



Material Culture and Consumer Society: Dependent Colonies in Colonial Australia (The Springer Series in Underwater Archaeology)

Mark Staniforth

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The establishment of a consumer society in Australia has not been a particularly well explored area of academic inquiry. My interests lie in the concepts and meanings that underlie the material world; ideas like, in the words of Madonna, "I am a material girl and I live in a material world" (terminology taken to be not gender specific), the classic graffiti paraphrasing of Descartes: I shop therefore I am or perhaps simply in the "world of goods" in the more academically respectable terms of Douglas and Isherwood (1979). This book arises out of my longstanding interest in the early colonial period in Australia. In part it represents an extension of the purely "historical" research conducted for my Master's thesis in the Department of History at the University of Sydney which explored aspects of the diet, health and lived experience of convicts and immigrants during their voyages to the Australian colonies within the timeframe 1837 to 1839 (Staniforth, 1993a). More importantly, it is the culmination of more than twenty-five years involvement in the excavation of shipwreck sites in Australia starting with James Matthews (1841) in 1974, through the test excavation of William Salthouse in 1982, continuing with my involvement between 1985 and 1994 in the excavation of Sydney Cove (1797) and most recently with shore-based whaling stations and whaling shipwreck sites. In this respect, this book may be seen as an example of what Ian Hodder (1986, p.

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