



THE PICK OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

Pick Volume 1:6

A Bunch of Losers

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These young convicts were chosen to represent many who died whilst working in the Road Gangs. Initially I found these men by accident in the pre-1856 BDM reels. They also appear in the returns of Convict Deaths. These men were chosen as they all died young within a few years of arriving in the colony and within a short time of being in a road gang. All were under thirty and skilled, and at this stage how representative they are, is not known. Neither to date is much known about colonial work place industrial accidents of which these deaths are probably representative

Michael Byrne per *Marquis of Huntley* was a young Irish convict who died shortly after arriving in the colony. He was a post boy, a native of Wicklow, when he was sentenced at Wicklow on 8 March 1827 to seven years transportation for stealing clothes. He had no former convictions. On arrival in January 1828 he was assigned to G.T. Savage of Sydney.

G.T. Savage had come to Sydney from Mauritius. He was both an Ironmonger (many of the tools Savage sold were branded with his name as the supplier) and a large landholder at Bringelly. It appears he is listed as Maurice Byrne in the 1828 census taken in November 1828 by which time he was assigned to Vardy Sheehan at Cornwallis who had 10 acres cleared and cultivated and one head of cattle on which he kept himself, a 'housekeeper', three young children and two convict labourers. It is not known how Michael Byrne ended up at Lower Portland in Iron Gang No 4 where he

John Carr was a 26-year-old Dublin born ostler and labourer when he was charged and convicted in Dublin on 1 November 1830 with assault with intent to rob. He was sentenced to seven years transportation. He travelled to NSW on board the *Waterloo (2)* arriving 30 April 1831. He was apparently suffering from tuberculosis as he is recorded on arrival as having several large scars of scrofula on his left arm. He was assigned to Thomas Hinds (sic) in Sydney. Thomas Hyndes was a timber merchant who had a timber lease in Hunters Hill where in 1828 he was employing three sawyers and four labourers. He also had a house and timber yard in Sussex Street, Sydney where he employed two females and five male servants and two male labourers and kept one horse. As an ostler and labourer it can be assumed John Carr would have looked after this horse as well as worked in the timber yard while he was assigned to Thomas Hyndes. How long he worked for Thomas Hyndes is not



died in February 1831 aged 25.

Chris (Christopher) Creighton (Clayton)

A native of Dublin he was an 18-year-old tradesman, a slaxer and plaisterer (slatcher and plasterer) when he was convicted in Dublin on 2 January 1828 of burglary and sentenced to transportation for life. In some parts the wooden battens (commonly called laths) that were used to hold the plaster in place were called slats hence a batten fixer was a slatcher.

The records show Chris was a small brown hair, brown-eyed man with a scar on the right side of his forehead. He arrived in Sydney twelve months after sentencing on board the *Sophia* and was assigned to Berry and Wollstonecraft. Berry and Wollstonecraft were well-to-do merchants and land holders, with a large store in George Street and land holdings in the Shoalhaven. They were reputed to be solicitous of the welfare of their convicts. How Chris Creighton ended up in an Iron gang is not known but he was in No 3 Iron gang at Lower Hawkesbury when he died in November 1831 aged 21, one year and eleven months after arriving in the colony.

William Quinlan lived less than two years after arriving in Australia. He was 27 when he arrived on the *Hercules 3* from Ireland in October 1830. The convicts were kept on the ship for 14 days before they were mustered for assigning and disembarking. William, a soldier and cooper was charged with desertion and sentenced to seven years transportation. He was one of 10 skilled convicts on that ship assigned directly to the Public Works Department. Two carpenters were

known but within eighteen months

he had been sentenced to an Iron Gang then progressed to a Road Party where his death is recorded. As he died at the Road Party and not in hospital it would appear he died from something other than Tuberculosis. He died at the Wollombi Road Party on 8 October 1832

James McAnaly (Mc Nally) arrived in January 1829 on board the *Governor Ready* The indent shows he was aged 22, a protestant who could read, his occupation was both carter and soldier. he was charged with desertion and sentenced to 7 years transportation. He was 5ft 5 inches tall. of ruddy complexion with brown hair and grey eyes, with the scar of a large cut on the inside top of his left hand. He was assigned to John Tucker of the Patterson River. He died in No 13 Road Party near Patricks Plains in March 1834. At this time Nos 13 and 14 Road Parties were building the road from Cockfighters Creek (Warkworth) to Cobbs Station at St Patricks Plains (Whittingham) and side cutting the worst parts of this road and also building bridges over the smaller creeks.

assigned directly to the Department of Roads and Bridges. He died 10 August 1832 aged 30, a member of the Wollombi Road Party.

References:SR Reel 3063 Dulhunty to Surveyor General 34'18: page no

76 17 June 1834(Road Parties 13.14 side-cutting) Pre 1856 BDM reels Vol.11. 12. 13.14.15.17 Convict Indents1828 Cen

