kanakas were a cheaper source of labour than these.

The cheap labour of Chinese, Germans and Kanakas was used by the Archers to offset the labour costs of British employees. Wages were subject to individual agreement and it is difficult to make general statements, but wages rose during the fifties and ranged from £20 a year to the wage of £35 a year paid to stockmen. Edward Kelly was employed by the Archers from 1841 until he retired at Gracemere. During that time he rose from the position of hutkeeper at Durundur to the Archers' right-hand man and overseer of the cattle station. In 1852 his salary was £50 a year with rations of 16lb. flour, 28lb. meat, 8oz. tea and 4lb. sugar weekly. This agreement was renewed annually throughout the fifties with wages of £65 for 1854 and

1855, £100 for 1856, 1857 and 1858 and £75 for 1859. In 1860 James Archer was receiving £20 a year under a three years' agreement but in addition to his salary he received 800 sheep during that period. Since these were valued at 12/- he estimated that this was equivalent to a salary of £180 a year.

A cheap source for some labour was important for the Archers since they employed a large number on Gracemere. In 1856, for example, besides the family members (Charles, Colin and James Archer and Simon Jorgensen) there were eighteen British, six German and fifteen Chinese employees at the head station alone. Shearers were usually employed casually as extra labour at shearing time as the station records for 1843 indicate: "Discharged shearers ... Smith and Brennan left for shearing." The Gracemere stock returns show that there were twenty-two shearers employed there in 1858-59. Since fifteen shearers were employed there permanently in 1859 it would appear that these were supplemented by casual shearers as need arose. In addition to the men on the head station there were others employed on the sheep and cattle out-stations but the number of these is difficult to estimate.

The presence of members of their own family at Gracemere was a very great advantage to the Archers. These were engaged in managing the stations or in gaining experience to fit them for later management. All of these had some share in the runs and were given stock or land to help them to establish them themselves as squatters. James Archer, for example, was given a block of country at Peak Downs by Colin Archer, and he sold this later for £800. This family participation in the work at

47. James Archer: Letter, 1 February 1860  
48. Durundur Diary, Nov. 9, 1843.  
50. Wages Book, 1853 et seq.
Gracemere greatly aided the continuity of management policy and was important in helping the Archers through difficult periods.

If we think of pastoral development in terms of the extension of settlement, increase in the numbers of stock, the growth of towns and ports and the opening up of communications, pastoral development during the period under review in this thesis and in the regions I have dealt with was considerable. But pastoral technology made little progress; squatting remained a primitive system of exploiting natural resources, relying completely upon natural vegetation and surface water.\footnote{51}

The lack of water gave the Archers trouble at Emu Creek; it was an important factor in Thomas Archer's decision not to occupy Fitzroy Downs but to look for a run on the Burnett River; and it was a serious disadvantage of the Peak Downs country. The Archers learnt from experience how important it was to "run the creeks" in new country since these creeks, with their water-holes, were just as important in determining the capabilities of a run as the adjoining grazing land. de Satgé, describing the simple squatting system of the fifties and sixties, recalled that a hut and bough yards at the back of a water-hole were sufficient for two flocks of sheep, managed by two shepherds and a hutkeeper.\footnote{52} This was the usual unit which made up a "sheep station", and a number of these in conjunction with a head station made up a "run".

\footnote{51} This contention is, of course, intended to apply only to the districts on the frontier of settlement where the Archers held runs. Changes in the system were made earlier in the older settlements in New South Wales and Victoria.

This explains why the boundaries of a run were usually so roughly defined. The precise limits of his run were of less concern to the squatter than control of the water-holes and creeks since these determined how much use he could make of the grassed areas of his run. Gracemere had twenty-four of these sheep and lambing stations in 1859. More than half of these were within a radius of three or four miles from the head station but there were stations twelve, fifteen, sixteen and even nineteen miles away. Management of the run really meant keeping in touch with these scattered sheep stations.

The head station with its huts, kitchen, store and woolshed was built near a water-hole chosen for its permanence. It was the centre from which the squatter or his overseer managed the sheep stations. Its store supplied the shepherds and hutkeepers with their weekly rations and personal requirements such as tobacco and working clothes. At the end of the winter the flocks were driven into the head station for the annual sheep washing and shearing.

The sheep were washed, sometimes by hand-rubbing, either in a water-hole or creek, or under a rough spout like the one Charles Archer constructed at Cooyar. Colin Archer maintained that hand-washing was never clean, and he did not believe the claim that ten men could wash a flock of a thousand sheep in a day. In 1858 he was washing with "a strong gang". He does not specify the number of men in the gang, but it would not have been less than ten men, and they seem to have been experienced at handling sheep. Yet even with this gang he was able to wash only 400 sheep in one day and 550 on the following day.54

53. Colin Archer: Journal 1858-59. Sheet giving list of "Sheep and lambing stations."
Shearing was just as primitive as washing. The sheep were allowed to dry after washing ready for shearing. At Gracemere the washpool was half a mile from the head station. This gave the wool a chance to dry as the sheep grazed their way over good clean pastures to the woolshed. In 1855, according to de Satgé, the sheep were shorn on rough slabs under a bark roof; the wool table and the press were simple and rather clumsy contrivances. The sheer weight of the operator was important in working the lever of this crude wool press and Thomas Archer could not press the bales at Moreton Bay as tightly as Ned Kelly because he was much lighter in weight than Kelly. The shearing, too, seems to have been done in a rough and ready fashion. de Satgé mentions that the sheep were cut a lot with the shears and tar was used liberally to staunch the cuts and protect the sheep. The whole of the operation was rough and inexpensive. Anthony Trollope's later description of a young squatter's station corroborates de Satgé's account. His actual words were, "The place was altogether rough."

Management of the flocks was just as primitive as the washing and shearing, and there was little attempt to improve either the quality of the wool or the weight of the fleece. The Gracemere clip of 1859 was 38,236 lbs. from 21,677 sheep, giving an average of under 2 lbs. for each fleece. In 1861 the clip was 63,859 lbs. from 27,796 sheep, or 2 lb. 4–21/27 oz. per fleece. This is no better than the estimate of 2½ lbs. by J. O. Balfour in 1845. nor that of the Sydney Morning

Herald in 1841. It was probably no better than the
yields from the Walker flocks of the twenties and thirties,
since selective breeding and improvement of the flocks was
hardly possible under the system of unfenced runs.

Some improvement to the flocks could be effected by
culling. These culled sheep were sold to newcomers or to
squatters who were squatting large runs. Such culling did
not make for the general improvement of Australian sheep.
From 1843 old, diseased or inferior sheep could be "boiled
down" for tallow. This disposed of sheep which otherwise
would have reduced the average quality of particular flocks,
but it was not very effective in improving the average
quality. In 1854, for example, William Archer "overhauled
the flocks" on Coonambula, selling over 5,000 sheep. This
got rid of all the inferior sheep on the run, and he expected
to get "a heavy clip" from the remaining 16,000 sheep. His
estimate of this clip was "say 2 lb. 6 oz. or 8 oz. per sheep",
even after his severe culling had reduced the flocks by more
than a third. The increased production of wool from the
twenties to the sixties was the result of an increase in the
number of sheep rather than of any improvement in the yield
per sheep. This contention may not apply to the same extent
in the settled districts of the south but it is applicable
to the expanding frontier of settlement in the northern dis-
trict where the Archers had their successive runs. This
almost unchecked increase of the flocks was an important
cause of the movement and expansion which Charles Archer
described as a necessary feature of a squatting career.

After the sheep were shorn the squatter had to rely on
his own drays to transport his wool to a port for tranship-
ment to Sydney and from there to London. On its return the
dray brought back stores for the station. Since the drays

59. Sydney Morning Herald, 1 and 13 May 1841.
60. William Archer: Letter to David Archer, 9 April 1854.
usually travelled only eight or ten miles a day it was important for the squatter that his line of communication with the nearest shipping port should be kept as short as possible. This is why Ipswich, twenty-four miles further inland than Brisbane on navigable branch of the Brisbane River, became such an important centre for the Darling Downs and West Moreton runs. Hodgson claimed that he initiated the Drayton road from the Darling Downs to Ipswich and spent £1,800 on it. 61 This need for a short road explains why the squatters who moved north from Moreton Bay began to look for closer port than Ipswich and Brisbane and why they established roads to Maryborough, Gladstone and Rockhampton.

The squatters' dray tracks were important in determining the sites of townships. Drayton, and later Toowoomba, were established where the drays from the Darling Downs converged on the road down from the range. Warwick was similarly situated in relation to the southern Darling Downs and the road down Spicer's Gap to Ipswich. Goode's Inn (where the township of Nanango developed later) was built north of the Blackbutt Range where the road from the norther Darling Downs through Cooyar joined the road from the Brisbane Valley to the Burnett runs. Gayndah marked the junction of a number of important roads; there the roads to Maryborough and Gladstone joined the road from Brisbane to the Upper Burnett, the Dawson and the Fitzroy rivers. The agitation to have Gayndah made the capital of a northern colony indicates the strong influence of squatting settlement on the early pattern of development in the northern district.

The occupation of Gracemere ended transport difficulties for the Archers. They had only to haul their wool a few miles to the Fitzroy River and they had the "Ellida" and later the "Jenny Lind" to carry their wool by sea to Gladstone. In

61. Sydney Morning Herald, 7 February 1855.
addition coastal vessels began to call at the Fitzroy very soon after the occupation of Gracemere. After Rockhampton became a port of entry in 1859 ships began to ply more regularly and the Archers found they no longer needed their own sea transport. Rockhampton itself became the outlet for an extensive district with roads converging to it from the Upper Burnett, the Dawson, the Peak Downs and the northern runs.

One aspect of sheep management that was well developed in this early period was lambing. The Archer flocks lambed after shearing, usually in January or February. As the time for lambing drew close the ewe flocks were tended closely, ewes with newly-born lambs were separated from the main flock and given special attention. Thomas Archer did a great deal of shepherding during lambing time at the Castlereagh and at Moreton Bay. Even David took a hand and John Archer spoke of his brothers as careful "mid-wives". The term gives an indication of the way in which the ewes were tended. The result of such careful attention to the lambing ewes was that lambing percentages were very high, sometimes as high as a hundred per cent. Gregor claimed that Balfour's sheep on Colinton had increased from 1,800 to 9,000 in four years. David Archer was unlucky to have the increase of his flocks checked by scab on the Castlereagh and an unsuitable climate at Durundur, but when he moved his flocks to the western side of the Brisbane Valley and later to the Burnett they increased very quickly.

This rapid increase in the size of the flocks and the resulting need for more sheep-stations was a very important factor in the expansion of squatting which forms the main theme of this study. Newcomers entered squatting as a

63. O. de Satyrl: op.cit. pp.48-50
64. J. Gregor: op.cit.pp.31-32.
profitable form of investment and this led to the formation of more flocks and the occupation of more country. But individual squatters also expanded the size of their flocks and the area of their runs. This expansion can be seen quite clearly in the records of the Archers.

David Archer began his squatting career by taking up sixty square miles at Durundur. To this he later added fifty square miles at Emu Creek (taken up in Thomas Archer's name) and a hundred square miles at Cooyar. While they still held these runs the Archers claimed two runs on the Burnett and it was only after they had established themselves at Coonambula and Eidsvold that they sold the Moreton Bay runs. The same procedure was followed when Gracemere was taken up. The Burnett runs were held for some time even though Gracemere covered 600 square miles.

It must be borne in mind that some of these were really multiple runs. Coonambula was made up of six runs - Coonambula, St. John's, The Flats, Shallow Creek, Mundowran and Malmoe. These varied in size; Shallow Creek was forty square miles, for example, but the others were between twenty and fifty square miles. Eidsvold comprised Eidsvold, Tellemark, Small's Creek and Geumga. Gracemere consisted of twelve blocks of country which were really separate runs. Another run was tendered for later and the Archers also took up some country on the northern side of the river. In addition to this they bought four more runs in the mid-sixties. These runs were all in the Fitzroy valley. They also tendered during the fifties for four runs on the Dawson and nine runs at Peak Downs. They did not stock any of these runs.

and sold them later, unstocked. 66

The expansion of their flocks and herds was considerable. David Archer's flock of 8,000 sheep on Durundur in 1841 increased to a peak number of 48,363 in March, 1866. He had no cattle at first but by 1845 Durundur was too small for the cattle pastured there and some had to be moved to Emu Creek. A stock return for October, 1858, lists 2,908 cattle and another records that in 1868 there were 11,063 cattle on Gracemere. 67

These flocks and herds were running on very large runs but the improvements on those runs were inconsiderable. An inventory made out in 1849 gives the value of improvements at Durundur as £200 and at Coonambula as £43. The Coonambula improvements are listed. They consisted of a store, a kitchen, two sheep station huts and 200 hurdles. One of these huts was the first one built on the new run. It was 24 ft. by 12 ft. and was built for £9. Nearly all the value of the run was concentrated in the stock, the working plant and the stores. 68


68. An Inventory, 1 May 1849, by Geo. Macatta and Edward B. Hawkins.
Value of 12,472 sheep at 3/6  £2,177
Value of working plant (16 horses, 16 working bullocks, with gear, 3 drays, implements).  £218
Value of stores  £250

By 1853 the improvements on Coonambula amounted to only £468. 1. 0 yet in that year David Archer, dissolving his partnership with Edward Walker and entering into partnership with his brother William, valued the stock and other property he put into the new firm at £4,634/2/8. 69 How temporary the improvements on Coonambula were may be judged from William Archer's report in 1855 (only seven years after the run was first formed) that "the woolshed, paddocks and most of the buildings are showing evident signs of decay." 70 Yet Coonambula was sold in 1858 for £8,161/15/8 with 10,000 sheep on the run but with improvements valued at £661/15/8. 71

Even on Gracemere during the early sixties the improvements were not very considerable. The first hut at the head station was supplemented in 1858 by a new slab hut with a brick chimney and a well-laid floor. This was roomy and very comfortable. The old hut was still used, and these two huts provided adequate accommodation even with the arrival of the visitors who are mentioned so frequently in the records. By 1868 the Archers had been at Gracemere for thirteen years, yet the improvements on the run were very similar to those on the Moreton Bay runs a quarter of a century earlier.

These improvements consisted of the houses, the men's huts, the store and the woolshed, the pens and yards at the head station and the huts and yards at the out-stations.

69. MS statement of "Valuation of stock and other property put into the concern of David Archer & Co (new firm) by David Archer on 1st April, 1853."
70. William Archer, Letter, 5 May 1855.
71. ibid, 18 July 1856.
Plan of 482 acres at Gracemere
Drawn by Colin Archer 1861
179 c.
The Woolshed, Gracemere, Sept. 1861
Drawn by Alexander Archer
There were more of these buildings and they were more substantial than the earlier ones. The two dwelling huts at the head station, for example, were floored, some sawn timber was used in their construction and one had a verandah all around it. The value of these buildings was generally higher than that of comparative buildings on the Burnett or Moreton Bay runs. William Archer, for example, valued a shingled hut and two dozen proof stake yards at Bouldercombe, one of the out-stations, at £60, a figure that is considerable more than the £9 which Charles Archer paid for the erection of the first hut on the Burnett River in 1848. Yet a reading of the records leaves one with a distinct impression that Gracemere in the early sixties differed little in essentials from Durundur in the early forties. Nearly the whole of the assets of the run lay in the value of the stock (41,250 sheep worth £19,927/13/6 and 9,629 cattle worth £27,355/16/-) while the total value of the improvements was only £3,620. The picture one gets is that of a considerable number of stock running freely and with ample room on a comparatively unimproved run.

The returns from squatting were substantial in spite of the primitive methods employed. The Archers had to struggle throughout the forties but during the fifties money began to pour in upon the family. It is hard to get precise details from the records which are very incomplete for the early period, but it is possible to piece together an impression of the financial situation. Returns from the runs came from

72. Gracemere Account Book 1868-1871 pp.1-4. A Sworn Valuation dated 10 July 1868 made out as part of William Archer's claim for pre-emptive rights over some resumed land shows improvements as £1,753/14/6, but this was not the total value of improvements on the whole run.
wool sales, sales of stock (mostly sheep but some cattle also), returns from "boiling down", sale of runs and a certain amount of speculation.

Two rough statements, one by Charles Archer and another by Colin, suggest what the financial position was towards the end of the forties. Charles and Thomas had commenced their partnership of the Eidsvold run with 2,000 sheep belonging to Thomas, 2,300 belonging to William Archer (which they probably took on terms) and 3,800 culls from D. Archer & Co which were also probably taken on terms. Thomas had received £150 from William in return for a partnership in the Emu Creek run. When this was sold Thomas received £100 as his share of the sale and William advanced him a similar sum (William's share of the sale) to help him with his occupation of Eidsvold. 73 During the first year, which they spent on Coonambula, Thomas and Charles did little more than clear expenses. In 1849 Charles Archer drew up an estimate of the probable expenses of establishing Eidsvold. He was taking 6,200 sheep there and he listed the following items:

Wages
(4 shepherds, 2 hutkeepers, 1 cook and 1 bullock driver) £160
Stores £ 90
Improvements £ 27
(hurdles, 1 sheep station hut and 2 huts for the new headstation)
Licence £20 and assessment on sheep £ 26.14. 2
Lambing and shearing £77 Woolpacks £12 £ 89

Total £392.14. 2

He suggested that a lien of £170 might be raised on Thomas's 2,000 sheep, that Walker & Co be asked to advance the stores and that William make some arrangements for raising the rest of the money needed. The return from these sheep would be not more than £450 for wool and, in addition, Charles expected to wean 1,800 lambs. 74.

Charles Archer's estimate may be compared with a rough statement of debit and credit drawn up in 1853 for Coonambula by Colin Archer. 75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wool</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of sheep</td>
<td>1,715.15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash from Eidsvold</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£3,965.15.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debit</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expenses of the station</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of half</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Walker's sheep</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments to James and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Walker</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£2,965</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The payment to James Walker was connected with the cattle David Archer was keeping for him on terms and that to Edward Walker was for returns from his share of the partnership. The important thing to note is that Colin Archer expected the return from wool alone to be about twice the station expenses, leaving sheep sales as clear gain. It is to be noted that the profit for the year was £1,000.

The fifties were prosperous years for the Archers. David Archer cleared his debt to Walker & Co in the early years of the decade and this saved him the heavy interest charges which

74. Charles Archer: Letter to William Archer, 22 November 1849
75. Colin Archer: Rough statement dated 12 March 1853.
had been such a handicap during the forties. His flocks had increased on the Burnett runs and continued to increase on Gracemere. In the first half of the fifties his wool clip amounted to between 27,000 and 29,000 lbs, a heavier clip than in any previous year. At the end of 1862 the nett proceeds of the season's clip at Gracemere was £5,800. Since the number of stock on the run increased until 1866 the return from wool sales also continued to increase until the same year.

The Archers realised substantial sums of money from the sales of stock, chiefly sheep. In 1853 Colin Archer recorded the sale of 7,180 sheep for £1,715/15/-.

The records for this year contain references to the sale of a number of flocks of sheep ranging in number from a thousand to five thousand, but it is not clear precisely which of these were actual sales and which were offers of sale. In 1854 William Archer sold 3,000 culls at 7/- each and 800 fat four and five-year-old wethers at 10/- each. These prices are considerably higher than those recorded by Colin Archer the year before and from the sales William Archer realised £1,450.

de Satgé refers to the ten years after 1856 as the palmy days of the Darling Downs squatters. They were getting 2/- to 2/6 for wool washed on the sheep's back, Victorian and Riverina squatters were buying wethers from the Darling Downs to fatten for the goldfields market and the squatters pushing out to the north were buying breeding ewes.

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77. Letter Book 1858-1869, 6 December 1862.
Gracemere were even more favourably placed than the Darling Downs squatters to profit from sales of wethers to northern squatters, although they were not as favourably placed to sell to the southern market.

On the other hand they were very close to a good meat market in the township of Rockhampton. In March, 1859, Colin Archer recorded that in Rockhampton fat cows were fetching £7 a head and bullocks £9 and that from Gracemere he was selling between £35 and £40 worth of beef, "dead and alive", each week. These local sales continued and increased during the sixties. In one year, for example, William Archer wrote offering to supply a Rockhampton butcher with 1,020 head of cattle in the following twelve months at the rate of about 20 head each month. "Boiling down" was a way of disposing of sheep or cattle which offered an alternative to selling. The Archers sent stock to be boiled down on a number of occasions but few details are given although William Archer mentioned sending 1,400 wethers to "the pots" in 1855. de Satgé claimed that, although the demand for cattle was limited, tallow was selling at 40/- to 50/- a cwt in 1856, while the northern squatters were paying 15/- for good ewes and £1 for maiden ewes in 1860.

At the end of the fifties the Archers sold their Burnett runs and realised much higher prices than they had been able to get for the Moreton Bay runs sold ten years before. The effect of the great increase in population following the southern gold discoveries of the fifties is apparent. Emu Creek had been sold for £250 and Cooyar for £400. In 1854 one block of the Eidsvold run on Small's Creek was sold for £750. Its grazing capacity was 7,000 sheep and the sheep that were sold

80. Colin Archer: Diary 1858-59; 8 March 1859.
82. O. de Satgé: op. cit. pp.63, 156.
with the run brought 12/- a head. The run that Thomas Archer had taken up for Bouverie was sold in 1856 with 12,500 sheep (fleece on) at 10/- a head, but William Archer claimed that it was overstocked and there was scab nearby. All the same, he held out little hope of selling Coonambula. He had to wait two years before he sold four blocks of the run with 10,000 sheep and £661/15/8 worth of improvements for £8,161/15/8 in March, 1858.

The two remaining blocks from Coonambula were added to Eidsvold to make a run capable of running 20,000 sheep. William Archer expected to get £3,500 for this run of 5 blocks. Three of these blocks were sold a year later. The price is not recorded but there is no reason to think that William Archer did not get the price he expected. There is no record of the sale of the two remaining runs from Coonambula, but all the Burnett properties had been sold by 1861.

The Archers were fortunate to have stock and runs to sell at such an opportune time. They had acquired the Gracemere run simply by discovery and occupation. The large sums from the sale of the Burnett runs gave them a considerable amount of capital. They were not the only squatters to benefit in this way. Colin Archer, in 1858, noted in his diary: "Princhester is, we hear, sold with 15,000 sheep at 20/- a rattling price. The estimate of the capabilities of the run vary from 15,000 to 20,000 sheep. Assuming the latter as the most correct, the price is unprecedented for an outside run with few improvements and those very indifferent. This is no doubt the way to make money. Stock and sell."

84. ibid, n.d. but probably 1856.
85. Wages Book, p.94.
86. William Archer: Letters 10, 30 June 1859.
87. Colin Archer: Diary, 4 August 1858.
The Burnett runs were not the only runs in the possession of the Archers. The 1847 Orders-in-Council allowed any person to tender for a run if he could describe its boundaries. Charles Archer's exploring trips between 1852 and 1854 had given him a very good knowledge of the country on the Dawson River and further north. The Orders-in-Council encouraged exploration by giving those who discovered new country a secure tenure over any runs they might claim; but these regulations allowed the runs to be held unstocked, the leases were marketable and there was no limit to the number of tenders that might be submitted. As a result "prospecting" for runs became a regular speculation. There were even a great many "drawing room" tenders cooked up from explorers' journals by speculators in Sydney who had never even seen the country they claimed and who had no intention of occupying it with stock. 88

The Archers were genuine settlers, they explored a great deal of the western Darling Downs, the Dawson Valley and the Fitzroy basin, they had every intention of remaining on the runs which were their livelihood, and they intended to stay in Australia and make squatting their career. Yet they tendered for a number of runs on the Dawson River and at Peak Downs which they held unstocked for several years and then sold. These consisted of runs on the Dawson at Lagoon and Ruin Creek, others in the Callide Valley at Kroombit, North and South Kariboe and Prospect Creeks and nine runs at Peak Downs. They sold all of these runs, without occupying them, by 1860, except for one run at Peak Downs which was taken out in James Archer's name before he reached Australia. The prices received for these runs are not recorded but some indication of what they probably were may

be deduced from the fact that James Archer sold his single block for £800, unstocked. In 1871 it changed hands at £15,000 and five years later £118,000 was offered for it. The speculation in these unoccupied runs yielded substantial sums of money to the Archers.

This accumulation of capital from their own efforts in Australia was supplemented to some degree by a certain amount of outside capital. While Thomas Archer was in Norway in 1852 his mother's sister, Miss Ann Walker, died in Perth leaving a sum of money to the Archer family, that is, to William Archer, Senior, and his wife. David Archer took money with him from Australia in 1853 to restore the old house at Larvik and by this time the Archer brothers were able to assist their parents financially so this sum of money became available for investment on behalf of William Archer, Senior. Thomas Archer took the money, amounting to £1,335, to Australia in 1853. William Archer, Junior, conferred with Thomas Walker and, on his advice, invested the money in a Melbourne property at 12½% interest. The investment gave William Archer some anxious moments but it seems to have finally turned out quite profitable. Kate, the eldest of the Archer children, had married a Norwegian. On his death she was left a certain amount of money which her son, Simon Jorgensen, took out with him to Australia in 1855. William Archer invested this money, £650, in sheep in Simon's name. These two amounts appear to be the only capital introduced into the Archer business from outside Australia. None of the sons took money with him to Australia, and whatever capital they accumulated came from their wages and the returns from their squatting ventures.

At this stage we might consider what the financial position of the Archers was in 1860. There is only indirect reference to this in the letters and documents, but a general idea of their position can be gained. The fifties was a period of general prosperity and the Archers shared in this prosperity. David Archer had cleared his debt to Walker & Co. and had dissolved his partnership with Edward Walker by 1853. In that year William Archer (who was then the managing partner for D. Archer & Co) bought half of the sheep that D. Archer & Co were renting from Edward Walker, paying £1,094/10/- for 4,378 sheep at 5/- each. In 1855 he completed the purchase by taking the other half of Edward Walker's sheep at 8/- a head. In the same year he bought Eidsvold from Charles and Thomas Archer for £2,000 and in the following year he bought a half interest in Gracemere for a further £2,000.

David Archer had taken £400 with him when he left Australia at the beginning of 1853 and William Archer sent him a further £200. By the end of 1854 he had drawn £982/5/7 but this had gone much faster than he expected, most of it on repairs to Tolderodden since the old house was badly run down at this time. He married in 1855 and a short time afterwards set up in partnership with a friend as a London merchant and wool-importer. He seems to have drawn large sums at this time but William Archer gives no indication that these drawings placed any great strain on Coonambula. Indeed, as we have seen above William himself was expending considerable sums in Australia.

William Archer's personal position was strong financially. He bought a half share in D. Archer & Co in 1853 but was able

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93. William Archer: Letter, 5 May 1855
94. ibid, April 1855, David Archer: Letter, 10 September, 1856.
96. David Archer: Letter 9 December, 1854.
to tell David that he could draw on William for £300 or £400 if he needed any extra money. In 1854 William offered to lend his brother, John, £700 at 8% so that John could buy a share in a vessel. If this was not enough William thought that he could spare £200 or £300 more.

In addition to providing a means of livelihood for the four original partners Gracemere and the earlier runs were used for the support of other members of the family — Colin, James, Simon Jorgensen, the Archers' parents in Larvik, their sisters the children of those sisters who had married and the children of John Archer, who had been drowned at sea with his wife in 1857.

This was all made possible because the Archers were running a large number of stock on huge and almost unimproved runs under a system of pastoral management based on cheap land and exploitation of natural resources; a system which yielded high returns for a comparatively small outlay. A few details will support this contention. The Gracemere run in 1867 covered 331½ square miles and grazed 36,187 sheep and 10,862 cattle, yet the rent for this land and the assessment on the stock amounted to only £614 and the total value of the improvements was £3,620. The nett receipts from the run for 1866 amounted to £14,060/1/6 — a high return for a comparatively small outlay. This primitive system began to change during the sixties and the changes were almost completely effected before the end of the seventies.

100. Colonial Treasurer: Letter to Messrs. Archer & Co. (date not shown).
Alexander Thomas (L.K. Rice) James Archibald William
CHAPTER 8
GRACEMERE IN TRANSITION
(1868)

The changes at Gracemere in the sixties and seventies involved the Archers in difficult adjustments to a new intensive system of pastoral technology and in heavy capital expenditure on the purchase of land and on improvements to both runs and stock. Pastoral pioneering did not end in 1860; on the contrary, the sixties witnessed a great expansion of squatting which carried the pastoral frontier far to the north and west. This expansion is not considered in this study, which is concerned mainly with those aspects of pastoral development which are related to the history of one family of squatters. But a question which immediately arises is why the Archers did not continue to move onward with the pioneer pastoralists on the advancing frontier of settlement. It is difficult to give definite reasons or to assign relative importance to any of the reasons which come to mind.

By 1861 the Archers had been pioneering for twenty years and it was natural that there should have been some weakening of the impulse to move every few years. In 1854 David Archer had expressed his opinion that pioneering was for younger hands. In 1861, when he was forty-five years old, married and settled in London as a merchant, he was hardly likely to have changed that opinion. Thomas Archer also was married. He had approved of Charles Archer's decision to move to Gracemere but considered that he himself could not engage in the unsettled life of a squatter pioneering a new run. In 1861 he was settled in England with a young family and it was hardly likely that he would engage again in any pioneering squatting venture.
By this time some of the Archers had developed interests outside of squatting. When he returned to Australia in 1871 Thomas Archer did not even take an active part in Gracemere affairs but accepted the position of manager of the Central Queensland Meat Preserving Company at Rockhampton. John Archer had been the third brother on the original overland journey to Moreton Bay but he had soon resumed his sea-faring life and died when his ship was lost at sea in 1857. Alexander, thirty-three years old in 1861, was progressing in his banking career and was not willing to leave this for the unfamiliar work of squatting. In the fifties the health of William Archer, Senior, began to fail and it was agreed that at least one of the brothers should be at home. Charles had actually lived at Tolderodden since he had left the colony in 1857 but by 1861 his wish to return to Gracemere was strong. It was Colin Archer's turn to visit Norway and it was arranged that he and Charles should change places. While Charles was preparing to leave Norway he died suddenly and unexpectedly as the result of a skiing accident, only a few weeks before Colin arrived. Colin Archer did not return to Australia, but married and settled down in Larvik.\(^1\)

As a result of these changes the only Archers at Gracemere in 1861 were William and James. They were joined at Gracemere in 1863 by their brother, Archibald, who had spent a number of years at the Sandwich Islands. Simon Jorgensen,

1. He resumed his occupation of boat-building and became famous for his design and construction of improved types of pilot boats. He evolved the first "rescue boats" and greatly improved the design of fishing boats for use in the dangerous fishing grounds off the Lofoten Islands. He later constructed a vessel on a new design for Polar exploration. This was Nansen’s famous ship, the "Fram".
their nephew, was also at Gracemere and had acquired a share in the run. Archibald Archer was forty-one years old and had no previous experience of squatting. James was twenty-five and Simon was about the same age. These two were the "younger hands" who might have undertaken another pioneering venture. Peak Downs was the "new country" of the time and the Archers had acquired leases over runs in that district. The occupation of these runs does not seem to have been considered once the Archers had secured their claim to Gracemere and the runs at Peak Downs were sold. James Archer even sold the run given to him. The Archers had decided that the huge Gracemere run was sufficient for their needs and as much as they could manage.

They had also developed a strong affection for Gracemere. The strong romantic streak in their father had influenced him in his decision to settle at Tolderodden. We have seen it appear among the Archer brothers in their attitude towards the picturesque aspects of Durundur and of the Spring at Cooyar. It is apparent in Charles Archer's description of Ban Ban Springs, a picturesque spot on the way to Eidsvold, and in his selection of the site of the head station at Gracemere. The small peninsula jutting out into the waters of Gracemere Lagoon bore a strong resemblance to the peninsula on which Tolderodden stood and this resemblance was reinforced by the pains the Archers took to turn this small peninsula into an attractive garden in the same way that their father had established a landscape garden at Tolderodden. The resemblance between Gracemere and Tolderodden and the attractions of Gracemere itself seem to have led James Archer to accept Gracemere quite readily as his overseas home. This intangible factor in the decision to stay at Gracemere was a thing of the mind and the spirit,
but no less powerful in its influence than material considerations.

The management of Gracemere from 1861 was in the hands of William Archer and his temperament did not incline him to undertake pioneering ventures. He was naturally rather cautious. He had remained at Wallerawang when David went to Moreton Bay. When Thomas Archer was planning to move from Moreton Bay William decided that he would take a position as manager of Eton Vale, leaving Thomas to manage all the sheep. He remained at Coonambula when Gracemere was formed and was reluctant to take control of Gracemere until he had become quite familiar with its management since it was "much more complicated than an ordinary squatting." In addition, he was not fond of horse-riding - a severe disability for a pioneering squatter. On the other hand he was an experienced station manager and a good businessman, qualities which stood him in good stead in the sixties and seventies. He was more fitted by temperament and experience to adapt himself to the changing conditions after 1860 than to move out on to the pioneering frontier, and more able to make the necessary adjustments at Gracemere to meet the new conditions than to establish a new run further to the north or to the west.

It is these changing conditions of the sixties and the Archers' adaptation to them that we must now consider. The changes were brought about by the increased population of the northern district and the consequent pressure towards closer settlement. The Archers were no longer pioneering squatters on the frontier of settlement but large and comparatively wealthy pastoralists living in a settled district close to the commercial centre and outlet of a large and rapidly developing region. The increase in population had led to the separation of the northern district from New South Wales in 1859 to form the new colony of Queensland.
The new government took office in 1860. The squatters were strongly represented: of the ministry of seven, six were squatters. This government gave early consideration to the land question and passed the "Crown Lands Occupation Act" in its first session. To prevent Sydney speculators from taking up new country by proxy and so forcing genuine settlers further out this Act abolished the old intermediate districts, issued leases for fourteen years, limited each run to an area of between twenty-five and one hundred square miles, made it a condition of the leases that each run should stocked to at least a quarter of its capacity on application, and made the runs liable to resumption on twelve months' notice. This act encouraged pastoral expansion in the sixties since anyone who found an unoccupied run in an unsettled district could obtain a lease at the low rental of ten shillings a square mile. At the same time the act checked the speculation in unstocked runs (so common in the fifties) by making the lease conditional on the stocking of the run to a quarter of its capacity during the first year. Since the capacity of a run was reckoned at a hundred sheep or twenty cattle to a square mile and the size of the runs ranged from twenty-five to a hundred square miles this allowed ample room for increase of stock.\(^2\)

The encouragement which this act gave to settlement made it possible for the large runs of the fifties to be subdivided and sold at a substantial profit. The runs at Peak Downs which the Archers sold to Sandeman, unstocked in 1860 provide a convenient example. Sandeman's partner, de Satgé, stocked these runs and sold the separate blocks before 1866. He sold Belcombe with 17,500 sheep for £14,000, Crinum with 16,000 sheep for £20,000, Gordon Downs with 35,000 sheep and improvements for £45,000 and Capella (of which he gives no details). de Satgé modestly described these as "fairly

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satisfactory transactions".  

The Archers were not as fortunate. It is tru that they found a ready sale for their surplus stock to the squatters pushing out from Rockhampton and that wool prices, which had begun to rise from 1848 continued to rise until 1866. But Gracemere was in the settled district and its situation, seemingly so favourable, suffered from the very serious disadvantage of land losses through resumption and selection.

Even as early as 1858 the government surveyor was marking off the flats between Gracemere head station and the river into farms. In 1859 an area of two miles around Rockhampton was reserved for extension of the town area and this reservation intruded into the Farris and Kjouvet blocks of the Gracemere run. More of the Archer leases were resumed the following year and in 1863 another section of the Archer land near Bouldercombe was resumed. By 1867 the thirteen blocks of land making up the Gracemere run had dwindled to 331 1/2 acres — half the original size of the run.

To offset the land they lost by resumptions after 1860 the Archers secured land by exercising their pre-emptive rights, by buying land at public auction and by purchases of other land. An extra block of land had been tendered for in 1861 and the following year they exercised their pre-emp-

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5. Letter from Government Resident at Port Curtis to C. and T. Archer, 23 July 1859.
7. ibid, 24 August 1861.
8. Appraisement of rents for renewed leases in Port Curtis, 29 July 1867.
tive right over 320 acres of the Meadow Flats run. In 1862 they applied for pre-emptive rights over 640 acres at the head station, but they were allowed pre-emption over only 200 acres and they had to buy 290 acres at public auction at the high price of £10/-/6 an acre simply to ensure free access to their own woolshed. There is a reference, probably in 1865, to a squatter who built a hut at the Nine Mile Water-hole and blocked access to the head station. In 1865 the Archers bought the four blocks comprising the Rosewood Run (Rosewood, Moah, Emu Creek and Tilpalberry) from James Atherton for £6,557/13/9 paying 17/- a head for the sheep on the run.

The 1860 Act had provided for land to be reserved near the coast and in certain populated districts. Free selection before survey was allowed in areas of 40 to 320 acres. But the Queensland legislature was dominated by squatters and in 1863 the extent of the reserved land was reduced, free selection was not allowed and stringent conditions were imposed regarding residence, fencing and cultivation. Later acts gave relief to selectors and these acts caused the selectors to press heavily on the Gracemere lands which were just on the outskirts of Rockhampton. As we have seen above this involved the Archers in heavy expenditure to retain important areas of their run.

Their difficulties were aggravated by a drought in 1867 which lasted until the end of 1868, so that the sheep had to be moved away from Gracemere and could not be moved back until

the beginning of 1869. In addition, the price of wool dropped in 1867. In general there had been a fall in wool prices from 1839 to 1848 and then rising prices until 1866. Then came a fall in prices with several fluctuations and a rise in prices in 1871. From that year there was a general price decline to the end of the century.\textsuperscript{14} David Archer was in close touch with the London wool sales and his reports to William were not optimistic. Wool was depressed and the wool sales were going badly in 1868. He did not expect the low prices to continue but he warned William that the high prices of the sales four or five years earlier would not be realised again. He expected the Gracemere wool to average only 9d or 10d a lb\textsuperscript{15}, a low price compared with the average price of 24d. for the 1859-60 clip and 2/1\texttwothirds for the 1861-62 clip.\textsuperscript{16} In 1869 he reported that the wool market was in its most depressed state since 1848, and that sales were down by forty to fifty per cent on the previous year.\textsuperscript{17}

In this difficult situation the squatters looked to an alteration in the land laws for some alleviation of their condition. According to de Satgé, "it became necessary that better security should be afforded to the pastoral interest... and to encompass that end, ... I was urged by my squatting friends to put up for the seat [of Clermont] in order to assist in passing the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869... projected for the relief and support of our predominant interest."\textsuperscript{18}

Among the squatters who took an active interest in politics

\textsuperscript{15} David Archer: Letters to William Archer, 10 September; 8 October 1868.
\textsuperscript{16} Gracemere Ledger 1858 et seq.
\textsuperscript{17} David Archer: Letter to William Archer, 20 May 1869.
\textsuperscript{18} O. de Satgé: op. cit. p.218.
at this time was Archibald Archer. Trained as a mechanical engineer in Perth he had left Scotland in 1848. Although his brothers expected him to join them in Australia, and were prepared to adjust their arrangements to make an opening for him, he spent the time between 1848 and 1863 in the Pacific as a trader in copra and oil, a storekeeper, a coffee and tobacco planter and a cigar manufacturer. In 1863 he joined William at Gracemere and became a partner in Archer & Co. He represented Rockhampton in the Queensland Legislative Assembly in the sixties and seventies and again in the nineties. After 1900 David Archer's son, Edward, represented Capricornia in the House of Representatives.

This interest in politics was not new among the Archers but their active participation was a new development. It is significant that it came after the pioneering phase of their squatting had ended and when they had become large landholders in a closely settled district. At Moreton Bay and the Burnett they were pioneers holding their runs in an "unsettled" district. Their Burnett and Fitzroy runs were at first even beyond the recognised boundaries of government control. When the northern district was made into a separate colony the Archers were still on the northern frontier of settlement but that frontier was already moving beyond Gracemere, so that from 1860 onwards the Archers' interests were in the settled district of the new colony. It was this fact, coupled with the land legislation of the sixties, which drew Archibald Archer into politics.

At the beginning of 1867 the "Northern Argus" had complained that squatters dominated the Queensland Legislature and that legislation was "tinged with squatting ideas"; that commerce and labour were unrepresented and mining interests overlooked; and that legislation guarded squatting rights and suppressed other industries. Archibald Archer was

nominated to represent Rockhampton at a public meeting held early in June. He could count on support from the Land League and his candidature was strengthened by the Archers' position as the discoverers and first settlers of the district and as large (if not the largest) holders of Rockhampton and suburban property and the circumstance that about £10,000 of Archer money was spent each year in the town and the colony.

His opponent was advocating free selection before survey and promised that he would take Gracemere away from the Archers. de Satgé, representing Peak Downs, could consider that his first duty was to advance "the predominant interest" of the squatters. Archibald Archer, as a candidate for the Rockhampton seat, had to take into account the strong feeling in the town that conditions of settlement should be more liberal and that more land should be made available for selection - land which could be provided only by resuming portion of the squatters' holdings. As part of his policy he supported the popular claim that the price of £1 an acre for land was too much and the areas offered for selection were too small.

Archibald Archer was elected and took his seat in the legislature in August, 1867. The Minister for Lands in this parliament was E.W. Lamb, a Peak Downs squatter. In October he introduced a bill for the alienation of Crown Lands. The provisions of this bill were referred to a Select Committee comprising the Minister, Archibald Archer and Fitzgerald, the squatter member for Kennedy. This Committee drafted a bill

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20. Ibid, 11 June 1867.
which was satisfactory to parliament. Archibald Archer took
a leading part in composing it and the "Northern Argus",
which had been so critical of squatter influence in the legis-
lature, was loud in its praise of the way in which Archer and
Fitzgerald had carried out their parliamentary duties and
reported that the new Land Act was "the very best and most
liberal onward looking bill that has ever emanated from a
colonial parliament." Archibald Archer had something of
a triumphal return to Rockhampton. In an address explaining
the provisions of the new bill he remarked that although the
existing squattages were immense they were held on tenures
which barred improvements. The bill would halve runs but
would give a secure tenure over the remaining half. Since
squatters would not be disturbed for ten years they would be
able to improve their runs so that these could carry double
the number of stock. The act required that all runs in the settled districts
should be divided into two halves. The lessees would be
given twelve months to do this. The act did not allow selec-
tion before survey, but the squatter was allowed to make a
feature survey of his run which he then divided as he wished.
The government selected the half that it would resume and make
available for settlement as required. The other half of the
run, called the leased half, was held by the squatter under
licence until selection but without disturbance for ten years.

The resumed half was classified into (1) agricultural
land, in areas of 40 to 640 acres, at 15/- an acre (2) first
class pastoral land, in areas of 80 to 2,560 acres, at 10/- an
acre and (3) second class pastoral land, in areas of 80 to
7,680 acres, at 5/- an acre.

These lands could be selected for conditional purchase.
In the case of pastoral lands the freehold could be obtained

24. ibid, 4 April 1868.
after two years residence and upon improvements being made to the value of 10/- an acre for first class land and 5/- an acre for second class land. The purchase price could be spread over ten annual instalments of rent, that is, each class of land could be bought by making annual payments of 1/6, 1/- or 6d. an acre respectively for ten years.

One person could select the full allowance of all the different classes of land, that is, one person could select 10,880 acres at a cost of £368 a year for ten years. This area of seventeen square miles was a great deal smaller than the standard "block" of pastoral country which was twenty-five square miles in area. It is important to note that pastoralists as well as agricultural selectors could acquire such freeholds, and it is not surprising that the act resulted in a rush for land. So eagerly was the land sought after in the Rockhampton district that "applications were five or six deep" in the portion of Gracemere that William Archer gave up.

Under the terms of this act the Archers were given notice by the Commissioner of Crown Lands in May, 1868, to divide their runs. These notices included those for the twelve blocks of the Gracemere run, the Meadow Flats run sixteen miles to the south on the road to Gladstone and the four blocks of the Rosewood run to the north-west which the Archers had bought only three years before. This loss of half the runs meant a loss of 165 square miles.

When William Archer surrendered the run he gave up, in consideration of his pre-emptive right over 2,560 acres of the homestead block, improvements to the value of £1,753 14/6 whereas it was only necessary to prove £1,280 of improvements in order to select 2,560 acres at 10/- an acre. He also paid

£78 for improvements on two areas which he selected for conditional purchase, that is, he bought back his own improvements. 28

Since the runs comprising Gracemere adjoined each other William Archer was able to have them "consolidated" into one run instead of being scattered about the country included in the original run. The aim of the act was to encourage closer settlement by making land available to selectors and also to give pastoral lessees greater security of tenure over the leased halves of their runs by leaving these leases undisturbed for ten years. This consolidation gave William Archer a great deal of trouble. The runs were in various names at the time since Charles Archer had taken up some in his own name, some in the names of himself and Thomas Archer, some in the names of David Archer & Co. and some taken up after 1856 in the name of the new partnership of Archer & Co. The Secretary for Lands considered that this would be no bar to consolidation, notice was given in the Government Gazette and arrangements for consolidation proceeded. The Secretary for Lands was wrong, and in September William Archer received a telegram saying that the whole thing was illegal. This was serious since the time fixed for consolidation of the run had expired. 29

In this difficult situation Archibald Archer used his influence with the Minister for Lands and other squatters in the legislature. Before the end of October he was able to assure William Archer that the trouble over the run was gradually righting itself. 30 Archibald Archer's opponents in

Rockhampton were quick to seize their opportunity. They stigmatised the arrangements made by Archibald Archer as the "Gracemere job", condemning it as an unwarranted use of squatting political influence. Since the mistake was not made by the Archers but by the government they would seem to be justified in asking the government to rectify the mistake.

Although the squatters dominated the Queensland legislature for more than three decades their attitude towards land legislation was not completely illiberal. The land laws between 1860 and the eighties were adapted with some success to the needs of large and small pastoralists and farmers. Consideration of this subject is not within the scope of this thesis, but the act of 1868 marks a convenient division between the old extensive squatting system of the sixties with its large runs and primitive technology and the more intensive system of the seventies with its emphasis on improvements. The change did not come about suddenly but the contrast between the seventies and the sixties is described by de Satgé. He writes with some evident disapproval of the improvements that were made on runs in the seventies - the small fenced paddocks, the boundary-rider's horse-paddock, and the smart, verandah cottage which replaced the old shepherds' huts; the elaborate woolsheds that "cost a fortune"; and the wells, tanks and dunes that made surface water unimportant when the occupation of a run was being considered. With some inconsistency he speaks with asperity of Tyson's failure to improve either his stock or his runs and contrasts

33. O. de Satgé: op.cit. p.165.
this with the way the Fairbairns turned Lansdowne from a waterless, grassy waste that would barely carry twenty-five thousand sheep in the sixties into "a grand run" that was not over-stocked with a quarter of a million sheep in the seventies.\(^{34}\)

The Archers were well aware that conditions were changing. Gracemere, only a few miles from Rockhampton, had a constant stream of visitors of all kinds — squatters from the outside runs and from the south, business men and politicians from the capital and southern towns. They were in an excellent position to hear about any new developments and to assess their value. Through the Walkers in Sydney, Alexander Archer in the Bank of New South Wales and David Archer in London they were in touch with financial conditions in New South Wales and England and with the wool market at the key point of Sydney and London. They were able to use this fund of information to make adaptations to the new conditions.

William Archer was ready to introduce changes at Gracemere. He realised that the pastoral technology of their pioneering days was no longer suitable and that loss of some of their land by resumption was almost inevitable. In compensation he hoped to get a more secure tenure which would justify investment of capital in fencing and improvement of stock. The new act came at a bad time, since all their ordinary sources of income had more or less failed. The portion of Charles Archer's estate that was invested at 8\(^\%\) was paying better than his share in the run. In January, 1868, the Archers were £1,400 worse off than they had been three years earlier.\(^{36}\) As a result of "considerations,

\(^{34}\) ibid, p.217.
\(^{36}\) David Archer: Letters, 10 September and 8 October 1868.
land buying to protect our interests in some measure, and fencing and drought, and our own inability to make sales at any price, the fall in the price of wool, etc. etc. etc."

William Archer wrote that he was reducing the dividend of the partners from 8% to 5%. Even under these conditions the Archers were better off than many of their neighbours who were being forced out of their stations by the hardness of the times. In 1869 the drought ended but the grass intake for the year was only £12,347/1/6 and the profit for the year £2,219/5/-.

In these circumstances William Archer showed a good deal of courage in the measures he adopted. With the help of a bank loan of £12,000 he set about carrying out the improvements he considered necessary to make Gracemere into a run suited to the new conditions. Within the next five or six years he had spent £6,190/15/- on improvements on the preemptive selections and purchased lands; £3,430 on the cattle station on the leased half, in all £10,020/15/-.

These improvements consisted of fencing, improvement of the stock and provision of water.

Fencing of selected lands was required under the 1808 act. It was carried out in the northern district much later than in Victoria and New South Wales, and a Rockhampton newspaper found it of public interest to report the fencing of a run on the Dawson River in 1868. Sufficient fencing was provided on that run to keep 12,000 sheep without shepherding and with the labour of only one good boundary rider. Under the old system these sheep would have required the labour of at least four shepherds and two hutkeepers. The fence on

this station was made of brush and logs and was reported to be inexpensive. 40 William Archer, in his usual cautious way, was experimenting with helping sheep in paddocks on second-rate country. 41 The Fences were either brush and log or chock and log. In 1871 James Archer recorded that top-logging at a cattle station cost £11 a mile. 42

Fencing was carried out to reduce the labour needed to manage the flocks and to save on costs. In general it brought with it very great advantages - improved wool, greater carrying capacity, more freedom from disease and better pastures. 43 But in Central Queensland coastal districts the squatters' early experiences with fences were unhappy. The paddocked sheep quickly ate out the best grasses and left the way open for the spread and rapid growth of spear grass. This plant is of little use for feed, but it grows very quickly after rain and seeds rapidly. The heavy seed-heads carry the seeds which have a long tail which twists when damp and drives the pointed seed into the wool and even into the skin of the sheep. This resulted in heavy sheep losses so that we find James Archer recording his disappointment in these words, "Those wretched paddocks after all the expense they have been are very little good." 44 de Satgé ascribed the failure of a squatter named Davis on a run west of Peak Downs to the inferior country he occupied and the prevalence of spear grass. 45

Fencing constituted the most important of the early improvements on Gracemere, but William Archer also improved

41. David Archer: Letters, 10 September and 8 October 1868.
42. James Archer: Diary, 19 February 1871.
44. James Archer: Diary, 20 February 1871.
45. O. de Satgé: op.cit. p.166.
the runs by erecting windmills, tanks and dams so that he no longer had to rely entirely on natural surface water supplies. Attempts had been made to improve the quality of the stock on Gracemere as early as 1859. Thomas Archer was in England at that time and he selected two bulls in Yorkshire at 60 and 100 guineas each and shipped them to Gracemere for 50 guineas each. In 1863 the Archers imported four Negretti rams direct from Germany. Fenced paddocks made selective breeding and improvement of the stock practicable and in the seventies the Archers imported pure-bred Shorthorn and Hereford bulls direct from England and laid the foundations of the Gracemere stud which later became one of the leading studs of Queensland.

Besides improving the quality of their sheep the Archers made efforts to improve their methods of preparing wool for sale in the London market. In 1856 William Archer had expressed his concern at hearing that the water on Gracemere was not good for washing wool since the Archer brand had a good name and it was important that this should be maintained. In 1858 Colin Archer recorded his opinion that washing by hand was never clean. David Archer was in London at this time and in a good position to inquire into the market demand for wool. Simes, the well-known London wool-broker could not give him an decided opinion about the merits of hand-washed and pool-washed wool. Some buyers fancied that hand-washed wool did not take colours well, but others preferred it. David Archer had a suggestion to make to William.

"Would it not be worth your while to leave a flock of dry sheep of some size till the last - poolwash a third handwash a third and shear a third in grease. Then see what the result is and in esti-

47. Colin Archer: Diary, 2 January 1859.
"mating that result you ought to take into account the suffering and injury the sheep sustain in the washpool. 49

There is no indication in the documents that William Archer carried out this experiment, but he seems to have used spout-washing early in the sixties. One paper contains a description of one lot of 137 bales of the 1861/62 Archer clip. "We should call this flock all spout-washed fine dry silky clothing but chiefly seedy, bright and clean." 50 All through the sixties there are references in the Gracemere records to burrs and seeds in the wool, and in 1869 David Archer wrote to warn William that grass seed and burr were more detrimental to wool than squatters had realised in his day. 51

Charles Archer had washed the sheep under spouts at Cooyar in the forties, but spout-washing at the end of the sixties was done by using machinery to heat the water. To ensure that the sheep, after washing, would remain clean until shorn William Archer removed the woolshed and surrounded it with well-grassed paddocks. In selecting and installing this steam-blast machinery Archibald Archer's training and experience was of the greatest value. He inspected some of the stations on the Darling Downs, where a great change had been effected in sheep washing and where squatters were spending several thousands of pounds on their washpools, and then ordered the most suitable machinery he could find for the new washpool. The first estimate William Archer had made of the cost of this machinery was £500 but Archibald Archer warned him that suitable machinery could not be installed for less than £750. 52 David Archer also had some advice to offer. He

agreed with William that "good wool well got up" was the only thing that would pay and that they would have to grow superior wool if they wanted to effect sales on the depressed London wool market. He consulted buyers and wool-brokers and found that spout-washing did not justify its expense for inferior wool, especially for wool that contained seeds or burrs. Because of this he strongly advised William to get rid of the 10,000 "rubbishy" sheep on the run "on any terms". He also informed him that, according to the brokers, hot water washing showed up dirty or seedy wool and that most wool people in London condemned the use of soap. David Archer was hopeful that the provision of paddocks and good sheep washing apparatus would enable them to market their wool in first rate condition.

This hope was not fulfilled in spite of improvements made to the washing plant on several occasions under Archibald Archer's supervision. In May, 1870, David Archer reported that the wool which had lately arrived in London had "a grey stain, a harsh feel and a fearful amount of grass seed" and concluded sadly that "Gracemere is not fine wool country." On the heels of this conclusion came James Archer's report of the failure of the early paddocks. It is not surprising that James Archer, who was managing Gracemere for several years from 1871, decided not to wash the clip that

55. ibid, 25 March 1869.
56. ibid, 8 Oct. 1868.
57. ibid, 20 May 1869.
58. ibid, 27 Jan. 1870.
59. ibid, 25 Feb. 1869.
62. See above p. 206. An increasing proportion of Australian wool was marketed in the grease from this time. See Barnard, op. cit. pp. 7-8.
that year and that David Archer agreed with this decision. 63

The failure of the wool washing machine was disappoint-
ing to the Archers, but not disastrous. David Archer was
able to report that wool prices were improving in 1869 and
continued to improve in 1870 and 1871. 64 The failure of
their attempts to make great improvements in the quality of
the Gracemere clip was offset by their ready access to a
local meat market. They could compete with squatters on
better wool country because they could make more use of sheep
carcases. 65 In 1874 David Archer was able to tell William
(who had been away from Gracemere since 1871) that the
accounts for the last three years had shown the outstanding
result of a nett profit of £14,000. 66

The changes made at Gracemere involved the Archers in
considerable expense. Anthony Trollope thought that the
squatters were crippling themselves by expenses like these
and Rusden claimed that some settlers incurred heavy liabili-
ties through buying land at auction in order to prevent selec-
tors from acquiring strategic parts of their runs. We have
already seen that William Archer had been forced to do this
in 1862. On the other hand by dummying, by pushing their
pre-emptive rights to the utmost limit and by using their in-
fluence to have good lands classified as second class pastor-
al lands many squatters were able to reduce greatly the price
they had to pay for the land they acquired.

The Archers had to face another serious difficulty early
in the seventies. The resumptions of 1868 were not the final

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63. David Archer: Letter to James Archer, 10 Aug. 1871
64. ibid, Letters to William Archer, 7 Oct. 1869; 22 April, 1870;
Letters to James Archer, 10 Aug. and 1 Dec. 1871.
65. ibid, Letter to William Archer, 17 May 1870.
66. ibid, 30 Oct. 1874.
losses of land suffered by the Archers. They had assumed that their lease over the unresumed part of their run would not be disturbed for at least ten years but within five or six years the demand for land in the Rockhampton district was so great that the government proposed to resume 102,120 acres out of the Gracemere run and 26,240 acres out of the Meadow Flats run. This meant that the Archers would lose the leased halves of both Gracemere and Meadow Flats. They had already lost more land than any other settler in the district in proportion to the number of stock they possessed in 1868. In the terms of the resumption they were debarred from selecting enough land for their stock, most of the improvements they had made on the run would be rendered useless and they would have to get rid of most of the stock on the run. William Archer acted promptly. He drew up a petition asking for special consideration of his case, had this signed by 120 people in Rockhampton and district and presented this to the Legislative Assembly. He claimed that he had exercised his pre-emptive rights as far as possible and asked to be given additional pre-emptive rights over 11,400 acres at Gracemere and 2,000 acres at Meadow Flats. This, with lands acquired by pre-emptive rights and selections, would be equal to 4,340 acres of pastoral lands for each of the eight partners in Archer & Co. Even of this claim were granted, William Archer stated, he would have to get rid of a large proportion of the stock on Gracemere.

What William Archer was claiming was that he should be allowed to select 13,400 acres of that part of the run to be resumed, not in competition with other selectors but without competition at the government fixed prices of 15/-, 10/- and 5/- an acre. The Archer & Co's petition was presented, William Archer gave evidence on his claim before a sympathetic committee, and in May, 1875, his claims were granted by means
of a special bill, "The Gracemere Pre-emptive Bill." This concession left the Archers with a run of less than sixty square miles out of an original area of six hundred square miles. Since this reduction had been effected in a space of fifteen years it is not hard to realise the difficulties which confronted William Archer during this period. The Archers, perhaps better than other squatters, realised the way in which conditions were changing and they were able to adapt themselves to those changes so that the second big resumption was not quite as disastrous as it might have been.

One factor in the cushioning of the effects of these changes was the gradual substitution of cattle for sheep. This is an interesting trend since David Archer had deliberately sold Edward Walker's cattle and substituted sheep for the overland journey to Moreton Bay. Yet he took up his first run in heavily-timbered country in a high rainfall area. His choice of Durundur was influenced to some extent by his experience at Wallerawang where the sheep stations were in similar country. Even in the mid-thirties and early forties when the Walker runs were extended to the Castlereagh the sheep stations were at Biamble on the upper Castlereagh while the more open country farther west on the lower reaches of the river were used for cattle. Even as late as 1860 there were few sheep west of Gunnedah. It was not until some years later that the country along the Darling River was used for sheep, although after that time it quickly became famous for its fat sheep and fine merino wool. The Brisbane, Logan and Burnett valleys were all originally stocked with sheep. Only a few settlers like the Scotts and the McConnells relied exclusively on cattle although others like the Bigges ran some

cattle with their flocks. Those squatters who pushed too far towards Wide Bay or too far down the Burnett to Gin Gin, Monduran and Walla 69 found the country unsuitable for sheep and substituted cattle as David Archer had done at Durundur. But there was a limited demand for beef and a ready demand for wool, so that sheep continued to be run wherever possible even on coastal areas.

The increasing number of cattle on Gracemere is plainly shown in the records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Cattle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>2,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October</td>
<td>2,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>4,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>5,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>6,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>7,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>7,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>6,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>7,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>8,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>10,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>11,063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colin Archer found a ready market for cattle in Rockhampton in 1858 at the time of the Canoona gold rush. These local sales continued and increased during the sixties and William Archer began to buy cattle from the Burnett and Moreton districts to maintain a continuous supply to the Rockhampton market. As a result of the resumptions in 1868 the stock had to be reduced. The sheep suffered most. From 48,363 in 1866 their numbers dropped to 21,255 in 1871 and by the end

70. Gracemere Accounts, 1858 et seq.
of the seventies there were no sheep left on Gracemere. The cattle still numbered 9,373 in 1871 but after the resump-
tions of the next few years this was reduced to 3,968 by the
end of the seventies - proof that William Archer was speaking
no more than the truth when he told the members of the parlia-
mentary committee inquiring into his claim for pre-emptive
rights that he would have to get rid of most of the stock on
Gracemere even if his claims were granted.

Less than two months after James Archer recorded the
failure of the fenced paddocks for sheep on account of the
incidence of spear grass he recorded the sale of 10,600 sheep
at 4/6 a head. It is clear from this that the Archers
were getting rid of some of their sheep as early as 1871.
The remaining flocks could not be kept on Gracemere so the
Archers bought eight blocks of country at Minnie Downs near
Aramac in the west of Central Queensland in 1874 and transfer-
red all their sheep to this western run. They also transfer-
red 1,948 cattle to Minnie Downs, leaving less than 4,000
cattle on Gracemere. These cattle were those selected to
form the stud which later became famous. The Archers were
reluctant to move from Gracemere and to give up wool-growing
but they recognised the difficulties of keeping sheep on the
coastal areas and were quick to recognise that the provision
of windmills, tanks and dams made the dry western areas avail-
able for occupation as sheep stations.

The coastal areas were good cattle country, so they chang-
ed over from sheep. In making this decision they were influ-
enced by the prospect of continuing sales of beef to the local
market and of supplying cattle for export. This was made
possible by the building of the Lakes Creek Meatworks near
Rockhampton in 1871. A successful export trade in beef had
to wait for the successful establishment of a freezing process

71. James Archer: Diary, 10 April 1871.
in the eighties, but meat preserving provided an outlet for cattle during the seventies. Thomas Archer returned to Queensland at this time and became manager of the meatworks, a circumstance which had some influence on the Archer's decision to turn Gracemere into a cattle station.

The contrast between Gracemere in 1878 and Gracemere in 1868 is striking. In the sixties the value of the run lay in its stock,

41,250 sheep  £19,927.13. 6
9,629 cattle  £27,355.16. 0
horses  £1,488
Working oxen, drays, etc.  £344

£49,115. 9. 6

The land was valued at £3,976/19/-72 and improvements at £3,62073.

At the end of the seventies there was no leased land on Gracemere, only land selected or purchased.

19,892 sheep  £9,757. 8. 0
7,776 cattle  £36,452. 5. 0

£46,209.13. 0

Land  £51,106.11.11 74

The effect of land purchases is evident. The value of the stock shows little difference, but the land, in spite of its reduced area, shows a very great increase in value. Gracemere had changed its character and had become a much smaller, freehold cattle station and stud farm, fenced and improved,

72. Town property valued at £10,250 has been omitted.
73. Gracemere Accounts, July 1868.
74. Gracemere Accounts, 1877-1883 (Town property has again been omitted. Minnie Downs has been included with Gracemere.)
carrying a smaller number of stock, but with those stock improved by selection and breeding.

Changes had come about also in the recreational and social life of the station. On Christmas Day, 1858, a great gathering was held at Gracemere with an elaborate meal supplemented with champagne supplied by Wiseman, the Crown Lands Commissioner. The day was spent in playing cricket and in sparring, jumping and wrestling and the evening in playing cards and singing until midnight. As Rockhampton grew it offered opportunities for many business activities and for a wide range of social activities. Young William Archer remarked on the stratification of Rockhampton life. He distinguished three grades of society. The top grade was made up of government officers, bankers, lawyers, doctors and agents not in the retail trade. A second grade consisted of the large and prosperous shop-keepers and their employees and a third of the small shop-keepers, mechanics, manual labourers and so forth. He added as perhaps a fourth group the squatters from the outside runs. The tentative way he included these in his classification implies a distinction of interests and social activities between the squatters and the residents of Rockhampton. On their stations these squatters lived luxuriously but more monotonously than the city dwellers. They received letters and newspapers once or twice a week and books and magazines periodically from Sydney. They kept a good table and their homesteads were well-furnished with a piano as an essential item.

Gracemere homestead by this time - the mid-seventies - had become something of a show place. Its setting on a small peninsula facing the lagoon was naturally beautiful. On the lake were birds of all kinds, prominent among them being pelicans.

75. Colin Archer: Diary, 27 December 1858.
wild geese, and ducks. Around the edge grew clumps of reeds, while the small peninsula had been made into a very attractive garden filled with trees and flowers, including tropical fruits and palms and a large bunya pine - a reminder of Durundur. The homestead itself was a house of eight or nine rooms. The perpendicular slabs of the walls had been left unpapered and the floor was uncarpeted so that the rich, reddish-brown of the timber was left unobscured. In the largest room were two large tables, one used for dining, the other for reading and working. A special feature of the homestead (one which it had in common with other station residences) was the verandah - long, deep and low-roofed. This verandah served as sitting room, smoking room, promenade and summer dining room. Sofas, rocking chairs, lounge chairs and a hammock made it into a pleasant place for relaxation after the heavy, physical and sometimes sustained and tiring work of the station.  

Gracemere was no longer the great sprawling run of earlier days but their squatting experiences had impressed on the Archers a way of life quite distinct from that of the small selectors and farmers on one hand and of the city dwellers in Rockhampton on the other.

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