



THE PICK OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

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Daniel Holland, Convict (c1798-1886)

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On 20 February 1821, at the Middlesex Gaol Delivery in London, a young man and his female accomplice were indicted for stealing a watch valued at £3 from George Dodds, a sailor. The young man, Daniel Holland, was short and stocky with a fresh complexion, brown hair and grey eyes.

Despite Holland and his accomplice's denial that they were guilty, the jury at the Old Bailey convicted them of stealing and sentenced them to be transported to New South Wales. where they would remain for the rest of their lives.¹¹³

Daniel Holland arrived in Sydney Cove on the convict transport *Mary* in January 1822 as the colony of New South Wales celebrated the thirty-fourth anniversary of the arrival of British settlers.¹¹⁴

Following a few days at Hyde Park Barracks he and several other convicts from the *Mary* were ferried up the river to Parramatta, prior to assignment to the Government Agricultural Establishment at Emu Plain.¹¹⁵ Shortly afterwards he began working for James Kelly, a wheat and maize farmer, at Wilberforce near Windsor. This was the beginning of his association with the area around Windsor. His family was to remain in the district for the next two generations.

Daniel was not an exemplary convict. In September 1828, after being charged with possessing a stolen hat, he was sentenced to six months in Road Party 25 working on the construction of the Great North Road.¹¹⁶ Conditions in these gangs were harsh. The overseers, usually fellow-convicts, were despised by those under them. Consequently many prisoners absconded and tried to survive in the bush, often joining other escapees to form bushranging gangs. It is not surprising to find Daniel had escaped from the Road Party early in 1829.¹¹⁷

In most cases it didn't take long for absconders to find they were unable to support themselves. Members of the road parties were assured of regular supplies of food and clothing, something they could not rely on when on the run. Within a few months Daniel was recaptured or gave himself up.



He may have been employed by Reverend T. Hassall after this, but the next positive 'sighting' I have of him is in January 1832 when he was in service at Hyde Park Barracks and sentenced to 48 hours solitary confinement for drunkenness. Soon afterwards he absconded from the barracks and by June was working for Henry Jupp, a market gardener, at Field of Mars.¹¹⁸

In 1835 he was sent to work at Port Macquarie, a former penal settlement, north of Newcastle.¹¹⁹ When his Ticket of Leave was granted in May 1841 he was issued with a passport to travel to and from Port Macquarie.¹²⁰ The family believed he delivered messages from there to Sydney. While travelling between the two towns he suffered a serious illness which left him blind.



Daniel Holland c1798-1886

This very faded photograph is the only known photograph of a convict that worked on the Great North Road

Daniel settled in Windsor in 1844, opening a drapery store in the main street. A contemporary newspaper article notes he was blind and a surviving photograph, showing him with his eyes closed, reinforces this. The following year, at the age of about 47, he married Julia McGillicuddy, who was eighteen years his junior.¹²¹

Julia was born in County Kerry in the west of Ireland around 1816 and tried at Cork City on 2 November 1838 for larceny and house robbery. Owing to her record showing two or three previous convictions she was sentenced to seven years transportation.¹²²

Following her arrival in Sydney on the barque *Whitby* in June 1839 it is likely she spent some time at the Parramatta House of Industry (colloquially known as the Parramatta Female Factory). Newly-arrived convicts were usually housed there while awaiting assignment to settlers, some of whom



sought a wife as well as a worker. Julia was assigned to William Tompkins in the Windsor area, but ran away from him, perhaps to liaise with Daniel Holland.

It is thought Daniel and Julia had eight children but only one, Daniel, born in Windsor in 1848, lived to adulthood. The Holland family's drapery store was run successfully by Daniel junior after his father retired. In 1875 Daniel junior married Mary Jane Daly, eldest daughter of John Joseph and Mary Sophia (*nee* McDonald) Daly, at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney.

By the time Daniel senior died in 1886 his son was a leading citizen in the town, taking an active part in community affairs through his involvement with the Hawkesbury Benevolent Society and Hospital Committee, the School of Arts and the Windsor Municipal Council. As a magistrate he was reputed to take his duties on the bench very seriously.

Julia Holland died in 1902, mourned by 'friends from far and near', 63 years after her arrival as a convict. The writer of the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette's* obituary, oblivious to her convict origins, paid tribute to her as 'a woman possessed of many admirable traits of character' whose 'unassuming disposition and kindly nature was beloved by all.'¹²³

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¹³ *Old Bailey Sessions Papers*. 20 February 1821 (034 ML) and Great Britain. Home Office. Criminal. Old Bailey Sessions: *Returns of convicted prisoners 1819-1822* (H016/2; AJCP Reel 1542).

¹¹⁴ Great Britain. Admiralty. Medical Department. Registers. *Medical journals 1818-1835*. Surgeon's Journal of *Mary* 26 Jul 1821 to 28 Jan 1822 (ADM101/51; AJCP Reel 3202).

¹¹⁵ Colonial Secretary: *Correspondence*. Convicts arriving on *Mary* transferred to Emu Plains Agricultural Establishment, 1822 (SRNSW ref: 4/3504A p.359; SR Reel 6008 & 1032). Police report of prisoners, 1828 (SRNSW ref:X821: SR Reel 660) & Great Britain. Home

¹¹⁶ Office. Criminal Convicts, New South Wales and Tasmania: *New South Wales census 1828* (H010/23; AJCP Reel 68) & K. Johnson and M. Sainty, *1828 Census (of New South Wales)*, (Sydney, 1977).

¹¹⁷ *Sydney Gazette* 17, 24 February and 3 March 1829, p.4. ¹¹⁸ Rev. T. Hassall's Muster Roll B27 p.13x_ML] [This is a D. Holland - I can't prove it was the same one], SRNSW X825 and *Sydney Gazette* 23 Feb 1832.

¹¹⁹ Rev. T. Hassall's Muster Roll B27 p.13x ML] [This is a D. Holland - I can't prove it was the same one], SRNSW X825 and *Sydney Gazette* 23 Feb 1832.

¹²⁰ Colonial Secretary: *Butts of Tickets of Leave*. 27 Apr-21 Jun 1841. Entry for Daniel Holland, 16 May 1841 (SRNSW ref: 4/4151 Entry No.41/1040: SR Reel 940) & Colonial Secretary: *Butts of Ticket of Leave Passports*. 26 Sep 1844-16 Jan 1845. Entry for Daniel Holland (SRNSW ref: 4/4255 Entry No.44/1620; SR Reel 973).

¹²¹ SRNSW Fiche 801 Permission to Marry Granted.

¹²² National Archives of Ireland (formerly State Paper Office), Dublin, TR2, p.26(f), *Convicts in Gaol of Cork*



City 1838 & letter from State Paper Office, Dublin, 3 January 1985.

¹²³ *Windsor & Richmond Gazette* 6 September 1902, obituary.



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