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## The Archaeology of Frustrated Ambition: An Australian Case-Study

### ABSTRACT

Questions concerning cultural adaptation are particularly important in Australian historical archaeology because of the distances involved in the European settlement of Australia, and the unfamiliar environment faced by early colonists.. One such question concerns the socioeconomic and political failure of some early colonial land-holders who ran estates based on assigned convict labor. A notable example was Major Archibald Clunes Innes, who during the 1830s and 1840s developed extensive pastoral, agricultural, and commercial interests in what is now northeastern New South Wales. At Lake Innes, near Port Macquarie, on what was then the very edge of colonial settlement, he created an estate from which he could control his various activities, while living in a style that he could never have aspired to in his native Scotland. The remains of his extensive brick-built house and stables, as well as the sites of a range of estate facilities, reflect his ambitions for the future, while the survival of this archaeological evidence largely results from the frustration of those ambitions.

### Introduction

The European colonization of Australia was principally characterized by the enormous distance over which migration took place, among the longest such mass movements of people in human history, a shift literally from one side of the globe to the other. Although the rapidity with which these colonists spread out over a huge continent was remarkable, taking much less time than the similar process in the United States, “the tyranny of distance,” as Geoffrey Blainey (1966) called it, the distance both of Australia from Europe and the distance between the initial patches of settlement within Australia, has been a major element in Australian history. In seeking to understand this distinctive colonization experience, in which so many people moved so far and so quickly, Australian historians have, at one time or another, adopted a variety of theo-

retical frameworks, including frontier theory, staple theory, fragment theory, and world systems theory (Jeans 1988). The historical geographer Dennis Jeans has suggested that the last of these (Wallerstein 1980) has particular explanatory power, so that the rapid colonization of this distant continent can be seen as “the inevitable outcome of capitalist expansion” (Jeans 1988:59).

Such an expansion required large numbers of Europeans, from disparate socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, to adapt rapidly to new and strange environments, so distant from their places of origin that most of them had little chance of ever returning. As a result, cultural adaptation has become a major research theme among Australian historical archaeologists (e.g. Connah et al. 1978; Birmingham and Jeans 1983), who have increasingly seen their task as considerably more than merely supplementing the historical record. Indeed, they have generated and addressed their own questions about such matters as the character of the colonization process, the emergence of an Australian culture, the environmental consequences of European settlement, and the tragic consequences of settler-Aborigine contact ( e.g. Birmingham et al. 1988; Birmingham 1992; Connah 1993; Murray 1993). The historical archaeological record has also been seen as a means of testing archaeological method and theory, in controlled situations that can draw on documentary or oral sources ( e.g. Connah 1986, 1994c).

One aspect of the process of cultural adaptation which has attracted the attention of Australian historical archaeologists, concerns the failure of the landed gentry and government officials to maintain their early dominance of colonial society. For instance, comparing the Australian with the Argentinian situation at the end of the 19th century, Jeans (1988:59) has pointed out that: “While Argentina remained in the hands of a land-owner dominated government, from 1858 Australia was ruled by middle class men, supported in universal male suffrage by the working class.” In New South Wales the big land-holders of the early 19th century, running extensive

estates on the basis of cheap convict labor, saw themselves as an emerging ruling class, what one of their political opponents satirized as a “bunyip aristocracy” (Clark 1980:38). A bunyip is an Australian term for a fabulous monster inhabiting swamps and lagoons, or alternatively an imposter (Allen 1990:149). Their failure to realize their ambitions resulted from a combination of socio-economic and political circumstances but the personal weaknesses of individuals, such as ignorance of the environment or extravagant lifestyle, also played a part in their downfall. Although landed families of wealth and influence were to remain a feature of rural Australia, they were never again to have quite the same aristocratic aspirations.

The archaeology of such frustrated ambitions has been particularly studied in two instances in recent years. The first is at Regentville, a mansion built near Penrith, in the Sydney area of New South Wales, by Sir John Jamison, a man who had served with distinction as a surgeon in the Royal Navy, being present for instance at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 (Connah 1986; Wilson 1988). The second is the case discussed in this paper; that of Lake Innes House near Port Macquarie, New South Wales (Figure 1), built by Major Archibald Clunes Innes, formerly of the 3rd Regiment of Foot. He was rather more fortunate in his battles, having arrived a day late for the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 (Connah 1997). The ruins of the Innes mansion and its extensive

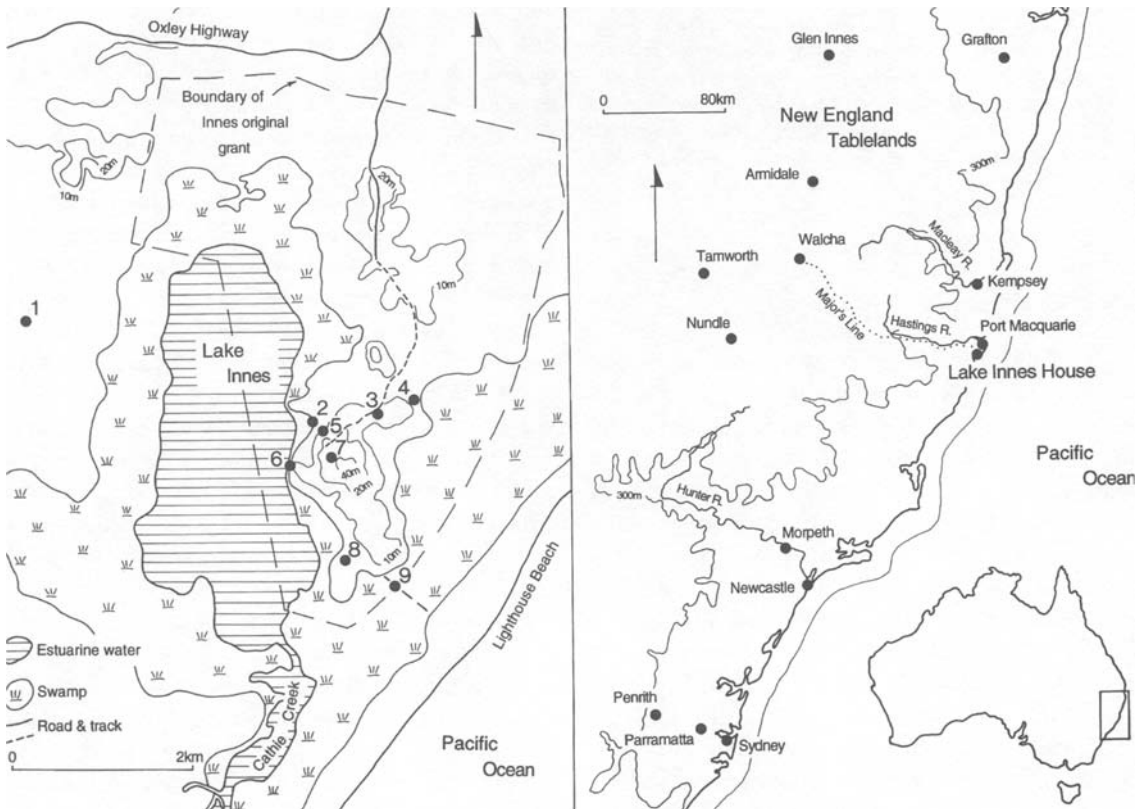


FIGURE 1. Location of Lake Innes House and its associated sites: 1-4, brickmaking sites; 5, servants' village; 6, boathouse site; 7, house and stables; 8, home farm site; 9, corduroy road. (Drawing by Graham Connah and Terry Moore, Warners Bay, NSW.)

stables were constructed of brick in the 1830s and 1840s at a place that was then on the margins of European settlement. Together with its associated sites that represent the wide range of activities carried out on such a remote estate, they provide an almost unique opportunity to investigate the ambition and failure of this man as represented by the material evidence. In addition, this investigation provides important insight into the site-formation processes involved, for it can be argued that the extensive nature of the surviving evidence results rather from his eventual failure than from his earlier achievement.

This subject however, has a relevance beyond that of early New South Wales or even of the Australian colonization experience as a whole. The Innes estate is yet another example of those large capitalistic agricultural enterprises, supported by slave or other unfree (confined) labor, which were such a feature of European expansion from the 17th century onwards. Although there are obvious differences between the Lake Innes case and such instances as the plantation settlements of South Carolina (Lewis 1984:226–248), the plantation of Drax Hall in Jamaica (Armstrong 1990), or the Vergelegen estate in South Africa (Markell 1993), such developments were, nevertheless, comparable responses from the periphery of the then world economic system. Entities like the Lake Innes estate are also informative about the worldview of their creators, in this case influenced by ideas about social and economic progress that derived from the Scottish Enlightenment of the 18th century (Dixon 1986). Men like Innes saw themselves as extending civilization into wild and savage corners of the world; as agents of progress their personal ambitions were conveniently justified. Some, however, misread their world or rather misread the way it was changing, and they failed.

This paper first outlines the historical evidence for Innes's ambitions and then examines their archaeological expression. Subsequently it considers his failure and the degree to which that has shaped the material record and is reflected by

it. It concludes that human ambition and its frustration, aspects of human behavior so familiar to historians, can sometimes be the major factor in the creation of the physical evidence studied by historical archaeologists.

#### Ambition in the Historical Record

Archibald Clunes Innes was born on 4 May 1799 at Thrumster, in Caithness, in the bleak far northeast of Scotland. As the sixth son of Major James Innes of the 94th Regiment of the British Army, who seems to have been a minor landowner from a relatively unimportant titled family, Archibald Innes would have had only poor prospects in life. Even after the death of three elder brothers, one at the Battle of Badajos, another at the Battle of Salamanca, and a third of natural causes, his future must have seemed very limited (Burke's *Peerage* 1975:1424). His best hope for making his way in life was to follow the family tradition and join the army. This he did late in 1813 (Champion 1935:103), at the early age of thirteen or fourteen (O'Grady [1967:196] and Flowers [1967:3] give his year of birth as 1800), when he was commissioned as an Ensign in the 3rd Regiment of Foot, a regiment better known by its nickname as "The Buffs." This regiment belonged to Kent, in the southeast of England, so that the early part of Innes's military career (as an Ensign and then as a Lieutenant) must have given him ample opportunity to observe the lifestyle of brother officers who came from more affluent backgrounds than his own. It is unknown whether he saw active service or not, the Napoleonic Wars were nearing their end and he does seem to have missed the Battle of Waterloo (Herman 1993:169). Indeed, the end of the war brought a brief period when he was placed on half pay and his prospects must have seemed very poor. He was rescued, however, from this by a brief appointment to the 58th Regiment, before returning to his original regiment in 1817. As a Lieutenant he seems to have served for a while with the occupation forces in France and then with a peace-keeping

force in Ireland, being promoted to Captain in 1821 (Howell 1993:2). His very survival in a reduced peacetime army would suggest that he had ability or influence, or perhaps both. Nevertheless, the times could have held out little hope to him that he would ever be able to aspire to the landed privileges of some of those that he must have met in Scotland, England, France, and Ireland.

His big opportunity came when his regiment was detailed for service in Australia, and he was put in charge of the guard on the convict ship *Eliza*, which arrived in Sydney late in 1822 carrying 160 male prisoners (O'Grady 1967:196). In command of the Grenadier Company of the 3rd Regiment, he was then sent to Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania), where he remained until 1825, and particularly distinguished himself by the capture of three runaway convicts who had turned to bushranging and whom his soldiers pursued for nearly three months through difficult country. Back in Sydney, he was appointed Aide-de-camp to the Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales, and thus achieved entry to the top-most level of colonial society (Champion 1935:104–105). By 1826 he was courting Margaret Macleay, the third of the six daughters of Alexander Macleay, the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, who was the highest ranking public servant in the colony and therefore close to the Governor and other people of influence (Windschuttle 1988:16). Clearly, the Innes star was on the rise (Figure 2).

His situation continued to improve when in late 1826 he was appointed as Commandant of the remote convict settlement of Port Macquarie on the north coast of New South Wales, a place accessible at that time only by sea (O'Grady 1967:196–197). Whether this was a move by Macleay to improve a future son-in-law's finances and prospects, or merely an attempt by him to distance Innes from his daughter, is unknown but Innes's appointment would suggest that the colonial government did have a high opinion of his abilities. Port Macquarie was pri-



FIGURE 2. Archibald Clunes Innes (1799 - 1857) as a young army officer. Unsigned and undated painting but probably about 1826. (Reproduced with the permission of the Dixon Galleries, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, ML ref. DG 408).

marily a prison settlement for the detention of convicts who had committed further crimes after their arrival in Australia (O'Grady 1967:197), and in early 1827 had a prisoner population of 724 (McLachlan 1988:228). It was a place with many problems that would be no easy task for a twenty-seven-year-old officer to run. Indeed, almost no Commandant at Port Macquarie held the job for long and Innes survived for only six months, being recalled in 1827 following official criticism of his administration. Nevertheless, on arrival back in Sydney in April 1827, he was promoted to the rank of Brigade Major. This seems to have been in expectation of his departure with his regiment to India, to which it had been posted, but although the regiment went Innes never did. In the October he became seriously ill and seems not to have recovered until April 1828 (O'Grady 1967:201–203). The

nature of this illness is unstated but in the long term it was a fortunate development so far as Innes's ambitions were concerned.

The immediate outcome of his illness was that Innes resigned from the army, and in June 1828 was appointed Police Magistrate and Superintendent of Police at Parramatta, near Sydney. Meanwhile, his pursuit of Margaret Macleay must have continued, for in 1829 they were married in Sydney at "one of the most magnificent weddings that the colony had then seen" (Flowers 1967:3), at which even Governor Darling was present (O'Grady 1967:203–204; Windschuttle 1988:17). In many ways this was a wise match, for both the Macleay and the Innes family came from the north of Scotland, Alexander Macleay had the power and influence that would assist

Innes in his ambitions, and Macleay's financial position was not such that he could afford to ignore the opportunity to marry off a daughter. As a retired army officer, with the money from the sale of his commission in his pocket, Innes was entitled to a free grant of land if he settled in the colony, and in addition his wife was also entitled to such a grant on her marriage. Innes had seen enough of the Port Macquarie area to know that when it was thrown open to free settlement (as must inevitably happen), there would be rich pickings for those who got in first. This, indeed, was exactly what happened in 1830, when Innes was granted 2560 acres (1037 hectares) and his wife 1280 acres (518 hectares) in the Port Macquarie area (O'Grady 1967:204). Innes, to use a modern idiom, had arrived.

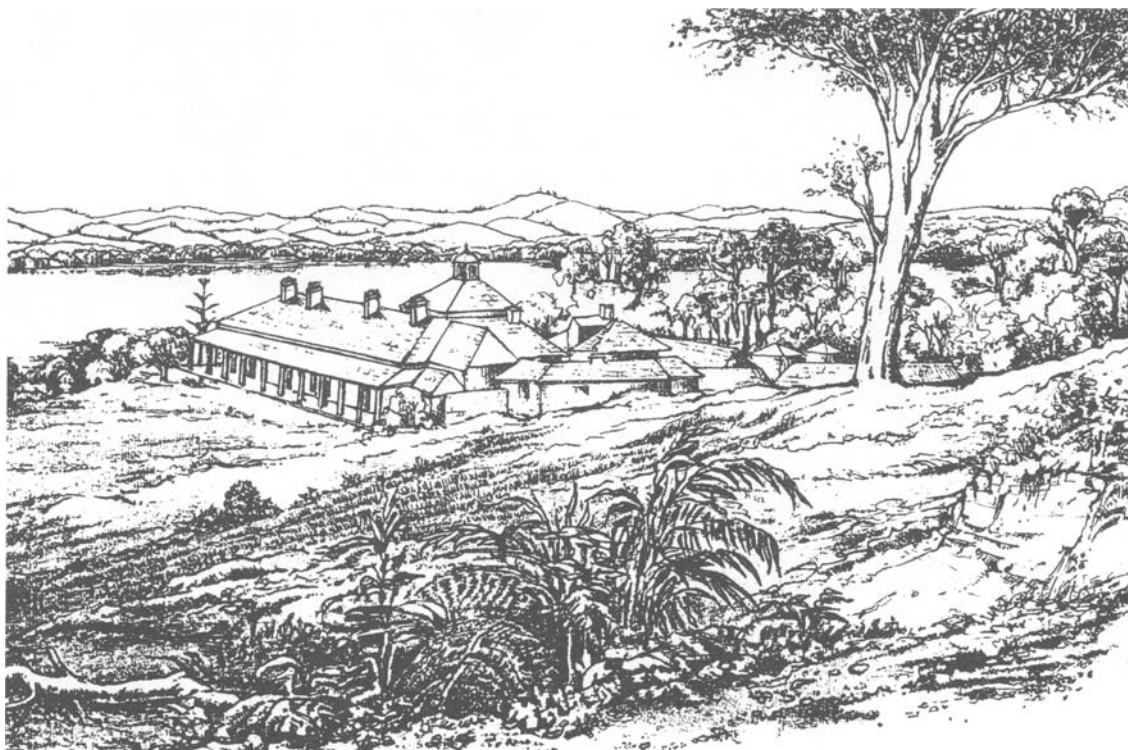


FIGURE 3. Lake Innes House as it would have looked in the early 1840s. This view from the southeast is a composite illustration based on a painting of 1839 by H. C. Allport and on an anonymous painting of 1842 (Lucas and Partners 1987:Figures 5, 8). (Redrawn by Elizabeth Dixon, Hampton, Victoria.)

At his own request, his land grant lay about 7 mi. (11 km) southwest of the township of Port Macquarie and took in part of Burrawan Lake, otherwise known as the Big Lake, and later to be renamed Lake Innes. In 1831 he and his wife moved into what they at first called "Lakeside Cottage" or "Lake Cottage," a relatively modest brick dwelling which they had built on an elevated site facing west towards the lake, with an impressive view across it to the distant New England ranges. This was to become merely the first stage in the growth over the next decade or so of an impressive rural mansion of 22 rooms, known as "Lake Innes House" (Figure 3). Eventually with attractive gardens and impressive stables, it formed the center of an extensive estate that included a home farm to supply the house with some of its food, accommodation for numerous convict servants both near the house and in a separate settlement a suitable distance away, brickmaking facilities, a boathouse on the side of the lake, and roads to both Port Macquarie in one direction and to the adjacent shore of the Pacific Ocean in the other (Connah 1997). Yet the estate was hardly prime agricultural land. Although some parts of it had fertile soil, much of it was stony and poor or marshy and badly drained, and most of it was heavily timbered requiring a great deal of labor for clearance. Its choice suggests that the Inneses shared that romantic view of nature so common both in Georgian Britain and among their social equals in the colony of New South Wales. Indeed, their estate was to attract the attentions of both painters (Figure 3) and poets. As one of their friends, the Commissioner of Crown Lands George James MacDonald, another Scottish exile, put it:

How—like some vision of the painter's brain—  
The living landscape opens to the eye!  
Mountain, and wood, and lake, and grassy plain,  
The dim seen ocean, the surrounding sky,  
Blended in beauty 'mid the fading light,  
Steal o'er the soul and captivate the sight  
(Sheather 1986:89).

Romantic though the location of the Lake Innes estate was, it would seem to have been a

poor choice for someone trying to build up a fortune. Innes however, had clearly set his sights high and appears to have intended the estate to be merely the center of an expanding network of property and commercial interests. In Scottish terms, he was to be the laird, with his personal piper and Gaelic-speaking visitors (Herman 1993:60–61), sitting in his impressively situated country residence from which he controlled an ever-expanding socioeconomic complex. Starting with a lucrative contract to supply provisions to the government establishment at Port Macquarie (Windschuttle 1988:18), his activities were both widespread and diverse. By 1843 a variety of land holdings in different locations totaled 30,062 acres (12,175 hectares), in addition to town lots in Port Macquarie (including a hotel and a windmill) and Kempsey, a store in Port Macquarie and one in Armidale, and several leasehold stations on the Macleay River and in New England (O'Grady 1967:211–212). Furthermore, he bred horses that were exported to India for use as army remounts (Sheather 1986:105), planted one of the first vineyards in the area, even ventured with several other entrepreneurs into shipbuilding, although the *Macquarie Packet* which they constructed was wrecked on its maiden voyage (O'Grady 1967:207). So varied and extensive were his interests, indeed, that the distant town of Glen Innes, high on the New England Tablelands, was named after him (O'Grady 1967:208). Behind all this activity, it appears, Innes was convinced that Port Macquarie would become the port of entry for northern New South Wales, out of which the wool and other products of the New England highlands and the adjacent coast would be exported and into which all the much-needed supplies for a rapidly developing region would be imported (Herman 1993:57). So convinced was he of this, that he was instrumental in getting a road (Figure 1) built from Port Macquarie up into the New England Tablelands (O'Grady 1967:208–209), a road completed in 1842 that became known after him as the "Major's Line" (Oppenheimer 1977:163). This, he thought, would provide a vital route for the growing commercial activity from which, advan-

tageously placed near Port Macquarie, he would be one of the major beneficiaries.

In the short term, Innes's ambition was realized. By the early 1840s, he and his wife had established one of the most impressive mansions outside Sydney, and were renowned for their generosity, hospitality, and lavish lifestyle. There was a constant stream of visitors and guests, and after the death of Innes's younger brother George in 1839 his widow and her two daughters eventually went to live at Lake Innes as well. This was fortunate indeed, for one of the daughters, Annabella Boswell as she became after marriage, left a fascinating account of growing up there during the period 1843–1848 (Herman 1993). Although she lived to the age of 90, only dying in 1916, and towards the end of her life re-cast for publication much of the original diary that she had kept, *Annabella Boswell's Journal* rates as one of the classics of early Australian literature. She provided firsthand evidence of the various activities at the fine brick-built house and stables, and (separately) even left a sketch-plan identifying the uses of many of the rooms (Lucas and Partners 1987:8). She wrote about the gardens, the numerous servants, the fine furniture, the paintings (including a Veronese), the Chinese porcelain made to order, the silver, the books, and a chandelier in the dining room (Herman 1993:54–56, 134). Another contemporary account, by Mrs. Henry Harding Parker, confirmed this picture of affluence, which according to her even included the luxury of a “bathroom, to which the water was laid on” (Howell 1993:12).

Perhaps the high point of Innes's attainment of his ambition came in 1847, when the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Charles FitzRoy, and his wife Lady Mary FitzRoy, and their party, were guests at Lake Innes House (Herman 1993:124–135). This was at a time when a new form of government for New South Wales was under discussion and when leading politician William Charles Wentworth was hoping for the creation of an Australian aristocracy, who would sit in a sort of Australian House of Lords. His idea of a hereditary colonial peerage was sharply rejected in 1853 (Clark 1980:36–41) but Innes,

who was one of his friends, was clearly hopeful of a better outcome. Without any official justification he designed himself an Australian coat of arms, on which was the Latin motto: *Dum spiro coelestia spero* (Howell 1993:18), which O'Grady (1967:219) translates as “While I live I aspire to the highest.” Although this was no doubt intended to sound idealistic, it could also be seen as a blatant statement of ambition; translated into modern idiom it might well be rendered as “While I'm alive I want the lot.” For behind the generosity and the hospitality to people whom he perceived to be of his own class, lurked a darker side to Archibald Innes. Like many of the estates that Europeans created in the parts of the world into which they expanded, the Lake Innes estate, and indeed all of Innes's success, was founded on unfree labor. Not black slaves as in the Americas but convicts, usually (but not always) of British origin, men and women who were assigned by the colonial government to work for landed proprietors who did little more than feed and house them, often in a minimal fashion. In the Innes case, we know that in 1837 he had 90 such assigned servants and had clearly used his influence to obtain representatives of many of the trades necessary to build and run Lake Innes House, as well as engage in his other activities. His assigned convicts included, for instance, four brickmakers, a bricklayer, a carpenter and joiner, a plasterer, a painter and glazier, a slater, a well-sinker and pump-borer, three grooms, two stablemen, and a harnessmaker and horsebreaker (Butlin et al. 1987; Principal Superintendent of Convicts n.d.a, n.d.b). He would also have had a lot of unskilled labor. Such people have left us few firsthand accounts of their lives but it so happens that one convict who was assigned to Innes for a time did have his reminiscences recorded many years later, long after he had finished serving his time. This was William Delaforce, born London 1817, died Port Macquarie 1900, sentenced to seven years transportation at the age of 17 for housebreaking, a crime that even at the end of his life he claimed he had not committed (“Woomera” 1984:5, 11). In 1838 Delaforce and

two others were digging drains through the swamps at the Innes estate when “the boss,” who from the context was Innes, came to see how they were progressing with the work. According to Delaforce, one of them said to him: “You ought to allow us a little more tea and sugar, for this is hard work; to say nothing of being up to our knees in water all day.” Innes’s response is significant: “Go on with your work,” he is reported to have said, “I think a good flogging would do you more good than tea and sugar” (“Woomera” 1984:22–23).

### Ambition in the Archaeological Record

Lake Innes House was derelict by the beginning of this century and, following destruction by fire, rapidly degenerated into an overgrown ruin. The sites of the various associated activities on the former estate had already become lost in a dense regrowth of vegetation. Although logging, mining, and other activities subsequently took place on a small scale in the area, it was generally unaffected by the modern development of Port Macquarie and its surroundings into a popular place for both holidays and retirement. The ruins remained known to local historians, however, whose interest led to some amateur clearance of vegetation from the house and stables in the late 1950s, an action that merely accelerated vandalism and large-scale theft of materials by other less idealistic members of the public. This work did, however, enable architect Richard Ratcliffe to draw a reconstructed plan and some reconstructed elevations of the main building complex (Herman 1993:Appendix II). It also resulted in Bertram Watson producing an unpublished typescript about the house and its builder (Watson [c.1980]), a series of drawings (Watson 1982–1984), and four newspaper articles (Watson 1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1982d). The interest generated by these activities eventually led to the purchase, early in the 1990s, by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, of a large part of the original estate. This followed the preparation of a conservation analysis and

draft conservation policy, on behalf of the Service, by Clive Lucas and Partners (1987) of Sydney. The intention of the New South Wales government was (and still is) that the area should be conserved as an historic site and as a wildlife sanctuary (it possess one of the relatively few surviving koala colonies). Before this could be fully realized, however, a detailed archaeological analysis of the site was needed, and this has been undertaken by the writer since 1993, as a collaborative project of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Archaeology and Palaeoanthropology at the University of New England (Connah 1994a, 1994b, 1997). A team of students and ex-students has spent something in excess of 600 person-days surveying, drawing, photographing, and note-taking, in a non-invasive investigation of the whole complex of sites. No excavation has been undertaken, although considerable vegetation clearance has been carried out, mainly by the National Parks and Wildlife Service but also by the project team. In addition, there has been an ongoing program of conservation at the main site, which is now open to the public on a limited basis. Further analysis of visible evidence is planned, particularly at some of the associated sites, and it is also intended to develop a carefully targeted excavation program over the next few years.

The Lake Innes House site complex provides material evidence of Archibald Innes’s ambitions at two levels, the general and the particular. At the general level the scale and diversity of activities on the estate (Figure 1) are indicative of his confidence in the future, as well as his desire to create a largely self-sustaining property. Furthermore, the size and sophistication of the brick-built house and stables (Figure 3), which comprise the principal elements of the main site, make them unique for this part of New South Wales for the time when they were constructed. These were ambitious domestic buildings for the 1830s and 1840s, in a part of the colony only just opening up to European settlement, and with poor communications with Sydney other than by



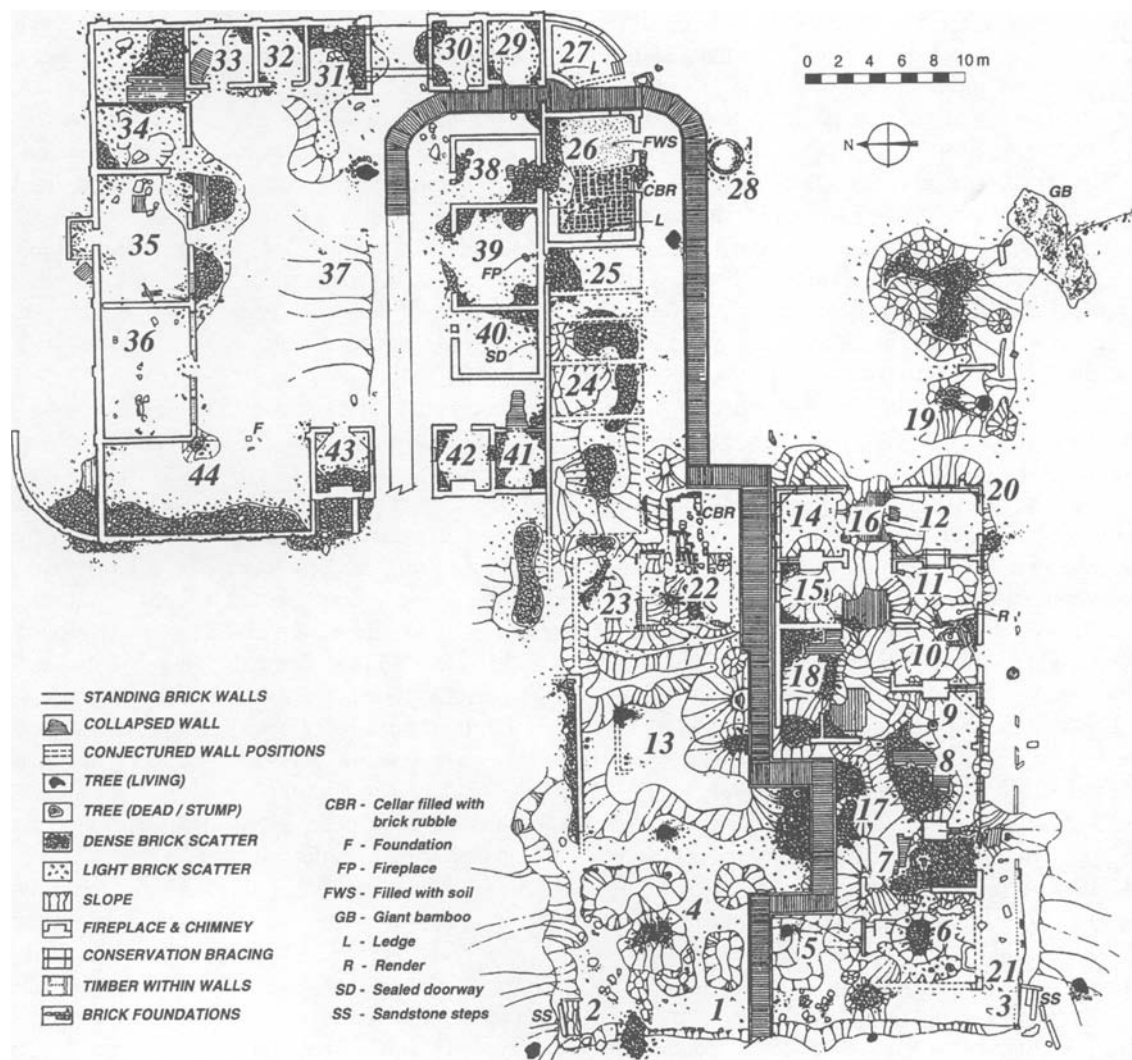


FIGURE 4. Archaeological plan of Lake Innes House and its stables. The numbers are explained in the text. Linear feature running through the site is a wooden walkway constructed by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, for visitor access. (Drawing by Elizabeth Dixon, Hampton, Victoria and Malcom Abel and Doug Hobbs, Armidale, NSW.)

sea. Scarce public buildings and churches were a different matter but this was at a time when most settlers were constructing homes with timber-slab walls and bark roofs, and when those who could build in stone or brick did so in a more modest fashion than at Lake Innes. Even the future city of Armidale, eventually one of the more important centers inland of Port Macquarie, was founded only in 1839 (Walker 1966:15) and

by 1847 consisted of scarcely a dozen buildings (Champion 1935:110). In such a context, the house and stables at Lake Innes were remarkable indeed, and even in their present ruined condition, with some walls surviving to roof height but others totally destroyed or buried in their own rubble, these buildings are impressive for their extent and their complexity, as Innes clearly intended them to be (Figure 4). In addition, they

are remarkable for the large number of handmade sandstock bricks that had to be made for their construction, most of them fired in clamps (of which the remains of several have been located) on the estate itself.

The plan of the house and stables (Figure 4) is particularly informative about Innes's lifestyle and his perception of his own social position. Interpreted in the light of the contemporary sketch-plan left by Annabella Boswell, it can be seen that the house was L-shaped, with an enclosed courtyard between its two wings (Figure 4, No. 13). In its final form, the western-facing wing (which had at first comprised the entire house) was mainly occupied by the public day-rooms such as the library, the dancing room, the dining room, and the drawing room (Nos. 4–6). The front door (No. 1) opened onto an inner veranda with sandstone steps at each end (Nos. 2–3), beyond which there was also an outer veranda of which no trace has survived. The southern-facing wing consisted of bedrooms (Nos. 7–12, 14–15, 18), some with dressing rooms and most with fireplaces, arranged along one side and part of the other side of a corridor (No. 16–17) that led to a doorway at the eastern end of the wing. Along the southern wall of this wing ran a veranda (Nos. 20–21), onto which French windows opened from the adjacent bedrooms, so that these rooms would have been some of the coolest in the house. The bedroom at the northwestern corner of this wing (No. 18) formed part of the ground floor of a three-story block, that apparently had a schoolroom and two more bedrooms on the first floor, and a "lookout" on the top floor with windows at each side (Figure 3). Attached to the eastern end of the bedroom wing was a building containing a bathroom and privies (No. 19), that could probably have been entered from either the door at the eastern end of the wing or from a door at the end of the southern veranda, enabling the male and female members of the household or visitors to maintain their privacy. Overall, the house was clearly intended to provide comfort and convenience for the Innes family and their more important visitors, with

space for wining, dining, music, dancing, and educating their children, as well as for general recreation and relaxing.

In the 1840s, when Annabella Boswell lived in the house, its usual occupants seem to have consisted of three adult women (assuming at least one of the maids lived in the house) and four girls, with Innes and his young son the only males present. Probably for this reason, as well as because of lack of space within the house, single male visitors were accommodated in a "bachelors' hall," as it was called (No. 23), that was attached to the kitchen (No. 22) in an adjacent but separate building at the northeast corner of the house. To the east of the kitchen, which had a cellar beneath its floor, was a range of rooms that included servants' accommodation, a laundry, a wine cellar, a store, and a dairy (Nos. 24–27). These rooms fronted a yard for drying clothes, in which was situated an underground cistern (No. 28), fed from the roofs of the surrounding buildings, that provided the water supply for the house. Collectively, this service area of the main site is indicative of the range and scale of domestic servant input that was necessary to run the house itself, and to provide its occupants with the lifestyle that they enjoyed.

Horses were essential in 19th-century Australia for any reasonable lifestyle. Goods were often transported by bullock-dray, often the only wheeled vehicles that could cope with the appalling tracks that passed as roads. For personal transportation, however, you rode a horse or you traveled in a horse-drawn vehicle. The only other way to get about was to walk or, when possible, travel by boat along the coast or on its adjacent rivers. Given the scale of Innes's house, therefore, it should be no surprise that the stables covered almost as large an area. Indeed, their remains are more substantial and in rather better condition than those of the house, probably because they were less attractive to vandals and thieves during the 20th century and because their less fenestrated walls were stronger. From those remains and to some extent from Annabella Boswell's sketch-plan (which shows only a part

of these buildings), it appears that the Innes stables provided quite exceptional facilities for the housing not only of horses and vehicles but also the servants who worked with them. In short, the stables were just as ambitious as the house and its associated services. The physical evidence suggests that in their final state they accommodated only fifteen horses, probably just the more valuable animals such as the personal mounts of Innes and his wife, the carriage horses, and perhaps the more prized stallions and brood-mares, while other horses were turned out into nearby paddocks. Nevertheless, those kept within the stables were privileged animals: each with its separate wooden stall, in a brick building paved with sandstone slabs beneath which ran a drainage system (western part of No. 34, Nos. 35–36). The horse accommodation opened onto a central yard (No. 37), around which the stable complex was arranged. An open-fronted building (No. 44) housed various wheeled vehicles, probably the more valuable ones, and several other buildings provided accommodation for stable workers, such as grooms and coachmen. The best of this appears to have been in the two-storied gatehouses, a pair of which flanked each of the main entrances to the stable yard (Nos. 30–31, 42–43). Each of these comprised a living room on the ground floor, with a fireplace for cooking and warmth, and a room on the first floor for sleeping, both stories being provided with window ventilation. Cramped they might have been but they would have given the basic comforts and one of them had, indeed, been extended by the addition of an extra room (No. 41). Other stable workers seem to have been accommodated in the central room of the building on the southern side of the stable yard (No. 39), which was provided with a fireplace and probably had a loft that was used as a sleeping space and which also extended over the room on each side (Nos. 38, 40). These latter rooms, together with three rooms on the eastern side of the stable complex (Nos. 29, 32–33), may have been used for storage of saddles, harness, and miscellaneous tack, as well as other horse-related equipment

and also fodder and grain. In the case of the three eastern rooms this is made more likely by the existence of horizontal slots on the inside face of some of their walls, formerly containing lengths of timber to which other fittings, such as shelves or racks, could have been attached. It is also significant that each of these three rooms has an unglazed circular opening in the upper brickwork of its eastern wall, for these would appear to have been owl-holes (Roxburgh and Baglin 1978:88), intended to encourage owls to enter and hunt for rodents, always a problem in stable storage areas. In addition, it is possible that these rooms may also have contained lofts that could have provided rough sleeping facilities for stableboys and the like. Finally among the amenities in the stables, privies were provided at several locations, particularly it seems in the room at the northeastern corner (eastern part of No. 34), which could be entered both from inside and outside of the stable complex.

The location of the stable complex in relation to the house is also indicative of Innes's aspirations. Although the stables actually adjoin the service area of the house, they were designed and positioned in such a way as to be out of sight from either its public rooms or bedrooms. Indeed, isolated within their surrounding wall, set back from the house front by approximately 100 ft. (30 m), attached to the corner of the house complex furthest removed from the drawing room, separated from the front of the house by gardens: every effort seems to have been made to have the stables conveniently near but to insulate the occupants of the house from the sights, sounds, and perhaps smells of horses and workers. Significantly, Annabella Boswell recorded that during the heyday of Lake Innes House it was "quite an event to visit the stables, and always with my uncle" (Herman 1993:159). Close to the house they may have been but they were no place for a genteel young lady, unless suitably accompanied and no doubt the stablehands previously warned. Innes was apparently quite convinced about the superior position of both himself and his family in colonial society.

Furthermore, the continuing growth of Innes's ambitions is reflected by the construction sequence of the house and stable complex, as suggested by the archaeological evidence and the documentary sources. It appears that the earliest work dates from 1830–1831 and the latest modifications to about 1848. Effectively, however, the complex seems to have already reached its maximum development by 1843, so that its entire constructional history probably extended over less than 19 years and most of the work was completed within 14 years. Building work seems to have been episodic rather than continuous, prompted no doubt by the growth of the Innes family (in addition to those mentioned there were two sons who died in infancy), and by the availability of money, labor, and materials. Analysis of the evidence suggests a four-stage sequence of growth, although this is somewhat hypothetical because of the difficulty of putting precise dates on some parts of the complex (Figure 5). Nevertheless, this sequence is clearly eloquent of Innes's ambitions: commencing with a modest country cottage, probably with an external kitchen, his residence grew in size and complexity until it was one of the most important rural mansions in New South Wales. As such, it was obviously intended to be something more than merely functional; it was also to be a material expression of his success.

That being the case, his residence conformed to many of the fashions of the colonial Georgian domestic architecture of the period (Herman 1970; Roxburgh 1974). Basically, its layout reflected British ideas, but these were modified to suit Australian conditions in ways typical of the time: first, the building was mainly single-storied; second, there were verandas around the house walls; third, there was an external detached kitchen. Like many of his colonial contemporaries, Innes was probably his own architect, although he may have been influenced by the ideas of John Verge (Broadbent et al. 1978), one of the best known of Australia's early architects who designed his father-in-law's magnificent Elizabeth Bay House, in Sydney, and whom he must surely have met. It is also likely that he consulted one or more of the architectural pattern books that influenced colonial domestic architecture at this time (Irving 1985:50–51). The best known of these, by John Claudius Loudon, was not published until 1833 (Loudon 1833), but Alexander Macleay (his father-in-law) possessed a copy of it and Innes may well have consulted it before extending his house during the 1830s and early 1840s. Earlier pattern books, concerned specifically with rural residences, that might also have given him ideas, include those of John Plaw (1800, 1802) and John Papworth (1818). So the means certainly existed for Innes

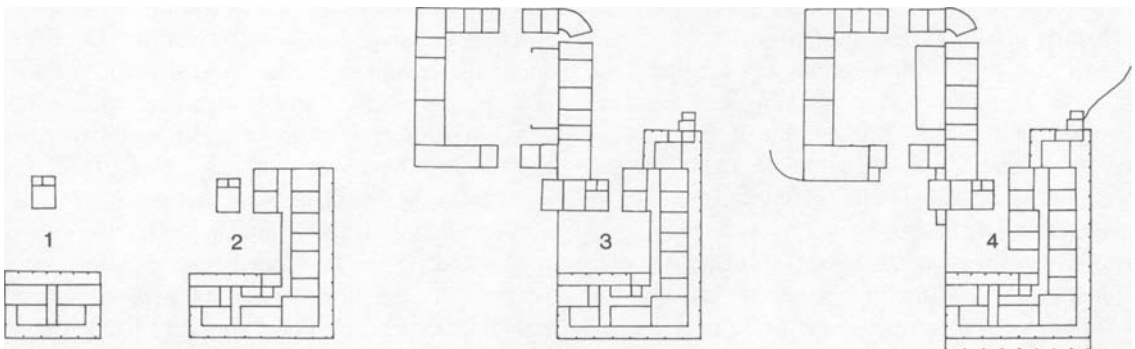


FIGURE 5. A hypothetical construction sequence for Lake Innes House and its stables. (Drawing by Linda Emery, Exeter, NSW.)

to make sure that his mansion conformed to the most fashionable ideas of taste and suitability, as it clearly had to if it was to achieve its objective.

Archaeological traces of the gardens at Lake Innes House are also evidence of Innes's grand plan. These consist of the remains of a low retaining wall of brick, holes left in the external brickwork of the western wall of the stable complex to support a trellis, and a number of exotic species which appear to be survivors from the former gardens. Notable among the latter are several clumps of giant bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea*), rose (*Rosa bracteata*), shell ginger (*Alpinia speciosa*), agave (*Agave* sp.), polygala (*Polygala myrtifolia*), maurandia (*Maurandia barcliana*), and mysore thorn (*Caesalpinia decapetala*) (Lucas and Partners 1987:20). Annabella Boswell frequently mentions the garden, including the bamboo and the roses (Herman 1993:51, 65), and it is clear that it played an important part in the daily life of the house. The family of Innes's wife, the Macleays, were very much interested in natural history (Windschuttle 1988) and she was presumably instrumental in the planning and management of the garden. Indeed, it has been assumed that she was responsible for the introduction of the mysore thorn, a rare exotic in Australia that by the late 1980s had engulfed much of the ruins in an impenetrable tangle. Like much else at Lake Innes House, the gardens were apparently somewhat out of the ordinary.

Moving from the general to the particular, there are numerous details among the archaeological evidence that are also indicative of Innes's ambitions. There has, for instance, been considerable care taken in selecting and following the bonds employed in the brickwork. These are English bond in most of the house, where inside wall surfaces were plastered and external surfaces rendered and scribed to resemble expensive ashlar masonry, and the more attractive Flemish bond on the outside of the stable complex, where the brickwork was intended to be seen. The inner faces of stable walls are also English bond, as are the engaged columns that

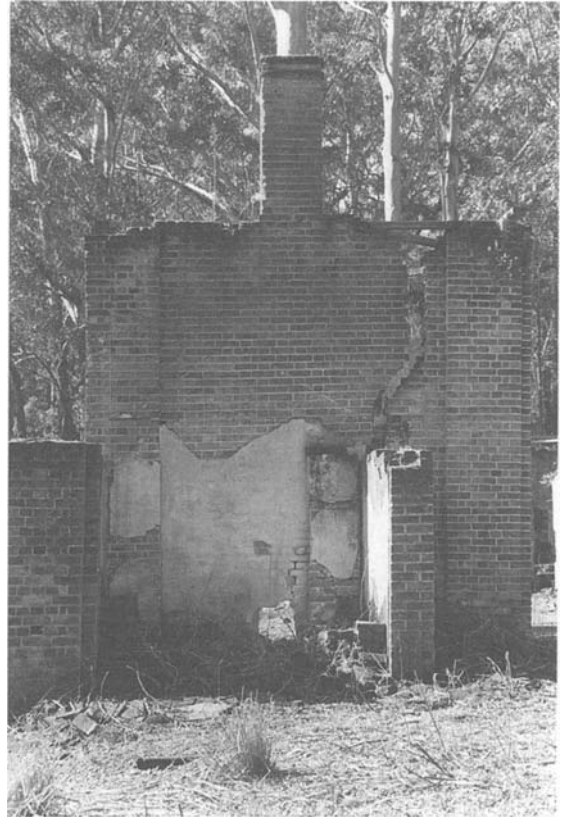


FIGURE 6. Western side of the northwestern gatehouse of the stables complex. Note the selective use of both Flemish and English bond in the sandstock brickwork, also the queen closers near the edges of the engaged columns. The serious structural crack to the right is caused by the lack of foundations. A small room has been added to the face of this building late in the construction sequence. (Photograph by Bryan Asha, Kenthurst, NSW, 1993.)

reinforce the outside of those walls. To ensure the regularity of the bond selected, queen closers (Plumridge and Meulenkamp 1993:214) have been used near corners, window and door apertures, and at brickwork junctions. Without doubt, the brickwork that could be seen was intended to look good (Figure 6), and where it was actually covered with rendering the purpose was to achieve the effect of stonework that would have been even more prestigious. Indeed, in limited instances actual masonry was used, for paving

the house verandas and the horse accommodation within the stables, and most notably for the elegant steps at each end of the front veranda, but its sparing use would suggest that it was prohibitively expensive. Both the sandstone utilized and the workmanship would suggest a Sydney origin, and the cost and trouble of shipping such heavy material in the small coastal craft available would have precluded its more extensive use. In fact, it would also have been necessary to transport a considerable amount of lime to the site, for the large quantities of mortar, rendering, and plaster



FIGURE 7. Eastern side of the bedroom chimney serving rooms at 9 and 10 in Figure 4. Note the scribed rendering over the stretcher-bond brickwork and the indications of a shingled, pitched roof. (Photograph by Bryan Asha, Kenthurst, NSW, 1993.)



FIGURE 8. Bedroom fireplace in room at 14 in Figure 4. Note the lime-plastered walls, the header bond used at the back of the hearth, and the spaces left for wooden blocks to which the fireplace surround and the skirting board were attached (all the rooms in the house had suspended timber floors). Scale in 1 cm and 5 cm divisions. (Photograph by Bryan Asha, Kenthurst, NSW, 1993.)

used in the construction of the house and stables, but at least some of this would have been available in the Port Macquarie area.

That the appearance of the brickwork was important, is also shown by indications that many of the doorways and windows had rubbed-brick

flat arches at their heads (Herman 1970:134), although little evidence of these has survived and in the case of the house this fancy brickwork would have been obscured by rendering. Other examples of showy brickwork include the curved perimeter walls at the northwest and southeast corners of the stable complex, and a series of decorative blind owl holes on the external face of its northern wall. Perhaps the most impressive looking pieces of brickwork, however, are the surviving chimneys of the house (Figure 7). Built in stretcher bond above wall level, decorated with two double string-courses, and with brick flue-caps, these served carefully constructed



FIGURE 9. Leaning brickwork at the western end of the northern perimeter wall of the stables. The lack of foundations has brought this wall close to the point of collapse. Scale in 1 cm and 5 cm divisions. (Photograph by Bryan Asha, Kenthurst, NSW, 1993.)



FIGURE 10. How not to construct a foundation for a two-storied building: two courses of brickwork straight onto clay. This is the northern wall of the southwestern gatehouse of the stables complex. Scale in 1 cm and 5 cm divisions. (Photograph by Graham Connah, 1997.)

back-to-back fireplaces (Figure 8) that originally had wooden mantelpieces and surrounds. Although the parts of the chimneys that would have been visible were covered with scribed rendering, their design and indeed their very existence were clearly intended to impress the beholder. Conforming as they did to the fashion of the period (cf. Herman 1970:139; Stapleton 1985:27), they were eloquent of both comfort and good taste, at the very edge of civilization. Given the mild climate of Port Macquarie, there would have been relatively few days when fires would actually have been needed in the house: in short, there were indeed times when the chimneys were functional but at all times they would have been prominent status symbols.

In addition to these positive indicators of Innes's ambitions, there are also some highly significant negative ones. Elegant though the chimneys were, Annabella Boswell's account would suggest that their design and construction left something to be desired. On the night of 10 March 1848, by which time few servants were left at the house, there was a violent thunderstorm that lasted for some hours, and "every bedroom was inundated through their fireplaces, and we wandered about like ghosts, with basins and

house-cloths in our hands drying up the water as it came in, till about four o'clock, when the storm abated" (Herman 1993:161). The archaeological evidence would suggest, indeed, that the whole building complex of house and stables was put up with more regard for appearance than constructional quality. The fancy Flemish bond brickwork on the exterior of the stables and on the eastern end of the house was merely a veneer on the outside of English bond brickwork, to which it was tied with headers not every other course as it should have been but only every fifth course, the other headers consisting of half bricks. This use of snapped-header construction meant that the better quality bricks needed for the Flemish bond wall face would go further, and seems to have been a cost-saving strategy thought up by late 18th-century developers in London (Asha 1996:125). In the case of Lake Innes House it was a great mistake, for in a number of instances the external Flemish bond veneer is now peeling away from the rest of the wall. Even more serious, however, whole sections of wall have collapsed or are leaning precariously (Figure 9), while other parts of the buildings have serious structural cracks (Figure 6). Foundation failure seemed to be the most likely cause of this but in the absence of any archaeological excavations the character of the foundations was unknown. For this reason, the National Parks and Wildlife Service cut two inspection holes prior to deciding on the most suitable conservation measures. One of these was outside the north wall of the southwest gatehouse of the stable complex (Figure 10), and the other similarly located near the center of the north wall of that complex. In both cases they revealed what appears to be a complete lack of foundations. Whether the situation is similar for all the stable buildings and for the house as well is uncertain, but it would seem quite likely. It appears that Innes was in too much of a hurry and more inclined to spend money on appearances than on basic quality. It may even have been that he saw Lake Innes House as merely a stopgap, until such time that he could afford to build an even grander mansion, that might com-

pare more favorably with his father-in-law's Elizabeth Bay House, in Sydney, at that time one of Australia's finest residences.

#### Failure and its Archaeological Consequences

In the end, however, Archibald Innes failed: his finances collapsed and his ambitions were frustrated. When he died in Newcastle (New South Wales) in 1857 his only published obituary consisted of merely a few lines to record his death (O'Grady 1967:218). Among local historians, who sometimes regard early colonial figures with more adulation than they merit, his failure is usually attributed to the economic depression of the 1840s, and certainly this was a major factor in his ruin as in that of many of his contemporaries (McMichael 1980). The expansion of Australian capitalist pastoralism through the boom years of the 1830s was followed by a collapse in wool prices on the international market during the 1840s. Furthermore, this occurred at a time when the assignment of convicts ceased in New South Wales (1839) and even their transportation was discontinued (1840), so that the supply of assigned unfree labor that had supported the activities of people like Innes began to dry up. At the very time that profits fell, the costs of labor escalated as land-holders had to employ free labor, that being in short supply could demand decent wages, which not surprisingly tended to be highest at the margins of settlement. Thus the depression was particularly difficult to cope with in an area like Port Macquarie but, to make matters even worse, the gradual running down of the convict settlement there meant that by 1848 the town was "almost deserted," according to Annabella Boswell (Herman 1993:167). For Innes the situation was disastrous. By the early 1850s, with the loss of most of his income-producing ventures, living at Lake Innes House became a luxury that he could no longer afford, even though he managed to retain possession of the heavily mortgaged property and seems to have avoided actual bankruptcy. He was forced to seek employment that would pay him a salary, in 1852 becoming As-



sistant Gold Commissioner at Hanging Rock, near Nundle in northern New South Wales, and in 1853 being appointed police magistrate at Newcastle, a position that he held till his death. His wife then returned to Lake Innes but died there the following year in 1858.

Although it is tempting to attribute Innes's failure solely to economic and even political circumstances beyond his control, there seems little doubt that he himself also contributed to the disaster. He did this in two ways. First, he failed to properly understand the geographical environment of the Port Macquarie area. The entrance to the Hastings River on which the town stood was obstructed by a dangerous, shifting sand bar, as he well knew, so that there was little likelihood that it could be developed into a significant port and indeed this was never to happen. Furthermore, his attempt to open a road up to the New England Tablelands, that would provide a major commercial artery linked to the future port at Port Macquarie, was also a failure. Although the "road" was completed, much of the 116 mi. (187 km) of the terrain through which it passed to Walcha was so difficult, and the surface of the road so poor, that the only wheeled vehicles that could manage it were bullock-drays (Figure 1). Indeed, even they had substantial problems, so that in 1847 it was recorded that one dray had taken 10 days to travel 20 mi. (32 km) of this road (Oppenheimer 1977:163). In such circumstances, a more southerly route was developed by others, linking the pastoralists and agriculturalists of the interior with the Hunter River, near the mouth of which grew up first the port of Morpeth and then that of Newcastle, the latter eventually becoming one of Australia's main commercial gateways.

Second, Innes overreached himself financially, apparently borrowing heavily to develop his over-energetic pastoral and commercial interests during the good years, instead of consolidating his situation as a safeguard against a possible economic downturn. A risky strategy at any time, it seems that in his case it resulted from fundamental personal weaknesses that his wife's eldest sister, the intelligent, educated, and sensible

Fanny Macleay, had identified as early as 1826. According to her, Archibald Innes had "not saved anything since he has been here. . . . He is very idle." Later in 1831 and 1832 she wrote: "He is sadly extravagant" and "I hope that Archy will yet prosper notwithstanding his little failures in prudence" (Windschuttle 1988:16, 18). It seems that with the passage of time his little failures became larger and larger, and that Lake Innes House was one of them. Life in an officers' mess, instead of a formal education, had hardly equipped him to become a successful entrepreneur and businessman; his social ambitions clearly exceeded both his financial abilities and his common sense.

For Lake Innes House, the consequences of Innes's failure were that it ceased to be relevant. No longer the center of his socioeconomic network, impossible to run and maintain without a plentiful supply of unpaid labor, and unsuitable as an income-producing farm, it became a classic example of a white elephant, a useless and troublesome possession that nobody really wanted. The very reason for its existence had been lost. In August 1853 the house and estate were advertised for sale but there were no buyers. It remained with Innes and subsequently his wife and then his son, and was used intermittently by them or by tenants or was vacant (from 1871 to 1874 it even had a different owner) until 1879 when it was finally sold. Records for the second half of the 19th century are poor but the impression gained is of a collection of buildings that gradually deteriorated, so that by the turn of the century the house was no longer habitable (Lucas and Partners 1987:7, 14–15, Figures 10–12). Fire, weather, vegetation, theft of materials, and vandalism over the following ninety years reduced the buildings to the ruins that now exist.

Paradoxically, it was the frustration and failure of Innes's ambitions that now make it possible to study those ambitions archaeologically. Had he been successful, he would almost certainly have replaced the house and many of the other buildings as time went on. This is exactly what happened on many other Australian rural properties

during the second half of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. At Saumarez Homestead, near Armidale, for instance, a dwelling that had originated in the 1830s was swept away in 1888 and replaced with a grand house that was not even on the same site and which was made even larger in 1906, while most of the early work buildings were ousted by new structures during much the same period (Philp and Oppenheimer 1986). It is in the nature of a functioning viable rural enterprise that new generations demand houses with more comfort and convenience and that changing pastoral and agricultural practices render other buildings unsuitable or obsolete. At Lake Innes House this did not happen, it was as if the clock had stopped about 1850, so that as a result we can study directly the products of Innes's ambitions over the two previous decades. This can be done not only at the house and stables but also at a range of other sites, that have the potential to inform us about the many different aspects of life on a convict-based rural estate, in Australia, during the second quarter of the 19th century. Although some modification of the evidence must inevitably have taken place during the period between about 1850 and 1900 (the house and stables were roofed with wooden shingles, for instance, and these would probably have needed replacement at some time), it does seem as if activity was limited to fairly basic maintenance and there is no indication of any new constructional work after about 1848. In the main, what we are left with is the archaeological expression of Innes's ambitions, which has survived, to the extent that it has, because of the frustration of those very ambitions.

### Conclusion

The ruins of Lake Innes House, and the various sites associated with them, provide an almost unique opportunity to study the operation of an early colonial rural estate in Australia. They were the product of one man's ambition to create a lifestyle for himself, his family, and his

friends, that he could not have hoped for back in his native Scotland. They represent a crucial stage in the process of cultural adaptation by some British settlers, who were willing to risk all on the chance of making a fortune from free or cheap land on the other side of the world. With assigned convicts as virtual slave labor, who had only to be fed and housed and often rather poorly, pastoral production and investment seemed to be the quickest way to economic success, social position, and political power. The gold discoveries of the 1850s were to change all that but even before that happened some settlers, like Innes, had to learn the hard way that they had misread the economic future, misunderstood their geographical environment, and let their personal ambitions run away with their common sense. Nevertheless, both their aspirations and their failures have shaped part of the archaeological record, so that in a case like that of Lake Innes House we actually have what might be called the archaeology of frustrated ambition.

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could never have succeeded. There is not space to name them here but details have been provided elsewhere (Connah 1997). Finally, acknowledgment is due to the Dixon Galleries, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, for permission to reproduce Figure 2 (ML ref. DG 408), and to the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University, Canberra, for their hospitality to the author as a Visiting Fellow.

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