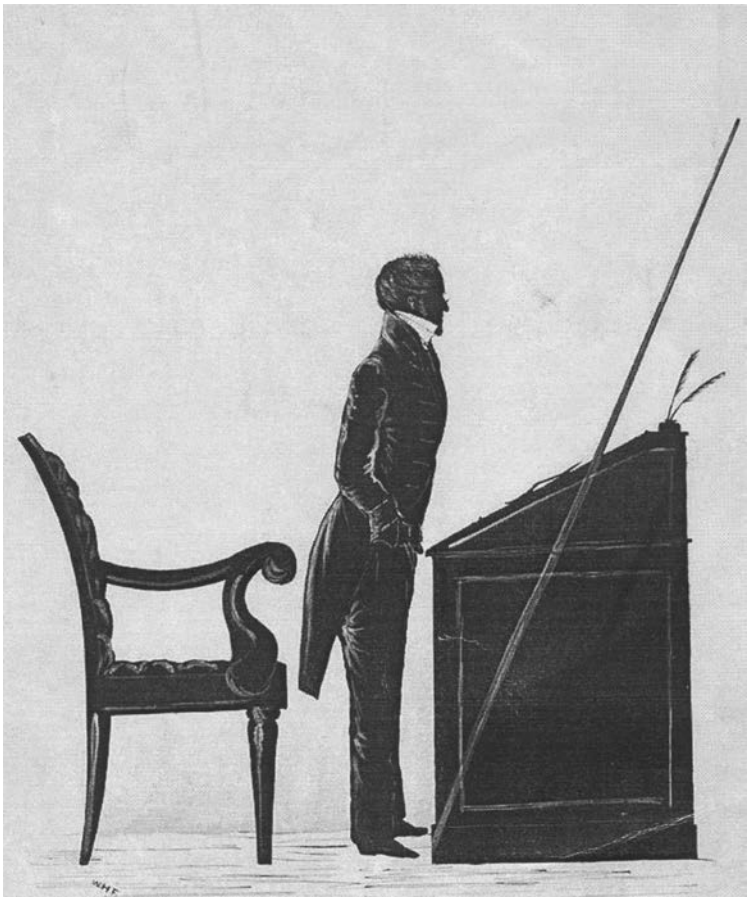
The Pick

of the

Great North Road



Surviving the Great North Road

Volume 5

The Journal of the Convict Trail Project

Convict Trail Project Incorporated

The objectives of the Convict Trail Project are to:

* promote the Great North Road with its associated convict relics, heritage landscapes and buildings as a Convict Heritage Trail, providing an opportunity to develop an appreciation via understanding of convict labour and life, colonial engineering and the development of the colony;
* endeavour to protect the Great North Road from further degradation and ensure the Road, its branches and associated relics are properly cared for by encouraging the implementation of appropriate management practices through the active involvement of member groups in the management of the Road and by facilitating communication between them;
* work with member groups to conserve, manage and promote the Great North Road as an outstanding example of our convict and early colonial heritage; work with member groups to conserve, manage and interpret convict and colonial era relics within the Great North Road corridor;
* provide forums and mechanisms where priorities for management and conservation of the Road can be assessed and discussed, background and contextual information and reports obtained and shared, and asset holders encouraged to undertake conservation activities;
* work towards obtaining financial support to fund the objectives of the CTP and to use all available resources to the maximum benefit of the Road
* support, partnerships, sponsorships, and in-kind contributions pursuant to CTP objectives
* prepare, provide and disseminate information about the Convict Trail Project and the Great North Road, its associated history, structures and localities;
* undertake and support historical and archaeological research into the Great North Road, its construction and its cultural landscape.

Membership:- Organisations, agencies and asset holders, commercial enterprises and individuals with an interest in, or responsibility for the conservation, promotion and management of the Great North Road may be members of the Convict Trail Project.
The annual subscription which includes the journal and at least 2 newsletters per year for individuals is $30.00 per annum,
concession $25.00: for commercial businesses and enterprises is $100 per annum,
or such other amount as may be negotiated in forming a partnership.
Community Organisations which contribute to the well being of the Great North Road and/or the Convict Trail Project are entitled to in-kind membership.

Journal Editorial Committee Barbara Appleton, Mari Metzke, Elizabeth Roberts.

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COVER Illustration: *Sheriff Macquoid at the Bar*. by W.H Fernyhough: circa 1836 reproduced by permission of Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW. Call no PXA 617

Photos, accept where otherwise acknowledged, by Elizabeth Roberts

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Survival

The basic elements needed for human survival are oxygen, water, food and shelter followed by mental well being, and information about these elements is not readily found in historical documents. The research for this copy of the Pick has been interesting and challenging as it involved looking at crop yields and cattle sizes in the 1830s and carcass yields as well as venturing into the psychology and history of imprisonment as well as field work and the use of divining skills to try to trace the sources of water used in the stockades. Also used as a research tool was Ralph Hawkins' knowledge of native plant species and their natural habitat. Looking at the various names along the road and who or what the different places were named after has been fun and I would like to thank Dr Joyce Miles a researcher for the Geographic Names Board and Bruce Jones who had thoroughly researched McQuoid and Manning through their connection to Ourimbah, for their contributions.

Essential for these people were the inns that provided reassurance and shelter even if they could not afford to buy sustenance. Thanks to Ann Mobbs for the work on the Inns as it was to long for publication and in the form of a data base it will go on the website when it is next upgraded. As a retired pharmacist Trevor Patrick looked at medical supplies. It is appropriate that the last local history article Ken Maheine was to write, will be published in a journal with the theme survival, his great contribution to local history will certainly survive.

Although it probably raised more questions than it has answered I hope you enjoy this copy of *the Pick.* The Women related to the Road definitely raises lots of questions.

I apologise for this volume being so late.

Elizabeth Roberts for the editorial team.

The Pick
of the
Great North Road

Surviving the Great North Road
Volume 5

The Journal of the Convict Trail Project Inc.

The Greatest Survival - The Great North Road.

E.A.Roberts

This volume is dedicated to surviving or not surviving the Great North Road. The greatest survivor is the road itself. The Great North Road was one of three great roads that were being built simultaneously out of Sydney heading North, West and South. Whilst little evidence can still be found of the Great Western Road and the Great Southern Road much more evidence still exists of the Great North Road. It was the survivor. It is known that the early part of the nineteenth century was a road building era and whilst a number of bridges remain intact, in an internet search it is very difficult to find, outside of Australia, the remains of roads, other than bridges, built in the early nineteenth century. This may be because they no longer survive or because they are not thought to be important.

Why did the Great North Road survive?

Its roots go back in time to the 1804 convict uprising at Castle Hill. Following this uprising, Newcastle was established as a secure place to send convicts they did not want in the settled districts of Sydney, Parramatta and the Hawkesbury. At Newcastle many were put to work mining coal. In the Hawkesbury the sons of the original convicts and free settlers were growing up and wanting their own land. Many did not want to cross the Blue Mountains and looked longingly towards the known fertile land up the Hunter Valley. Finally a route through to the Hunter Valley was found and Newcastle was no longer a secure place for convicts. The penal station was closed down and the convicts under sentence of secondary punishment moved to Port Macquarie. The Hunter was opened for free settlers, and wealthy free settlers who could buy their own land were encouraged. Amongst this class of settlers were a number who had some influence with the Governor. They wanted an overland route for their goods and petitioned the Governor. As the Governor was related to some of the signatories of this petition it received a favourable hearing and in September 1826 work commenced on building a road along the line which had been surveyed by Heneage Finch in 1825. Finch was rewarded with a land grant for this. In 1827 Thomas Mitchell arrived in NSW. An ambitious man with a passion for straight lines he was determined to make a name for himself. Believing the shortest road was the best road, he straightened out several kinks in the road and resisted attempts to have it diverted from his preferred route.

This resulted in long dry grassless and waterless sections of the road which had been some of the more difficult and isolated parts of the road to build. These sections were soon abandoned with people either taking a longer route via St Albans and Windsor or travelling north via the new Steam ships.

The 1832 Post Office Directory provides a good description of the road as does the 1840 Post Office Directory but that directory adds in numerous other roads, also calling them the Great North Road. Many of these so named “Great North Roads” were never part of Mitchell plans.

The abandoned sections through Dural and Glenorie to Maroota and from Ten Mile Hollow to Mt Manning were brought out of obscurity in 1859 when the Telegraph line was built beside the line of the Great North Road. A Telegraph exchange was built in Wollombi adding to the number of Government buildings and to the importance of Wollombi.

In 1849 Peats Ferry Road was surveyed and built at least as far as the ferry. There were surveyed roads from Mooney Mooney to Gosford and Kulnura but whether these were built roads or only horse tracks is debatable especially as the main overland route to Gosford until 1927 remained via Wisemans Ferry, Devines Hill to Ten Mile Hollow and down through Mangrove Creek.

With the advent of pushbikes and then motor cars there was resurgance of interest in the Great North Road through Glenorie and north of Ten Mile Hollow.

The Second World War with an ever present threat of Japanese invasion saw work on the Putty Road, the original cattle track of the 1820s.

From the time of early settlement until well after the advent of cars and trucks, most of the movement and trade up and down the Hawkesbury, and Macdonald Rivers and Mangrove Creek was by boat. The road from Wisemans Ferry to Spencer was built between 1927 and 1930.

A 1927 road map shows that to get to St Albans one crossed at Wisemans Ferry drove up Devines Hill and down Shepherds Gully crossing by a punt then along the western side of the river to again cross the Macdonald River near the St Albans Hotel.[1]

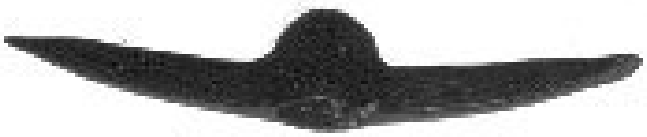
By the 1960s more households than not, had cars and young men and women were acquiring cars. Those with VW’s, war surplus jeeps and early land rovers went looking for forestry tracks and other old roads through the bush to explore and many found the Great North Road north of Wisemans Ferry. While many travellers used the road from Peats Ridge via Kulnura and Wollombi to Singleton as a short cut north, few then realized it was part of the Great North Road.

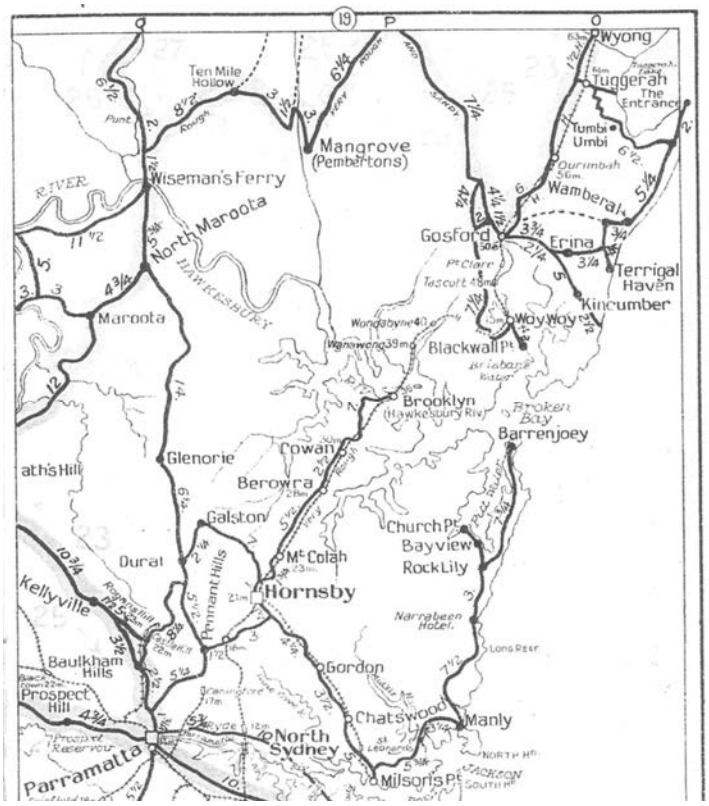
In 1965 The National Trust became involved with the Great North Road when the NSW Electricity Commission built decking on Clares Bridge. [2.] Dharug National Park was proclaimed in 1967 and the road up Devines Hill was closed to traffic through the agitation of some of the National Trust members. In 1976, in the same week as the proposed heritage legislation was announced, contractors for the Department of Public Works as part of building Mangrove Dam took a bulldozer down the road causing much damage especially at Sampsons Pass. The road from Donneys track to Mt Manning was not closed to traffic till 1992 with Clares Bridge being usable till the decking was removed in 2004. In 1983 the National Trust commissioned the engineering firm of McBean and Crisp to survey the road from Mt Manning to Paynes Crossing and report on what they found and what should be done to protect it. Later in 1989 they surveyed the road from Devines Hill to Mt Manning.[3]

By then the surrounding area was National Park.
In the 1990s the road from Bucketty to Broke was sealed and despite worries that in part lead to the formation of the Convict Trail Project, a considerable amount of the evidence of the road survived the sealing. As the great survivor in 2008, Devines Hill and Finches Line of Road were, as one of a series of eleven convict site across Australia, nominated for World Heritage Listing

1.Robertson , H E C Ltd. *NSW Motorists Road Guide.* 1927
2.Correspondence in National Trust Great North Road file
3.Sydney Morning Herald; 28 September 1976; 2 October 1976; Sun Weekly 5 Nov1992

Illustration. Map from NSW Motorists Road Guide. 1927 Robertson , H E C Ltd.





Surviving

Ralph Hawkins

This is an exercise in reading the landscape, not mile after dreary mile as Sarah Matthew put it, but looking specifically at the places chosen as stockade sites. This is where convicts, overseers and soldiers ate and slept. The hazards here aren't work related, but relate more to the problems of people living in a confined space for any length of time. One should think of the need for fresh air, the availability of water, and the disposal of human and animal waste.

There is virtually no information surviving on the stockade sites south of Glenorie to Baulkham Hills and Five Dock but we do know that they would have been located on sites close to fresh water and if the gang had working bullocks a supply of grass. For sites south of Glenorie it is likely that the animals were kept in a stockyard nearby. Perhaps the Government Paddock now Thornleigh was used for the bullocks working on the stretch of road between Epping and Dural. Perhaps there was another stockyard between Middle Dural and Glenorie where Foster's Waterhole could supply an unfailing supply of water. North of Glenorie the geology changes from shale soils to sandy soils. This doesn't favour the growth of grasses. Generally speaking, fodder for the Government working bullocks is unavailable on the rocky ridge tops on either side of the Hawkesbury River. It had to be brought in from along a creek or river bank. The job of grass-cutter was usually given to the most trusted convicts who would be away from direct supervision
The site of the camp near the Maroota abandoned loops has not been located but a well survives nearby on the western side of the road. It is circular in shape. Now with one hundred and eighty years of development most of the stockade sites would have long been built over, or cultivated. It is only at those few sites that are relatively undisturbed where one can look for a different type of evidence, that of the plants that grow in these sites

Two contemporary articles provide clues for what might be found in stockade sites. The first quote is from Joseph Mason who describes the interior of a convict hut in the 1830s. The second, by Alexander Harris describes a Road Gang site.

> *When a hut is built the men are put into it varying in number from two to six and sometimes eight. The furniture or rather utensils consist of an iron pot and frying pan for general use with an axe to cut wood and a quart tin to each individual to boil tea in and sometimes a pint pannican to drink it out of. A piece of coarse stuff which they call Ossenburgh is served out to each man who is a prisoner for a bed tick which he has to sew up himself and stuff with straw. If the men have other conveniences in the hut they must provide them themselves and in most instances Sunday is the only time they have for providing them. If they do not choose to lay their bed on the ground which from the innumerable quantity of fleas and ants and the like would be very uncomfortable to say nothing of the hazard of finding a snake coiled up in the blanket they must take an axe to the bush and cut some forked sticks and poles. The forked sticks are driven into the ground about three feet from the side of the hut and a pole laid into the forks while*

another pole is made fast to the slabs at an equal height and three or four short sticks laid across on which is placed a sheet of bark and the business of constructing a bedstead is over. But anyone who disapproves of the above methods is quite at liberty to adopt any plan he pleases. A sheet of bark or a few boards when they can be obtained placed on a rude frame serves for a table which is sometimes made fast to the side of the hut or fixed in the centre and sometimes it is portable. They mostly contrive to make a stool or two which with a few blocks of wood forms seats for the whole of the occupants.[1]

Alexander Harris in The Emigrant Family gives a description of the camp of a Road Party near Lupton's Inn on the road south of Sydney during the 1830s.

The camp was ranged in an opening at the edge of the bush, forming three sides of a square. The huts were long, low, bark-roofed buildings of the rudest sort, with slabs rather thrown than fitted together, and many of them displaced. Along the rails which separated the camp from the road, were hung blankets of all colours, white excepted, and of all sorts save untattered. The huts at the far side were superior to the others, and occupied partly by the overseer and partly as a store for serving out the rations supplied by the contractor. The store, on other than ration days, served as a tool house for locking up by night the spades and other implements. This building, though the smallest, being likewise the most secure, was sometimes used as a place of temporary confinement for any refractory member of the gang; till he could be handed over to the police, or taken by the overseer to court. In front of the overseers hut was a long pole, resting horizontally upon two uprights, on which the overseers nocturnal comforts were spread, to air them and get rid of the fleas. As the overseer had a hutkeeper allowed him, however, whilst those under his superintendence had to manage for themselves as best they could, the interior of his habitation displayed much more cleanliness and regularity than was elsewhere discernible.[2]

There are two stockade sites above Wiseman's Inn. The first stockade site on the southern side of the river has recently been cleared. This has made room for a strong growth of Kangaroo Grass. There is also a growth of Kangaroo Grass in a hollow on the access road nearby. This first stockade site is the only one with a growth of Fleabane which may well have been brought onto the site by the convicts themselves. Traditionally Fleabane was used with other herbs in order to repel fleas. They were just as much of a problem at a Road Gang site as they were in England as the two quotes above show.

The Stockade site on Devine's Hill is characterised by a growth of Weeping Rice Grass which has arrived on the site as animal fodder or as stuffing in mattresses. There is no Kangaroo Grass on the site suggesting a different locality for the grass cutting activities. This grassy area is surrounded on three sides by Lomandra Longifolia.

A study of the two sites on either side of the Hawkesbury suggests to me that the cattle may well have been locked in the stockade site at night with the men and equipment.

The Iron Gang 9 Stockade site in the general vicinity of Mt Manning is set just over the ridge to catch the sun all day. It has a mixture of Weeping Rice Grass and Kangaroo Grass. The closest source of supply would be along the upper reaches of Wollombi Brook. This is interesting as this was the furthest most north of the Wisemans Ferry based gangs with the headwaters of Wollombi Brook being the southern end of the Newcastle Gangs areas.

Denis' Dog Kennel is located in a hollow with a plentiful supply of fresh water. It would have received a good updraft of fresh air in summer but would have been cold in winter.

There is no mention of fruit or vegetables which the convicts were expected to grow in their own gardens. There was a Government Garden in Sydney which supplied vegetables to Hyde Park Barracks, the Carters Barracks and road gangs nearby. At the Pennant Hills timber getting establishment there were four acres of land set aside as a garden and Camp Ground. In 1823 they grew 15 bushels (840 lbs) of maize, together with a few potatoes and vegetables.[3] The maize which ripened towards the end of March probably needed manure to increase its yield. Potatoes were generally grown as a first crop to prepare the fields for cultivation. They were sown in January and were at their best when grown on new land, manure was found to deteriorate their quality, while the clay soils made them somewhat watery and waxy.[4]

One of the first things a settler planted was an orange and a lemon tree. Although neither of these have been located at Stockade sites it may have been possible in certain instances to get these fruits nearby. One plentiful resource on the sandstone ridge tops was Native Sarsparella. From the beginnings of white settlement it was boiled in water by the convicts and commonly known as Sweet Tea.

The animal manure would have gone straight into the garden early in the morning before its presence attracted the flies. Animal manure was dropped at random but human manure was probably collected from one place. Although urine tubs were issued to the military there is no known mention of them in the requisitions list of materials being issued to Road Gangs although they are mentioned in instructions for locking up Iron Gangs in at night. Elizabeth Roberts has tentatively identified a toilet site at the stockade at Devine's Hill. It is on the outer western edge of the stockade. There was a grove of the native shrub Clerodendrum tomentoseum in full flower growing

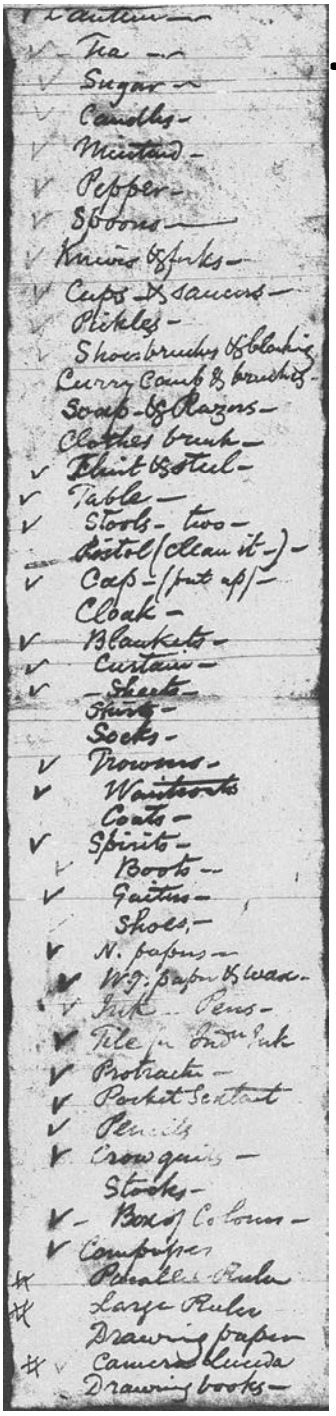
around it when we visited the site on 12 Feb 2008. There were no other Clerodendrums growing anywhere nearby.

As an exercise in reading the landscape a study of the out of place plants that are growing in the mostly undisturbed landscape tell us about the movements of people and animals.

1. David Kent & Norma Townsend, *Joseph Mason Assigned Convict*, 1996 p 43 - 44
2.Alexander Harris, *The Emigrant Family*, reprint Canberra 1967 p 215
3.Re turns of the Colony 1825-26
4.Sullivan to Col Sec, 11 Sep 1824 SR NSW 4/1775 pp 167 – 168, W. C. Wentworth, *Statistical, Historical and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales*. London 1819 p 94

Right: Kangaroo Grass Themeda australis

Below: Sir Thomas Mitchell's Packing List
Mitchell Library Manuscripts CY reel 1992



The Smells

E. A. Roberts

In Australia in the early 21st Century we take for granted daily ablutions, deodorant, toothpaste, tooth brushes, running water, underwear, toilet paper, fly screens, insect repellents, refrigeration and washing machines. Without them we and our surroundings would give off strong odours. Yet none of these things were known to the convicts that built the Great North Road or to the men who surveyed the route or supervised the building of the road. To the above potential smells could be added those of a diet rich in boiled cabbage, cooked over a smoky open fire and of a camp site lit by tallow dips.

After 1830 another smell in some camps would have come from the cowhide tents. These were supposed to be tanned but some were greenhide.

For iron gangs after 1833, picture them enclosed after dark in a wooden caravan with little ventilation. Now imagine the effect on a hot summer's night in the Hunter Valley especially towards the weeks end.

"Slops lists" describe the clothes supplied to convicts. They did not include any underwear or socks. Before leaving on his first trip of exploration Thomas Mitchell wrote himself a packing list. This list has survived, tucked in his notebook. He took more shirts than pairs of socks, wore a waistcoat and a nightcap but no underwear.[1]

The convicts were allocated two changes of clothes and three-and-a-half ounces of soap a week. On Saturday afternoons they were supposed to bathe and wash their clothes and muster clean on Sundays for church parade. In dry camps, this would have involved a walk to the nearest creek. It is assumed they wore one set of clothes all week, while the second set was washed and dried for next week.

Each gang was supplied with one razor and one pair of scissors. Thus one "cut-throat" razor was shared between twelve to seventy men. In a time when men often had full beards and longish hair, a convict was supposed to be clean-shaven with short hair, as this would allow him to be readily identified if he absconded. Bedding consisted of one blanket with a second supplied in winter. Beds were made of sheets of stringy-bark or palliasses stuffed with grass or straw both with smells of their own. The coarse woollen blankets would have absorbed the smells of unwashed bodies and dirty clothes to which would have been added the smell of damp wool in wet weather. If transported back in time, the modern nose would have found convict, soldiers and surveyors camps all smelling very rank.

1. Mitchell Library CY Reel 1992

How healthy were the convicts?

E. A. Roberts

In 1830 the Royal College of Physicians in London sent a survey to Governor Darling asking a series of questions about the health of the native and European population of NSW. Mr Bowman, Inspector of Colonial Hospitals, and Dr McLeod, Deputy Inspector of Military Hospitals, both replied. Their long reports showed that, at least for most of the population, NSW was a healthy place to live.

McLeod and Bowman were writing about 30 years before Louis Pasteur discovered the existence of microbes, which later led to the discovery of how bacteria and viruses caused infections, and over a hundred and ten years before the development of antibiotic medications.

McLeod and Bowman reported that fevers and influenza were not common and the population was well fed. The most prevalent and fatal disease was dysentery, which accounted for half the convict deaths in civilian hospitals. The other troublesome disease was an inflammation of the eyes known as 'blight' or 'sandy blight' (trachoma). This was very contagious and spread rapidly through a household and in severe cases could cause blindness.

In 1828 a form of whooping cough appeared in Sydney and spread very rapidly across the colony. It was suspected to have come on the convict ship *Morley*. Dr McLeod commented that tuberculosis was more frequent than he expected in such a mild climate and people who arrived suffering from it appeared to die more quickly than they would in a colder climate. McLeod attributed the lack of marsh fevers to the winds, the good ventilation of the dwellings and the frequent bathing of all classes of the population as well as the quantity and quality of the food. Bowman observed that fevers were more frequent in the long period of drought.[1]

With close accommodation, shared drinking mugs, and no knowledge of hygiene, a convict gang could have seen any disease spread rapidly. But, as Bowman and McLeod reported, diseases other than dysentery were not a major concern.

For the men working in the open building a road there would have been a number of other health issues. Sunburn, heatstroke, dehydration, hypothermia, crushed, bruised or broken hands or feet; hernias, strains, injured backs, and eye injuries from flying chips of sandstone were just a few of the health issues the men would have faced. For major injuries there were hospitals at Windsor, Parramatta and Newcastle but with the death rate from dysentery in them one would have to have been very ill to want to go there and very strong to survive the journey by wagon or boat. In October 1829 with no other way of getting injured men to hospital. Percy Simpson hired a boat from the settler James Molloy for £3/5/- to transport the men the 35 miles to Windsor Hospital.[2]

Many gangs had a number of 'invalids'. They were usually set the tasks of breaking stone, a job they could do sitting down. So far no description has been found of what defined an invalid. Arthritis may have been one cause, hernias the result of on site injuries another.

Medical practices were primitive. Bleeding was still used for a number of ailments including severe headaches. Another favourite was purging with Epsom Salt.[3] Basilicon ointment was used on wounds as was salt, calamine powder and cabbage leaves.[4] Dry salt sprinkled on open wounds was excruciatingly painful but did promote healing[5] whereas cabbage leaves contain anti-inflammatory agents and the zinc oxide in calamine powder has known antibacterial and fungicidal properties.[6]

Huts were built for use as a dispensary and medical attendants were attached to the road gangs. When soldiers were sent to guard Iron Gang No.3 in late 1830, an Assistant Surgeon was to be included for the treatment of the road gangs in the vicinity. A hut was to be set up for the treatment of slight injuries, while the victims of more serious ones were still to be sent to the Hospital at Windsor.[7] In late 1830 Dr McMath was the attached surgeon.[8] The two sets of Road Party reports for 1830 show that between 2% and 3% of the men in the gangs were sent to the hospital each month. Some were later returned. One of the men sent to hospital and returned was Patrick Casey, who was the overseer of Road Party 42 when he was sent to hospital on 13th July 1830. He returned on 31st July 1830.[9]

Having 2% of the workforce injured each month may seem excessive, but when it is considered in the context of the work the men were doing at this time, it was not surprising. They were cutting down cliff faces and building massive walls and a transverse across a gully, with about half the men in leg irons that restricted their movement. There was no safety equipment of any sort.

In March 1830, when seven men were sent to hospital from Iron Gang No.3, fifty new men had been received that same month. In writing this article it has been assumed the men sent to hospital were sent because of injuries. They may not all have been injured. We have yet to explore the possible psychological effects of sending men who had been born and bred in the city to work in leg irons in conditions of extreme isolation. We know at least one man sent to a road party was suffering from tuberculosis. How many he may have infected is impossible to know.[10]

A number of the stockade sites were away from ready sources of water. Thus water would have had to be

carted daily. As it is now known that the human body needs approximately two and half to three litres, or 0.5 to 0.7 of a gallon of drinking water per day at a bare minimum, and more during hot, sweaty or windy weather, it is probable that inadvertent dehydration could have been a problem at times. Droughts are not restricted to NSW and in 2005 the Human Rights watch wrote to a prison in Virginia, USA, that had run out of water. They were concerned that the prisoners were not being supplied enough water. In part they wrote:

Risks of even mild dehydration include increased risk of urinary tract infection, headaches, syncope (fainting), fatigue, and constipation. The risks of severe dehydration include shock, seizure, and arrythmias. At the very least, inmates may suffer fatigue, and reduced metabolic rate, at worst, there may be inmates whose renal function is compromised, and a reduction in water intake could have serious consequences. Those with diabetes, cardiac and renal problems are especially vulnerable.[11]

All the problems cited would have applied equally to the men in road gangs if the water supply was not adequate. Dehydration may have been a contributing cause to the man found dead at Iron Gang 3 in September 1830. As there are no medical records from the medical attendants it is not possible to estimate if there was widespread mild dehydration as evidenced by the reporting of constipation and headaches.

Possible dehydration aside, according to Dr McLeod's criteria for a healthy population (those of being well-fed, living in well-ventilated accommodation, bathing frequently and working in the open air), the convicts building the Great North Road were a healthy lot.

1.*Historic Records of Australia*, Series 1, Vol. XV, pp. 370 -378
2.State Records Reel 3002, letter no 29/133, Col. Sec. to Lockyer PRO reel 3210; Report of George Fairfield, Surgeon Sovereign, 1829.
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilicon 27 Jan 2008; discussions with Emmie Parkes 27/1/2008 and RH Parkes 1990s;
4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calamine 27 Jan 2008. recollections of Wiseman's daughter (Mrs Crawford) in an unreferenced newspaper article in Primary Records SAG: Basilicon ointment: a mixture of wax, pitch, resin and olive oil. Calamine powder: a mixture of zinc oxide (ZnO) with about 0.5% iron(III) oxide (Fe_2O_3)
5. Dry Salt was still used at Prince Alfred Hospital on rare occasions in the late 1930s and in the military hospital in Singapore in 1942
6. http://www.kabanaskincare.com/Antibacterial_Literature.pdf 27Jan 2008
7. State Records Reel 3065,Heneage Finch to Surveyor General, 25 September 1830; Reel 3015, Col. Sec. to Thomas [8.] Mitchell, 27 Sept 1830.Instructions re Military guard for Iron Gang 3.
8. State Records Box 4/2095. Proceedings, court of Magistracy Lower Portland Head, 31 December 1930
9 CTP Convict data base
10 Roberts, E.A, 'A Bunch of Losers' in *The Pick, vol.1 ,2003*.John Carr arrived per *Waterloo* (2), April 1831, died in the Wollombi Road Party October 1832
11.http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/09/30/usdom11820_txt.htm 2/1/2008

Native Foods along the Great North Road.

Ralph Hawkins

A number of the plants growing along the route of the Great North Road that were regularly eaten by the local Aborigines had long been known to Europeans as edible plants. With a daily diet of meat, damper and cornmeal porridge it is probable the convicts used at least some of the native plants foods to break the monotony of their diet.

The plant that was most likely used was the native Sarsaparilla or Smilax Glyciphilla –known to the convicts as Sweet Tea and the Sydney Aborigines as Warraburra. Smilax glyciphylla is a small climber with wiry stems found on the east coast of Australia. The flowers appear between October and December and the black berries appear mainly in winter. Aborigines chewed the leaves and black berries for coughs and chest complaints, preferring the new pink leaves which were less bitter. Smilax glyciphylla was first described by Sir Joseph Banks in 1770 under the botanical names of Philydrum lanuginosum. Its used was discovered by Denis Considen the Assistant Surgeon of the First Fleet and it became known among the convicts as sweet tea. In 1790, after some leaves had been sent back to England, Dr James Smith of Marlborough Street London published the first, but incomplete description of Sweet Tea.

SWEET TEA PLANT
*This is a tree or shrub whose leaves only we have seen, but from them we judge it to belong to the genus Smilax. For want of the stem we cannot settle its specific character. These leaves are about two inches long, ovato lanceolate, pointed, entire, marked with three longitudinal ribs, and many transverse elevated veins, smooth and shining above, glaucous beneath, with a thick cartilageneous edge of the substance of the ribs. The leaves have the taste of liquorice root accompanied with bitter. They are said to make a kind of tea, not unpleasant to the taste, and good for the scurvy. The plant promises much in the last respect, from its bitter as a tonic as well as the quantity of saccharine matter it conta*ins.[1]

When the Bryants escaped from Sydney in March 1791, Mary Bryant took sweet tea leaves with her in the boat. Some of them were obtained by James Boswell and were discovered among his long lost papers in 1956.[2] In 1947 Smilax glyciphylla berries were examined by

Mary Bryant's Sweet Tea Leaves

the Institute of Anatomy in Canberra for its Vitamin C content and found to have 21 milligrams per 100 grams equivalent to a tomato. A cup full of berries would be sufficient for one man for one day. Smilax species was known in Europe as a cough medicine. In the 1840s in Dublin it was prepared at Butler's Medical Hall in Sackville Street. The recommended dosage was a tablespoon three or four times a day.[3]

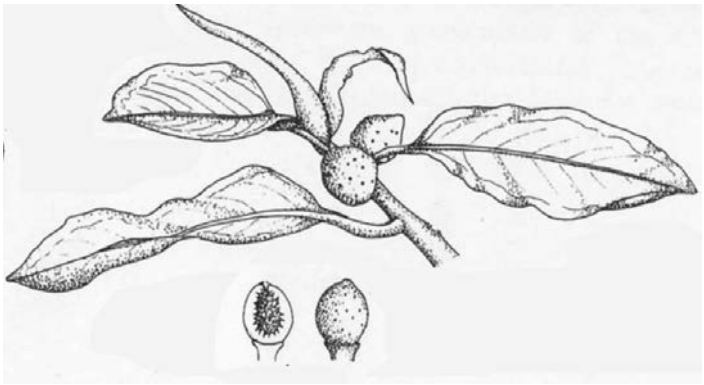
Another native plant the Convicts probably picked were native figs – known as Damun Ficus rubiginosa. It begins life as an epiphyte clinging to vertical rock faces in its early stages of growth. On good soil it becomes a tree. The figs ripen between February and July and Surgeon White of the First fleet has the following to say:

> *A man shewed us some wild figs that grew near at hand. Such as were green and unripe he did not pull; but, after some search, having found one that was tolerably ripe, he made me pluck it and put it into his mouth. He ate it with apparent relish, and smacked his lips, after he had swallowed it, to convince us how good it was.*[4]

Other plants that may have been used were Bracken Fern Root – called Gurgi by the Sydney Aborigines and Native Grape - Cissus hypoglauca which flowers in November – December and fruits are about 10 – 20 cm across. Native Grapes have dropped their fruit by April, which will lie on the ground in mid May. They grow best on old middens and on the deep enriched sandy soil of the levees along the creek. The recently fallen fruits of the Native grapes are sweet and tart and the older ones which wrinkle like currants less so. Samples have been found on the lower Hawkesbury River as large as 15 cms (6inches) in diameter.[5]

Whilst there is no known written record of the Great North Road convicts eating native plants, given that the plants would have been all around them and their diet was so monotonous it is likely they ate what ever they found that was known to be safe. The fact Mary Byrant took Sweet tea with her in 1791 shows the knowledge about the more palatable native foods quickly got into the convict community.

1 White, John. *Journal of a Voyage to new South Wales*. Appendix 1 page175
2. *Sydney Morning Herald* 15th Dec 1956
3. Butlers used Smilax aspera rather than the more usual Smilax sarsparilla
4. White, John. op.cit., 29th July 1788 p151
5.On Berowra Creek south of Crosslands



Above: Bracken Fern, the root can be eaten.

Below: In the plains Country, Emus may have been captured and eaten as alternative to the monotony of beef.

Above Native figs
Below Sarspella or sweet tea growing in the wild near a camp site.

Flour for the Convicts from the Mills on the Hawkesbury

By Les and Anne Dollin of the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Three watermills were built in Wisemans Ferry area between 1817 and 1833 by early Hawkesbury pioneers, James and Benjamin Singleton. The Singleton brothers had a contract to supply flour to the Government Store, which supported the convicts and free settlers of the colony.[1]

These three watermills were built on small creeks on the edge of the Hawkesbury River and were powered by the river's tides. Water would flow up the creek on the high tide and be held by a dam. Then as the tide dropped, the miller would run the water back to the river under the water wheel. The turning water wheel would drive the millstones through a set of huge wooden cogged wheels.[2]

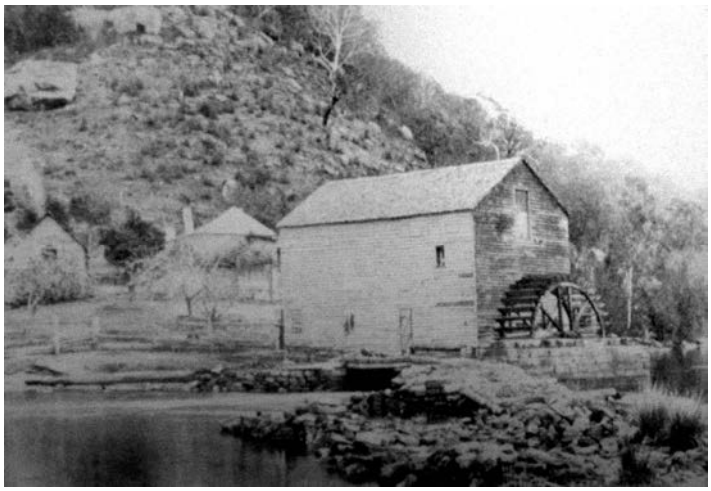
James Singleton built his first tidal mill on a creek called Mill Creek on Singleton Road only about two kilometres down river from Wisemans Ferry.[3] He and his brother Benjamin had applied for this land in 1817.

James Singleton built a second tidal mill in the early 1820s on a creek on the north side of the Hawkesbury River. This creek was called Dillons Creek or Myrtle Creek, but later just became known as Mill Creek. A stone wharf for this mill was built at the mouth of the creek. James had applied for this block of land as early as 1810.[4]

This second mill was about 300 m up the creek. The bottom floor or cellar of the mill residence is still standing. It was built of cut sandstone with an elaborate arched entrance.

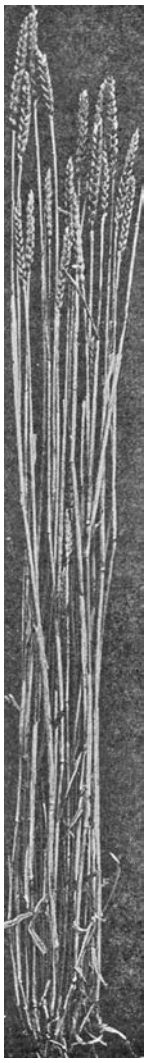
James Singleton built a third tidal mill called the Gunderman Mill in the early 1830s. It was later just known as the Singleton Mill. It was on Layburys Creek about 17 km from Wisemans Ferry.[5] Early photographs show the imposing old timber mill building with its wheel, standing beside the Hawkesbury River. It was a prominent landmark of the area until 1915.

Singleton imported French Burr millstones for use in his second and third Wisemans Ferry mills.[6] These stones were able to produce the finest white flour. James and his wife lived in the residence at Layburys Creek for the rest of their lives. James Singleton died in 1849 aged 72 years and was buried in the Laughtondale Cemetery, beside the Hawkesbury River that he loved so much.



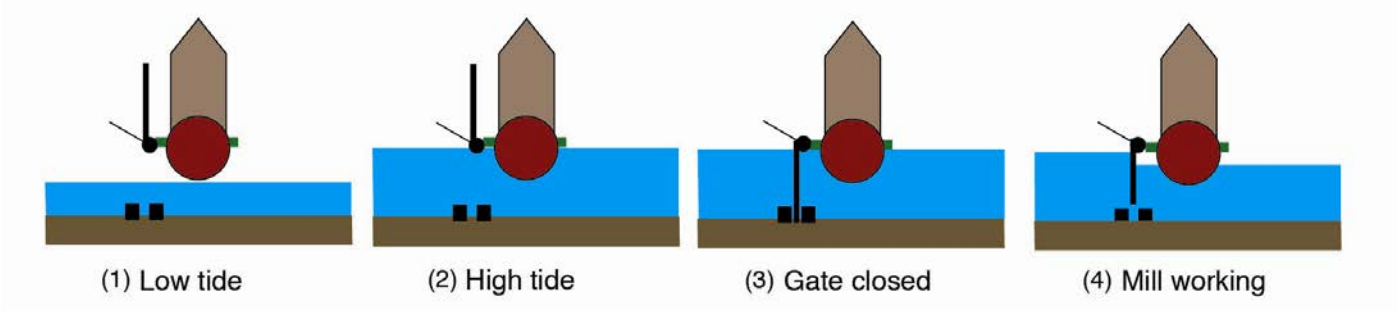
Above: Earliest photograph of James Singleton's tidal mill and residence on Layburys Creek in the late 1800s . Photograph courtesy of Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society

1.Singleton, Bruce. *Singleton's Mill;* . Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society
2.Howell, Charles and Keller, Allan. (1977). *The Mill at Philipsburg Manor Upper Mills and a Brief History of Milling.* Sleepy Hollow Restorations, Tarrytown, USA. p 125
3.Old map of Frederick Parish. http://parishmaps.lands.nsw.gov.au
4.Old map of Spencer Parish. http://parishmaps.lands.nsw.gov.au
5.Old map of Frederick Parish. http://parishmaps.lands.nsw.gov.au ; Morawa District Historical Society *Water-powered flourmills in Australia.* http://members.westnet.com.au/caladenia/waterflourmill_aust.html
6.Morawa District Historical Society. *Water-powered flourmills in Australia.* http://members.westnet.com.au/caladenia/waterflourmill_aust.html



Left :A healthy wheat plant. Wheat was cut and stooked, generally made into hay stacks ,then thrashed to separate the grain before it could be milled. Photo courtesy Dept of Agriculture NSW *The Farmers Handbook* 1941

Below: A simplified diagram of how a tidal watermill works. (1) Watermill at low tide; (2) The tide comes in under the wheel; (3) The tidal water is held back by the control gate; (4) The water, that is slowly released by the control gate, drives the water wheel. Diagram by Anne Dollin



Survival on the Great North Road

Elizabeth A Roberts

The basic elements of survival are food, water and shelter. This article examines each of these elements of survival as it applied to the men building the Great North Road. Whilst the Government policy in relation to this is easy to find, the implementation of it is not. Part one looks at the food supply and what was involved in feeding the men working on the Great North Road and the possible effects on the surrounding districts particularly Lower Portland Head as that is where the greatest effect would have been. Parts two and three examine the water supply and shelter.

The 1828 Census shows there were 798 residents in the Lower Portland Head district plus 261 convicts in Iron Gangs and Road Parties. The Lower Portland Head Census district ran from about the Colo River to Mangrove Creek including the MacDonald River and Webbs Creek. Most residents were farmers and their families, assigned convicts and labourers. One 'farmer' was Solomon Wiseman who had the contract to supply the Convict Gangs with food and other supplies for most of the time the gangs were stationed in the Lower Portland Head district. The 1828 Census showed he employed a shoemaker, a baker, a carpenter, blacksmith, and three labourers one of whom would have acted as ferry man. Also resident in the district there were two millers; James Singleton and his employee Francis Burns, a tanner George Elliott and a butcher Joseph Preston.[1] It is likely these four men all played a part in the survival of the convict gangs.

Part 1 the Food Supply

The Commissariat advertised in the *Sydney Gazette* for persons wishing to supply the commissarial with goods, but to date no lists of successful tenders have been found in that newspaper before January 1831. It appears Solomon Wiseman had the contract for Lower Portland Head from the time when the gangs arrived in 1826 till 24 December 1831, when the contact was awarded to James Hale. Richard Woodbury had the contract for one gang at Ten Mile Hollow for all or part of 1830. From the advertisements in the *Sydney Gazette* the terms of the contacts are known.[2] The food was supplied three times a week or more often if needed. The contractor was required to deliver the rations to the men's huts but for some reason Wiseman worked his contract so the convicts had to collect their rations from him. This saved him money and cost the gangs time in having men away from work. Contractors were to quote and be paid per pound delivered. Salt meat was to be supplied in the summer months with fresh meat in the winter. From the few records that remain the numbers in the gangs varied from 240 to 310. For ease of calculation an average of 260 men was used when calculating the volumes of food needed.

The standard daily ration for convicts was one pound (456gms) of fresh or salt beef or ten ounces (285gms) of pork and one and a half pounds (684gms)of grain meal. The meat portion of the ration remained constant with the pork alternative being dropped in November 1830. What made up the cereal portion of the diet, varied over time. In 1825 the weekly rations was seven pounds of beef or four pounds pork, seven pounds of flour or wheaten meal; three pounds of maize and half a pound of sugar. From 1826 the rations were quoted as a daily allowance. The contract let in November 1826 was for one and a half pounds of wheat meal. By November 1827 the ration had was changed back to one pound of wheaten meal; half a pound of maize meal plus one ounce of sugar (a saving of one ounce per man per week on the 1825 ration). The wheaten meal (coarse flour) was only to have twelve percent extracted as bran or pollard. The rations to be delivered in 1832 changed to one and one quarter pounds of wheaten bread or one pound flour and eight ounces of maize meal. Salt was to issued when fresh meat was delivered. Maize and sugar was eaten together as porridge. It was soaked for many hours before cooking. The daily allowance of soap was half an ounce (14gms) this is the equivalent of one cake of bath soap a week.

Convicts and soldiers received the similar rations the only difference being the soldiers flour had twenty percent of bran or pollard extracted and soldiers got mutton as well as beef and did not have to eat the dreaded corn meal porridge. With less roughage in their diet and less physical exercise it is likely the soldiers suffered more constipation than the convicts.

The question has always been could Solomon Wiseman supply all the provisions needed or would he have needed to purchase some from the other farmers in the district thus spreading the benefits of gangs presence across the community. From December 1827 if he supplied all beef, (there did not appear to be many pigs kept in the lower Hawkesbury although Wiseman had some) with a average of 260 men he need 1820lbs (830kgs) of meat the equivalent of three large beasts, thirty five bushels of wheat (nearly six bags) and seventeen and a half bushels of hulled corn each week.

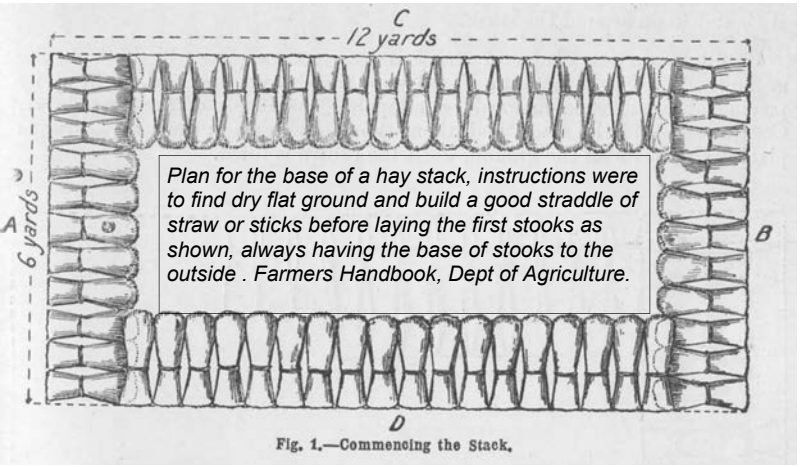
In the 1820-30s cattle were of mixed breed and all colours

On an annual basis he would have slaughtered some where between 160 and 170 head of fully grown cattle (at least three years old) per year to supply the meat. He would also have needed 1771 bushels of wheat (590bags); 790 bushels of hulled cracked or ground maize. Presumable Singleton or his employee Burns ground the wheat and corn each week, while Joseph

Preston was employed by Wiseman to slaughter and dress the three beasts each week and George Elliott tanned the skins. The convicts were also to be supplied with sugar; soap and salt. Initially this was supplied from the government stores in the later years the contractors had to provide it as part of their contracts.

If Wiseman could produce twenty bushels of wheat per acre he could have grown most of the wheat needed on his Hawkesbury river flats. It was estimated to take a man and two horses nine hours to plough an acre in grass, if the soil was light it would take less time. Horses had to be harnesses and hitched up before work could start then rested every so often.[3] If he set three men ploughing with his six horses it would have taken nearly a month to plough enough land to grow the wheat.

Once the wheat was grown it had to be harvested which was a long complicated process. The grown wheat was cut close to the ground with a sickle, gathered into bundles and tied. The tied bundles called sheaves were stacked standing upright in groups of twelve called a shock to dry out for about three days then gathered and stacked into hay stacks and then threshed. This involved a lot of handling and took time. This was how grain had been harvested since biblical times.[4] For efficiency there was supposed to be one person binding for each six men cutting. The better behaved men from the Road Gangs were lent to the local farmers for the Harvest.[5] Technology was advancing as in 1831 Cyrus McCormick invented the reaper but there were already in NSW at least one horse worked machine that could separate the grain from chaff and the flour from bran. Whether there were any in the Lower Hawkesbury is not known.[6]



Plan for the base of a hay stack, instructions were to find dry flat ground and build a good straddle of straw or sticks before laying the first stooks as shown, always having the base of stooks to the outside . Farmers Handbook, Dept of Agriculture.

Fig. 1.—Commencing the Stack.

In the 1828 Census Solomon Wiseman claimed he had 1100 acres of land of which 220 was cleared and cultivated. He also had six horses and eighty head of cattle. While his son Richard stated he had 800 acres twenty cleared and cultivated with one horse and 160 head of cattle.[7]

From land title research it is known Solomon Wiseman had 1090 acres of land. This consisted of 170 acres at Wisemans Ferry; 800 acres at Laguna that he sold to Richard for £500 in February 1838, nine months before he died; and eighty acres on the north side of the Macdonald River that either David Cross had mortgaged to him or he had sold to David Cross and David Cross was occupying when a *Release and Confirmation* from Solomon to David was registered for the transaction of the nominal sum of five shillings, a month before Solomon died. The other land he apparently held in 1828 was forty acres on Sawyers Reach known as Hayman's Farm that he sold to George Loder, Publican of Windsor, on the 1st January 1832 just before the Road Gangs departed. It appears that the land Richard claimed in 1828 was actually his fathers land. Richard was to later acquire a lot of land in the Wollombi valley. At one stage he owned most of the cultivatable land on Murrays Run; Wattagan Creek and Wollombi creek south of Laguna. In 1834 he bought Finch's land and took up another 4000 acres in his own right, defaulting on a mortgage of £15,000 to his brother John in 1842.

While Solomon Wiseman could have grown most of the grain himself if he had employed enough labour, he would have had to purchase stock. It is probable he and Richard purchased weaner calves and ran them on the Wollombi lands till they were big enough to be profitable to kill for meat. Solomon probably also purchased from his neighbours, for a cheap price, broken down cows and cows, too old to breed any more. It was claimed the carrying capacity of the Hunter was one cow per ten acres and it took three years for a herd to double itself if none were sold.[8]

When the contractor had to supply the sugar it would have been purchased in Sydney from an importer. The salt could have been either imported or purchased from John Blaxland's salt works on the Parramatta River. It was reported that Blaxland's salt was not good enough to keep meat for a long time. The soap was probably made in Sydney, here there was a manufacturer that made soap and would sell it for five pence a pound if purchased in large quantities. When Wiseman had to supply soap he had the option of making the soap or purchasing it. The soap made in Sydney was made using the ash from the Mangrove trees in Botany Bay and other places. There were mangroves growing along the Hawkesbury River near Wisemans Ferry and each beast that was killed would have produced at least one kilo of fat each between the protective craw and kidney fat.

For much of the time the road was being built NSW was suffering a severe drought. In February 1827 it was reported there was average crop harvest in spite of the drought, but by October the same year it was being reported that the drought had caused cattle to die at Bong Bong. The Drought did not break till March 1829 and there were droughts reported again in 1833/4. The Maize crop failed in 1828 and there was a very poor wheat crop. Prices skyrocketed and a lot of wheat was imported from Tasmania. In the early part of the drought wheat was averaging seven shillings (70cents) a bushel, on the 26 September 1828 the price reached eighteen shilling ($1.80) a bushel but with little or no grass cattle prices went down.[9] This may have diminished Wisemans profit for that year.

One of the problems facing a contractor supplying a large number of men was that each beast killed would produce a different weight of meat often a little more or less than what was needed. In the heat of mid summer meat would go bad within twenty four hours of killing if it was not salted down, (rubbed with large amounts of dry salt and placed in salt brine) which is why it was to be supplied salted in summer and fresh in winter.

In December 1831, shortly after he had purchased Wambo Station at Warkworth, James Hale. a Windsor publican, successfully submitted a lucrative tender that must have underbid Wiseman's tender. The Sydney Herald listed what each successful tenderer was to be paid. Using these figures and remembering Wiseman probably was making an even greater profit it is possible to calculate that Wiseman was making a profit of at least £791/-/- ($1582.00)a year, probably more as this was calculated on purchasing full grown cattle, the wheat and corn. This profit needs to be compared to Sir Thomas Mitchell's salary package of £1000 ($2000) which included house rent travelling expenses and all other allowances. Percy Simpson's salary was £200 ($400) plus allowance for a horse and one ration when in the field. And the director of public works salary was £700 ($1400) and that of the surveyor in charge of the Roads and Bridge Department salary was £600 ($1200).[10]

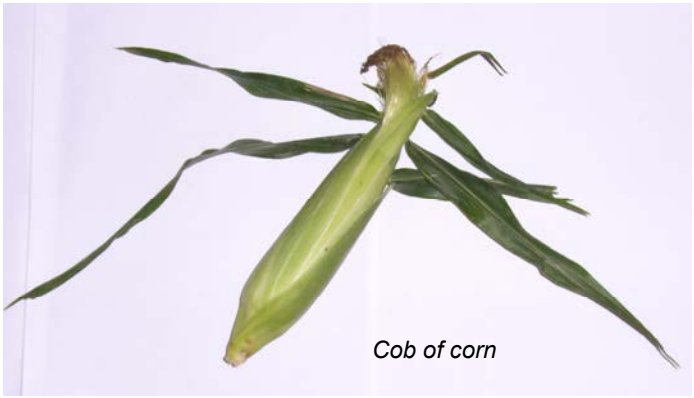
As there was a mill a short distance down the river from Wisemans Ferry it is most likely the wheat and corn was milled there. This would have earned Ben Singleton somewhere in the vicinity of an additional £2/-/- ($4.00) to £2/16/-($5.60) a week. One of the many complaints against Wiseman as ferry contractor was that he kept people waiting while the boat was away on his private business, possibly delivering grain to or collecting flour from the mill. For a period of time Richard Woodbury also had part of the contract to feed the gangs near the Mangrove Creek.[11]

It would appear from a letter John Jenkins Peacock wrote to the Colonial Secretary that Wiseman had the district convinced that the contact to supply the road gangs was his by right and not something to be contested each year.[12] But Wiseman himself was fully aware he had to tender each year and with a very lucrative contract was vulnerable to being under quoted. When it became necessary about half way through a contract to erect a yard at Hungary Flat, Wiseman wrote wanting certainty of receiving the contract the following year. This was rejected. The internal correspondence mentions Wiseman's was the only tender so the Commissariat had no option but to accept his high prices.[13] It took someone from outside the district to break Wiseman's monopoly on the lucrative contract just as the work was winding down. James Hale who won the contract needed to erect a store on government land at Wisemans Ferry for the storage of supplies.[14] Based in Windsor with a property at Warkworth, he would have had to employ someone to run this operation many miles distant from where he lived and from his property but could still do that, undercut Wiseman and make a profit.

There were by-products from supplying the convict rations, for each 100 pounds of wheat ground there was twelve pounds of bran or pollard extracted. For each beast killed there were the horns, hoofs, hide and kidney and craul fat. It is probable George Elliot tanned the hides that were at first shipped round to Sydney for sale and, after November 1830, possibly sold by contract to Percy Simpson to make tents.[15] By buying the skins locally everyone saved, the Government got a lower price and vendor saved the cartage to market in Sydney.

Whilst this research did not reveal which other farmers if any may have profited from the presence of the Road Gangs, it showed that Wiseman was profiteering, and appears to have convinced the locals that the contracts were his by right. It also showed that Wiseman needed to purchase cattle and probably grain during the drought.

Although it appears Wiseman kept most of the benefits of the presence of the Road Gangs to himself and his family, some benefits would have flowed on to the other residents. The presence of the Road Parties meant there was extra labour available during harvest time for the cost of their rations. There was a local market for surplus stock and for broken down or old stock and possibly a market for surplus grain especially during the drought. A hidden benefit to the local community is that, through observation, some would have learnt how stone was split and worked and the basics in road construction.



Cob of corn

When looking at the official daily allocation of food as supplied by Wiseman the question of scurvy was raised. The official ration was about adequate in carbohydrates and protein, B and A vitamins but totally lacking in vitamin C. Scurvy, a potentially deadly disease caused by the lack of Vitamin C, was the scourge of the sailors, and armies fed on diets of meal and flour. From the time of Cook it was known that limes, lemons, oranges and fresh vegetables prevented scurvy although the reason was not understood till 1932. In the early 19th century scurvy was a well know disease and the symptoms, the formation of liver spots on the skin most abundant on the thighs and legs, spongy gums, and bleeding from all mucous membranes, would have been readily recognised. Scurvy also made a person look pale, feel depressed, and become partially immobilized. In

advanced scurvy there are open, suppurating wounds and loss of teeth.[16]

As we had researched a number of the men it was known that some men worked in road gangs for several years so if they had not been getting vitamin C, they should have been seriously ill or dead. Why did they not get scurvy or did they? A search of the index of Historic Records of Australia from the mid 1820s to the late 1830s showed there was not one mention of scurvy in the official records so it appeared the men had been supplementing the official diet in some way with vitamin C contained fruit or vegetables. The question was then, what were they supplementing their diet with and how did they get it. There were passing references to carts been sent to town but no references to what was got and by 1826-32 the government farms had ceased. It was known that the convict timber-getters at Pennant Hills in the early 1820s grew their own vegetables in gardens behind their huts but there was no mention of vegetables or gardens in any of the published material about the Great North Road, nor in the several inches of copies of correspondence or official documentation about the Road.[17]

Taking *Convict Timber-getters of Pennant Hills* as the first clue, the next clue was found in a dispatch of Governor Darling to Sir George Murray about the establishment of a penal colony at Morton Bay where he enclosed the Regulations for Penal Settlements. There are eighty one points laid out in the regulations that covered not only the behaviour of the convicts but that of the soldiers, the administration and their wives. Early in the instructions it lays out how much land for gardens the various non-convicts were each to be allocated and what they were allowed and not allowed to grow on that land, including no sugar or tobacco. Towards the end of the instructions almost as an after thought the regulations state

> *69. A portion of Ground shall be allotted as a prisoners' Garden the extent of which shall be determined by the Commandant.*[18]

If convict sent to penal colonies, those on the very bottom of the scale were allocated vegetable gardens then those further up the scale must also be expected to grow vegetables but still there is no evidence.

On browsing through a facsimile of the first few months of the *Sydney Morning Herald* it was found that on the very last page of the facsimile of 2 January 1832 was a list of successful tenders for supplying the road gangs for the next 12 months. Now with clues of where to look, the later un-indexed copies of the *Sydney Gazette* were scanned. Although the *Sydney Gazette* did not list the successful tenderers, the tenders being called for 1829 and 1830 were found.

Set out in great detail on page one of the *Sydney Gazette* was an advertisement from the Commissariat Department calling for tenders for the supply of numerous items including the provisioning of the troops and soldiers at various stations across the colony for the next twelve months. The tenders were split into bread and beef; mutton; milk and vegetables. Everyone got bread and beef, soldiers were supplied alternatively with beef and mutton; the only people who were supplied with vegetables were those who were unable for one reason or another to grow vegetables. Vegetables were supplied to the goals, the hospitals, the *Phoenix* hulk and troop transport ships and colonial ships chartered for government business. Milk was supplied to the hospitals, the female factory and the lunatic asylum.[19] Finally the question was answered; the convicts were obviously expected to grow their own vegetables.

The next question was what did they grow? It had to be available in Australia in the 1820s was likely to be fast growing, and have a fairly high vitamin C content. The probable answers are cabbage and possibly radishes. The vegetables regularly sold at the market in Sydney were potatoes, cabbages, red cabbages, cauliflowers, turnips, carrots, celery, broad beans and french beans, pumpkins, onions, shallots and peas.[20]

The convicts needed to grow vegetables whose seed was readily available and that could be eaten at any stage of its growth and would keep if they had to leave camp and move to a new camp. Of the vegetables sold at the market cabbages and celery are the only ones that could be eaten at any stage of its growth followed by turnips and carrots, shallots and onions. Radishes although not listed in the vegetables sold at market have been a well established crop since before the Roman Empire and they are fairly easy to grow. It is a rapidly-maturing crop, with many varieties able to reach maturity within 30 days. Cabbage comes in two broad varieties, early and late. The early varieties mature in about 45 days. They produce small heads which do not keep well and are intended for consumption while fresh. The late cabbage matures in about 87 days, and produces a larger head. Cabbage is a cool season crop, so early and late plantings do better than those maturing in the heat of the summer. Cabbages contain more vitamin C than lemons or oranges while radishes and onion greens contain half, and turnip greens three times as much vitamin C as oranges or lemons. Carrots and celery and mature onions and pumpkins have minimal vitamin C content. Given scurvy does not appear to have a problem no matter how long a man was in a road party it appears they probably grew cabbages and turnips and possibly radishes as they are the easiest of vegetables to grow.[21]

Finally several months after setting out to find if the convicts in road gangs suffered scurvy and if not why not, a partial answer had been found.

Part 2 – Water

The next basic element of survival is water so where did the road parties get their water from? Water is essential to life and to a person's wellbeing. Depending upon size a person needs a minimum of between two and a half to three litres of water per day to survive. A person's body continually loses water, from lungs when breathing out, through their skin, in urine and faeces. Without perspiration, the normal daily turnover of water in adults is about four percent of

body weight, which is just under three litres for a seventy kilogram person. During hot weather, in windy weather or with physical activity a person looses a greater percentage of their body moisture each day which has to be replaced.[22]

Where did Road Parties and Iron Gangs get their water from? Did they have wells, find a spring, camp beside a permanent creek or water hole or cart water or use a combination of sources. It was known that men were assigned to carry water and if necessary bullocks were used. Indeed, in building the Great Western Road some bullocks were killed carrying water.[23] As the Hawkesbury River is usually salty/ brackish as far up stream as Wisemans Ferry they could not have taken water from the Hawkesbury at Wisemans Ferry.

A gang of fifty men would have needed one hundred and forty litres or thirty one gallons of water to drink each day as a bare minimum and much more if they were sweating. Rainfall records do not exist for the 1820s or1830s but it is known there was a drought for three years from 1827 to 1829.[25] As NSW has recently gone through a long period of drought conditions in the stockade sites would have been much the same. During the drought there was no visible water at any of the stockade sites which is what posed the question in the first place. In an attempt to answer some of these questions a person with some ability to divine water inspected a number of known stockade sites and the well at Maroota.[24] When the sites were inspected with a divining rod after heavy rains all were shown to have been sited close to sources of underground water or water soaks.

Aboriginal water hole above Stockade sites Wisemans Ferry

In 1990 an archaeologist Jillian Comber identified a well in the Number 3 Iron Gang stockade site on Devines Hill.[26] This is a depressed area surrounded by cut stones, this area was tested with the divining rod to see if it showed it was a well site. The divining rod reacted to the well site but also seemed to show it was dug into an underground stream that flowed across the stockade site. On following this apparent stream across the stockade site it was found that it flowed into two shallow clay embankment dams situated above the road, that given the current unusually high rain fall (February 2008), were full of water. These dams were in an area that had been heavily quarried. Whilst the actual dam construction probably dates from a later period when the road was used as the access road to Gosford it appears to have been a point for water collection in convict times as there was a channel cut in the natural rock that leads into the cut drain at the road edge either to deliver the over flow to the drain or for ease in collecting this water. That this is a permanent seepage point and not a feature of the unusually wet weather was evidenced by the water loving plants growing in this area only at the seepage point at the edge of the stockade site on a west facing slope.[27] Also growing in a band across the stockade site probably above the underground stream was a plant identified by Ralph Hawkins as a plant that likes to put its roots into moisture.

The well within the stockade appears to have either only supplied a small portion of the water needed or only supplied water at certain times. Unfortunately the site was not surveyed with a divining rod during the drought. In 1990 Jillian Comber also found evidence that water was collected from the intermittent creeks above the road to the east and south of the stockade. Elizabeth Roberts and Ralph Hawkins found evidence of the damming of these creeks below the road also. As well there is evidence that water was collected from a seep in a cave below the road. It appears the convicts collected water from where ever it could be found. The less distance it had to be carried the better.

It is suspected that Shepherds Gully road dates from this time. The MacDonald River is fresh water as opposed to brackish water in the Hawkesbury. The road could have provided a passage for water carts as well and the men may have been taken down to the Macdonald to bath and wash their clothes on Saturday afternoons rather than down to the Hawkesbury River, freshwater being easier to wash in than brackish.
Felton Mathews' correspondence to the Surveyor General revealed that Percy Simpson was sending sawyers to the head of Wrights Creek to fell suitable timber. Where this timber was to be used and how it was got to where it was to be used in not known but Shepherds Gully road may have been involved.

In inspecting the Stockade/campsite on the south side of the Hawkesbury River water was found to be oozing from the clay layer in the soil and running across the entrance road. From the reaction of the divining rod it also appeared there was an underground stream flowing under the road. On top of the ridge above the first Stockade site there are rock water holes that have obviously held water for hundreds of years. About one kilometre south of the stockade site on the top of the ascent there are a series of large stone water holes that appear to be fed from an underground water source that have also held water for hundreds of years. These water holes held water throughout the drought but it is not known how they would have held up if constantly milked.

Early in the drought of 1827-29 it appeared Jonathan Warner was getting water from a well found at the base of the southern hillside. He wrote complaining that Wiseman's pigs kept rolling in the mud and fouling

the well. This well is again possibly an aboriginal soak. It is situated at the base of the hillside where it would normally be fed by a small stream, but during the drought, when there had been no rain for many weeks, the well appeared dry. But a hole made by a stick poked down through the surface in to the mud below quickly filled with water.

The other well that probably was used to supply the convicts with water is the well at Maroota near to the Maroota loops. It also probably originated as an Aboriginal water soak that was enlarged to a well by the convicts. It is cut through stone into a clay lens and is fed by a strong underground stream. This source only dried up toward the very end of the drought and held water again as soon as it rained.

Well at Maroota full of water after heavy rain, Jan 2007

It would appear that where stockade sites were not situated besides obvious sites of water such as the Hunter River, Wollombi Creek or Dennis Dog Kennel, they were sited where there was divinable water.

This water research is only very preliminary research but published so people researching convict stockade sites think about, and look for, the sources of water as well as being alert for any comments about the sighting of stockade sites. It appears more than just a convenient flat site was needed for a stockade.

Part 3 - Shelter

The third element essential to survival is shelter. During the period the road was built, four types of accommodation was used. They were bark huts, slab huts, cowhide tents and wooden caravans or boxes on wheels. The convicts either built their own accommodation or it was built for them by other groups of skilled convicts. Where they could find sufficient Stringybark trees the huts were constructed completely of bark attached to a sapling frame. Bark huts, when properly built with enough overlap, made a water proof and fairly windproof shelter.[28] To obtain the sheets of bark, Stringybark trees were either ring-barked top and bottom and the bark split from top to bottom and levered off, or the trees were cut down and the bark cut through at appropriate lengths, split top to bottom and levered off. Appropriate lengths of bark would have been about 6 ft (2 meters) or less for the side walls and longer for the roof sheets and gable ends. The bark with a natural tendency to curl had to be flattened. The technique for flattening bark was first learnt from the Aborigines who used the sheets of bark for their shelters. Fresh split moist bark was flattened by being placed over a small fire and when flat, weighted down and left for two to three days to dry.[29] Hyacinthe de Bougainville wrote about bark huts and recorded in his diary.

> *A few hours suffice for the erection of a hut which provides adequate shelter. The chimney is made of stones and clods. Thus are built huts of lumberjacks, road repairing gangs, clearing gangs etc. We came across several which seemed quite comfortable.*[30]
>
> *…the huts could each hold to eight people , and some could even boast a small garden.*[31]

More permanent huts were built of split slabs, these lasted longer than bark huts but were also not as windproof and were roofed in bark.

The Quaker missionary James Backhouse provides us with a description of slab huts. He described the accommodation of the Bridge Party at Cockfighters Creek in winter 1836.

> *The Bridge-party here, were lodged in huts of split timber. The numerous fissures in the walls of which, admitted much air; but fires were allowed, to keep out the frost. The men had only one blanket each, in which they slept, on large sheets of bark, put up like berths in a ship*. [32]

The huts at Cockfighters Creek described by Backhouse were at least two years old as headquarters of the road party moved there between June and November 1834.[33] Convicts were issued with two sets of slops (clothes) each year and one blanket. In winter they were supposed to be issued with a second blanket.

In the month from 25 April to the 24 May 1833, John Byrne's Bridge party was employed building huts at Wollombi Brook near Cuneens Bridge. As well as building four huts and stockyards, the party of 29 men split 720 slabs, stripped and flattened 148 sheets of bark, felled and had drawn in 15 sleepers 70 feet long and had felled and cleared 240 square rods of land. It was not specified if this was campsite or road, but they had laid 150 square yards of foundation. The 1830 instruction to Assistant Surveyors on filling road gang reports did not specify what *Foundation laid* meant.[34] From the road party returns it appears huts were regularly built of green slabs which, as they dried and seasoned, would have shrunk and warped, opening the gaps between the slabs as reported by Backhouse. Slab buildings used by settlers as houses were generally lined with many layers of newspaper covered with wall paper for this reason.[35]

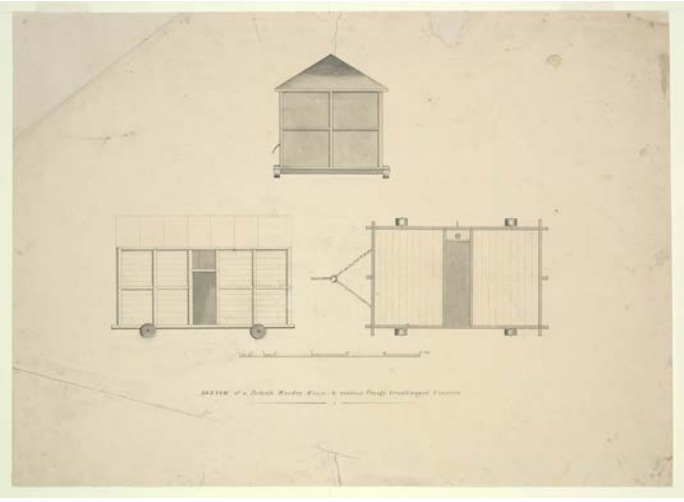
Slab and bark huts took time to build and as the parties moved into areas where Stringybark trees were less abundant, the time necessary to find and collect the needed materials increased. To overcome this, it was suggest that tents be used for gangs that were regularly moving. Tents could be quickly erected and taken down and moved. The idea was approved but as canvas was in short supply and had to be imported,

tanned cow hides, which were abundant and in little demand, were substituted. To further save on costs, tenders were to be called for the supply of hides near to where the tents were to be erected. It is not recorded how these were stitched together, how big the tents were or how waterproof they were.

The floors of the tents would have been dirt as would those in both the bark and slab huts. With the huts it is not known if they were just trodden compacted dirt or if they were laid dirt floors.[36] There were several known formula for laid dirt floors some involved clay, cow dung, ox blood and fat, others clay and lime. As the gangs were, in theory, constantly on the move it is more likely the floors were just trodden compacted earth.

The huts of Iron Gangs, particularly when near settled areas, were usually surrounded by a nine foot high stockade fence. Building these fences was very time consuming and took a lot of labour in the cutting and preparing of the required material. To overcome this Percy Simpson, when he was in the roads department after completing the work at Wisemans Ferry, designed some wooden caravans on wheels for the accommodation of Iron Gangs. These could be moved to a new site along with the convicts they housed. The Maitland Bridge party built some at Maitland. They were roofed with tarpaulins, that were sent to Maitland via the steam ship *Sophia Jane*. Being housed in these caravans would have been an appalling experience, each person was allowed a mere eighteen inches or forty five centimetres in which to lie, there was no where to store their change of clothes or anything else. One would hope ones bed-mates were all skinny and small framed. From the picture of the design it appears they were built with a drain for urinating and the men were issued with a bucket of water when they were locked in at night. Backhouse, who visited on a rest day was not impressed.

> *In the Afternoon, we visited an ironed-gang, employed on the roads, under a military guard; we found them locked up in their caravans, out of which only one-third were allocated to come at a time, for exercise. When locked in, only half of them can sit up, on the ends of the platforms, on which half of them sleep; the rest must sit back, with their legs at a rightangle with their bodies. On our arrival, they were all turned out, counted, and then marched to a place, at a short distance, where they stood, with the guard of soldiers, under arms, behind them.*[37]



Plan of caravans on wheels for the accommodation of Iron Gangs.

So far no factual contemporary accounts that describe life in a Road Party or Iron gang from a convicts perspective have been found so we can only speculate about what were the privileges used to get men to work and to keep them reasonably content. That the men were reasonably content and took pride in their work is evidenced by the fact that so much of the road is still standing in good condition. One of the known privileges issued to some men in Bridge Parties were extra rations. The death of one man receiving same and the recommendation of another to take his place showed that only a certain number were issued.[38]

Other privileges could have included time to make beds and other hut furniture. As described by Backhouse, bark was used on timber frames to form beds. It is only possibly to speculate what other privileges could have been. For much of the time working on trust without guards is a possible privilege, this is being examined in more detail. Other privileges or rewards for good behaviour might have related to the allocation of huts, the selections of one's hut companions or the allocation of work tasks. It appears that even men in Iron gangs were allowed privileges as instructions were issued that heavy irons gangs were not to receive privileges. Some convict overseers kept fowls so eggs may have played a part in privileges. An order was issued that Road gang overseers were not to keep fowls and overseer Henry Martineer was sacked for using a government cart to move his fowls.[39]

Missionary Backhouse provides some of the few insights we have about life in a bridge party when he further recorded.

> *No religious instruction was provided for these men, nor any suitable occupation, for the first day of the week. Bibles were distributed among them about three years ago, but none are now to be found. Men in such situations often take to card-playing, or other demoralizing occupation, to fill up vacant time. In some places in these Colonies, they have been known to convert the leaves of their Bibles into cards, and to mark the figures upon them with blood and soot!.*[40]

Huts had to kept clean and swept out. As there is no record of the supply of brooms it can only be assumed they made their own brooms. In road parties one convict was employed as the hut keeper, it was his job to keep the huts clean and help the cook. They may also have been the gardeners. It is known that soil constantly walked upon compacts and becomes very hard. Iron Gang 3 stockade site on Devines Hill is still an open grassed site that has not been reclaimed by the local scrubby vegetation that surrounds it.

From the instructions issued regarding the building of this stockade it is known the soldiers were to camp near the entrance, there was to be a guard hut and soldiers were to patrol around the stockade wall all night. With this in mind the site was examined on the

Stockade at Illawarra drawn by Georgina Lowe circa 1842 Wollongong City Library.

drop off edge, down hill from the water flowing across the site. On the opposite side was a rock formation that did not appear to be natural and could possibly have been the base of a toilet organised in a way that would allow the faeces to be collected as manure for the vegetable gardens. Whilst discussing this research with Ralph Hawkins he remarked that while he had seen urine tubs issued to the military he had never seen urine tubs issued to convicts. This led to some interesting research into why urine was collected and what use was made of it. Urine contains urea and water and thus made a good nitrogen rich fertilizer, but its main uses were in the dying industry and in tanning. When left to ferment under certain conditions, the urea was converted into ammonia. Urine had been used for many centuries for dying with indigo to produce a rich deep blue. It was also used in the processing of wool to produce a soft woollen cloth and in some tanning processes. However with road gangs and road parties camped so far from such industries there would be no call to collect urine.

From one gang return we know the men did not work when it was too wet. But again we can only speculate about their occupations on wet days. We know from archaeological evidence the convict on the hulks in Bermuda played gambling games and carved bits of stone. This was not possible in the road gangs because of the restriction on knives but whilst at work many engraved their initials and pictures on the rock walls. Wet days would have been a chance to catch up on hair cutting and shaving. As there have been no professional archaeological excavations of any camp site, we do not have evidence to rely on. We know from numerous collectors who have picked up objects at different camp sites/stockades that pennies, buttons, stub ends of iron bars, and broken tools, broken bottles and lead balls have all been found at various sites. Burnt bones have also been found in fire ash.

Sue Rosen in her recent PhD thesis found that iron gangs and road parties were generally accommodated separately, this may account for the two stockades above the village of Wisemans Ferry and the records of gangs camping at Snodgrass Valley and Ten Mile Hollow.

Instructions were issued that parties were to be placed every seven miles or just over eleven kilometres apart. The men had to walk to work in the morning, walk back for lunch, the main meal of the day, and walk out again to work after lunch and back again in the evening. For practical purposes the gangs were camped near where they had the most work to do. To date, only a few of the camp sites have been found. Numerous sources can be used to help find these sites. James Backhouse describes one site as being at

> *Cock-fighters-bridge, on the Wollombi Rivulet; where we were hospitably entertained, at the house of a person belonging the Survey Department, under whose charge, a party of prisoners were employed in the erection of a bridge.*[41.]

The government had good intentions of providing adequate food, shelter and water. Unfortunately this did not always happen. As Backhouse reported, the second blanket in winter was not provided to the men at Warkworth in 1836, but they had fires in their huts as partial compensation. When it was found that, when expected to cook for themselves, many men did not portion out their meals adequately and had nothing left to eat the day before the next rations were due. A man in each gang was assigned to cook for the gang and the rations were carefully allocated to last the time required. This would also have meant all vegetables were shared equally.

There would always of been some convicts who found life in a Road Party or Iron Gang much more difficult than the government meant it to be. In most randomly selected segregated groups of people there are one or more who do not fit. For example if most of the men wanted to work hard, those that did not were likely to be picked on, vice versa if the majority did not want to work hard. Out of sight of the government officials things like male rape and bullying overseers would have severely affected some, whilst snoring and being confined in small spaces with no way to move would have tormented others. Despite adequate food, shelter and water, mere survival would have been difficult for some of the men.

Slab hut Murrays Run Road at Bucketty, repaired with sawn timber and cover strips to keep the wind out and with a tin roof. Note Flea Bane in full seed in front of hut.

1. *Census of New South Wales November 1828*. Editors Sainty & Johnson, Library of Australian History 1980. George Elliot had 14 acres of cleared cultivated land and employed one convict labourer. Joseph Preston a free by servitude butcher; was twenty five year old and had 6 acres of cleared and cultivated and one head of cattle.
2. *Sydney Gazette* 1, 25Nov.1826,p1;10,15,22,29 October 1827,p1;5 Nov, 1828, p1; 12 Nov 1829,p1. *The Australian*, 5 Nov 1830; 19 June 1831 back page, 2 Nov 1832. *Sydney Herald* 2 Jan 1832 p.4
3. Low, David. *Elements of practical agriculture*. 1834 Digitized by Google from Oxford University Library April 2006.
4. Bible: *Old Testament* Book of Ruth, Chapter 2 verses 2 and 3. King James version.
5. *Sydney Gazette* 22 November 1826 page1 column 1.State Records, Surveyors General Letters in from Surveyors 1826-1855 25 Jan 18390 from Percy Simpson.
6. Herren, Ray V *Exploring Agriscience* Published 2000 Thomson Delmar Learning; Low, David. *Elements of practical agriculture.* 1834 Digitized by Google from Oxford University Library April 2006. Riviere, Marc Serge. *The Governor's Nobel Guest Hyacinthe de Bougainville's account of Port Jackson, 1822* page 116
7. 1 acre equals 0.405 hectares; records were written in acres.
8. *HRA, Series 1* Peter Cunningham requesting an additional grant.1826-30
9. *Sydney Gazette,* 21/2/1827;2d,3b;26 Oct 1827; 19Dec 1827; 28 March 1828;7April 1828;26 June 1828; 2b;16 June 2a-b;8Jan 1829, 23; 27 Jan 1829 2c;30 26 March 1829 drought broke on coast .30 April 1829 Weekly sale prices in *Sydney Gazette* for 1828. Wheat topped 18/- a bushel at the `Sydney markets 26 Sept 1828: 16 June 1828 reports that Maize crop had failed. Maize topped 12/6 per bushel 27 June 1828: 29 March 1829 Wheat was 7/- and Maize 7/6 per bushel
10. *HRA Series 1 Volume X*IV page 629 1 Feb 1829, Enclosure Darling to Murray , salary of civil servants. *Sydney Herald* 2 Jan 1832 p.4
11. Ross, Valarie. *A Hawkesbury Story*. 1981 page 41
12. State Records 4/2037 7 July 1829 John Jenkins Peacock to Colonial Secretary.
13. State Records Box 4/2037 no 205; no 206; Wiseman to Col Sec 2 July 1829
14. *Sydney Morning Herald* 2 Jan 1831. p 4. 1828 Census; State Records Box 4/2148; no32/146 RV Perry, Surveyors General Office to Col Sec.
15. State Records NSW Surveyor General to Surveyors Reel 2821, 28 Sept 1839 page 220: *Australian* 10 November 1830 p1,col 3
16. *Historic Records of Australia (HRA)* indexes Series 1; 1825-1836, assistant surveyors and surveyor general letters ; Wikipedia, scurvy.
17. Hawkins, Ralph. *The Convict Timbergetters*. Page 49. Webb, Ian. *Convict Road Gangs*. CTP collection of documents about the GNR
18. *HRA* series 1 No……. page 113 Governor Darling to Sir George Murray 13 August 1829
Sydney Gazette, November 5 1828; November 12 1829.
19. *Sydney Morning Herald* Market report page 4 April 1831 to Jan 1832
20. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabbage and Radish sited 30 August 2007; *Yates Garden Guide*, 1971; Lange, Norbert Adolph. *Handbook of Chemistry* tenth edition 1961
21. http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/09/30/usdom11820_txt.htm 2/1/2008
http://www.bloodindex.com/
Human_Water_Requirement_Calculator.php 2 Jan 2008
22. Assistant Surveyor Abbot to Surveyor General Sept 1833 State Records Reel 3080 page 236 quoted in Ian Webb. *Convict Road Gangs 1826 – 1836.*
23. Elizabeth Roberts has played with divining water with a piece of bent wire all her life. This was the first time she had used this ability for research purposes. Ralph Hawkins uses a plumb-bob to find different energy force fields and found he also got a strong reaction to water sources with the bent wire. Together on 12 Feb 2008 they visited the various sites.
24. *Historic Records of Australia Series 1* Volume XIV p232, 20 June 1828; Darling to Huskisson 1: Volume XV p 185-6 1 Oct 1829, Darling to Sir George Murray: p 341, 23 Jan 1830, Petition to G. Murray
25. Comber, Jillian. *Historical Archeological Survey of Devines Hill, The Old Great North Road Wisemans Ferry*. Prepared for National Parks and Wildlife Service, July –August 1990.
26. Plants were identified by Ralph Hawkins as normally growing in rain forest type areas. as a fig, a sandpaper fig, i a native sedge of the gahna family, cheitanthes (fern) Cyperis *Cyperus lucidus* occurs naturally in eastern Australia, along margins of creeks and rivers, at or close to the water's edge. It is a robust perennial sedge growing from a short, thick rootstock. The stems are solid, triangular in cross-section and grow to 1.3 m . native passion-fruit, *Passiflora herbertiana* ; Native olive, Native graper cayratia, Moss; and other plants
27. .Personal experience; a property Elizabeth Roberts moved to as a child had various farm sheds built of stringy bark sheets. She played imagining what it would be like living in a hut built of stringy bark. *Springfield* Llangothlin 1954-62
28. http://www.ssec.org.au/our_environment/our_bioregion/kurnell/history/origins/captcook.htm 1April2008
29. Riviere, Marc Serge. *The Governor's Noble Guest Hyacinthe de Bougainville's account of Port Jackson 1825* the Miegunyan Press 1999 page98.
30. Riviere. M.C. as above page 186
31. Backhouse, James. *To the Australian Colonies. 13 June 2008* http://weblearn.newcastle.edu.au/service/archives/aboriginalstudies/pdf/backhouse.pdf
32. State Records. Letters received from surveyors. Laurence Vance Dulhunty 6 Jan 1830 to 11 Jan 1837. original 2/1532.2 Reel 3063 17 June 1834, 14 November 1834.
33. State Records. Letters received from surveyors. Laurence Vance Dulhunty 6 Jan 1830 to 11 Jan 1837. original 2/1532.2 Reel 3063 24 May 1833. Instructions re filling in Road Gang Returns. Signed Nicholson 8 Feb 1830
34. Personal experience: Back room of house at *Springvale* Wollar 1945-1953; Inspection of *Tintinhull Inn* beside the New England Highway 2004.
35. http://www.abp.unimelb.edu.au/aboutus/staff/milesbl/australian%20building/pdfs/3.06.pdf 1April 2008
36. Backhouse, James. *To the Australian Colonies*. Page 390 chapter xxxiv
http://weblearn.newcastle.edu.au/service/archives/aboriginalstudies/pdf/backhouse.pdf *13 June 2008*
37. State Records. Letters received from surveyors. Laurence Vance Dulhunty 6 Jan 1830 to 11 Jan 1837. original 2/1532.2 Reel 3063. 4 February 1834.
38. State Records. Letters received from surveyors. Laurence Vance Dulhunty 6 Jan 1830 to 11 Jan 1837. original 2/1532.2 Reel 3063. 4 February 1834.
39. Surveyor General Letters received, John Nicholson 1832-4 letter 13 june 1832 2/1562
40. Backhouse, James. *To the Australian Colonies. 13 June 2008* http://weblearn.newcastle.edu.au/service/archives/aboriginalstudies/pdf/backhouse.pdf
41.Backhouse, James. as above

James Delany per *Brampton* 1823
Researched Fay O'Donnell, written E.A.Roberts

In 1822 at the Special Sessions in Kerry, Ireland nineteen year old James Delaney a butcher was sentenced to seven years transportation, this was to prove to be a life sentence. James was five foot four and half inches tall with brown hair and eyes and a pitted complexion.
On arrival in the *Brampton* in April 1823 he was forwarded to Windsor for distribution. Here he was assigned to William Cox Esquire. Eleven months later he was sentenced to three years at Port Macquarie for violent disobedience and transported there on the *Lady Nelson*. At the expiration of his sentence he was assigned to Road Party 14 which was working at Kissing Point when the 1828 census was collected. The next we defiantly know about James Delaney *Brampton* is that on 24 March 1848 he was admitted to the hospital for the insane at Parramatta. Some time within the next four years he murdered a fellow inmate so was then confined in a cell by him self. Through strong iron bars he could see what was going on in the airing yard and was allowed to converse with the other inmates of the asylum. The final entry written on his indent records is his death, in the Parramatta Asylum, on third of December 1891. He had spent forty-three years in the Parramatta Asylum for the insane and was aged about eighty eight when he died.

1828 Census
Convict Indents *Brampton*.
Sydney and Darlinghurst Goal Admissions 1819-1839
Colonial Secretaries Correspondence 1788-1825 Reel 6010, 4/3508 p196; 4/3864 pp116 and 468-9
Colonial Secretaries Correspondence1848-1853; letter 52/3635 in 4/3076.
Colonial Secretaries Correspondence 1891 91-15574; 8 December

Mental Health of the Road Gangs

E. A. Roberts

Mental health as we understand it today is a very modern concept and certainly was not thought about at the time of the Road Gangs. Certainly people who exhibited grossly abnormal behaviours were confined in Lunatic Asylums but as we now know, that is only a very small part of the complete mental health spectrum. Thus it is not possible to examine the mental health of the Road Gangs but it is possible from a number of modern studies to make few observations that may or may not reflect on the mental health of men in Iron Gangs and in Road Parties.

The Convict that were sent to NSW were lucky that the economic hard heads in the British Government prevailed over those who believed criminals could be reformed by being placed in prisons designed so they were to work in isolation within their cells but under constant supervision.

Following on the prison reform work of a highly religious British squire John Howard, the agnostic prison designer and would-be entrepreneur Jeremy Bentham and evangelistic antislavery campaigner William Wilberforce joined forces and worked together to try to convince the British government that transportation should be replaced by expensive Penitentiary Panopticon designed prisons. An isolationist system was adopted in America from 1790 and immediately proved to be problematical.[1]

Some insight into a convicts thought process can be obtained by reading Jack Bushman's narrative: *Passages from the Life of a "Lifer*": which was published as a serial in the *Morton Bay Courier* in 1859.[2] Although the convict Thomas Brooks whose tale is reported spent most of his time at Morton Bay and had a harder time and worse diet than the men working on the road, his story provides an insight to a convict's reaction to leg-irons and floggings.

Convicts in Road Gangs sent into the isolation of the bush had a number of things to deal with that could have affected their mental health. Those in chains could never escape them even in their sleep. Every time anyone moved the chains would clank. There was the ever present fear of the Aborigines who may or may not have been friendly and the strange noises to deal with, the maniacal laughter of the kookaburra and lyre birds reproducing many sounds during the day.[3] At night there could have been grunting, hissing territorial possums, bull frogs and dingoes howling. As well at night possums that may have jumped on to and run over the hut roofs, or entered the huts looking for food, and of course snakes and spiders like warm dry places. As well as the strange and frightening noises in the night and during the day, there was the isolation of the unending impenetrable bush, the heat and space. This was very different to the soft green rolling hills and close villages or urban towns and cities of England, which contrasted with the overcrowded huts, the close supervision and the heavy constant work.

On the other side of the equation the men had a constant routine in their lives, they were employed doing useful tasks for which at least some could and obviously did take pride. As well they were working in the sunshine and open air. Much of the work involved working in pairs and at least some communication related to that work was necessary and allowed. In American goals at times many prisoners were not allowed to talk to each other.[4] Overseers including Iron Gang Overseers allowed indulgences (unspecified), talking and collecting native sarsaparilla to make tea could have been part of those indulgences.[5]

Some convicts were given additional punishment for slacking. Were they just being lazy, on unofficial strike, or were they so depressed they found it very difficult to work or were they suffering scurvy which made a person look pale, feel depressed, and become partially immobilized. At least one convict sent to a Road Gang ended his days in the Lunatic asylum. (see box previous page)
Why did some convicts attempt to abscond not once but numerous times despite increasing punishment each time they were caught?

It is well known that male rape is a feature of modern prisons but convicts records are very silent on that and homosexuality. For most of the time the road was being built the ratio of males to females in the colony was four to one and would have been much higher in the isolated areas the road was being built through. It is likely sexual frustrations and tensions would have contributed to the men's mental well being.

The Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, George the Earl of Aberdeen was aware of the possible effects of unrelenting punishment and that men needed hope.

His concern was reflected in the reaction, when their irons were removed, of the prisoners who had been subject to the illegal instruction from the British Government to work men convicted in England of certain crimes in irons for the length of their sentences of transportation.[6.]

We will never know but it is interesting to speculate on the state of the mental health of the men in Road Parties and Iron Gangs.

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Roadside Graffiti – a lasting memorial ?

E. A. Roberts

Since the beginnings of time humans have liked to leave evidence of their existence behind them, sometimes in the form of scratching or painting on rocks. The convicts, the later telegraph men and the casual travelers who spent time on the Great North Road were no different. All along the Great North Road graffiti can be found, these days when new Graffiti appears it is removed, the theory being that new graffiti attracts more.

> *The word graffiti means 'little scratchings' and it comes from the Italian graffiare, which means to scratch and for thousands of years ancient cultures have engaged in this form of written expression.*[1]

Graffiti has been found in the excavation of Pompeii, and much cave art could be considered graffiti.

Whilst it is possible to distinguish between the 19th and 20th century graffiti by the style of the writing it is not possible except in a few cases to know if the authors were convicts. The graffiti that can be attributed to the convicts is the *25th Road Party* on Finches Line and the hangman high on the cut face on Devines hill. In a position where it was engraved after one or two layers of stone was removed but before the rest of the stone was cut away. The man smoking the pipe, again on Devines Hill, has

been attributed both to convicts and to the military guarding the convicts. Two similar engravings exist one further along the Great North Road and one on what was the Great Western Road. Graffiti inscribed in the 19th century was written with serifs (the bits on the tops and bottoms of letters) while 20th century graffiti is san-serifs (without serifs)

The Graffiti described as the hangman is ⌐ shaped, this part is deeply cut and there appears in some lights to be a lightly engraved figure hanging in the middle, above it is some undecipherable writing. North of Mt Baxter on a very steep rocky slope there are what appear to be two crosses on the rock face uphill of the road. If indeed they record the death of two convicts the only place there would have been room to bury them would have been in the road itself.

As the convicts built the road, in parts they would have seen Aboriginal rock engravings. The convicts that built the road round the large rock at Maroota must have wandered up on top and seen the Aboriginal engravings there, indeed it seems they inspired one T. Quigley to engrave his name in full on some flat rock near by. But who was T. Quigley? In the late 1820s early 1830s there were at least three T. Quigley's in the colony. There was Thomas Quigley, convict per Lord Sidmouth, Thomas Quigley, convict per Marquis Huntley and Corporal later Sergeant Thomas Quigley of the 57th Regiment assigned to the Mounted Police.[2] Unfortunately with only smatterings of convict returns surviving we do not know if Quigley was convict, a member of the mounted police or a later by-passer. Of the three known to be present when the road was bring built, if it was any of them, it is likely to have been T Quigley per Marquis Huntley who was in Road Party 19 in 1828 and did not receive his certificate of freedom to 1834. Although absconding in July 1826 Thomas Quigley per Lord Sidmouth received his Certificate of Freedom in August 1827 and he apparently is the T Quigley of Parramatta to whom Catherine McCarth per Southworth was assigned in 1832. To date no reference has been found of any Mounted Police working round Maroota, the references to T Quigley of the Mounted Police are in the Hunter and south of Sydney. Although Road Party 19 never worked on the Great North Road sometimes men were transferred between parties.

As most of the other graffiti is initials only, it is even harder to try to track down. If all the convict gang returns existed we could try as the returns reported who was in the gang, where the gangs were working and what work was being done. But as only fragments of the convict returns exist the initials engraved with serifs remain tantalizing in their obscurity whilst recording for posterity the passage, past that point, of the person who engraved them. The one bit of roadside graffiti that can be identified is the memorial to Dinah Bailey. This was retained in folk memory till it could be research and recorded.

Reisner 1971; Abel & Buckley 1977 quoted in http://stbride.org/friends/conference/temporarytype/overgroundarchaeology

Sydney Gazette; 14 June 1826; 1 July 1826; 8 August 1827; 28&30 October 1830; 2 November 1830; 20 December 1832; 14 June 1834; 5 May 1836

Those Mysterious Names

Bruce Jones.

We often hear, with regard to the Great North Road, that the section between Wisemans Ferry and Bucketty was never popular. It was waterless and uninhabited. It is said that the more comfortable route through St Albans and up Mogo Creek was the preferred option for travellers to and from the north.

While that is true as far as it goes, it was not always true for travellers to and from the east. The only land route road to Gosford, until the construction of the Pacific Highway in the 1920s, was to take the Great North Road through Wisemans Ferry and on to Ten Mile Hollow, then to turn right along Simpsons Track and travel across to Mangrove Creek and up over Mangrove Mountain.

The truly desolate part of the Great North Road was the section north of Ten Mile Hollow, up to the junction with the Mogo Creek road near Bucketty. In the occasionally fearsome loneliness of that section of road we find features with names that vividly portray the experience of travelling this road. These features include the hot rock surface of the Devil's Backbone on a baking summer afternoon and the welcome respite of a clearing to make camp at Gibber Gunyah. There is an opportunity for a drop of water (if you know where to look) at Hungry Flat, and the comfort of the fondly though not uncommonly named Frog Hollow. And farther on we find the distinctively named location, Dennis's Dog Kennel.

Amongst these colourfully apt descriptors we also find an almost ill-fitting set of references to the upper colonial crust. A themed array of names commemorating court officers of whom we might say, in most cases, justice has been done as they serve their time in solitude. Their names survive their persons here in the wilds of the most despised section of the arduous route connecting Newcastle and Sydney.

The Judge Dowling Range is about 18 km long, commencing some 5 km north of Ten Mile Hollow and extending northwards. At its southern end is a pretty hill named Mount Baxter, around the eastern slope of which rises the Great North Road. The range terminates at its northern end with Mount Manning, the point at which the Great North Road meets the Mogo Creek road (often called the St Albans road). Some 4 km further north, the prominence where George Downes Drive meets the Great North Road was named Mount McQuoid.

Dowling, Baxter, Manning and MacQuoid were all recent arrivals in Sydney, at the time the Great North Road was under construction. All came to do public service in the colony's legal system. In each case their private goal of financial success was thwarted.

Baxter

Scots-born Alexander MacDuff Baxter (1798–1834) was the first of the group to arrive. He landed in Sydney in 1827 to take up his position as Attorney-General (salary £1400) and later became a member of the Legislative Council. He was accompanied by his Spanish wife, to whom he was newly wedded, Maria del Rosaria Anna Uthair.

Nicknamed Dandy, Baxter moved into a mansion and entered colonial society. He was granted 2560 acres (1036 ha) on the Williams River in the Hunter Valley and asked for an increase in salary in order to rent more.

In court he soon demonstrated that he was totally out of his depth. He first sought help from the solicitor-general and later turned for assistance to Joseph Gellibrand, the Attorney-General of Van Diemen's Land.

When Darling complained to the Colonial Office about Baxter's incompetence, Baxter threatened to sue for libel. Darling dismissed Baxter's clerk and reduced his allowance while travelling on circuit. Baxter began drinking heavily and fighting with his wife, who had already borne a son. In 1830 she gave birth to twin daughters. When, against his will, the daughters were baptised in the Catholic faith the fighting became violent.

In December 1830 the Colonial Office accepted Baxter's nomination as second judge in Van Diemen's Land. Baxter resigned as Attorney-General in New South Wales in January 1831 and just days later declared himself insolvent. He travelled to Hobart to take up his new position. His wife returned to England with £200 advanced on loan by Darling. It was never repaid and Darling was censured by the Colonial Office for allowing the loan.

On Baxter's arrival in Hobart, Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur immediately realised he had a 'habitual sot' on his hands and put off the official installation. After a short trip back to Sydney, Baxter returned to Hobart, only to ask for leave and money to travel to England to recover his health and his good name. Arthur advanced him £400 of salary, choosing to entrust it to a fellow traveller, businessman Daniel Cooper (a former convict) who sailed with Baxter for England in October 1831.

In May 1832 Hobart newspapers erroneously reported Baxter's death at sea. He was already in London, soliciting another appointment. In July 1832 he was placed in prison for debt. He was released in August 1832 and died on the Isle of Man in March 1834.[1]

Manning

John Edye Manning (1783–1870) began practising law in about 1804 and had already endured a period of insolvency before coming to NSW. He passed some nine years on the Continent before returning to

England in 1823 under the protection of a debtors' relief act.

He arrived in Sydney in 1829 to take up an appointment as Registrar of the Supreme Court. His salary was £800 but he understood his office to have a practical value of £2000 per annum. Not long after assuming his duties he was also appointed by the Supreme Court as Curator of Intestates' Estates. As protection against loss of the funds in his care, the Curator was required to lodge a bond of £2000. Manning was unhappy about this and had to arrange for his father and brother in England to provide the security.

Manning's ire was drawn again when the judges modified their rules to require the Curator to deposit intestates' monies into a bank and to submit his accounts for quarterly audit. Manning had found his private funds insufficient for his needs and had begun to use intestates' proceeds as his own. He did not segregate public funds from his own. His reasoning to the judges was that his own salary did not extend to the outgoings necessarily incurred in the care of the public monies and the method he had adopted of using the intestates' funds as his own was to the advantage of the estates. His objections to the judges' instructions were dismissed by Colonial Secretary Glenelg.

He accrued considerable landholdings in Sydney, Melbourne and country centres in NSW, including 2560 acres (1036 ha) near Ourimbah. He adopted the practice, not uncommon at the time, of cycling through successive mortgages of increasing amounts to fund his business and lifestyle choices. He appears to have trusted the increasing value of land to remain in control of the debt. He was a vigorous networker across a number of business associations and was a director and shareholder of a number of companies.

When he became affected by economic depression at the start of the 1840s his continued use of intestates' funds to meet his personal obligations again became an issue. On his own admission he had continued banking these funds with his own. Now his shares were worthless and he was unable to meet his mortgage repayments. Towards the end of 1841 the judges decided against sacking Manning only because they felt they might better be able to monitor his dealings while he remained in office. By early 1842, however, the extent of the problem forced action. Manning was sacked. His debts amounted to more than £30,000, a third of which he owed to the public purse. His property was sequestered and he returned to England briefly before again taking shelter on the Continent.

Responsibility for the problems caused by Manning was batted around for awhile after his departure. Colonial Secretary Stanley blamed the judges. The British Treasury obtained the £2000 security from Manning's family in 1846. The NSW Legislative Council sought the intercession of the Queen to make the British government responsible, as it had appointed Manning to the position of trust despite his earlier insolvency. Predictably, the British government did not react. And there was no reaction from anyone to offers from Manning's sons in NSW – merchant Edye Manning, pastoralist John Manning and barrister, solicitor-general and later Supreme Court Judge (Sir) William Montagu Manning – to pay compensation. Eventually the NSW Legislative Council authorised sufficient payment to satisfy the claims of the intestates' inheritors. John Edye Manning died in Bristol in January 1870.

MacQuoid (Also McQuoid, Macquoid)
Thomas MacQuoid (? –1841) arrived in New South Wales in 1829 to take up an appointment as High Sheriff of the Supreme Court.

For many years prior, he had been an employee of the East India Company. In Singapore he had been good friends with Sir Stamford Raffles. In Java he had produced coffee crops for his employer. He named his grant at Tuggeranong *Waniassa* after the Javanese coffee plantation he worked.[2]

He came to New South Wales with a view to sharing the good economic times. Sadly the good times eluded him and he died by suicide in 1841.

The residence of Thos. Macquoid Esq. High Sheriff of N.S.Wales, Goderich Lodge - Darlinghurst. architect John Verge. Demolished 1915. The Caroline Simpson Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust NSW record no.31635

MacQuoid was disappointed to find, on arrival, that the position of High Sheriff was not among those of the Administration included in the Executive Council. He felt slighted by this circumstance and issued a constant stream of correspondence to his superiors both in New South Wales and in England, aimed at increasing his salary and his prestige.

As well as his grant at Tuggeranong, he was granted 2560 acres (1036 ha) along Ourimbah Creek. His eastern boundary abutted a grant made to John Edye Manning. The location of the Ourimbah grant was the instigation of another stream of insistent correspondence, possibly owing to the production of maps with labels such as Tea Tree Swamp, particularly at the north of Manning's grant, hinting to the men they may not have selected land of the best quality. Together they wrote frequently to the Colonial Secretary saying that the placings were incorrect.[3]

Their concerted campaign was successful in having their grants redrawn. However, for decades afterwards MacQuoid's, the northern boundary of which was for several miles the southern bank of Ourimbah Creek, was repeatedly incorrectly measured for its full 2560 acres (1036 ha).

MacQuoid wanted to subdivide the grant into lots for sale. Surveyor Heneage Finch found that the grant was 130 acres (52.6 ha) deficient. The matter was referred to Felton Mathew, who discovered an error in scaling and who put the deficiency at 113 acres (45.7 ha).[4] Surveyor Larmer was despatched in 1836 to remeasure the grant and make up any deficiency at the western end.

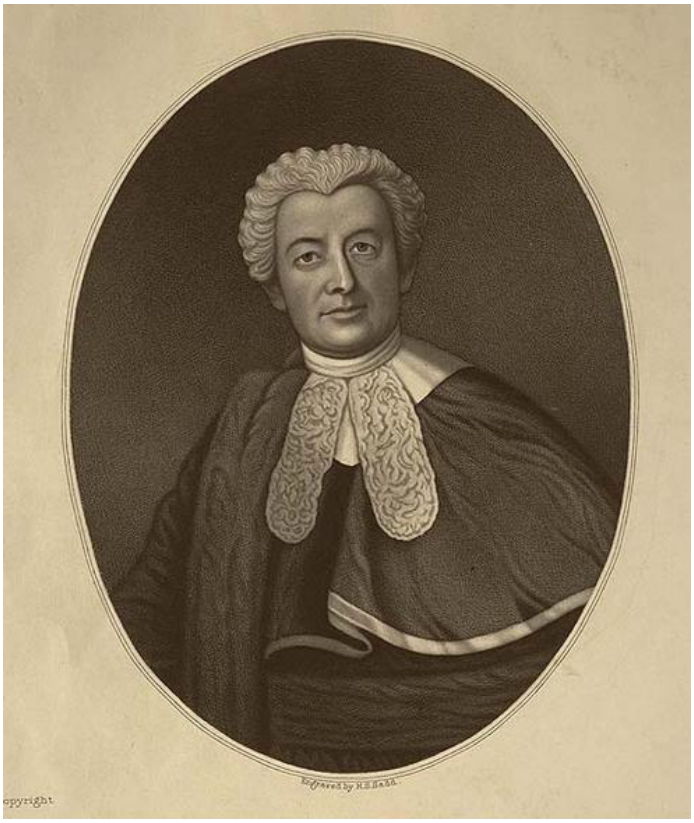
The problem with the measurement may have been the reason for MacQuoid's not proceeding with any plan to divide the grant into lots for sale. However, it did not prevent him from using the land as collateral in the raising of loans. The presence of natural resources, such as timber represented an additional bonus.

MacQuoid was becoming a figure of some notoriety in the Colony. As early as 1832 newspaper reports appeared questioning his use of public funds for private purposes.

When economic depression arrived on the back of severe drought MacQuoid was ill equipped to survive. He was friendly with prominent businessman, Robert Futter, who appointed MacQuoid an executor of his will. After Futter's death MacQuoid authorised for himself a loan of £2000 from the estate. In January 1841, Futter's widow asked MacQuoid to repay the money or to resign from the trust administering the estate and put up security for the loan. MacQuoid fumed at the effrontery of the implication contained in the request. He wrote to his solicitor saying he wished to break off all contact with Mrs Futter and that he would repay the money 'in a short time'.[5]

MacQuoid's fortunes did not turn around and in October, 1841, Governor Gipps wrote to the Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Russell, saying:

> *I am sorry to have to report to your Lordship the death of Mr Thomas MacQuoid, Sheriff of this Colony and I regret still more to add, that he died by his own hand, having shot himself through the head with a Pistol on the morning of the 12th instant.*
>
> *The verdict of the Jury assembled by the Coroner to hold an Inquest on his body, was that he had destroyed himself in a fit of temporary insanity. As pecuniary embarrassments were well known to have led Mr MacQuoid to the commission of this rash act, I lost no time in appointing two officers to report on the state of his accounts with the government …* [6]



Judge James Dowling (1787—1844) by H. S. Sadd
National Library Australia

Dowling

James Dowling (1787–1844) was born in London. He was called to the bar in 1815. He practised law and edited multi-volume reports of court cases. He was by all accounts a diligent reporter even if not a brilliant lawyer and in 1827 sought a colonial appointment to serve the public and advance his own interests. He declined an appointment as Chief Justice of Dominica but accepted an offer of a junior puisne judgeship in New South Wales.

He arrived in Sydney with his wife and six children in 1828. His salary was £1500 and he received grants of seven acres (2.8 ha) at Woolloomooloo (on condition that he erect a house to the value of £1000) and 2560 acres (1036 ha) in the Upper Hunter.

He sensed strain in his initial welcome from Governor Darling, Chief Justice Forbes, Justice Stephen and governor's assistant Alexander McLeay. Later, as those men responded to his considerate nature and diligence at work, he formed good relations with them. Sydney society was riven with conflict, polarised between military and government. The newspapers backed the entrepreneurial activities of military officers. It was a litigious society, with many libel actions occupying court time.

Dowling was put to work the day after his arrival. He is universally acknowledged as a competent lawyer with extraordinary skills in recording the arguments before him and reasons for his decisions. In 1829 he held the first Supreme Court sitting in the Hunter, at the Union Inn in Maitland.

He recorded reasons for all his decisions, whether agreeing with fellow judges or not. He was promoted to positions of senior puisne judge and second judge to the Chief Justice. In 1836 he filled in for Forbes as Acting Chief Justice and on Forbes's retirement in 1837 he was appointed Chief Justice (salary £2000). Dowling was knighted in 1838.

The office of Chief Justice also carried the responsibility of appointment to the Legislative Council. Dowling's view of the involvement of the Chief Justice in debate in that Council was congruent with the principle of the separation of powers under the Westminster System: he thought the legislature and the judiciary should be kept as distinct as possible. He thought a Chief Justice should not engage in debate in the Council and would be better not being in the chamber at all. However, as the Council was reshaped through the Constitution Act of 1842 and as the Governor ceased to be a member of the Council from 1843, replaced by a Speaker, Dowling took the view that the Chief Justice would be the ideal appointee as an independent Speaker.

He did not want to take candidacy in an election to that post, however. He preferred that the government propose and endorse him. In this case, only if an additional judge was appointed to assist with the burden of work, would he agree to become Speaker.

Governor Gipps disagreed with Dowling's views, considering that with two-thirds of the Council's now 36 members being independent, elected representatives, the Crown's injection of a selected official into such a pivotal role would not be accepted. Dowling felt so strongly about his views that he asked they be placed before the Colonial Secretary. Gipps did so and the Secretary, Earl Stanley, concluded the matter by agreeing with Gipps.[7]

Dowling began suffering illness from overwork in 1840. In 1841 he sought 18 months leave to rest and travel but the Colonial Secretary withheld approval until satisfactory temporary arrangements to fill his position could be made. Eventually, in June 1844 Dowling collapsed on the bench. Gipps granted him leave on full pay but in September 1844 Dowling died in Sydney.

His son, District Court Judge James Sheen Dowling, said of him that he "must have been a most painstaking, industrious, indefatigable man. He was methodical in all he did. He wrote shorthand perfectly which was of great assistance to him on the bench; he wrote the ordinary hand almost like copper plate. He left upwards of two hundred books, containing notes of cases tried before him, exclusive of books wherein he had copied all letters of an official character." [8]

Dowling had intended publishing his accounts of 465 of the many cases he heard in NSW. In 2005 those cases finally were published as Dowling's Select Cases.[9]

Baxter, Manning, MacQuoid and Dowling: what could have inspired Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell to commemorate these figures from the colonial court system at all, let alone in such a way as they are associated together in perpetuity? Events of the later 1830s and 40s may encourage the view that the industrious Sir James Dowling alone amongst them was worthy of such an honour. But is it fair to judge the others by today's standards? And are today's standards — and the behaviour of those in positions of trust — any different, after all? Traveller, you may reflect on these matters as you are guided on your passage across the high ground separating the Hawkesbury and the Hunter by these features that remind us of men of power as modern as us in their human frailties.

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References: Place Names along the Convict Trail (next page)

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Place Names Along The Convict Trail —

Joyce Miles

People and Place Names

Who was Dennis? He apparently owned a dog kennel so important that "Dennis's Dog Kennel" was referred to by Surveyor General Major T.L. Mitchell in his account of traversing the Hawkesbury Region in the l830s? He remarks:

> *I had now the satisfaction to trot over a new and level road, winding like a thread through the dreary labyrinth before me, and in which various parts had already acquired a local appellation not wholly unsuited to their character such as 'Hungry Flat', 'Devil's Backbone', 'No-grass Valley' and 'Dennis's Dog-kennel'*…[1]

Perhaps Dennis was a dog, as the site near Bucketty, marked on The Convict Trail map, was the most southerly camp for one of the Newcastle-based convict work gangs.[2] The waterhole, now used by the Bucketty Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, is all that remains. Intensive local investigation has so far thrown no light on this intriguing and historical name.

The Great North Road is a magnificent l9th century engineering feat built between 1826 and 1836. One of the joys of travelling this road is the variety of unusual placenames encountered, often displayed on decorative plaques at the entrance to the settlement. Many of the placenames commemorate people associated with this enormous project.

Wisemans Ferry is named from Solomon Wiseman, a former convict who established a business shipping timber along the coast, running inns and supplying provisions for the convict road gangs working in the area. In 1827 he obtained a licence to operate a ferry across the Hawkesbury – one which has operated ever since.[3]

John Anthony Fernance, formerly a waterman on the Thames in London, had arrived in Australia in 1814 and, following the Robertson Land Acts of 1861, the Fernance descendants left the Macdonald River and took up land in the Wollombi area – hence Fernances Creek.

Ramseys Leap is named after a convict said to have escaped by leaping from the buttress to the bushlands below. Murrays Run Culvert is from the name of an early landowner and the Blaxlands Arm creek is named after the early settler John Blaxland (brother of the explorer Gregory Blaxland), who in 1832 kept his sheep on a tract of 8,000 acres.[4]

The origin of the name Jerrys Plains (settled in 1822) has not so far been verified. One theory is that it is named after a leader of the local Aborigines, but another suggests that it relates to the ex-convict Jeremiah Butler who was a member of the 1817 expedition led by John Howe and was responsible for looking after the base camp.[5]

Other Sources of Naming on the Convict Trail

Millfield proclaims itself to be "Town of Mills and Bridges" – the origin of which seemed fairly obvious as many places incorporate the word "mill". The name originated from the flour mill that was erected along the Maitland Road "which gave the name to Millfield".[6] Nevertheless the name plaque shows a team of oxen drawing a timber wagon which is quite appropriate today as there is a flourishing saw mill.

Monkey Place Creek is an unusual name for an Australian watercourse, but this one is attributed to the convict road-builders. According to the local legend it obtained its name when the convicts were building the road. They saw strange creatures in the trees which they mistook for monkeys. In fact they were koalas.[7] Citations in the Australian National Dictionary show that early settlers commonly referred to koalas as monkeys, so this is a plausible explanation, although one which, so far, it has not been possible to verify.

Bellbird apparently got its name from the flock of bellbirds that once lived in the eucalyptus forest nearby. According to one-time residents, they made such a noise that the bullocks could not hear their own bullock bells. With the opening of the Bellbird Colliery and the removal of the trees, the bellbirds vanished, but left behind a delightful name.[8]

The name plaques at either end of historic Wollombi proclaim 'Meeting Place of the Waters', but this is one of the many settlements with names alleged to refer to the meeting of watercourses. A.P. Elkin, writing about the parish of Wollombi explains that the name Cockfighters Creek was given to the lower part of the Wollombi Brook because one of the expedition's horses named Cockfighter died as a result of being bogged down in the creek.[9]

Broke was settled in 1824, and its name might at first thought to be rather unfortunate, but it did not, in fact, refer to the pecuniary state of its inhabitants but was conferred by Major Mitchell in honour of "that meritorious officer, Sir Charles Broke Vere, Bart".[10] It seemed somewhat puzzling that Mitchell should choose the name "Broke" rather than "Vere". Mitchell was a veteran of the Peninsular War (1808-14) caused by Napoleon's invasion of Portugal and Spain. When the commander, the Duke of Wellington, required intelligence officers to survey a particular region Mitchell was one of three officers chosen for the task. One of the others was Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Broke, for whom Mitchell obviously had high regard. Charles Broke was knighted for distinguished service in 1815, and in 1822, as Sir Charles Broke, took the additional name of Vere, but Mitchell obviously preferred to remember him as he was known in the army days.[11]

These are just a few of the fascinating names along the Convict Trail – names which give insight into a unique historic achievement.

References See bottom previous page

A Darling Idea

The practical employment of convicts between1826 to 1836 for the benefit of the colony

Beverley and Trevor Patrick

Governor Ralph Darling was very pleased with his idea of having convicts work for the colony to create a road network to facilitate communication between the many isolated settlements.

> *By this measure, which originated with me, and of which the merit or demerits belong exclusively to myself, 1260 men are now beneficially employed, who would otherwise have been eating the Bread of Idleness at a Penal Settlement, or is some other Place of confinement, occasioning a much greater expense than they do at present.*[1]

To the men of the East India Company, the new colony in New South Wales was a golden opportunity for trade and profit. Sending shipments of foods and household goods from India produced immediate gain. Sending members of the company to establish trading outposts added to the opportunity for company and personal advancement.

The American businessmen were also quick to grasp the significance of an isolated colony in the South Pacific Ocean following advice from Lieutenant Philip Gidley King whom Captain Thomas Patrickson had met at the Cape of Good Hope in July 1791. King recommended the American bring provisions to the colony after discharging his present cargo in England. Patrickson sailed as swiftly as he could to America to take on provisions for Port Jackson, his brigantine *Philadelphia* arrived on 1 November 1792 filled with a speculative cargo which was welcomed by eager colonists. The offerings were American cured beef [559 barrels, each containing 193 pounds], wine, rum, gin, some tobacco, and pitch and tar [27 barrels] Total colonial expense £2829. [2]

Two years earlier, on 17 April, 1790, the ship *Supply* was sent to Batavia under command of Lieutenant Lidgbird Ball. The ship arrived on 6 July and Ball hired the Dutch Snow *Waaksamheyd* as an extra vessel to carry much needed food supplies. A Dutch snow is a vessel equipped with two masts, resembling the main and foremasts of a ship and a third small mast just abaft the mainmast carrying a trysail. The *Supply* returned to Port Jackson on 18 October followed by *Waaksamheyd* on 17 December. This ship, the *Waaksamheyd,* later carried John Hunter and officers and crew of the *Sirius* back to England, sailing from Port Jackson on 28 March 1791.

> *The Sirius had been wrecked on Norfolk Island on 19 February. Happily, however, Captain Hunter, and every other person belonging to her, were saved.*[3]

The settlement in Sydney appears to be at the ends of the earth when viewed from the 21st century yet examination of the newspaper printed in the colony during the convict era reveals a different image. Enterprising captains and trading individuals created vigorous business activity.

Provisions brought into the colony offered a wide variety:

> *Hosiery, Silks and Persians, Ribbands (Ribbons), Barcelona Handkerchiefs, Umbrellas and Parasols, Gloves, Cotton and Linen Checks, Raven Ducks, Brown Irish, Table-cloths Dimities, Printed calicoes and camprice (fabric), Kerseymere, Hats, Boots and Shoes, Irish and Cotton check shirts, Stationery and Perfumery, Blankets, Yellow soap, Patent Shot and lead pipe, Sheet Lead and Cordage, Turnery Ware; consisting of Wooden Bowls and plates, Bowls and Platters, Mops, Brushes Saddlery, Nails of all sizes, Joiners, Carpenters, Coopers, Saddlers and Blacksmiths' tools, Paints, Oils,* [4]

As the colony grew in population, so did the expectations of a better life. The basic survival skills of farmer, baker, blacksmith and butcher were added to with artisans establishing businesses in such diverse occupations as silversmith, jeweller, dancing instructor, musician, dressmaker and gunsmith.

The consumption of alcohol in all its forms was the most obvious ever-present social problem in the colony. The first American trader brought in barrels of rum and wine which were eagerly acquired.
Successive Governors struggled with the trading of alcohol throughout their terms of office and even today in the 21st century, alcohol consumption, especially the craze of binge drinking by young people is causing wide community concern.

Two contrasting advertisements in The Sydney Herald of 5 September 1831 showed the variety of life in Sydney at the time the Great North Road was being built.

Ex Curler

Pale Ale in casks of 3 dozen
Old Port in cases of 5 dozen
Sherry, superior to any in the Colony
Cape Wine per Pipe (a liquid measure 52 gallon)
English bottled Fruits in cases of 3 dozen
On Sale at POLACK'S London Tavern

By contrast

DANCING

Mr. A. Elliott respectfully begs leave to acquaint his Patrons and the Gentry of Sydney and its vicinity generally, that he has removed his ACADEMY for DANCING to his Residence, the
YORK COTTAGE
(next to Quarter Master LLOYD'S, 39th Regiment), York-street, where his best exertions shall continue to be unremittingly employed, in order to secure to him a continuance of that distinguished Patronage with which his Professional labours have hitherto been rewarded.
Attendance on the Evenings of Wednesdays and Saturdays, from Six to Half-past Eight o'Clock.
SEMINARIES and Private Families attended as usual.

The problem exercising Governor Darling's mind was how to gainfully employ the number of convicts who had re-offended in the settlement. He wrote to Sir George Arthur giving his opinion that:

Every one, by an honest and decorous course of life, may avoid being sent to a Penal Settlement. If, regardless of what he owes to Society, a man voluntarily and wantonly plunges into vice and indulges in evil propensities, he relinquishes every claim to Indulgence, and must submit to the Punishment due to his crimes. [5]

Colonial Secretary, Alexander McLeay, on 9 April 1827 states:

When men are returned for Government employment, the Principal Superintendent of Convicts will use all practicable means to ascertain whether they have been guilty of any misconduct or from general character are unfit to be assigned to private service. If they are found unfit for private service, they are to be forwarded to the Surveyor of Roads and Bridges. [6]

The provision of food for all convict establishments was carefully described and subject to inspection. It seems a paradox that convicts were subject to punishment yet at the same time every care was made to ensure their well-being. Medical chests were available at each settlement, and a requisition from the surveyor at Lower Portland Head (Wiseman's Ferry) gives details of medical items needing replenishment –

Requisition for the under mentioned articles for use of the Service at
Lower Portland Head Sept 17th 1827

Names of which Articles Required	*last supply of same Articles*	*number of Articles required*	*purpose for and grounds for asking the Requisitions*
Simple Ointment	*1 pot*	*one pot*	*for the use of the troops & men of the Road gangs at the above Station*
Aperient pills	*48*	*forty eight*	
Calomel Pills	*48*	*forty eight*	
Adhesive plaster		*one Piece*	
Fine lint		*4oz four ounce*	
Costic		*two drachms*	

The simple ointment was used as a soothing balm for dry, chafed and cracked skin. This would be a common skin condition with the men working out-of-doors and moving logs and stone to clear and build the road. Aperient pills moved the bowels and indicates the low fibre content of the diet and the common belief that the bowels must be kept active every day. Calomel is a mercurous compound which also acts as a purgative [forces the bowel to open]. Adhesive plaster and fine lint was used to cover wounds which most certainly happened in the environment of axes and saws cutting down trees and wedges, mauls, hammers and gunpowder splitting rock. The costic (sic) [caustic] was used as an antiseptic in weak concentrations and to remove proud fresh [dead tissue] from wounds.

In every iron gang along the Great North Road there was a man listed as a Scourger. His duty was to apply the whip to those convicts who had disobeyed lawful instructions. The medical kit would have been used after these punishments to ensure the convict did not become a burden to the road gang.
Injuries did occur during the construction of the road from the Parramatta River to the Hunter Valley.

1830s Medicine Box
Photo
Trevor Patrick

Roadside graves have been reported and correspondence in 1829 show men had been seriously injured, so much so that a boat was hired from a local farmer to take them from the Wiseman's Ferry area up the Hawkesbury River to Windsor Hospital.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th Instant enclosing an account amounting to three pounds five shillings for the hire of a Boat from James Molloy a settler in the district of Lower Portland Head, for the purpose of conveying Prisoners from the iron Gangs in that neighbourhood to the Hospital at Windsor a distance of thirty five miles.

In reply I am directed by the Governor to inform you, that as it appears from the report of Mr Assistant Surveyor Simpson that the men so removed were unable to travel to the Hospital, to which it was necessary to send them, and that no other equally convenient conveyance could be procured, His Excellency approves of your including the above sum in your contingent abstract as requested, the before mentioned account which is herewith returned to you. A certificate that the sum charged is reasonable and that the expense has been necessarily incurred - the receipt of the payee and this letter being produced as voucher for the payment.
Edmund Lockyer Esq
Surveyor of Roads & Bridges
Signed F C Harrington *£3.5.0 .* [7]

Men injured through accident with gunpowder, felling of trees or moving boulders were transported to hospital for treatment at Government expense.[8]

Rations were generally issued on a Saturday afternoon. Regulations specified the daily supplies to be 1½ pounds (675gram) flour or cornmeal, 1 pound (450grams) fresh or salt meat, 1 ounce (30grams) sugar and ½ounce (15grams) salt. In the summer months particularly, meat was supplied three times a week since there was no means to protect the food from spoiling. Convicts who had shown good behaviour were granted, as an indulgence, other rations such as tea and tobacco.

There is no mention of fresh vegetables or fruit in the regulations. Examination of medical records of the settlement show no major incident of scurvy which indicates that everyone received adequate vegetables as a matter of course and thus was not written into any official document.

D.D. Mann in 1811 wrote the book *The Present Picture of New South Wales* and detailed the amazing variety of foods available to the colonists. Convicts along the Great North Road would not have been given the opportunity to experience some of the more exotic foods yet the citrus and stone fruit industry was already flourishing around Dural and Maroota around the track leading to Wisemans Hawkesbury River crossing and could have been a source of supply for those men.

Foods available in the colony included:
Fruits: lemons, peaches, apples, pears, strawberries, quinces, watermelons, apricots, mulberries, cape gooseberries, oranges, raspberries, figs, grapes, almonds, limes, pomegranates, plums, citrons, nectarines and guavas.
Vegetables: wheat, maize, barley, oats, potatoes, turnips, carrots, cabbage, cucumbers, onions, French beans, peas, beans, asparagus, artichokes, spinach, pumpkins, cauliflower, broccoli, beet-root, lettuces, radishes, horse-radish, water-cresses, celery, endive and herbs of every description, extremely plentiful and at reasonable prices.
Animal foods and products included beef, mutton, pork, lamb, goat, turkeys, geese, ducks, fowls, wild ducks, pigeons, eggs, milk, and cheese. Indigenous foods such as kangaroo, wallabies, eels, oysters, lobsters, and fish offered variety when able to be captured.

Native plants were used such as native fig and spinach although the bush along the Great North Road [now named Old Northern Road which starts at Windsor Road, Baulkham Hills and winds its way north to Wisemans Ferry] does not seem to offer any meaningful volume of edible products.

Michael Johnston, Pharmaceutical Chemist of Pennant Hills, during his hypnotherapy course at Macquarie University learnt there are two basic types of human personalities—the self-centred and the global. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that some of the farmers along the Wisemans ridge where the Great North Road was being constructed were global in their outlook and offered to the road gangs, be they iron gangs with leg irons restricting their movement or road gangs who were free of the cruel shackles, foods from their farms. Thus the men were given fresh vegetables and fruits as a token of Christian kindness. Some of the farmers had themselves been subject to the heavy yoke of confinement as a convict in previous years.

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Old Fashioned Remedies
Drawing Ointment for Splinters and Boils

Mix household soap and sugar and apply as a poultice.

Dinah Bailey – mother of seven

1873 – 1909

E. A. Roberts

Between Mt Manning and Bucketty, engraved into the rock beside the Great North Road, are the words:

D. Bailey
1909.

This is one of the oldest memorials for a road fatality in NSW. It indicates the place where Dinah Bailey was thrown from a buggy or sulky and hit her head on the rocks with such an impact that she was dead by the time they had reached Wollombi.

Thirty-five year old Dinah Bailey died protecting her baby when she, her preschool children and her sister-in-law were thrown from their vehicle when the horse stumbled, twenty miles from St Albans on what was then called Five Brothers Hill. Dinah, herself orphaned as a toddler, left seven children. The oldest daughter had just turned thirteen and the youngest child was not yet one.

Dinah was accompanied by her youngest children and

her sister-in-law Ann Elizabeth Jurd as they hurried to Paynes Crossing and the bedside of their sister-in-law and sister, Clara Slack. Dinah's husband Newman Prosper Bailey and his brother Albert had preceded them.

Clara, the wife of the Paynes Crossing schoolteacher Harold Slack, was described as dangerously ill. She died later that year. The youngest of Clara's five children was twelve and the oldest twenty-one.
Dinah's body was returned to St Albans the following day and interred there in the Anglican section of the St Albans general cemetery. Dinah had only one younger brother but Newman, a butcher at St Albans, was the second youngest of at least fifteen children.[1]

The eleven-month-old baby, Ivy Dinah, whom Dinah died protecting, survived, married, and lived longer than any of her siblings, out-living them by twenty years and dying when she was 88.

All of the children of Dinah and Newman Bailey were to marry, but Newman Bailey himself never remarried. The baby Ivy Dinah was eleven when her two eldest sisters married, and the oldest girl then left at home, Elva Jane, was fifteen. Elva Jane was the second last of all the siblings to marry. Newman lived for another nine years after the last daughter married in 1929, dying in 1938 aged 64. He had been a widower for twenty-nine years.

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NSW online BDM indexes
Windsor & Richmond Gazette Sat 9 March 1909; copy supplied by Coralie D Hind.
Information supplied by Coralie D Hind, Patricia Eyeington, and Peter Moore

1.There is a discrepancy between the information in The Hawkesbury Pioneer Register complete with birth dates and that recorded by the Registrar General. Either children were registered with names they were not usually known by, or else some births and deaths were not registered. A combination of both lists shows John and Eleanor had somewhere between fifteen and twenty-one children. Newman was the second youngest on both lists.

Eric Turner's experience on the Great North Road.
or the
Passing of Ernie Sternbeck
Ken Marheine

Some time ago Ken Marheine sent in this story which he said would be his swan song.

Many years ago, Eric Turner told me the story of an excursion he made down the convict-built Great North Road, an excursion that ended in tragedy.

Eric Turner was associated with Turners' Saw Mill, which was situated in the main street of Cessnock, where the shopping centre and the Post Office then were. The Second World War was on – in 1943 – and Eric was looking for timber to keep the mill working. Of course he told many folks of his need for timber and this got to the hearing of an elderly friend named Ernie Sternbeck.

Ernie spoke to Eric about the amount of timber growing further down the Great North Road and said he would be glad to show him where it was. As a matter of fact, he insisted on taking him and using his own vehicle, an early model Triumph. Petrol was rationed at the time and most people extended their month's allowance by making a 'cocktail' with various liquids in order to increase the distance they could drive.

So off the pair set, Ernie Sternbeck driving Eric in his Triumph, which was operating on just such a cocktail mixture. Down the Great North Road they went till Ernie informed his passenger that the timber was growing in the gully below the road. Then the walk started downhill with Eric trying to keep up with Ernie who really moved quickly. But Eric was disappointed in the timber and said he was not interested in it.

So then the walk commenced uphill. Although Ernie had previously led the way downhill his seventy-three years now slowed him down considerably, and he found the going hard. At length they reached the car and started on their way back home with Ernie doing the driving and Eric alongside him.

Eventually Ernie told Eric that he had doubts whether the car could climb the hill they were approaching and asked Eric to get out and push. Eric gladly did so, but soon reached the conclusion that he was working harder than the engine was. He looked around the corner of the car, only to see that the driver, Ernie, had collapsed across the steering wheel. Naturally Eric took over the driving with Ernie propped up alongside him. But Ernie only slumped over onto Eric, who came to the realisation that poor Ernie had departed this life.

It must have been a nightmare drive for Eric to return on the little-used road with his dead companion continually falling against him. What thoughts would have raced through his mind?

At last Laguna was reached and Eric was able to phone to Cessnock for a doctor and an ambulance. No doctor arrived but the ambulance came with a load of nurses who were enjoying the ride out to Laguna.

Eric was asked to be a pallbearer when Ernie was laid to rest in the cemetery near Nulkaba on June 6, 1943.

Wollombi Wesleyan Cemetery

E. A. Roberts

A journal with theme 'survival' seemed a good place to report on research about the Wesleyan Cemetery Wollombi that lies adjacent to the road and Cunneens Bridge.

This research was undertaken because the initial proposal to build the new bridge upstream of the current bridge was shelved because it would have to cross the corner of the Cemetery. In looking for ways around this so as to preserve the 1895 wooden Cunneens bridge as well as it possible 1830s abutments, it was decided to research all the possible burials in the Wesleyan Cemetery. The idea was to erect a plaque naming the people who are were buried in the Wesleyan Cemetery. It was believed rather than damaging the cemetery which was indistinguishable grazing land this will restore the cemetery as a place of memorial for those people. It was possible to build the bridge over the cemetery without digging into the cemetery.

The *Maitland Mercury* of 4 Feb 1846 reported Surveyor White was measuring grants for the burial grounds at Wollombi these being the Wesleyan, Anglican and Roman Catholic Cemeteries. Prior to that Thomas Budd was buried on his property and it is believed others were also buried there.

The Wesleyan Lower Hunter Circuit Burial Register exists for 1841 to 1855. The Wesleyan minister appeared to record all burials in Wesleyan Burial grounds regardless of who did the burying. Between 1841 and 1855 there were no recorded burials at Wollombi.

From 1843 to 1850 there was a Wesleyan School at Wollombi. The Wesleyan burial register records a childhood disease epidemic across the Hunter valley for most of 1854 particularly September/October 1854. This same epidemic is evident in the other denominations Wollombi cemetery records but still no record of any burials in the Wesleyan burial ground. The 1849 map shows land owned/set aside for a Wesleyan chapel and School.

Adjacent to this land a grant, for a site for the (Wesleyan) Methodist Ministers residence was gazetted on 16 July 1863 and under the provisions of the Methodist Union Act, 1902,,,,, title was granted to trustees in Sydney on 12 April 1948. On 21 July 1948 they sold it to Albert Joseph Stapleford of Millfield, who in turn on 19 June 1970 sold it to Rex Thompson.

It appeared the cemetery was abandoned sometime in the 1880/90s. In 1970 when Albert Joseph Stapleford sold the cemetery in conjunction with lot 13 to Rex Thompson, he claimed his father Henry had assumed possessionary title over the cemetery in about 1900. So it appears the cemetery has been used as a cow paddock for at least 100 years

Whilst there are no known burials there between 1841 and 1855 when they would have been expected, it had to be assumed there were burials there between 1856 and 1890 but no burial register existed. Because Wollombi is isolated and was a place of Registration from 1856 to about 1900, it was reasonable to assume the death of anyone buried in the Wesleyan Cemetery would be registered at Wollombi. Thus possible burials for that period could be deducted from the differences between known burials and known deaths registration numbers.

As Wesleyans were not adverse to erecting headstones on the graves of loved ones and in other flood ravaged cemeteries (eg St Albans General Cemetery on the Macdonald river) many head stones remain, it was interesting that there was no evidence of headstones.

The Wesleyan Cemetery Wollombi, came to light when Cynthia Hunter, doing the research for the conservation assessment of the current 1895 wooden bridge, found it on an old map. The story then was that it had been de-consecrated and sold to Stapleford who sold it to Rex Thompson the current owner. The question then was if the Cemetery has been de-consecrated were there burials in it. When questions were asked about when the de-consecrated occurred, no one could answer so Parish maps were searched for clues. The 1849 map shows land adjacent to the cemetery owned/set aside for a Wesleyan chapel and school. Adjacent to this land a grant for a site for the (Wesleyan) Methodist Ministers residence was gazetted on 16 July 1863.

From the notations on the church and school and residents blocks it was possible to track the land through the 1902 Methodist Union Act, to its 21 July 1948 sale to Albert Joseph Stapleford of Millfield, who in turn on 19 June 1970 sold it to Rex Thompson. But nothing could be found for the Cemetery.

Sometime between the mid 1890s and 1925, Henry Stapleford, father of Albert Joseph, appears to have assumed occupancy of the cemetery. In 1970 when selling Lot 13 and the Wesleyan Cemetery (Book 2976 No 887 Old System Title) to Rex Thompson under possessionary title, Henry's son Albert Joseph Stapleford claimed his father has owned the land and paid rates on it for at least 20 years before his death in 1925. He did not purchased that land between the 1890s the start of the purchases index and 1925. In 1922 Henry Stapleford applied to convert the title of Lot 13 Section 40 to Torrens Title. This application was not proceeded with. Despite Rex Thompson having possessionary title over the Cemetery; according to an officer in the Status Branch of the Lands Title Office the Cemetery was still crown land, a cemetery reserve. He qualified this by saying this was the case unless there is something in the Notation 29 on Crown plan Wollombi 996 (referred to as plan

catalogued as W29996 in the deed) or in Maitland Land Board files 1946/1385 that changes the of ownership of the Cemetery, then the Cemetery is still Crown Land. Note 29 is written on Lot 13 Section 40 not the Cemetery. Both the officer and his superior stated that possessionary title should be registered and noted which has not happened. Also it is now no longer possible to claim possessionary title over crown land. Rex Thompson has clear title to all the ex Wesleyan lands except for the Cemetery. For the Cemetery he has only an unregister possesionary title, thus indicating that there could be people buried in the Cemetery.

Assuming anyone buried in the Wesleyan Cemetry would be registered at Wollombi because of the isolation the 600 plus deaths registered at Wollombi between 1856 to 1900 were extracted and using the Cessnock Combined Cemeteries CD produced by the Cessnock District Historical and Family History Society Inc., plus a book published by Singleton Family History Society that covered Broke and Howes Valley private cemeteries. All the register deaths with known places of burial were extracted, plus those persons whose siblings or spouse were recorded on the CD. This left 340 deaths this seemed way to many burials given there were only 30 Wesleyans in the Wollombi district out of a total population of 1000 in the 1851 Census [*Maitland Mercury Wednesday 23 April 1851*.] No one could tell me if the CD was a headstone transcription record or a transcription of burial registers but I decided it had to be headstone transcriptions only, certainly for Wollombi and Ellalong.

The council agreed to pay for the partial transcription of the 340 persons with no known place of burial and Joy Murrin was engaged to carry out this transcription noting place of burial and the religion. She kindly also included parents and age at death. Of the 340 names sent to Joy Murrin the only one that came back saying buried in the Wesleyan/Methodist burial ground Wollombi, that was as expected, Elizabeth Charters who died 28 July 1864 aged 55. Before long research was carried out, questions had been asked on family history chat lines about burials of Wesleyans in Wollombi and only Elizabeth Charters has surfaced. So where was Elizabeth buried in the cemetery? The Wollombi Brook is a contributory of the Hunter River and there were 7 floods recorded at Maitland 1864. Whilst the flood pattern in Maitland does not necessarily reflect the flood pattern in Wollombi it is an indication that there were floods in 1864 thus it is likely the family picked the highest ground they could in the cemetery not wanting the grave disturbed by flood water.

Out of the 340 persons there were only another 8 persons for whom was no religion or cemetery was recorded, just 'buried Wollombi'.
They were
John Wright died 1856 aged 40 years farm labourer
Timothy Reedy aged 60 years died 1857
James Ryan died 2 Feb 1859 43 years
James Hewens 23 April 1859; 20 days old
William D Parker died 19 Feb1863; 7 months old no funeral service preformed.
John Alfred Mitchell 6 days died 1884
Henry Jonas Robert Daly 9 days died 1887
Clara Turner 3days died 25 Sept 1900 Wollombi this was an illegitimate baby and there were no witnesses to burial

After careful analysis of these 8 persons, including who carried out the burial, who were the witnesses etc. it was decided that only Elizabeth Charters and possibly John Wright are buried in the Wesleyan cemetery.
Timothy Reedy aged 60 years a single male with no relations was likely to be a RC from witnesses.
James Ryan 43 years single male from his name was also likely to be RC; in the 1828 Census virtually all the Ryan's were RC.

James Hewens was 20 days old. His parents lived in Millfield area and father Samuel who died in 1892 is buried in the Cemetery at Ellalong, his wife who died the following year is buried in the Anglican Cemetery Nulkuba. This infant was very unlikely to be buried in the Wesleyan Cemetery
William D Parker died 1863; 7 months old no funeral service preformed. 17 days earlier a female child of similar age had been buried in Anglican Cemetery and an Adult male had been buried 7 February 1863 in RC section. This child was buried by same person who buried female child.

Given Henry Stanford could have taken this land over from the 1890s, he was probably renting it from he church for years before he bought it. I don't think the last three burials are in the Wesleyan Cemetery. The community would have objected.

Besides many additional burials in Wollombi and Ellalong Anglican and Catholic cemeteries this work also revealed additional burials in the Howes Valley cemetery, another lost cemetery at Quorrobolong at the corner of R. Palmer's Farm on Lot 29 between road number 6902 (was road 231) and the railway line on Lot 94; and a number of persons, particularly children, buried in the parents paddocks.

As Rex Thompson claimed his grandparents Thomas and Emmy Manser were buried in the Wesleyan Cemetery, copies of their death certificates were obtaining which proved this was incorrect.

The full copy of the study has been lodged with the Cessnock City Council and the Cessnock Historical Society.

Wesleyan Cemetery Wollemi runs from the road to the buildings.

Women Surviving the Great North Road

Elizabeth A Roberts

Who are the women who survived the Great North Road? What was found is that this is an area where much more work is needed and could be the basis of a whole Pick if people would like to do the research.

Although we know there were number of women associated with the Great North Road and some had very different experiences it is a difficult area to research and it appears an area where little research has been done.

One of the women who was obviously effected by the building of the road was Hester Simpson, the wife of Percy Simpson the surveyor in charge of the building the road. While Percy was in charge of building the road she lived in rented accommodation at Wisemans Ferry with her family of small children and had another baby whilst living there. Then there were the women of her household.

The 1828 Census shows the Simpson household at Wiseman Ferry consisted of the Simpson family; Percy, Hester, Ferguil 8, Maria 7, Isabella 4, Percy 2½ , and Edward Henry 1½ ; as well as two male convicts, two females each with a child, and two female apprentices from the orphanage.

There was Ann Brennan an ex-convict and her two year old daughter Nancy and also Elizabeth Dunn nee Goodwin who had travelled to Australia with the Simpsons as the children's nurse. In 1826 she married an Andrew Dunn, what happened to him is not known but by November 1828 she is back in her old job with the Simpson's and has an eighteen month old son.

To watch and help care for all the children there were two young girls from the female orphanage, thirteen year old Amelia Brown and eleven year old Susan Murphy. Amelia Brown was possibly the daughter of the Sydney executioner. The executioner as part of his salary package requested a place for his daughter in the orphanage to prevent her being tainted with his occupation. She was entered in the orphanage books under her mother's surname.

All we know of Hester Simpson is she appears to have been a devoted mother and, according to Sarah Matthew, kept a chaotic household full of undisciplined children and never stopped talking to the extent it was exhausting to visit her. Childless Sarah probably had very little in common with Hester other than they were both married to men employed as surveyors and were more or less of the same class. But what were the stories of the women in her household and what do they tell us about Hester.

At the other end of the social spectrum from Hester were the soldier's wives, the convict overseers wives and the wives of some of the convicts who were sentenced to time in an Iron Gang.

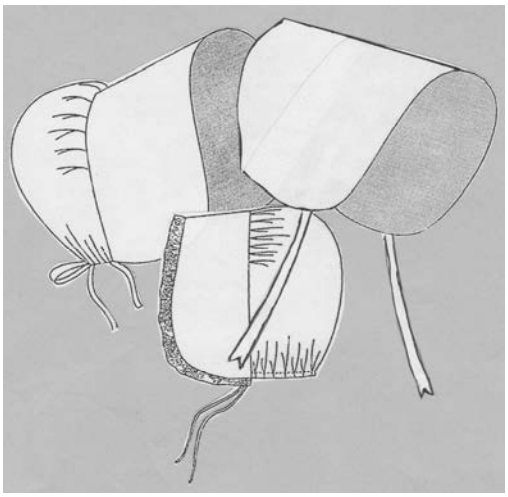
From the church record of the death of a soldier's child we know there were wives living in the army barracks at Maitland. The conditions under which soldier's wives had to live in India were appalling, there were no married quarters and the only privacy they could expect in their accommodation in the barracks was some flimsy curtaining. What were conditions like for soldier's wives in Australia? Were any of the soldiers who guarded Number 3 Iron Gang married? If so were there wives and children with their husbands outside the Stockade on top of Devines Hill?

A document published in HRA tells us that in places of secondary punishment there were regulations about the size of gardens which married soldiers could have and what could and could not be grown and what business their wives could and could not conduct. Does this mean there was separate married accommodation, if so why in Australia and not India?

It appears convict overseers had their own huts and could have their wives with them. If a convict was sentenced to time in an Iron gang his wife was left to fend for her self, there was no social security or support of any sort.

Just some of the women who could be researched are Mrs Wiseman No 2; the Wiseman daughters and daughters-in-laws; Mollie Devine wife of Owen of Devines Hill; Elizabeth Martineer nee Gorman, wife of the overseer Henry Martineer; Ann Thompson who married the overseer Edward Hawkins; other overseers wives; the other women in Hester Simpson's Household; Mrs Mitchell; wives of other surveyors related to the road; wives of any of the convicts who were married before being committed to a road gang; wives of the soldiers both officers and men who were assigned to guard the convicts. Mrs Dunlop wife of the Magistrate at Wollombi from 1840.

If you would like to research any of the women who were related to the Great north Road please let my know so we don't have six people working on the one woman.



Collection of Women's bonnets

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Convict Trail Project Inc.
Publications & Products

Exploring the Convict Trail-Great North Road Self Guided Tour Booklet
(24 page colour A4 Maps and detailed explanatory notes covering the entire length of the Road

By Force of Maul and Wedge – Talking about the Great North Road by Bill Bottomley.

Revised edition 2000 (105 pp A4 paperback) a set of interviews about the historical, archaeological, heritage and cultural significance of the great North Road. An easy to read comprehensive introduction to the Great North Road

The Pick Vol 1 Winners losers and also -rans

The Pick Vol 2 Settlements and Villages

The Pick Vol 3 The People of the Great North Road

The Pick Vol 4 The Road, the Road builders and its Neighbours

The Pick Vol 5 Surviving the Great North Road

OCCASIONAL MONOGRAPHS

A Dot and a Dash along the Convict Trail: a brief history of the Northern Telegraph Line, by Jack Delaney In 1859 the Northern Telegraph line From Sydney to Newcastle was built along the Great North Road this book outlines the history of this line. Out of Print

Convict Road Gangs 1826-1836 by Ian Webb 2003 this 54 page monograph outlines the different types of Road Parties their organisation , accommodation; rations; tools animals; Overseers and the use of the Military to guard them.

*Exploring the Great North Road- Forum Papers 1998:*A compilation of 10 research papers presented at a forum. Including biographical material on Sir Thomas Mitchell, Percy Simpson, and Heneage Finch. Out of print

Four Essays about the Great North Road, by Dr Grace Karskens 1998 A collection of in-depth papers about various historical and archaeological aspects of the Great North Road first published in mid 1980s in academic journals. This publication makes these seminal papers easily accessible for the first time.

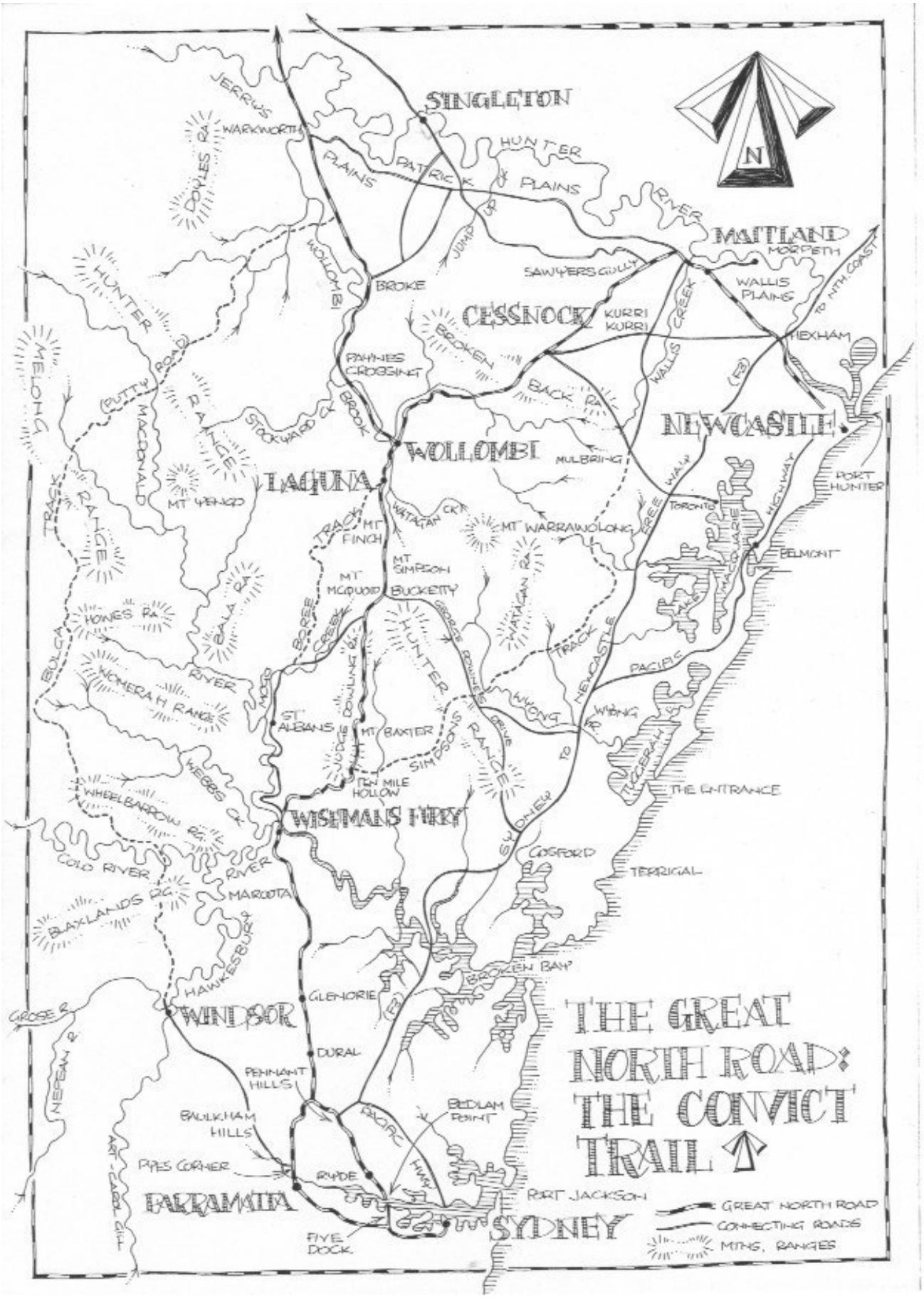
Maintaining Law and Order in the Wollombi/Macdonald Police District, by Carl Hoipo A collection on mid 1800s newspaper articles mainly dealing la and order events in the Wollombi and Macdonald police districts. Out of Print

William Curtin: Two Convicts, by Lorraine Banks and Bill Bottomley this the first of the Monograph series explores in-depth the difference experiences of two convicts of the same name with simular backgrounds. Out of Print

XYZ Goes North : 'An account of a Trip to Hunters River' and 'A Visit to Wollombi and the Cumnoray - by Ian Grantham. An annotated reprint of two series of 1827 letters attributed to William Dumaresq.

VIDEO

The Convict Trail Video, produced by Monterosa Media a 20 minute video about the Great North Road, its significance as an heritage item and the early development of the Convict Trail Project.



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