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<http://www.bda-online.org.au>**General Muster List of New South Wales 1823, 1824, 1825**

Edited by Carol J Baxter, Pub. by Australian Biographical and Genealogical Record, Sydney 1999.

The following has been copied from the published volume, and whilst some of it is not relevant in terms of viewing the Database, it does give the reader a complete view of the data collected, the original records from which it came and other useful and interesting information. Some Appendix tables have not been reproduced here but can be viewed in a copy of the volume in major libraries.

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**Introduction****Historical Background**

The first official general musters were taken in the earliest years of the New South Wales settlement as a means of counting the population, controlling the convicts and determining the colony's ability to support itself without recourse to the public stores. From 1795 onwards annual general musters appear to have been held. These were supervised by the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor and included all the inhabitants of the colony with the exception of important officials and the military.

Between 1814 and 1819, the Governor personally supervised the recording of the musters and returns, which were then written up in his office. However, the resulting documents were generally considered to be very inaccurate so the procedure changed in 1820. In the hope of greater accuracy, the Magistrates were charged with the supervision and receipt of the returns for their respective districts however the 1820 General Muster was again found to be inaccurate and probably as a result of

these inaccuracies the 1821 Muster was taken by the Governor. In 1822 the Governor ordered that the Magistrates again supervise the collection of the General Muster, while the district constables were ordered to take note of all the inhabitants in their district to provide a check for the actual Muster.

In 1822 and earlier years, Musters were taken at different stations according to the civil condition of the population. However in 1823 the inhabitants were ordered to attend muster stations according to the initial letter of their surname. This was undoubtedly to overcome some of the difficulties involved in creating an alphabetical list out of such a large number of entries.

Annual general musters continued to be taken from 1823 onwards, however the information from the individual muster returns has not survived. The extant muster generally known as the 1825 General Muster was in fact a compilation of the general musters taken in 1823, 1824 and 1825 according to its title page. The decision to combine these muster returns probably lay with the realisation that the information contained in a “master” volume could serve as a base against which the information gathered at each following muster could be checked. In being able to correct or add information to the master volume, a greater degree of both accuracy and continuity would arise.

The *General Muster List of New South Wales 1823, 1824, 1825* is the last surviving muster return of the New South Wales population. By 1828 it was generally known that free people could not be compelled to attend general musters and the first act for taking a Census of New South Wales was passed by the Legislative Council of New South Wales in that year.

For details of extant muster returns see the Bibliography below.

### **Method of Collection**

The information contained in the extant volume of this Muster List was extracted from the General Musters taken in September/October of the years 1823, 1824 and 1825. The Government and General Orders preceding these Musters provide details regarding attendance. The dates of attendance for each “alphabetical group” at each muster are recorded in Table 1. The location of the respective Muster Stations are shown in Table 2. For example, those living in the Sydney area who had surnames starting with the letters A or B attended Muster Station 1, the Police Office at Sydney, on 8 September 1823, 20 September 1824 and 3 October 1825. If they were born or arrived in NSW before the first date, the information recorded against their names was probably collected on that first date and corrected or amended if necessary on the following dates.

**Table 1:** Date on which each alphabetical group was to attend its respective Muster Station in 1823, 1824 and 1825 (see Table 2 for the location of each Muster Station).

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| <b>1823</b> | <b>Muster Station 1</b> | <b>Station 2</b> |                     |                  | <b>Remaining Stations</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 8 Sep 1823  | A to B                  | A to C           |                     |                  | A to G                    |
| 9 Sep 1823  | C                       | D to G           |                     |                  | H to O                    |
| 10 Sep 1823 | D to F                  | H to L           |                     |                  | P to Z                    |
| 11 Sep 1823 | G to H                  | M to Q           |                     |                  | P to Z                    |
| 12 Sep 1823 | I to L                  | R to T           |                     |                  |                           |
| 13 Sep 1823 | M                       | U to Z           |                     |                  |                           |
| 15 Sep 1823 | N to R                  |                  |                     |                  |                           |
| 16 Sep 1823 | S to T                  |                  |                     |                  |                           |
| 17 Sep 1823 | U to Z                  |                  |                     |                  |                           |
| <b>1824</b> | <b>Station 1</b>        | <b>Station 2</b> | <b>Station 3</b>    | <b>Station 4</b> | <b>Remaining</b>          |
| 20 Sep 1824 | A to B                  | A to C           |                     |                  | A to G                    |
| 21 Sep 1824 | C                       | D to G           |                     |                  | H to O                    |
| 22 Sep 1824 | D to F                  | H to L           |                     |                  | P to Z                    |
| 23 Sep 1824 | G to H                  | M to Q           |                     | A to G           |                           |
| 24 Sep 1824 | I to L                  | R to T           |                     | H to O           |                           |
| 25 Sep 1824 | M                       | U to Z           |                     | P to Z           |                           |
| 27 Sep 1824 | N to R                  |                  | A to E              |                  |                           |
| 28 Sep 1824 | S to T                  |                  | F to M              |                  |                           |
| 29 Sep 1824 | U to Z                  |                  | N to P              |                  |                           |
| 30 Sep 1824 |                         |                  | Q to Z              |                  |                           |
| <b>1825</b> | <b>Station 1</b>        | <b>Station 2</b> | <b>Stations 3/4</b> | <b>Remaining</b> |                           |
| 3 Oct 1825  | A to B                  | A to C           |                     | A to E           |                           |
| 4 Oct 1825  | C                       | D to G           |                     | F to M           |                           |
| 5 Oct 1825  | D to F                  | H to L           |                     | N to P           |                           |
| 6 Oct 1825  | G to H                  | M to Q           |                     | Q to Z           |                           |
| 7 Oct 1825  | I to L                  | R to T           |                     |                  |                           |
| 8 Oct 1825  | M                       | U to Z           |                     |                  |                           |
| 10 Oct 1825 | N to R                  |                  | A to E              |                  |                           |
| 11 Oct 1825 | S to T                  |                  | F to M              |                  |                           |
| 12 Oct 1825 | U to Z                  |                  | N to P              |                  |                           |
| 13 Oct 1825 |                         |                  | Q to Z              |                  |                           |

**Table 2: Muster Stations in 1823, 1824 & 1825**

| <b>General Muster</b>   | <b>1823</b> | <b>1824<br/>1825</b> |
|---|-------------|----------------------|
| The Police Office at Sydney, including Kissing Point, Concord, Botany Bay, Cooke's River, and Places adjacent. [Only north shore of Botany Bay and of Cooke's River in 1823 and 1824; not specified in 1825].   | 1           | 1                    |
| The Court-House at Parramatta, including Toongabbee, Prospect Hill, Seven Hills Baulkham Hills, Northern Boundary, Field of Mars, Dundas, Pennant Hills, and several other Places adjoining thereto, not specially assigned to any other Station, and understood to be in greater Contiguity to Parramatta than to any other of the present appointed Stations. | 2           | 2                    |
| The Residence of John Harris, Esq. at South Creek, including Bathurst and   | -           | 3                    |

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Melville.

|  |    |    |
|--|----|----|
| The Court-house at Windsor, including Pitt Town, and thence extending to Little Catye Creek, and along the South Creek to Richmond New Road. | -  | 3  |
| The School-house at Richmond, including the Districts of Upper and Lower Richmond and the Curryjong Brush.                                   | -  | 4  |
| The School-house at Wilberforce, including Portland Head, and all the Places thence down the River.  | 5  | 6  |
| The Court-house at Liverpool. [Included south shore of Botany Bay and of Cooke's River in 1823 & 1824].                                      | 6  | 7  |
| The School-house at Campbelltown, including Airs and Bunburry Curran.  | 7  | 8  |
| The Residence of Robert Lowe, Esq. in Bringelly  | 8  | 9  |
| The Residence of William Brown, Esq. in Appin, including Illawarra.  | 9  | 10 |
| Molles Main, including Upper and Lower Minto.  | 10 | 11 |
| The Government Establishment at Cawdor, including the County of Camden.  | 11 | 12 |
| The School-house at Castlereagh.   | 12 | 13 |

NB: Spellings are as recorded in the Government and General Orders.

As the limits of settlement expanded in the 1820's with the discovery of new areas suitable for farming and grazing, the need for additional muster stations arose. The Government and General Order included in *Sydney Gazette* on 15 September 1825 refers to some additional muster stations as follows:

The Muster of the Population for the County of Westmoreland will be taken in the Government House at Bathurst on the 3rd, 4th and 5th days of next month. And for the District of Hunters River, in the Government House at Newcastle, Patterson and Wallis' Plains on the 3rd, 10th and 13th of October.

This Year's Muster, for the County of Argyle, will be taken in two Places: - At the Cottage on the Farm of Charles Throsbey, Esq. for all Persons residing in Upper Bargo, of the County of Camden, in Sutton Forest, Wollondilly, or Parts adjacent, of the County of Argyle.

At the Residence of David Reid, Esq. for all the remaining Parts of the County of Argyle. To commence at both places on the 11th of October and to continue for three Days.

### Method of Documentation

Although no definite conclusions can be reached regarding the method by which the extant volume of this Muster List was produced, the following theory can be proposed. When the inhabitants were mustered in 1823, their details were grouped together by the first initial, or perhaps even by the first few initials, of their surname. The Muster Books were then taken to the Colonial Secretary's Office where it seems likely that the various pages were spread around the clerks, with the entries perhaps being numbered in some way, so that an alphabetised listing of the entries could be copied into a new Muster Book. This second-generation copy of the 1823 Muster appears to have been used as a "base" muster, with information from the later musters added where appropriate. This is suggested by the appearance of the entries with blank spaces in the entries being filled with details written in different handwriting, while "corrected" or additional information was squeezed in above or below the appropriate entry.

The decision to produce a composite muster list that contained information from these three musters was possibly not made at the time that the 1823 Muster Book was produced. It could have been a much later decision, made around the time that the 1824 Muster was taken. However irrespective of the time frame involved, this decision was undoubtedly made with the aim of producing a more accurate record of the circumstances of each inhabitant both as a means of controlling the population and for statistical purposes.

In the "base" muster book, surnames were recorded alphabetically and grouped by the first two or three letters of the alphabet with spaces between each grouping. For example surnames starting with "Aa" were grouped together with a space before those starting with "Ab". In this way entries that had been accidentally omitted could be added to the appropriate section. When the decision was made to combine the musters, the gaps between the surname groupings enabled the addition of details for those who were born or arrived in the colony after the first muster in 1823. Entries for this group of individuals are generally located at the end of these surname groupings and are not in strict alphabetical order. Sometimes entries are also found at the start of the appropriate alphabetical section, generally when the space at the end was filled.

As the extant volume is a compilation of three individual musters, numerous duplicate entries are found. As many as three different entries are recorded for some people because of the difficulties the clerks had in linking entries together. The surrounding entries will sometimes provide a clue as to which muster was the source of the respective entry. Three entries are recorded in the muster for Louisa Le Sage, the wife of Gabriel Marie Louis Huon de Kerrilleau, as follows: Louisa le Sage de Kerrillion [28269]; Louisa Lesage [29488] and Louisa Sugee [42042]. The latter was probably a transcription error made by the clerk when copying the information from the original muster book.

A number of individuals are not named in the 1823/4/5 Muster List because important officials, such as the Governor, and members of the military were not required to be mustered. There were also others who deliberately refused to attend

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the various musters. The latter were wealthy settlers or people who held positions of some importance in the community, who were well aware of their “free” status in a colony mainly populated by convicts and emancipists, and who chose to assert their freedom by refusing to be mustered like convicts. It was the government’s realisation that it could not legally force these people to attend a muster that led to the passing of the Census Act in 1828. With this act, all inhabitants other than the military and important officials, by law had to complete a census return; those who neglected to do so, or who provided false information, were liable to be fined.

The lack of an entry in the 1823/4/5 Muster List for officials and other “important” individuals is unlikely to create a problem for researchers. Numerous other references to these people will be found in early colonial records, including baptism, marriage and burial registers, newspaper columns, land records, government Blue Books, Colonial Secretary papers. Furthermore, numerous references to these people will actually be found in the 1823/4/5 Muster List itself, as employers of convicts or of free persons. Therefore the lack of an individual entry in the 1823/4/5 Muster List for people such as these is explained by the social environment of the time. The wealth of references to them in other records means that they could not have passed through the 1820’s without leaving a significant paper-trail.

However the failure to find an entry for an “ordinary” person - convict, emancipist, family of a convict or emancipist, less-wealthy free settler - is extremely significant. As the extant volume is a compilation of three individual musters, the statistical probability of a given person being omitted from the 1823/4/5 Muster List is extremely slight. If one assumes for the sake of argument that 10% of the population was omitted from each muster and that these omissions occurred randomly (due to mistakes on behalf of the muster clerks, an inability to attend the muster station on that day, or some other one-off circumstance) then the odds of a person who was born or arrived in NSW prior to September 1823 being omitted from the extant volume of this three-muster compilation would be  $0.1 \times 0.1 \times 0.1 = 0.001$  or 1 in 1000. As just under 37000 entries are found in the publication this suggests that no more than 37 people would have been accidentally omitted from the 1823/4/5 Muster List. If the assumption is made that 5% of the population was omitted from each muster, then the statistical probability is that only 5 people in 40000 would have been accidentally omitted from this extant volume. Naturally the statistical probability of an omission is increased for those who were born or arrived after the muster in 1823 and again increased for those who were born or arrived after the muster in 1824.

The 1823/4/5 Muster List is not the only muster return to have survived for the 1820’s. Both the 1822 Muster and the 1828 Census have also survived and it is worthwhile examining the statistical probability of an accidental omission when those two returns are also taken into consideration. The 1822 Muster was recorded in the year immediately preceding the first of the three musters included in this Muster List so for a person who was born or arrived in NSW prior to the date of the 1822 Muster, the statistical probability of their being accidentally omitted from the 1822, 1823, 1824 and 1825 Musters would be 1 in 10,000 if the omission rate was 10% and 1 in over 160,000 if the omission rate was 5%. If the 1828 Census is also included in these calculations, then the odds of a pre-1822 birth/arrival being accidentally omitted from all three records would be 1 in 100,000 at a 10% omission rate and 1 in



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over 3,000,000 at a 5% omission rate. As the population of New South Wales was less than 40,000 in 1828 this indicates that any “ordinary” person who was born or arrived in New South Wales prior to 1822 and who is not referred to in either the 1822 Muster, 1823/ 4/5 Muster List **or** 1828 Census was undoubtedly dead or had departed the settlement by 1828, and probably by 1822. This is an extremely significant point that needs to be taken into consideration by anyone researching early New South Wales settlers.

Although purportedly only including information from these three musters, the 1823/4/5 Muster List was apparently used as a source for recording additional details about many inhabitants. Later information, such as references to deaths with dates as late as November 1832, can be found in the Muster List, particularly in the section covering the first few letters of the alphabet.

Curiously, the last page of the Muster includes the date 3 November 1827 and the signature of Ra Darling, Governor in Chief. This could suggest that the Governor had “signed off” the muster at that date if it were not for the fact that later information is recorded in the muster. The reason for the decision to continue using the Muster List as a vehicle for recording later information will probably never be known.

### **Inconsistencies & Difficulties**

At least three different clerks were involved in producing the extant volumes of the 1823/4/5 Muster List as evidenced by their handwriting styles. One clerk copied letters A-B and I-A, another clerk copied letters C-F and S-V and a third clerk copied letters G-H. The handwriting of the latter clerk was poor and it is inevitable that errors will have occurred in the transcription process. The handwriting was scrappy and the clerk’s failure to neatly form letters made it extremely difficult to distinguish between letters such as “a” and “u”, “e” and “i”, “e” and “o”, “c” and “e”, “t” and “l”, “er” and “a”, “u” and “n” and so on.

The various clerks working on the different letters of the alphabet each used their own system to record information, particularly in treating family groups. In transcribing any document it is important to take into consideration the clerk’s intent, and possibly laziness as well, when recording the relevant information. In interpreting the clerk’s intent, it is also important to take into consideration the fact that the extant 1823/4/5 Muster List was a second-generation copy. This means that the clerk himself had to interpret the information provided by the muster-takers who would each have had their own method of documenting the information given to them at the muster stations. It is quite likely that the muster-takers were the same people as the clerks who transcribed the information into the “base” muster however as each of these clerks would still have been dealing with information recorded by others, the possibility of interpretation errors or confusion must be considered.

In order to produce a meaningful transcription, rather than a mindless copy, of the extant 1823/4/5 Muster List it is therefore important to have an overview of the project, that is, to take into consideration both the information as it appears to have been recorded as well as the purpose for documenting the information in the first place. It is also important to maintain the integrity of the original document yet to

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transcribe the information simply, without having copious Editor's notes. For this reason a number of editorial decisions had to be made concerning the manner in which some types of information should be interpreted and transcribed.

The clerk who transcribed the letters C-F and S-V did not use brackets to link members of the same family together, rather he recorded family groups in the following manner:

|                    |    |                |      |   |                        |            |
|--------------------|----|----------------|------|---|------------------------|------------|
| Saunders, Thomas   | FS | <i>Matilda</i> | 1791 | 7 | Landholder             | Parramatta |
| Saunders, Thomas   | 23 | BC             |      |   | Son of Thomas Saunders | Do.        |
| Saunders, Virginia | 20 | "              |      |   | Daughter               | Do.        |
| Saunders, Sarah    | 18 | "              |      |   | "                      | Do.        |
| Saunders, Mary     | 16 | "              |      |   | "                      | Do.        |

These entries suggest that the clerk variously used [""] and [Do.] to symbolise "ditto". However this clerk also recorded [""] in columns which should have been blank, for example, under "Matilda", "1791" and "7" for each of the four children listed above. Clearly the clerk appears to have been using [""] to symbolise both a blank and a repetition of relevant information, which creates problems when attempts are being made to generate a meaningful transcription. The broad overview however indicates that these children were undoubtedly born in the colony as their father arrived in 1791 well before the apparent birth date of the eldest child listed under his entry - c1802, and as the details of their ship of arrival would have been recorded if they had arrived by ship at some stage between 1802 and 1825. The last three were also quite clearly the daughters, rather than the sons, spouses, employees &c., of Thomas Saunders (if they had held a different relationship, that relationship would also have been recorded where appropriate).

Support for this interpretation of the use of the symbol [""] is found in the fact that when a page-break interrupted a family group, the first member of the family recorded on the following page had the relevant information, such as "bc" and "daughter of", recorded as part of his/her entry. After this entry the symbol [""] continued to be used in succeeding entries for members of the same family. Clearly if the assumption was made that [""] indicated a blank in all instances, critical information would be lost to researchers. The [""] symbol has therefore been treated in instances such as the above as a symbol for "ditto" and transcribed accordingly. Where the [""] clearly indicated a blank, such as for "Matilda 1791 7" in the above entries, it has also been transcribed accordingly. Therefore subjective decisions had to be made by the Editor to ensure that as much information as possible was transferred into the transcription and incorrect interpretations will occasionally have been made. The decisions had to be made so frequently that comments were not included in Appendix 1.

Entries were recorded in alphabetical order in the original volumes except for the following instances:

- a) family groups such as the above;
- b) the occasional mistake which is understandable in view of the large number of entries being alphabetised;



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- c) references to individuals who arrived after 1823 who are grouped at the end of each section generally without an alphabetical structure; and
- d) references to individuals who were born or arrived before 1823 whose entry could not be located by the clerks in the base muster and who were grouped with the later entries.

In family groups the father was generally recorded first, then the mother, then the offspring with the eldest recorded first, although this grouping was not necessarily adhered to rigidly. A notation of some sort was generally used to signify that a family group was being recorded. When brackets were used in the original volumes, the notation "FG" has been included in the main text in front of the age column. When a "ditto" [generally "Do."] was used, or the entry recorded "Wife of above" or "Child of above" an asterisk has been placed next to the "dittoed" or "above" name in the "Occupation/Employer &c." column. As such, the entry for Virginia Saunders, noted above, is recorded in the main text as "Daughter of Thomas Saunders\* Parramatta".

Where entries were recorded in this way it is clear that the children were born to the father listed immediately above, however in other circumstances the relationship is not as clear-cut. In many entries the mother was recorded under her surname at transportation and her children were grouped under her entry and carried her surname. When the entries for her children recorded "Child of Do.", even if a reference was made to the mother's spouse, the "dittoed" entry was transcribed as the mother rather than as the father. This method of transcribing parentage was chosen in these instances as the woman's children were not given her "husband's" surname and could have been born to a different man with whom she had an earlier relationship. The inclusion of the asterisk [\*] indicates that the reference to parentage was not written in full but instead used some sort of "ditto" notation. If in doubt, check the original muster.

If an entry is out of alphabetical order and repeats information contained in the previous entry it is worth considering that a family relationship is possible even if such a connection is not indicated; the clerks could have accidentally left out a family group notation. For example, the following entries are included in the Muster:

|       |                  |    |    |          |          |
|-------|------------------|----|----|----------|----------|
| 19028 | Douglass, Thomas | 23 | BC | Labourer | Richmond |
| 19029 | Douglass, Philip | 20 | BC | Labourer | Richmond |

Although no family connection was noted in the Muster, other sources indicate that these men were brothers.

As the surviving Muster Book is a second- or third-generation copy, mistakes were inevitably made by the clerks during the copying process. Many of these mistakes are simple errors, easily recognisable by researchers. Others will make it difficult to locate entries in the Muster. For example, most researchers would not think to look for *Louisa Lesage* or *Le Sage* or *Sage* under *Sugee*, or for *James Mitchell* per *Globe* 1818 under *James Witchell*. Researchers are advised to be very lateral in their thinking when attempting to locate entries in these Muster Books and a service is provided for a fee by the Society of Australian Genealogists to assist with the location of difficult entries.

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The information contained in the extant volume is the product of musters taken in different years which probably explains the lack of correlation between many entries. For example, Edward Parsons [25847] is recorded as a "Govt Servant to Goodsir", however Goodsir's entry reads "Gone to India". Sometimes an apparent lack of correlation will be the result of different landholdings such that the landholder is recorded as residing in one area while his employee is residing at another. This can create difficulties in identifying the employer when he has a common name. When a wife is recorded as residing in a different area to her husband, this is probably the result of a failure to update one or other entry.

The capitals "I" and "J" were frequently interchangeable in the handwriting of the time so when the initial "I" was recorded for a given name, particularly when reference was being made to a spouse or employer, it has possibly been incorrectly transcribed unless the correct initial was obvious from other sources. Given names starting with "I" are uncommon while given names starting with "J" are common, particularly for males, so this problem would not be a frequent occurrence.

The spellings "Mr" [Mr], "Mc" [Mc] and "M" [Michael] were also difficult to distinguish on occasion and sometimes could have been incorrectly transcribed.

The information noted under Occupation/Employer was recorded inconsistently by the clerks. For example, between the alphabetical sections "G" and "A" approximately 200 references to "Prisoner Barracks" were found in conjunction with the employer "Govt Employ" however for letters before G and after R only a handful of references to "Prisoner Barracks" are found. It is unclear as to whether more information was gathered at the time of the various musters, or whether some information was omitted when the final muster book was produced.

### Unusual and Interesting Entries

The Muster includes a number of references to ethnic origin and religion as follows:

- Aborigines: Billy [11953], the family of Johny, Betty and Thomas Cox [17263-5], Dickey [18648], John Richmond [37989] and Kitty and Samuel Coleby [17178-9].
- New Zealanders: Ashow [10627], Aurora [10772], Munnapenny [34275], Padoo [35441] and Tiger [43051].
- Chinese: Ahuto [10162] and John Keene [27849].
- Hindoo: Ramdial [37315] and Seabride [39546].

References are also found to physical disabilities:

- Deaf and Dumb: Samuel Lightfoot [29744].
- Blind: Paul Bailey [11012], John Sydney Bates [11445], Samuel Brain [13597], Henry Crawley [17431], George Handley [23871], Thomas Johnson [27093], James Smith [40715], Thomas Stapleton [41574] and Thomas Thompson [42901].

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In a few entries, interesting family information was recorded. Entries 28832-28833 record that the children were "At Mr Underwoods, Sydney [and] Adopted by Mr Duncan or Dangar, Sydney". Entries 34970-34971 record that the children were the offspring of Ann O'bee who was the "widow of John O'bee and daughter of Luckins". Entries 29112-5 record that the children were the "Grandchildren of Mr Bunker and Mr Connell, Sydney, residing at Mr Grevilles".

As the surviving Muster List includes information from general musters taken in 1823, 1824 and 1825, changes in status during this period are frequently recorded. The most interesting, and probably useful, of these references are those recording deaths and departures. With respect to deaths, the majority of entries simply recorded dates and places however a number contain additional information, for example: "Died from the bite of a Snake" [22865]; "Executed for the Murder of his Master[?]" [224921, "Killed by the Aborigines 1824 Bathurst" [38423]; Murdered in New Zealand in Schooner Samuel - April 1824 [31387]; "Supposed to have been Murdered by Bushrangers" [10100]. A number of these references to deaths actually post-date the muster as follows: "Drowned Feb 1826 Newcastle" [41699]; "Died Dec 1832 Bringelly" [15179].

Numerous references to departures are also recorded, many of which merely record "Left the colony" or "Gone to England". However a number provide more detailed information, for example: "One of the men who seized the sloop Isabella at Port Macquarie 1824" [26213]; "Runaway with the Cutter Eclipse May 1825" [27040]; "This family left for V[an] D[iemen's] Land - 1824" [27889]; "Gone a-whaling" [33411]; "Gone to Batavia" [32788]; Cleared in Belinda May 1824 for South Sea Fishing [36138].

As references to these deaths and departures would not, in many cases, be recorded elsewhere, they are of great value to genealogists and historians. For this reason, separate indexes to deaths and departures have been included in the publication. [See Index to Deaths on page 658 and Index to Departures on page 667].

Ages and/or year of birth are given in the muster primarily for children, however sometimes the year of birth is recorded for adults. The oldest ages suggested by the entries included 1750 for Mrs Mary Lilly [29757] who came free per *Minstrel* and 1765 for John McCowleff [30707] who was a convict per *Hooghley*.

### **Explanatory Notes** **Editing Parameters**

The aim of the ABGR Project in data-entering the 1823/4/5 Muster List was to use the information contained in each entry to generate biographies, and to retain the original structure of the Muster for publication purposes.

In publishing the 1823/24/25 Muster List, the main aims were:

a) To reproduce an accurate copy of the Muster as recorded in the volumes held by the Public Record Office, London (Ref. HO 10/19 & HO 10/20; PRO Reel 66A & B).

- b) To print the information in a single-line entry format in a single volume;
- c) To produce a cross-reference index including every person named in the Muster.

The extant volumes of the Muster List organised information into seven columns as follows: Names, Age, Class, Vessel, Year of Arrival, Sentence, Employment. All of these columns have been reproduced as in the extant volumes although a field "CS" for "Colonial Sentence" has been included after the "Sentence" column. In addition, each entry has been allocated an exclusive reference number to assist with the use of the Indices. A final field has also been added directing the researcher towards "Editor's Remarks".

It is clear that the Musters contain a number of errors, however these have not been corrected as it is necessary to maintain the integrity of the original document. Some alterations in the method by which the information was data-entered were necessary for computerisation and standardisation; these have been discussed below.

### **Method of Checking**

A screen entry format was designed using a commercial database program and data entry staff input each entry from the Muster List. Using photocopied pages of the original manuscript, ABGR Project volunteers then compared each entry with the corresponding entry on the computer print-outs and appropriate corrections were made. Finally the Editor rechecked every entry, with further corrections being added to the database.

### **Notes on the General Muster List of New South Wales 1823, 1824, 1825**

The published version of the Muster List includes the following columns:

**1. Reference Number** - The exclusive reference number has been allocated by the computer to enable the retention of the original input order after sorting, and to link entries in the indices with those in the main text. The numbering system commences with 10001 rather than 00001 as the database program does not adequately process numbers commencing with "0".

**2. Name** - Surnames have been transcribed as recorded in the Muster. Abbreviated given names have been extended to their full form. Titles and other descriptive details have been standardized and recorded within brackets. Aliases or alternative names have been recorded in the Remarks column.

**3. FG** - This column has been included in the text layout as a means of grouping family members together. Braces "}" were used in the original volumes to group family members together however these cannot be easily reproduced in the database. In this publication the notation "FG" [Family Group] has replaced the braces, with the "F" indicating the commencement of the bracketed entries and the "G" indicating the end of the bracketed entries. However it must be added that this notation does not necessarily represent the start or end of the family group as a

whole. In many cases the father, mother or parents will be recorded first with the children bracketed together underneath as "Children of ...". In some instances a page break divides the family and the entries commencing on the next page are grouped together within their own brackets or without any brackets. Whether or not brackets were used, it is generally easy to determine if these entries belong to the same family. However if there is some confusion, it is worth checking the original volumes to determine if a page break did occur at that point. The clerks who were responsible for copying the entries into the extant Muster volume each had their own way of recording family groups. The use of brackets to group family members together is mainly found in the section covering the letters G-R.

Occasionally braces "}" are recorded in this column in the publication. These have been used as a means of identifying twins.

**4. Age** - This column includes both ages and years of birth, with some entries recording both an age and a year of birth. A number on its own (eg. "6") indicates that the subject was six years of age. When the number is followed by 'rn' it indicates "months", by "w" - "weeks" and by "d" - "days". Entries such as the following "1 11814" indicate that the subject was 11 years of age and was born in 1814. Occasionally discrepancies are found between the age and birth-year and if these are significant a comment by the Editor is included. Fractions were also recorded in the original Muster volumes and these have been transcribed as fractions, for example, "½" equals "6 months" and "¼" equals "3 months".

**5. Class** - This column records the subject's civil condition at the time the various Musters were taken, the respective abbreviations being described on page 640.

As the extant volumes include information from three General Musters, the civil condition of many convicts naturally changed over time. This has produced some curious abbreviations, with different clerks approaching the problem in different ways. For example, the abbreviations "fcs" or "fcs" refers to convicts "c" who had become free by servitude "fs"; instead of crossing out the "c", the "fs" was added around it. This has been transcribed as "C FS" in the main text, thereby falling in line with the procedure used elsewhere in the Muster. Other double condition entries include "tl fs", ("ticket of leave" followed by "free by servitude") and "cp fs", ("conditional pardon" followed by "free by servitude"). Occasionally mistakes will have been made with the interpretation of "fs" and "tl" as in the handwriting of the time the capitalised version of "F" and "T" and of "S" and "L" often looked the same. Where possible the date of arrival and length of sentence were used to assist with the interpretation.

**6. Ship** - This column records the subject's ship of arrival. Spellings have been standardized where possible for sorting purposes using Charles Bateson's *The Convict Ships* as the main source for spellings. Incorrect names, eg. *Southampton* [17208] have been recorded as found in the original. No information was included in this column for those who were born in the colony. Occasionally the clerks included information in this column for colonial born inhabitants who had received a colonial sentence. References to these colonial sentences have been placed in the column 'CS' with additional information in the "Occupation/Employer" or "Remarks" columns.

**7. Year of Arrival** - This column records the year in which the subject's "ship" arrived in the colony according to information provided by the inhabitant, or the inhabitant's parent, at the time of the muster. **This information is frequently incorrect as the year in which an event occurred is often hard to remember. This information has been transcribed as found in the original.**

**8. Sentence** - This column records the term of the sentence received by those who arrived in the colony as convicts. The sentences received were usually for 7 or 14 years, or for life. Occasionally other sentences are found however most of these related to colonial convictions. As this information is of particular interest to historians a separate column has been included in the main text to cover colonial convictions.

**9. Colonial Convictions** - This column records details of convictions received for crimes committed whilst residing in New South Wales. Although most colonial convictions were received by convicts, some were received by those who were "born in the colony" or "came free". This information was recorded in various places in the original volumes, however it has now been reproduced in its own column in the main text. The information was originally recorded in a number of different ways, such as "CS", "Col: Sentence", or "Colonial Sentence"; all variations have been transcribed as "CS" in the main text. Occasionally "C" was recorded in such a manner that it was clear that reference was being made to a colonial conviction. Sometimes the term of the sentence was also recorded. For example, "Cs 7" indicates that a 7-year colonial sentence was received. Most references to sentences of 3 year's duration were for colonial convictions.

### **Additional Information**

In the Muster List, all additional information was recorded in the "Employment" column. This information has been divided into the following columns for ease of use:

### **10. Occupation/Employer &c.**

This column records information relating to the following:

- occupations: landholder, carpenter, &c;
- status: spinster, blind, invalid, &c.
- nationality: New Zealander, Chinese, &c.
- relationships: child of ..., wife of ... &c.
- employers: "John Smith", "Dockyard", "Cutter *Mermaid*", &c.

Some editing changes have been necessary as a database structure was used for data entry and as the information needed to be input in such a way that meaningful entries could be extracted for the Indices. These were as follows:

The following abbreviations were recorded in the extant volumes however these have been extended for ease of use and generation of indices as follows: "GS" [Govt Servant], "GE" [Govt Employ], "CP" or "Clg Pty" [Clearing Party], "Rd Pty" [Road Party], "PB" [Prisoner Barracks], "CB" [Carters Barracks].



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Given names of employers, parents, spouses and soon, were frequently abbreviated and have been extended to their full form for standardisation and computerisation purposes. Where the abbreviation was unclear attempts have been made to verify the full name using other sources. Poor handwriting will occasionally mean that transcription errors have occurred, however it is also possible that the clerks themselves made transcription errors from abbreviated information in the original Muster Books.

Possessives have been eliminated so that "Lodger at John Smith's" becomes "Lodger at John Smith". Plurals in surnames have also been eliminated, so that for example "Messrs Nortons", which was the format used when reference was being made to two men by the name of "Mr Norton", is recorded as "Messrs Norton". These changes ensure that names are correctly recorded in the Indices although the occasional possessive "swill have escaped the deletion process when the surname could have been spelt either with or without the "s".

For standardisation purposes, apostrophes have also been deleted from the names of employer organisations as these were not consistently included in the extant volumes, eg. *Colonial Secretarys Office*.

In many of the early musters, "gaol" was spelt "goal". To save confusion, these entries have been standardised to "gaol". However "jail" remains as written.

Many entries record the "employer" as a clearing party/gang or road party/gang, an example of one such reference being: "Wylde's Clearing Party". For the Indices to provide references to all people named in the muster along with all employer organisations and so on, it was necessary to data-enter the information in such a way that the type of party/gang was recorded in the Employer/Organisation column, and the employer or overseer in the "other person" columns. When this information was downloaded to produce the main text, the entry appears as follows: "Clearing Party - Wylde". As such the gist of the information is clear and the "employer organisation" and "other person" can be readily extracted to produce the relevant indices. Furthermore by recording the information in this format it is easier for researchers to distinguish between the name of an employer/overseer and a type of gang when the employer/overseer's name was also an occupational term, eg. "Carpenter".

Where a parent is recorded, say as "John Smith", and a child is recorded immediately following as "Child of John", "Child of J.S.", or "Child of do. [ditto]", the parent's name has been recorded in full. When a "ditto" symbol was used, an asterisk (\*) is recorded immediately after the surname. For a discussion of some of the problems involved in interpreting and transcribing the "ditto" symbols, see under the heading "Inconsistencies and Difficulties".

A number of multiple employers were recorded, occasionally in full and occasionally in abbreviated format. One multiple employer, "Berry & Woolstoncraft" [Wollstonecraft], was occasionally recorded as "B & W" due to space limitations. The

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abbreviated format was transcribed in full for ease of use, ease in generating indexes and so on.

**11. Where** - This column records place names. Some refer to places of residence while some refer to places of employment that are more appropriately recorded in this column. Street names are also included in this column; most refer to streets in the town of Sydney although some are obviously in other towns.

A number of double names were recorded, some in full, some abbreviated; all were recorded in full in the main text. Examples of double places names are "Melville and Bathurst" which was sometimes recorded as "M & B" and "Castlereagh and Evan" which was sometimes recorded as "C & E". Examples of place names which were recorded inconsistently and needed standardisation are "Completon" [Campbelltown], "Plains of Emu" [Emu Plains], "Punch bowle" [Punchbowl], "Wallaces Plains" [Wallis Plains] and "Gloster St" [Gloucester St].

In instances where a parent's entry contained details of residence, and a child's entry followed with the information "Child of Do." but no actual residence, the residence of the parent has been included in the child's entry. This information was collected at the time of the muster and is an essential part of the muster as it was required for statistical purposes. The conclusion that the child was residing at the same place as the parent is only logical and furthermore if the child was residing elsewhere this information would have been recorded in the extant Muster List. For a discussion of the problems involved in interpreting the information contained in the original volumes see under the heading "Inconsistencies and Difficulties".

**12. Remarks** - This column includes additional information that does not readily fit into the above columns, or information added by the clerks at a later date and referring to a change in status. It includes aliases, information relating to deaths, departures, marriages, occupational changes and so on.

**13. +** - This column contains the (+) symbol and indicates that comments by the Editor can be found in Appendix 1.

The Muster List was input using lower case letters and capitalised by computer. Checks were made to ensure capitals were added correctly however some discrepancies will inevitably have arisen as a result of this process.

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General Muster List of New South Wales 1823, 1824, 1825 [PRO HO 10/19 & 10/20]

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### Abbreviations

#### Age

- F - Start of family group.
- G - End of family group.
- d - days
- w - weeks
- m - months
- 1/6 - 2 months
- 1/4 - 3 months
- 1/3 - 4 months
- 1/2 - 6 months

#### Class

- AP - Absolute Pardon
- BC - Born in the Colony
- C - Convict
- CF - Came Free
- CP - Conditional Pardon
- FS - Free by Servitude
- TL - Ticket of Leave

#### Colonial Sentence

- CS - Colonial Sentence

- X - Other person named in

#### Other

- \* - Ditto of relationship above
- + - See Appendix 1

#### Index

- A - Alias or alternative name
- S - Subject of muster entry

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