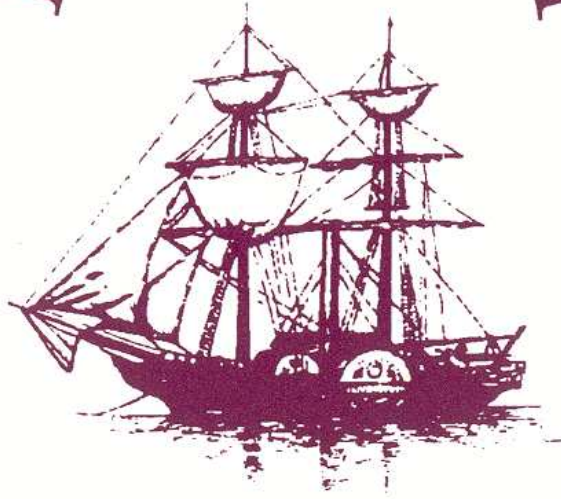


MORPETH

1821



Morpeth Heritage Walk

The area around Morpeth was first granted to Edward Charles Close in 1821, however, land for the settlement was not sold until 1834. Close built his residences to the west of the growing town. These remain in the form of "Closebourne" and "Morpeth House".

Due to Morpeth's favourable location, the settlement began to prove more popular as a port than Maitland. River trade expanded rapidly and during the 1830's and 1840's, Morpeth became the Hunter Valley's major port. During this time, a number of major buildings, such as St. James' Church and Taylor's Bonded Stores, were constructed.

The town reached a peak population of 1,472 in 1865 when river trade was booming. However, with siltation of the river, arrival of the railway at Maitland and the emergence of Newcastle as the major port for the region, a gradual decline of Morpeth's relative importance resulted.

Morpeth remains a town of outstanding heritage value. It has retained buildings from all periods of its past and is greatly valued for the attractive rural setting and overall historic townscape. The township has been placed on the Register of the National Estate.