

and, of his descendants, the only one to reside permanently in the District was his daughter, Frances, whose grave still sits on the hill at Mooney.

THE ROAD IN USE

W.B.Christie, writing in 1881, left this striking account of travelling on the Peat's Ferry Road by horse. He had been following the railway route until he reached the descent, now marked by *Pie in the Sky*. He recorded:

I turned my horse westerly and regained the road, along which I made my way till coming to the brow: of a high hill, down which the road runs to Peate's Ferry, a full view of the magnificent scenery of Broken Bay burst upon me for the first time.

Standing on this lofty eminence, the mighty estuary of the Hawkesbury River lay spread out aa a panorama at my feet; and unfolding my chart on the horse's neck, I proceeded to study the geography of this lovely scene from the map of nature.

Seven hundred feet below me stood the white cottage of an oysterman, with its well-drained garden-plot like a rare jewel in its setting. The boats, left by the receding tide, lay high and dry on the beach, while the merry shouts of the children in their gambols wafted up a tale of joyous liberty. Before me Long Island rose in all its bold and rooky grandeur, sheer two hundred feet from the water's edge; its serrated rocks gleamed like the teeth of some huge monster of the deep, while the gnarled and crooked trees cast their weird and shimmering reflections in the smooth surface of the waters below.

To the left lay Kangaroo Point and the punt house, where I was to cross to the opposite shore. Near it lay Spectacle Island, a triangular, boldly precipitous tract forming a delta at the mouth of Mooney Mooney Creek, a broad arm of the Bay running for miles between rocky barriers three hundred feet high. Away to the right, three miles off, and forming the delta of Mullet Creek, lay Mullet or Dangar's Island. Hard by, a solitary trading vessel at her

moorings rode on the bosom of the placid bay. Far away Barrenjoey and the North Head reared their massive walls guardians of that broad entrance through which the boundless expanse of ocean appeared lost in the dim and distant horizon, while the lurid glare of the setting sun burnished the whole scene into one of surpassing loveliness.



Traffic along the Peat's Ferry Road 1883



MARVELLOUS MUOCAMURRA



INTRODUCTORY NOTES BY
TOM RICHMOND, OAM
LOCAL HISTORIAN

GEORGE PEAT
TRAVELLING THE OLD ROAD

GEORGE PEAT

The first European who could claim to be a permanent settler was George Peat. In April, 1831, Peat was authorised to occupy a sixty acre grant at Mooney Mooney Point. Peat was a boat-builder, but sought to expand his interests into farming. He constructed a temporary dwelling at Mooney and his daughter, Margaret, was born there in 1833.



GEORGE PEAT, Peat's Ferry pioneer.

In January, 1836, Peat received a second grant of land in the area. It was of fifty acres and it was situated in what became known as "Peat's Crater".

It seems probable that Peat and his labourers moved themselves and their stock from one property to the other by water, landing at Peat's Bight. The grant at Peat's Crater was one of several made at the time that appear to have been speculating on transport routes yet to be developed.

At the time of Peat's arrival in the District, the Great North Road, crossing the Hawkesbury at Wiseman's Ferry, provided the main access to the north, but it was neither direct nor convenient. During the 1830s, thought was given to the provision of a more direct road. Peat acquired ten acres at Kangaroo Point, thus holding the land on either side of the Hawkesbury at the most convenient crossing spot on the lower reaches. Further up the Hawkesbury, near the mouth to Mangrove Creek, Samuel Taylor, publican at the Green Man Inn, proposed a route that would have seen the main north road pass through modern Arcadia to a crossing near Gentleman's Halt.

In 1840, Peat built Fairview, a two-storey structure of considerable size. With this as his headquarters, Peat now sought to have the road pass through his property. By

1843, he had:-

following the guidance of a native well versed in the geography of the country, undertaken and carried out the measure of making the entire line from Brisbane Water to his residence, and from thence again to near Sydney, proposing at the same time to establish a punt at Fairview in the event of the measure being approved and supported. (Sydney Morning Herald 20th September, 1843)

By April, 1844, the choice had been made between Peat's line of road and Taylor's. Peat set about providing a ferry for the crossing. The Herald reported:-

By advices from the lower portion of the river, we find that Mr Peat has completed his arrangements and that the ferry at Fairview above Porter Bay is already established. The amazing facility thus afforded to travellers on the Brisbane Water Road is pregnant with great advantage, and we have little doubt but the increased traffic will amply remunerate the spirited proprietor. Mr Peat has at present a substantial horse punt afloat, which crossing the entrance of Mooney Mooney Creek where the tongue of land on which the property is situated abuts into the main river to the opposite point, enables the traveller to save an immense extent of cheerless and difficult bush riding and conveys him into Lane Cove, about eight miles below Pennant Hills...



George Peat's House, Fairview, looking out towards Peat Island.

We may add that in case of accident, or from stress of weather, the traveller is obliged to be detained at the Ferry, that Mr Peat has been at considerable expense in fitting up his splendid new building, which in point of comfort, convenience and respectability we are credibly informed may vie with most of the leading houses of accommodation throughout the Colony. The continuation of the line to Maitland by Wyong, will no doubt materially enhance the amount of traffic by way of Fairview.

The newspaper report was, of course, a little premature in proclaiming the new route. Peat had marked the trail with the help of a local Aborigine, and it is likely that it followed an old Aboriginal track. Certainly, the proximity of carvings on either side of the eventual road, would suggest that the Aboriginal people had traversed the ridge for years and, possibly, centuries.

For the most part, Peat's original track would have been suitable for horses but not vehicles. Near to the River, Peat had his own road, leading from his ten acres at



FRANCES PEAT, the wife of George Peat. She knew the loneliness of a pioneer woman.

Kangaroo Point to his fifty acres in Peat's Crater. This earlier road is shown on the plan for the Peat's Ferry Road.

Peat's name has been perpetuated in several locations around the District. Apparently, his children did not share his love of the River