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ISSUE : [Issue 39](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1985/6/1

The Steel Boom Comes to Sydney, 1899 "By and by when Pittsburgh is a village and New York has got to be whistled for to stop a steamboat, Sydney will be the grand seaport of a continent."--from a story in the Sydney Daily Record, 1901. Sydney is a boom town. It has a boom town shape--industry established right through the heart of it. It still reflects the vulnerability and volatility of a one-industry town, a particular ethnic composition rooted in those first years, a conservative mercantile class, a history of outside control, and a focus outside the community for future development, with consequent paternalism and dependency--and PROMISE. It would not be wrong to hear a religious tone in that word. It can be argued that any huge change tends to fall back on older forms of expression, and often in the period of the steel boom, a religious ambience is evoked. That is why this presentation is in the form of an anthology. The purpose is not only to share some of the events of the establishment of the iron and steel plant in Sydney, but to share some of the experience, the tone and timbre of those events. While there is a beginning and an end, no attempt is made to narrate all events, or even to keep them in order--but rather to take up a variety of boom-town subjects from 1899 to 1902, the "era of unlimited optimism,"

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE [Henry Melville Whitney, President of Dominion Coal Company and Dominion Iron and Steel Company. With the "boom" came new streets. One turn-of-the-century newspaper wrote that it was good that a street had been named Whitney, so that many "year from now, when the steel plant is only a memory, we will remember, if not the founder, at least the finder, of Sydney." (33)