

WILLIAM BRADLEY'S FIRST CONTACT WITH THE WOMEN OF PORT JACKSON (COURTESY MITCHELL LIBRARY)

[THIS IS GADIGAL COUNTRY]

A PLACE OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.

IT BELONGS TO THE TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL OWNERS OF THE INNER SYDNEY REGION. THE GADIGAL CLAN WERE MEMBERS OF THE LARGER EORA GROUP. FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, THEY HUNTED, FISHED, AND TRADED AROUND THIS COVE.

[THE INVADERS ARRIVE]

ON 26 JANUARY 1788, THEY WATCHED AS THE FIRST FLEET OF BRITISH CONVICTS ARRIVED. CAPTAIN ARTHUR PHILLIP HOISTED THE UNION FLAG HERE, WHERE CUSTOMS HOUSE NOW STANDS. GADIGAL LAND HAD BECOME A BRITISH COLONY.

[THE GIFTS OF CIVILISATION]

EUROPEAN DISEASES KILLED THOUSANDS AND THEIR DOMESTIC ANIMALS DESTROYED ABORIGINAL HUNTING GROUNDS. THE NEW ARRIVALS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE RICHNESS OF ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND LANGUAGE. DESPITE RESISTANCE BY BRAVE WARRIORS LIKE PEMULWUY, THE ABORIGINES BECAME DESPISED AND IMPOVERISHED STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN LAND.

[THE SURVIVORS]

BUT THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE DID NOT DISAPPEAR. SYDNEY HAS A KOORI AS WELL AS A WHITE HISTORY. THIS IS NOW ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE LAND OF THE EORA PEOPLE.

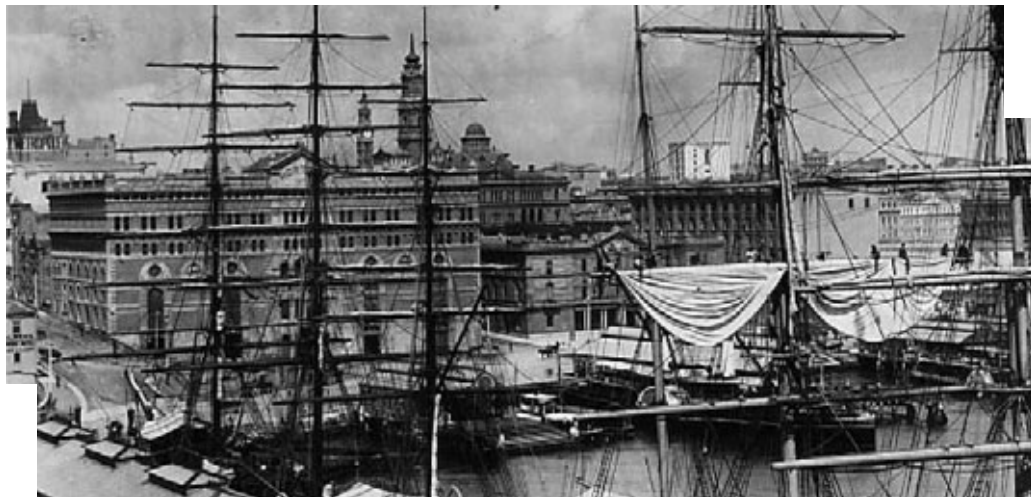


(COURTESY MITCHELL LIBRARY)

[LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION]

THIS WAS A PRIME WATERFRONT LOCATION WHEN THE 1845 CUSTOMS HOUSE WAS BUILT. IT WAS NEAR SYDNEY'S OFFICIAL CENTRE, MARKED BY AN 1819 OBELISK AT MACQUARIE PLACE. THE JAGGED LINE OF THE ORIGINAL HIGH WATER MARK IS MARKED IN DARK GRANITE ON THE PAVEMENT BEHIND YOU. FROM 1837 TO 1847, CONVICT WORKERS RECLAIMED THIS LAND TO FORM CIRCULAR QUAY.

A SOLITARY SYMBOL OF BRITISH POWER OVER SEA AND TRADE, CUSTOMS HOUSE DOMINATES THE QUAY IN 1845. CUSTOMS OFFICERS WORK THE WATERFRONT, CHECKING FOR CONTRABAND AND SMUGGLERS.



(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

IT'S 1889. THE PHOTOGRAPHER CAPTURES THE NEW THREE-STORY CUSTOMS HOUSE THROUGH A FOREST OF MASTS. THE SYDNEY ECONOMY IS BOOMING. THE QUAY IS FILLED WITH SHIPS BRINGING IMMIGRANTS AND CARGO AND LOADING WOOL FOR THE ENGLISH MARKET. MORT'S GIANT WOOLSTORE BESIDE THE HOUSE IS ONE OF MANY LINING THE QUAY. STEAM FERRIES CROWD THE NEARBY JETTIES. THE QUAY IS VIBRANT WITH NOISES, SMELLS, AND PEOPLE. IT ALL CREATES MORE WORK FOR CUSTOMS.



(COURTESY STATE RECORDS OFFICE OF NSW)

[CLOSING IN - THE 20TH CENTURY QUAY]

WALL AROUND THE QUAY

THE FERRY COMMUTER OF 1913 COULD STILL SEE CUSTOMS HOUSE ABOVE THE GABLED WHARVES. ELECTRIC TRAMS BEHIND THE JETTIES TOOK PASSENGERS DOWNTOWN. FERRY SERVICES ALMOST DISAPPEARED WHEN SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE WAS COMPLETED IN 1932.

CIRCULAR QUAY STATION OPENED IN 1956, CONNECTING THE QUAY TO THE CITY RAILWAY, AND DIVIDING CUSTOMS HOUSE FROM THE WATERFRONT.

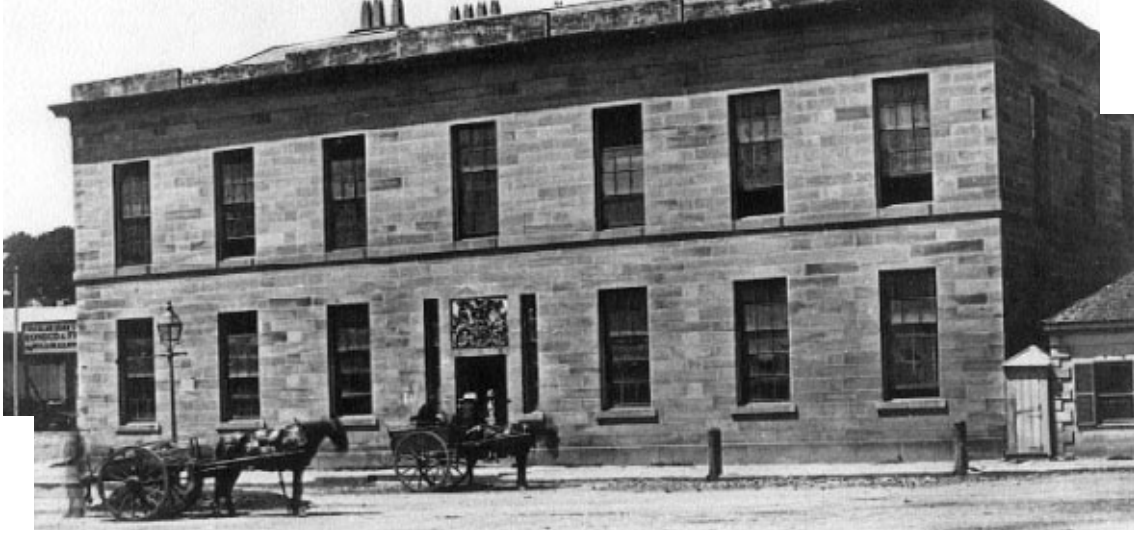
THE FINAL BARRIER, THE CAHILL EXPRESSWAY, WAS ERECTED IN 1962. SKYSCRAPERS WERE ALREADY REPLACING THE OLD WOOLSTORES AROUND THE QUAY.

[QUAY CHANGES]

BY THE 1960S, MOST CUSTOMS' WORK WAS AT DARLING HARBOUR. THEY RENEWED THEIR QUAYSIDE PRESENCE WHEN THE OVERSEAS PASSENGER TERMINAL OPENED IN 1961 TO PROCESS INCREASING NUMBERS OF MIGRANTS.

THE LINKS BETWEEN CUSTOMS HOUSE AND CIRCULAR QUAY WERE SEVERED IN 1990 WHEN CUSTOMS MOVED OUT AND THE BUILDING BEGAN A NEW LIFE.

THE DOLPHINS AND TRIDENTS SURROUNDING THE CUSTOMS HOUSE CLOCK ARE REMINDERS OF CUSTOMS' TRADITIONAL MARITIME ASSOCIATIONS.



(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

[HOW MANY CUSTOMS HOUSES?]

THE PRESENT CUSTOMS HOUSE EMBODIES THE WORK OF THREE NSW COLONIAL ARCHITECTS. EARLIER CUSTOMS PREMISES WERE AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE AND THE ROCKS.

THE FIRST CUSTOMS HOUSE HERE WAS BUILT WITH UNEMPLOYED LABOUR DURING THE ECONOMIC DEPRESSION OF THE 1840S. IT WAS A PLAIN GEORGIAN BUILDING DESIGNED BY MORTIMER LEWIS. SEMI-CIRCULAR QUAY WAS RECLAIMED AT THE SAME TIME AND BECAME THE FOCUS OF CUSTOMS' WORK.

[SECOND HOUSE]

THE EXPANSION OF COLONIAL TRADE SOON STRETCHED CUSTOMS' RESOURCES. IN 1885, THE BUILDING WAS PARTLY DISMANTLED. JAMES BARNET REDESIGNED THE HOUSE, ADDING TWO WINGS TO FORM A REAR COURTYARD, ANOTHER STOREY, AND A BALUSTRADED COLONNADE IN FRONT.



(COURTESY MITCHELL LIBRARY)



(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

[THIRD & FOURTH HOUSES]

IN 1896, WALTER VERNON DESIGNED A THREE STOREY WING WITHIN THE OPEN COURTYARD. HE EXTENDED AGAIN IN 1899, WITH TWO MORE FLOORS AND A SECOND-STOREY COLONNADE, GIVING THE BUILDING ITS FRENCH NEOCLASSICAL APPEARANCE.



(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

[CHANGING HOUSES]

A DECORATED AND RENOVATED CUSTOMS HOUSE GREETED SERVICEMEN RETURNING FROM WORLD WAR 1. WORKS DIRECTOR GEORGE OAKESHOTT HAD ADDED MODERN LIFTS, A CARETAKER'S FLAT ON THE ROOF, AND MADE MAJOR INTERNAL CHANGES. A TERRAZZO VESTIBULE FLOOR WITH THE ANCIENT SWASTIKA/FYLFOT GOOD LUCK SYMBOL HAD ALSO APPEARED.

[END OF AN ERA]

CUSTOMS FAREWELLED THE HOUSE ON 15 JUNE 1990 AND MOVED DOWNTOWN, FAR FROM THE WHARVES AND BONDSTORES. WITH CONTAINERISATION, COMPUTERISATION AND AVIATION, THEY NO LONGER NEED A WATERFRONT LOCATION. IN 2004, THEY MOVE TO ANOTHER CUSTOMS HOUSE AT SYDNEY AIRPORT.

[A RECYCLED HOUSE]

THE CITY OF SYDNEY LEASED CUSTOMS HOUSE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH IN 1994, ENGAGING ARCHITECTS TONKIN ZULAIKHA TO MODERNISE IT FOR CULTURAL FACILITIES AND CAFES. THE INTERIOR WAS REBUILT AND THE LIGHTWELL WAS ENCLOSED TO FORM A SPACIOUS ATRIUM.

[THE LATEST REINCARNATION]

IN 2004, ARCHITECTS PTW REDESIGNED THE BUILDING TO HOUSE THE CITY LIBRARY AND COMMERCIAL TENANTS. FRENCH DOORS AND A FORMAL PORTICO OPEN UP THE BUILDING TO THE FORECOURT.



COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

[ONE PEOPLE, ONE DESTINY, ONE FLAG]

ON 1 JANUARY 1901, CUSTOMS HOUSE PROUDLY CELEBRATED THE SIX COLONIES BECOMING A COMMONWEALTH. THE FOUNDATION DATE OF 1787 ON THE DESIGN FOR THE DECORATIONS (ABOVE) WAS QUICKLY CORRECTED TO 1788.

[FORTRESS AUSTRALIA]

[TARIFF PROTECTION]

TRADE AND CUSTOMS WAS THE FIRST COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED. A UNIFORM TARIFF WAS A MAJOR REASON FOR FEDERATION. THIS STOPPED FIERCE BORDER DISPUTES BETWEEN THE COLONIES. HIGH DUTIES ON IMPORTS PROTECTED NATIONAL INDUSTRIES AND PROVIDED GOVERNMENT REVENUE.

CUSTOMS ALSO CONTROLLED MEDICINAL AND ILLICIT DRUGS, PASSPORTS, PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS, COPYRIGHT, AND PLANT AND ANIMAL QUARANTINE.

[WHITE AUSTRALIANS ONLY]

UNDER THE 1901 IMMIGRATION ACT, CUSTOMS REFUSED ENTRY TO ASIANS WHO FAILED A DICTATION TEST IN AN OBSCURE LANGUAGE.

[MORAL GUARDIANS]

CUSTOMS SHIELDED AUSTRALIANS FROM INDECENT BOOKS AND FILMS AND THINGS LIKE CONTRACEPTIVE DEVICES. WHEN THEY BANNED DH LAWRENCE'S LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER IN 1961, SOCIAL VALUES WERE ALREADY CHANGING. YOU CAN NOW READ IT HERE IN THE CITY LIBRARY.



(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

[SHIPPING NEWS]

AS STAFF AND MERCHANTS ARRIVED AT CUSTOMS HOUSE, THEY PASSED THE SHIPPING NOTICES BOARD ON THE LEFT OF THE ENTRANCE. THE INVOICE ROOM DECLARATIONS CLERK, SEEN HERE IN 1955, POSTED THE LATEST ARRIVALS FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF IMPORTERS ON THEIR WAY TO THE INVOICE ROOM.

[CUSTOMS AND SHIPS]

IN THE EARLY MARITIME COLONY, CUSTOMS WAS IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF SHIPPING. NAVAL OFFICERS AND LATER THE CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT RECORDED DETAILS OF ALL SHIPS ARRIVING AND DEPARTING. THESE RECORDS ARE NOW VALUABLE HISTORICAL RESOURCES.

[MARITIME MATTERS]

SINCE 1845, THE REGISTRAR OF SHIPPING HAD ROOMS ON THE GROUND FLOOR WITH AN ENTRANCE TO LOFTUS STREET FOR AFTER HOURS ACCESS BY SHIP OWNERS & CAPTAINS. YOU CAN STILL SEE THE LIGHTHOUSE CARVING OVER THE DOOR. THE CUSTOMS TURRET CLOCK ALSO HAD MARITIME SIGNIFICANCE. SHIPS' OFFICERS USED THIS AND THE OBSERVATORY TIME BALL TO ADJUST THEIR CHRONOMETERS.



(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

[DOING THEIR DUTY]

THE GROUND FLOOR IN THE 1960'S

THIS WAS THE CUSTOMS INVOICE ROOM ON THE GROUND FLOOR IN 1960. FROM THE ENTRANCE, STAFF COULD SEE THE CLOCK ON THE BACK WALL AS THEY ARRIVED FOR WORK. INVOICE EXAMINING OFFICERS PROCESSED ALL THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BRING GOODS INTO THE COUNTRY.

WHEN COMPUTERS TOOK OVER, MANY LOST THEIR JOBS. AT LEAST TWO WOMEN ARE IN THE PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE, WORKING AS MACHINISTS.

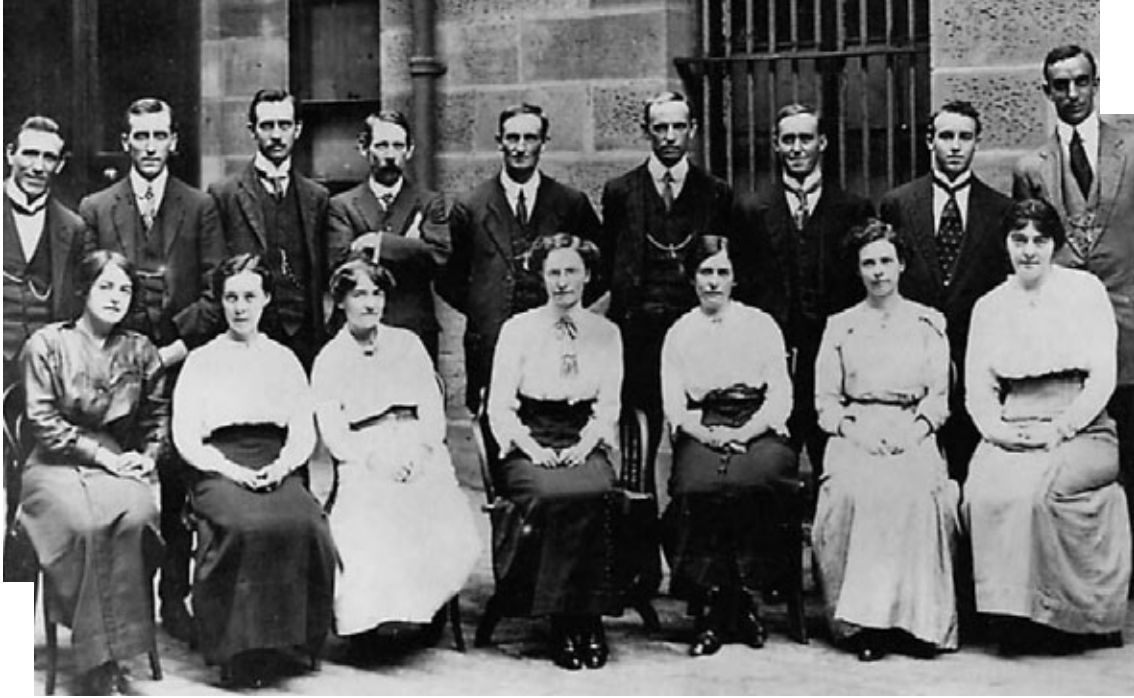


(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

THE WAREHOUSE BRANCH (ABOVE) WAS ALSO ON THE GROUND FLOOR. THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR GOODS HELD IN BONDED WAREHOUSES AWAITING PAYMENT OF DUTY.

UNTIL 1895, MUCH OF THE GROUND FLOOR WAS AN OPEN COURTYARD.

BY THE TIME CUSTOMS VACATED THE BUILDING IN 1990, THIS SPACE WAS CROWDED WITH DESKS, PARTITIONS, PILLARS, AND PEOPLE.



(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

[NO PLACE FOR A LADY]

THE NEW SOUTH WALES STATISTICAL BRANCH POSES IN THE REAR COURTYARD ON THE GROUND FLOOR. THIS WAS 1914, JUST BEFORE MASSIVE ALTERATIONS FILLED IN THIS SPACE AND HID THE STONework BEHIND THEM.

STATISTICS WAS ONE OF THE FEW AREAS WHERE WOMEN WERE PERMITTED TO WORK IN CUSTOMS. THEY WERE EMPLOYED AS JUNIOR CLERKS TO OPERATE THE NEW-FANGLED ACCOUNTING AND TYPING MACHINES.

EDITH HANSON WAS THE FIRST WOMAN IN THE NSW CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT, STARTING AS A "TYPEWRITER" IN 1872. WOMEN COULD DO "CLERICAL WORK OF A PURELY MECHANICAL NATURE" TO FREE MEN FOR "MORE PROFITABLE PURSUITS". WHEN MARY HUGHES APPLIED FOR A CUSTOMS AGENT'S LICENSE IN 1929, THE COMPTROLLER-GENERAL TOLD HER "THE WHARVES ARE NO PLACE FOR A LADY".

IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE 1960S THAT WOMEN WERE ALLOWED TO WORK ON THE WATERFRONT. IN 1967 FOUR WOMEN WERE APPOINTED AS PREVENTIVE OFFICERS TO DETECT FEMALE SMUGGLERS.



(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

[WHAT IS A LONG ROOM?]

[THE COMMERCIAL HUB OF THE CITY]

THE LONG ROOM WAS CUSTOMS' SHOPFRONT WHERE BUSINESS WITH IMPORTERS TOOK PLACE AND DUTIES WERE PAID. THE FIRST GREAT LONG ROOM RAN THE LENGTH OF THE RIVERFRONT IN THE LONDON CUSTOM HOUSE, BUILT BY CHRISTOPHER WREN IN 1671.

[A MOVABLE LONG ROOM]

FROM 1845, THE LONG ROOM WAS HERE ON THE FIRST FLOOR. IN 1917, WORKS DIRECTOR GEORGE OAKESHOTT MOVED IT TO THE MORE ACCESSIBLE GROUND FLOOR, LEAVING SPACE FOR THE BOARDING AND CORRESPONDENCE BRANCHES.

THE TRADITIONAL BARNET LONG ROOM IS AGAIN ON THE FIRST FLOOR, NOW RESTORED AS AN ELEGANT FUNCTION ROOM. SEMI-CIRCULAR WINDOWS OVERLOOK THE COLONNADE BALCONY AND THE QUAY.

THIS 1903 PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS THE FLOW OF MERCHANTS AND CUSTOMS AGENTS THROUGH THE LONG ROOM. STAFF RECEIVED PAYMENT FOR DUTIES, A PROCESS BEGUN BY GOVERNOR KING WHEN HE IMPOSED DUTIES ON IMPORTED SPIRITS IN 1800 IN AN EFFORT TO CONTROL THE RUM TRADE.



(COURTESY AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE)

[THE HOLY OF HOLIES]

THIS WAS HOW JUNIOR STAFF DESCRIBED THE COLLECTOR'S OFFICE. IT OVERLOOKED THE FORECOURT FROM THE EAST SIDE OF THE FIRST FLOOR. THE MINISTER OF CUSTOMS, WHEN VISITING FROM CANBERRA, USED A SIMILAR ROOM ON THE WEST SIDE.

JOHN THOMAS CAMPBELL, FIRST COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, WAS APPOINTED BY THE BRITISH CUSTOMS BOARD IN 1827, WITH A SALARY OF £1200.

THE FIRST NSW COLLECTOR AFTER FEDERATION WAS SIR NICHOLAS COLSTON LOCKYER. THE COLLECTOR WAS AN IMPORTANT PERSON, BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REVENUE. SINCE 1995, THE COLLECTOR IS CALLED REGIONAL DIRECTOR.

FRANK MARCUSON (CENTRE) WAS BOTH NSW COLLECTOR (1960-63) AND FEDERAL COMPTROLLER-GENERAL (1963-66). HERE IN HIS SPLENDID OFFICE HE CONFERS WITH BOARDING INSPECTOR TED KILLEEN (LEFT) AND SENIOR BOARDING OFFICER BILL ROBERTS. PORTRAITS OF FORMER COLLECTORS ADORN THE WALLS. UNTIL THE 1970S, CUSTOMS COURT HEARINGS WERE ALSO HELD IN THIS ROOM.