



Colonists' & Convicts' Chronicle

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Establishing Law and Order

The legal system in the colony was causing dissatisfaction by the 1820's, and according to the Third Charter of Justice in 1823, the existing courts were abolished, and replaced by a Supreme Court in New South Wales with both civil and criminal jurisdictions. The Rules and Orders of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, June 22nd, 1825 can be found at the State Library of New South Wales. [1]

Purpose-built courthouses and gaols were then required for the administration of law throughout the colony. Darlinghurst Gaol is the oldest surviving gaol complex in Australia, originally commencing construction under convict architect Francis Greenway in 1821.[2]



Darlinghurst Gaol by Henry Louis Bertrand, State Library NSW

[1] "Rules and Orders of the Supreme Court of New South Wales: June 22nd, 1825. | SLNSW Collection Viewer." 1825. https://digital-stream.sl.nsw.gov.au/ie_viewer.php?is_mobile=false&is_rtl=false&dps_dvs=1747087849042~886&dps_pid=IE3743334.

[2] Wales, State Library of New South. "Halls of Justice." https://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/discover_collections/history_nation/justice/establish/halls/hall_s.html.

Independence for Van Diemen's Land

On 14 June 1825, King William IV proclaimed Van Diemen's Land a separate colony from New South Wales. The proclamation was not issued, however, until Governor Darling's arrival in Hobart Town on 3 December 1825.

In 1825, there were 14,000 people in Van Diemen's Land, and communication and trade were via ship with Sydney, England and China, with ships taking six months to reach England. Free grants of land were available to settlers, and dwellings were basic in style. Most of the population was near Hobart, Launceston, along the Derwent River, and other coastal settlements.

Sheep-stealing was common, bushranging was rampant, and travelling was unsafe. Wheat was grown, and was a profitable crop during droughts in New South Wales in the early 1820s.[1]

At the declaration of Van Diemen's Land as an independent colony, Lieutenant General Ralph Darling became its first official Governor, appointing a Legislative Council, initially consisting of John Lewis Pedder as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Dudley Montagu Perceval as Colonial Secretary, and four other members. He also appointed an Executive Council, consisting of the Lieutenant Governor, the Chief Justice, the Colonial Secretary, and two other members. This new colony, therefore, had its own legislative structure from the outset, unlike the New South Wales colony.[2]

[1] Examiner. "TASMANIA." June 13, 1925. 4. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article90824041>.

[2] Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser. "TASMANIAN NEWS." December 22, 1825. 3. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2184900>.

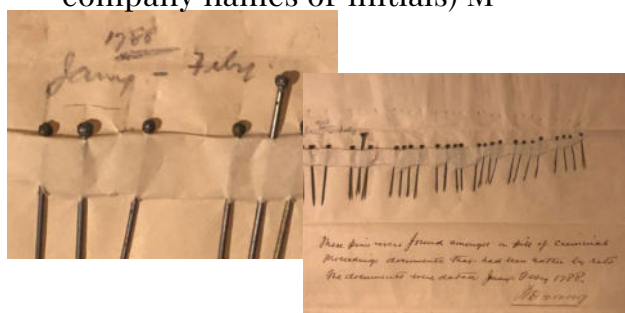
Australian Colonial Occupations

Accurate percentages of the population employed in different trades and occupations in colonial times are difficult to gauge due to the lack of complete census data recording this information, particularly for women.[i] In the earliest days of settlement, previous trades and occupations were recorded on passenger lists and other shipping records. They were often the reason for the selection of bounty immigrants.

On the First Fleet in 1788, 80 different trades were listed for convicts, the most useful to the new colony included carpenters, sawyers, shingle makers, blacksmiths, whitesmiths and silversmiths, brickmakers, stonecutters and masons. Convicts were assigned work according to their skills. Some had been employed in trades less useful in the fledgling colony, such as lacemakers, artificial flower makers, petticoat hoop makers and ivory turners![ii]

There were also several other trades represented on the First Fleet:

- currier (tans animal hides) M
- brazier (makes articles from brass) M
- milliner (hat maker) F
- wheelwright (maker of wheels for carts) M
- tambour worker (embroiderer) F
- bitt maker (maker of stirrup and bridle bits for horses) M
- pin header (putting the head on a pin. Pin production included five different trades: cutting the metal rod, making the heads, putting on the heads, pointing – to make it sharp– and sticking them on paper to sell.) F
- button stamper (metal buttons were stamped or punched out of large metal sheets. They would also brand or stamp the back of the buttons with company names or initials) M

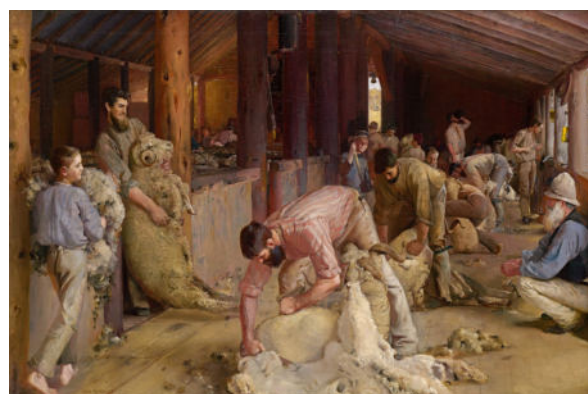


Detailed set of 1788 pins, Sydney, State Library NSW. <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning/work-be-done/what-job>



James Reid Scott, Convict Flogging, 1850, National Library Australia. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Convict_flogging_Tasmania.jpg

- fiddler (plays the fiddle or violin) M
- leather breeches maker (Breeches are men's trousers cropped just below the knee. Upper-class Englishmen wore buckskin breeches during the day and silk breeches for the evening. Tradesmen and hunters wore breeches made of leather or coarse cloth.) M
- shoe binder (stitched the parts of a shoe together before the sole went on) Mostly F or old M
- furrier (worker, seller or producer of furs) F
- stay maker (corset maker) M & F
- silk winder (winding the raw silk threads onto reels from soaked cocoons) F
- hawker (street seller of small wares, often itinerant going from village to village) M & F
- charwoman (part-time female cleaner) F
- waterman (worked on rivers transporting people by boat) M



Tom Roberts, Shearing the Rams, 1890, National Gallery Victoria. <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/tom-roberts-shearing-the-rams-1890/>

Colonial Occupations (contd.)

There were also some unusual occupations listed:

- knocker-upper (woke people up by using a truncheon to tap on the door, or, if on an upper floor, a pea-shooter to make a noise on the windows until the person woke)
- tweenie (a maid who worked between stairs, helping the older housemaids and cooks.
- battledore maker (made beaters from cane or reed to remove dust from cloth or floor mats, seasonal work around spring cleaning time)
- scourger (whipped convicts sentenced to the lash)
- pettiflogger (dodgy lawyer)[iii]

Many of the free settlers who came to Australia during early colonial times were farmers, who were given land grants and convicts to work for them to help clear land and grow crops to provide food for the colonies. Women ran the households, with single women often working as house servants, or, if educated, as governesses.

Some of the trades of the colonial period have become obsolete, or have changed in the way the roles are performed. Some of these occupations have been in families for generations. These include:

- printers
- confectioners
- coal and shale workers
- railwaymen and transport workers
- bakers
- hairdressers and wigmakers
- clothing trades
- undertakers
- stonemasons
- shearers
- furnishers[iv]

[1] Endes

[ii]<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning/work-be-done/what-job#:~:text=In%201788%20there%20were%2080,Makers%2C%20and%20Black%2DSmiths.>

[iii]https://www.ancestry.com.au/c/ancestry-blog/top-5-most-unusual-australian-occupations?srltid=AfmBOor-op_hhSUDbZUBwZoxgrzg9gCoh7EdtJQIERHpoXgafj3G4HK

[iv]<https://archives.anu.edu.au/exhibitions/forgotten-trades-selected-records-early-australian-trades#:~:text=Forgotten%20Trades%20showcase%2012%20diverse,Furnishers>

The Drake Name (contd.)

by Roselyn Drake

In the last issue of Colonists and Convicts Chronicle, I confessed to having lost the record of my great great grandfather's activities in the 1860's. Since then, by continuing to search the internet, I found, not only a reference to them, but a transcript of his appearance before a Select Committee of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, chaired by Sir Henry Parkes. My niece tracked down a reference to the Select Committee in the Sydney Morning Herald 15 July 1868 p.3, which said that the complaint was made by Captain Rowntree. Sharing information and problems with other family members can often help with searching.

AusLII Database, one I should have remembered from my time at Law School, has well-indexed transcripts of these select committees. The one Henry appeared before was entitled, "Report from the Select Committee on the Fitz Roy Dry Dock".(i) I found it exciting to read the actual words of my ancestor. I have frequently read things ancestors have written, but this is different, he is answering questions, and at times disagreeing with the Committee member. Henry was called and examined on 25 April 1860. In the end, the Committee agreed with him, and the Dry Dock remained accessible to private ship workers.

[i] NSWLASC Pub Inq 10 (22 May 1860)

Colonial Recipes

As we are now in the cooler winter months, the Chronicle is pleased to provide you with some warm and hearty fare to keep the chill away, no matter in which of the colonies you reside.

Rump Steak Pie

Pastry

Puff pastry requires one pound of butter to every pound of flour, half a salt-spoon of salt, and a little lemon juice, with about a quarter of a pint of the coolest water. Put the flour on the pastry board, make a hole in the centre, in which put the yoke of an egg, the lemon juice, and salt, mix the whole with cold water (in summer the water must be either iced or cooled) into a flexible paste with the right hand, and handle it as little as possible; then squeeze all the buttermilk from the butter, wring it through a cloth, and roll out the paste; place the butter on this, and fold the edges of the paste over, so as to hide it; roll out again to the thickness of a quarter of an inch, fold over one-third, over which again pass the rolling-pin; then fold over the other third, thus forming a square; place it with the end, top, and bottom, before you, and repeat the rolls and turns twice again, as before. Flour a baking sheet, put the paste on this, and let it remain in a cool place for half an hour; then roll twice more, turning it as before; place it again in a cool place for a quarter of an hour, give two more rolls, making seven in all, and it is ready for use.[i]

Filling

Cut two pounds of rump steaks into pieces; chop very fine a few shallots, and mix them with half an ounce of pepper and salt mixed. Strew some of the mixture on each layer of steaks, and so on until the dish is full. Add a mushroom ketchup and thickening, with a few hard-boiled eggs. A few oysters is an improvement.

Chicken, rabbit, fowl, ham, lamb, and fish are made in a similar way. The general mode is to stew the meats before putting them into the crust. With a partridge or pigeon pie, place a beef-steak over, as well as under, the birds.

Roast Mutton

Gently stir and blow the fire,
Lay the mutton down to roast;
Dress it quickly, I desire;
In the dripping put a toast,
That I hunger may remove ;
Mutton is the meat I love.
On the dresser see it lie;
Oh, the charming white and red!
Firmer meat ne'er met the eye,
On the sweetest grass it fed;
Let the jack go quickly round,
Let me have it nicely brown'd.
On the table spread the cloth,
Let the knives be sharp and clean ;
Pickles get, and salad both,
Let them each be fresh and green.
With small beer, good ale, and wine,
Oh, ye gods ! how I shall dine!

Dean Swift.

Puddings

Bakewell Pudding

Cover a dish with thin puff pastry, put a layer of any kind of jam, about half an inch thick, then take the yolks of eight eggs and ten whites, half a pound of sugar, half a pound of butter melted, and almond flavour to taste, beat all well together; pour the mixture into a dish, an inch thick, and bake an hour in a moderate oven.

Poor Clergyman's Pudding

Put a quarter of a pound of flour, a quarter of a pound of suet, the same of currants, and a quarter of a pound of raisins stoned, a table-spoonful of moist sugar, half a tea-spoonful of ginger, and a little salt; put the mixture into a pudding-cloth, and boil for two hours, or a little more. Turn the pudding out of the cloth, and serve with sifted sugar.

Abbott, Edward. The English and Australian Cookery Book: Cooker for the Many, as Well as for the "upper Ten Thousand". London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, 1864.
<https://archive.org/details/b28o73812/page/n5/mode/2up>.

A Ship Full of Women

by Helen Best

NAME	##	NAME	##	NAME	##
Elizabeth	25	Catherine	3	Isabel	1
Mary/Maria	20	Alice	2	Louisa	1
Sarah	19	Eleanor	2	Phoebe	1
Ann	18	Esther	2	Rebecca	1
Margaret	9	Heather	2	Rose	1
Jane	6	Judith	2	Sophia	1
Hannah	5	Agnes	1	Susannah	1
Frances	4	Amelia	1		
Martha	4	Bridget	1	TOTAL	131

When the Colonials and Convicts Interest Group suggested that we talk about the occupation of our ancestor coming to Australia, I thought I would go back to my original ancestor, Martha Chamberlain, who arrived in Sydney in 1796. The 351 ton Indispensible left London on 11 November 1795 carrying 133 women and only two died on the way so 131 arrived on land on the other side of the world on 30 April 1796. The ship called into Rio de Janiero briefly to get fresh supplies on the way. There were only two ships to arrive in New South Wales that year, the other being the Marquis Cornwallis. I tried to find out how many sailors/crew/soldiers/jailers (men) were on the ship but could find no mention anywhere. The ship carried enough provisions for the women for nine months after arrival. Given that they had been on the ship for at least 6 months, all provisions must have been dried food. By the time they arrived, the population of the colony would have been about 3000 although that figure is hard to establish.

Needless to say, the information about the women on this ship is extremely sparse. I could not find any mention of Martha's occupation before she was convicted at Middlesex Gaol of 'feloniously and burglariously stealing, breaking and entering' on the 23d of May, and burglariously stealing therein, a man's cloth coat, value 6s. a pair of mens velyeret breeches, value 7s. a man's cloth waistcoat, value 1s. a man's hat, value 10s. a woman's cotton gown, value 10s., a black silk bonnet, value 6s. and a stuff

quilted petticoat, value 7s.'[i] She was 21 at the time she was sentenced to 7 years transportation.

Looking at the basic information given on the Convict Records website, I was able to glean the following.

The Christian names of the women were as follows although some were listed as being known by more than one name. As a matter of interest, out of all the women shipped to Australia as convicts over the 50+ year period, 57 of them went by the name of Mary Brown!

Another 15 were Mary Burke. Ann Thompson was the name of 16 different women and four were Elizabeth Bennett! On the Indispensible there was one Mary Brown and one Mary Burke. Three of the women on the ship were named Brown and two were sisters-in-law, Elizabeth and Maria Hainsley.

Of the 133 women on the ship, 113 of them were sentenced to 7 years transportation, 4 were given 14 years 14 were given life sentences and two were unknown. One life sentence was for highway robbery and one for theft/stealing/larceny. The crimes of the other two lifers were not given.

The women came from gaols all over England. The following list shows where they were sentenced.

A Ship Full of Women (cont'd)

WHERE SENTENCED	#
Middlesex	53
Southampton	9
Northumberland	7
Surrey	7
Lancaster	6
Old Bailey	6
Stafford	6
Cumberland	5
Gloucester	5
Lincoln	5
London	5
Denbigh	4
York	4
Nottingham	3
Wiltshire	3
unknown	2
Newcastle	1
Sussex	1
Bristol	1

Only 5 of the women on the ship have an occupation shown on this website, being housemaid, house duties or servant. One was shown as 'letter carrier' (Sarah Liddiard/Tillery). Nowhere can I find anything to say what my ancestor Martha Chamberlain was employed as at the time.

Only 42 of the women had an age listed with the youngest being 15 and the oldest 52. One woman Sarah Boskham was about 40 when sentenced and died 10 years later in 1806 after being sentenced for life. No crime was given for her.

AGE	##
15-20	11 women
21-25	13 women
26-30	6 women
31-40	10 women
41-52	2 women
unknown	90

Of the 133 women on board, 32 of them have their crime listed with by far the bulk of them being theft/stealing/larceny, stealing clothes, etc. One is shown as burglary, one as grand theft larceny, one as handling stolen goods and the biggest one is highway robbery for which Ann Lockhart (or Lockett) was given a LIFE sentence. Ann died only 10 years into her sentence here. Mary Woodhouse was given 7 years for shoplifting. The Hainsley sisters-in-law were each given 7 years for stealing a brass pot and pan worth tenpence! However some were convicted for stealing a considerable number of items. Esther Hacker was indicted for stealing 'breeches, waistcoat, 10 shirts, 10 handkerchiefs, 2 petticoats, 2 jacket, drawers, 3 pair stockings, 10 caps, napkin, 2 sleeves, silk stockings, fan, cloth, sheeting, fabric, 5 pillow cases and a pebble box. The most expensive item was valued at 5 shillings (breeches and waistcoat).

One thing of interest to note is that for those where the information is available, out of 25 women whose trial date is shown, ten of them are shown as being convicted the previous year - 1794 - so they must have been held either in gaol or in a prison ship for quite a while before being shipped to Australia. Of course, there could also be errors in the dates given on this website.

Martha Chamberlain went on to marry George Best on 17 September 1797 at St John's in Parramatta and eventually they had 10 children. She died on 3 July 1836 in Seven Hills. Eight of her children outlived with the last, my great great grandfather, William Thomas Best, dying in 1902 at the age of 86.

[i] <https://convictrecords.com.au>

Grandad Minehane and the Banfields

by Pat Smith

In 1863 my maternal grandfather, James Minehane, was born on Sherkin Island, a small island situated very close to the southern coast of the now Republic of Ireland. I had the good fortune to visit Sherkin some years ago when I drove around Ireland for 3 weeks. James' family home was still standing at that time.

At age 15 he ran away from home to begin his life as a mariner. For the next 9 years he travelled around the world on various ships carrying cargoes ranging from coal to cattle. Three of his initial nine years at sea were spent as a member of the American Navy. It was on a navy vessel, the "Aushelot" that he experienced the only shipwreck of his career. The vessel ran aground in dense fog and sank in seven minutes, with the loss of 30 men out of the crew of 140.

After finishing his naval career James worked his passage to Sydney on a steamer named "Catterton". From there he made his way to Townsville, arriving in that town as a young man aged 24. He soon found employment, firstly on a ship carrying sugar from the various mills. He then went to Burns Philip working on their lighters for a year and then to Rooneys Ltd. carrying timber to their mill on the Ross River in Townsville. However it was on the vessels of the Howard Smith Company that he spent the rest of his life as a mariner. As time passed, he rose to the rank of a Captain. Three of the vessels he captained at various times were the "Mourilyan" the "Lass O'Gowrie" and the "Innisfail". These vessels, based in Townsville, carried passengers, mail and goods to towns mainly to the north of Townsville but also as far south as Gladstone, and occasionally on to Brisbane.

My grandfather's opinion of the three vessels is succinctly summarised in the following three paragraphs published in the Townsville Daily Bulletin newspaper a year before his death :-

- "The Mourilyan, which he describes as a handy vessel, with a fair turn of speed, was later sold to a New Zealand firm and Captain Minehane believes that it was running in the islands north of Australia during the war."
- "Another ship of which he has happy memories is the Lass O'Gowrie, well known to most northerners. The "Gowrie" had accommodation for 60 passengers, but Captain Minehane remembers when 160 were stowed on board. "But," he said "they did not demand feather beds in those days."
- "Captain Minehan's last command was the Innisfail, a stout little ship, with excellent lifting gear, that after her retirement from the north was used in lifting guns and other heavy equipment for the Army and Navy during the last war. She is now in Sydney."

The Queensland State Archive are now distributing a series named "Stories from the Archives". The story of 14th June, 2024 was titled "Island Escape – Dunk Island". It is the story of Edmund Banfield and his wife Bertha who lived on Dunk Island for many years as the island's sole residents. Edmund, or Ted as he was commonly called, was well known as a prolific writer. The best known of his books is probably "The Confessions of a Beachcomber" which was published in 1908.

Ted Banfield died on Dunk Island on Saturday, 2nd June, 1929. Unfortunately his wife had to live with her husband's body until the middle of the next week. On the Wednesday she was able to attract the attention of a passing vessel, the "Innisfail". The Archives story says "The ship's carpenter prepared a coffin and the Captain read a burial service as Edmund was lowered to rest under a cairn on the island he had loved so much." When I read the reference to the Captain of the "Innisfail" I immediately thought that the Captain might be my grandfather. That proved not to be so. The Captain on the "Innisfail" at that time was Captain Robertson.

Grandad Minehane and the Banfields (contd.)

Whilst my initial suspicion was incorrect, I wasn't too far wrong, because on Thursday 7th June Captain Minehane did stop at Dunk Island on one of his weekly voyages from Townsville to the northern ports as Captain on the Lass O'Gowrie. At that time Mrs Banfield handed over a letter she had written to him recording her husband's death and the events of the Wednesday. When the Lass O'Gowrie berthed in Cairns, Captain Minehane passed on that letter to the editor of the Cairns Post newspaper. It was published the next day under the heading "LATE BEACHCOMBER. MRS BANFIELD'S PATHETIC LETTER". The letter read:-

"My husband died soon after noon on Saturday-last. He had been suffering for nearly three weeks from what he thought was indigestion, but on Friday afternoon last he came in saying he was in agony, and he had no real relief till he passed away.

Unless Frank, the fisherman, returns from Innisfail during to-day, I shall still be alone when you arrive.

Please send a telegram to Mr Spencer Hopkins just in case he is not on his way from Townsville to here with the new boat.

PS: Since writing the foregoing I was able to signal and attract the attention of the Innisfail, and Captain Robertson and a number of men have been ashore and afforded me the greatest possible kindness. They buried my dear husband. For all else I have no care, but in case Frank the Fisherman is not here when you arrive to-morrow, will you please be good enough to land Mr and Mrs Cotterill, if they are passengers, and if you have the mail bag please throw it on to the point. I never hear a steamer whistle as I am so deaf, but if you come by daylight I shall be up. I am sorry to put you to so much trouble, but I think you will understand."

When I read the article in the Cairns Post I was really annoyed with the use of the word "pathetic" in the headline. I thought that the editor had no reason to belittle Mrs Banfield. At the end of the letter, the editor had added a paragraph which read:- "Captain Minehan added that it was with the greatest regret that he learned of the death of Mr Banfield who had been on Dunk Island for so many years, and who he knew very well". I was told in my youth that in our family circle it was well known that they were great friends.

I thought I should check my understanding of the meaning of the word "pathetic" and so I looked it up in the well-known Funk and Wagnall dictionary. To my amazement the dictionary stated the word was "of the nature of or expressing sadness, pity, tenderness etc. - arousing compassion". I then checked my Australian Pocket Oxford dictionary from which I basically got the same answer. However it drew attention to the fact that the word also has an Australian colloquial meaning of "miserably inadequate". That is the only meaning of the word "pathetic" that I have ever known.

This is perhaps a good example of the saying "Live and Learn". After a career of more than 50 years at sea Captain Minehane retired. The Townsville newspaper reported that at a Howard Smith staff farewell the keynote of the speeches was that "Captain Minehane was one of Nature's gentlemen". He died at Townsville on 30th August, 1949, aged 86.

I am very proud to report that the person I knew so well as Grandad Minehane was highly regarded by the Townsville community.

Button it up!

by Fleur Creed

Have you ever thought about buttons? I haven't thought much about them, except when I have to use them. They can be a bit of a nuisance really, with elastic or even zippers being easier, or more convenient. In the days before elastic and zippers, clothes had to be laced, or buttoned to stay done up on a body.



Early colonial 3, 4 and 5 hole buttons

When our ancestors first arrived in the colonies, buttons were very important items, and were made of bone, wood or metal. Evidence has been found of wooden buttons at Port Arthur, and of the manufacture of bone buttons at Parramatta Convict Hospital c.1790-1817. It appears that various types of buttons were made at the Parramatta site with sawn cattle bone until the 1830s. It should be noted that early wood, bone and horn buttons often had three or five holes, with the centre hole used to hold the button down as the other holes were drilled.



Evidence of bone button production, Parramatta Convict Hospital site, R.Stocks, 2008.



AAC NSW button



Government Convict Prison buttonst

Metal buttons were often made with the stamp of the crown, for the military, or an insignia for an organisation. The Australian Agricultural Company of NSW was established by British Parliament in 1824 as a land development company using convict labour. It had its own brass button.

With the gold rushes, and an influx of money in the colonies, manufacturing industries were established, including the production of pearl-shell and metal-uniform buttons. It should be noted that early wood, bone and horn buttons often had three or five holes, with the centre hole used to hold the button down as the other holes were drilled.

Sources:

Australian Button History. "The Early Years: 1788 Onwards. Convicts and Colonists." <https://www.austbuttonhistory.com/australian-button-history/the-early-years-1788-onwards-convicts-and-colonists/>

Museums of History NSW. "Convict Uniform Buttons." Convict Sydney, 2025. <https://mhnsw.au/stories/convict-sydney/convict-uniform-buttons/>.

Stocks, R. "New Evidence for Local Manufacture of Artefacts at Parramatta, 1790-1830." *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 26 (2009): 29-43.

The Parramatta Female Factory

by Bev Murray

Did your female convict reside in a Female factory?

Interestingly, over 9000 women were in Female factories located around Australia and it is estimated that 1 in 7 Australians are descended from 'female factory' convicts.



The original Parramatta Female Factory building pictured in 1872. (National Archives)

And here's a popular colonial song about the factory...

"The Currency Lads may fill their glasses,
And drink to the health of the Currency lasses,
But the lass I adore, the lass for me,
Is a lass in the Female Factory...
The first time I saw the comely lass
Was at Parramatta, going to Mass..."

This song refers specifically to an important function of the female factories. Convicts in receipt of their Ticket of Leave were permitted to marry and many of them paid a visit to their local female factory. Single women were lined up "for the inspection of the amorous and adventurous votary, who, fixing his eye on a vestal of his taste, with his finger, beckons her to step forward from the rank". In fact, this is the very process which resulted in the marriage of my 3 x great grandparents on September 12, 1826. They were married at St John's Cathedral at Parramatta by the Reverend Samuel Marsden. 200 years later, plans are underway for a Wells family reunion to coincide with this special anniversary next year.

Next time you're in Sydney, how about visiting the Female Factory at Parramatta?

On Saturday 17th May, 2025 a "Heritage Day at Parramatta North" was held at this remarkable historic precinct and I decided to enjoy a return flight to Sydney so that I could attend. Situated on 4 acres of riverside land, this important site was under threat by a developer. Fortunately, an enormous petition protesting against this action prevailed and now there are plans to further develop the site and create a similar museum to the Hyde Park Barracks. The site is also being considered for World Heritage Site status.

The factory was commissioned (around 1818) by Governor Macquarie, designed by convict architect Francis Greenway and was constructed with local quarried sandstone by convict work teams. An impressive structure consisting of 3 storey buildings, enclosed by 9-foot-high walls, it first opened for business in 1821.

Why was it named a factory? The aim of the institution was to provide female convicts with a safe place of manufacture, which included spinning and weaving, straw plaiting, sewing, and many other tasks. It also became a marriage bureau, where a convict with his Ticket of Leave could visit and select a wife.

During Lachlan Macquarie's era, there were two classes of convict women and Governor Brisbane extended that to three classes. First class consisted of women who were awaiting work assignment to a settler; second class were "cheeky" women who committed minor offences and women who repeatedly offended were assigned to the 3rd class.

Did you know there were 13 Female factories sites in total? They were located at Parramatta (2), Newcastle, Bathurst, Port Macquarie (2), Moreton Bay (2) Hobart Town, Cascades, Launceston, Ross and Georgetown.

For more information:

Phone: 0456787252

Email: parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au

Website: parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au

Facebook: facebook.com/pffriends

The Parramatta Female Factory (contd.)



The Parramatta Female Factory today

Descendants of Thomas Wells (*Baring 1, 1815*) and Martha Shaw (*Brothers, 1824*)

A Wells family reunion will be held on Saturday, September 12, 2026, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the marriage of convicts Thomas Wells and Martha Shaw.

For anyone descended from this union, please join "Wells Family Reunion 2026" on Facebook. For those not on Facebook, please contact wellsfamilyreunion2026@gmail.com to express interest.

Further information TBC.



Helen and Bev, two of the Wells descendants catch up at the PFF Open Day 2025.

The Places Where They Walked

The example of learning about the female factories is one for all of us who research the lives of our ancestors in the early days of the colonies. We know they arrived on ships, and then we often have little understanding of the actual conditions of their lives. Studying, and visiting, the places in which they spent their time helps us to understand more about them.

Was your ancestor sent as a convict to serve on a remote rural property, or did they work on a government project closer to Sydney, Hobart, or one of the other towns?

Were they indentured to the VDL Co, or the AAC NSW?

Sometimes you can find out information about your ancestor's life from the local area, either their family history society, or their local history society.

Perhaps your ancestor worked for a longstanding business, like Tooth's Brewery, or one of the large pastoral stations, and the employment records may be available somewhere, if not with the company, they could be in your State Library.

Did your ancestor have a trade or a business? You may find records relating to these.

Historical land records will also give you information about where your ancestor was, and when, if they owned land in the colonies.

A great resource to learn about your ancestor is Trove. You may find more than just births, deaths and marriages! Finding out whose home their wedding was held at, what music was played, and what their children excelled at in school, are extra details that all help you know your ancestors better.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Elizabeths

by Bev Murray

Captain William Bligh RN (Governor: 13 August 1806– 26 January 1808) married Elizabeth (Betham) on February 04, 1781, in Onchan, Isle of Man.

Major General Lachlan Macquarie (Governor: 01 January 1810– 30 November 1821) married Jane Jarvis, a West Indian heiress on September 08, 1793, in Bombay. Lachlan was distraught when Jane died 15 July 1796. In early November of 1807, Lachlan married Elizabeth Campbell in a little parish church in Holdsworth in Devon.

Lieutenant General Darling (Governor: 19 Dec 1825–21 Oct 1831) married Eliza Dumaresq on 3rd October 1817.

Major General Bourke (Governor: 3 December–5 Dec 1837) married Elizabeth Bourke (No relation) in 1800.

Major Sir George Gipps (Governor: 24 February–11 July 1846) married Elizabeth Ramsay, the daughter of Major-General George Ramsay, RA, in 1830.

Major Francis Grose, (caretaker Dec. 1792–Dec 1794) married Elizabeth Paterson on May 08, 1814 but he died a month later.

Captain William Paterson, caretaker (10 Jan 1809–Dec 1810), married Elizabeth Driver in London on 28 September 1789. She was 19 and he was 34. They later moved to NSW in 1791.

Sir George Arthur, (Governor of Van Diemen's land, 1814–1822) married Elizabeth Orde in 1814.

John Macarthur, pastoralist, married Elizabeth Veale in October 1788 and they sailed with the Second Fleet (Neptune) to NSW.

Reverend Samuel Marsden married Elizabeth Fristan at Holy Trinity, Hull on 21st April 1793.

Source:
Australian Dictionary of Biography.
<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/>

TRIVIA ITEM: WORD SOURCE GROG

In 1700, each sailor was issued with a quarter of a litre of rum each day. Keep in mind that back then, rum could be between 54% and 85% alcohol. Inevitably, the effects of so much alcohol was almost catastrophic. In 1740, Vice Admiral Edward Vernon introduced unpopular reforms that had a mitigating effect on the situation. Vernon quickly acquired the nickname of "Old Grogam", later abbreviated to 'Grog' (Grogam was a fabric used to make the heavy woollen cloak worn by Vernon).

Source:
Matt Murphy, RUM: A Distilled History of Colonial Australia, p.246.

TRIVIA ITEM: QUIZ

1 A convict site located on an Australian island, not the mainland or Tasmania, was where the worst convicts were sent. What island is it?

- Pitcairn Island
- Flinders Island
- Norfolk Island
- Van Diemen's Land

2 This island in Sydney Harbour operated as a convict penal station from 1839 to 1869. What island is it?

- Flinders Island
- Cockatoo Island
- Devil's Island
- Galah Island

Answers on the back page

So What's in a Name?

by Fleur Creed

Have you ever been frustrated in your research by how people in your family have the same personal name? Well, it is not by accident. They did it on purpose!

Around the world, cultures have used naming patterns to determine how babies will be named, following systems that have existed for centuries. It is only in recent decades that we have cast off these traditions and started to experiment with more creative naming practices.

From approximately the beginning of the 18th century, the British followed a naming pattern as follows:

- 1st son named after paternal grandfather
- 2nd son named after maternal grandfather
- 3rd son named after father
- 4th son named after father's eldest brother
- 5th son named after mother's eldest brother

- 1st daughter named after maternal grandmother
- 2nd daughter named after paternal grandmother
- 3rd daughter named after mother
- 4th daughter named after mother's eldest sister
- 5th daughter named after father's eldest sister

The Scottish sometimes followed a different pattern from the fourth child onwards, with some Scots naming infants after several more generations of ancestors.

Other countries used different naming patterns. In Germany, in the Middle Ages a tradition started where almost all boys were baptised with the first name Johannes or Johan, and girls with the name Maria or Anna, meaning that families could have several children with the same name. Each child was therefore given a *Rufname*, along with a surname which was used to distinguish them. The child would be known by this second name. By the 19th century, many people gave their children three names, one of which would usually be a saint's name or a biblical name. You may therefore find an ancestor with the name Johann Ludwig Peter, or Maria Jacobine.

Nicknames are also different in different cultures. British and Australian culture tends to take the beginning of a name to create a nickname, as in:

Christine: Chris/Chrissie
Margaret: Margie
Steven: Steve/Stevo
Gary: Gazza
Stewart: Stew

Germans, however, use the last part of the name:

Nicklaus: Klaus
Sebastian: Bastian
Christophel: Stophel
Katharina: Trin

Sources:

Fryxell, D.A. "Naming Traditions Across Multiple Cultures." *Family Tree Magazine*, 2025. <https://familytreemagazine.com/names/naming-traditions/jan-2012-naming-practices-feature/>.
Heppenstall, J. "English Naming Traditions." *Englis Ancestors* (blog), April 1, 2020. <https://englishancestors.blog/2020/04/01/english-naming-traditions/>.
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Post Script

Coming up in our next issue, we will be discussing all things immigration.

Many of our ancestors arrived as convicts. Although once there was shame in having the “convict stain”, today those of us with convict ancestors are seen as Australian royalty! Oh, how times have changed!

How did your ancestors come to this country? Did they arrive as guests of Her Majesty? Were they in the military, accompanying the convicts? Perhaps they came under one of the Bounty Schemes, or they may have been fortunate to be free settlers? They may even have been ship's crew

In the time between when the First Fleet arrived and Federation, travel from the Old Country changed substantially, reducing in time, and becoming safer. The early travellers suffered with scurvy and relied on the wind in the sails, whereas those who journeyed later in the 19th century were able to travel by steam ship.



Trivia answers:
1 Norfolk Island; 2 Cockatoo Island

COLONISTS' and CONVICTS' Group

We are mid-way through the year, and have been researching occupations in the Australian colonies, and our ancestors' immigration journeys. There will be more interesting topics coming up, so if you are interested in joining our group, we meet both in person and on Zoom.

Each meeting, we have a topic, and we also share our research, so if you have an interest in this period in Australian history, please consider joining us. For more information, please email: CandC@gsq.org.au

Resources

Please remember we have some great resources available to purchase.

Firstly, there is our invaluable Convict Research Folder, which provides information and includes templates to assist you with your research. It is available for \$10 as a download or \$25 in hard copy.

Second, we have our Certificate of Proof of Convict Descent. As previously mentioned, many people now want to claim descent from convicts, and we have a way for you to legitimise this, so if you can provide three forms of proof for each convict from whom you are descended, for \$25 we will provide you with a Certificate of Proof of Descent. Additional copies can be provided for \$10 each.

Submissions

Please contact us at CandC@gsq.org.au if you have ideas for an article or area of interest during Australian colonial times for a future issue of the Colonists' and Convicts' Chronicle, or would like to submit an article. See you next time!

The Editor