

## BDA Source Description Pages

<https://www.bda-online.org.au>**1788-1820 Association biographies**

The 1788-1820 Association was founded in 1968 as a non-profit organisation. Its members were descended from free and convict colonists who arrived or were born in Australia in the period 1788-1820 in New South Wales, Norfolk Island and Tasmania.

In the decades prior to its dissolution in 2017, one year short of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, members of the Association contributed short biographies of their ancestors. Many were published in hard copy in a series of publications called *The Pioneer Register* (Smee & Provis) and *Register of Pioneer Families* (McKay & Goard). Some short biographies were later published on the Association's website. The copyright as well as the Association's papers and library were acquired by BDA.

The Association's website went offline in 2020, but the text of 490 biographies from the website has been added to the Biographical Database of Australia (BDA). This text processed by Malcolm Sainty has not been editorially checked and may contain errors made by some descendants.

Each biography should be treated as a secondary source and checked against original sources on BDA and elsewhere. Some of these sources may not have been available when the biography was compiled. Corrections from BDA users are welcome and will be added as editorial comments.

The chief founder and promoter of the 1788-1820 Association was John Kimpton Rowley Lavett (1899-1978), an accountant born in the inner Sydney suburb of Chippendale. He was a descendant of the First Fleet convicts James Squire, the brewer, and his wife Elizabeth Mason.

Lavett also founded the Fellowship of First Fleeters in 1968 and was a proponent of raising awareness of Australian history and the adoption of a new national anthem to replace *God save the Queen* and a new national flag.

The Rev Neil Chambers (1911-1971) and Miss Jean Garling (1907-1998) were respectively the first president and vice president of the Association and Miss Beverley Watsford (1935-1993) was the first Honorary Secretary.

The Association's Inaugural meeting, with 153 in attendance, took place 16 July 1968 at the old AMP building's theatrette at the corner of Phillip & Alfred Street, Circular Quay, Sydney.

Lavett and other members of both societies spoke openly about having convict ancestors and endeavoured to counter and remove the shame, stigma and ridicule that had led to the covering up of convict ancestry among descendants since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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Over the course of its existence the Association occupied rooms in the Scots Church building in Margaret Street, Wynyard (Sydney), subsequently in Edwin Street, Croydon, then in the basement of the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts building at 280 Pitt Street Sydney.

In the late 1960s and 1970s members of the Association, among them its vice president Keith Johnson, campaigned for the preservation of Sydney's heritage buildings, notably Cadmans Cottage (1816) at Circular Quay, The Rocks, the city's oldest surviving house, and the Judge's House in 529 Kent Street, built by William Harper in 1825. Its name derives from its resident from the mid-1820s, Judge James Dowling. It has housed Tetsuya's Restaurant since 2000.

The Association's 1970 Christmas dinner dance was held at Ye Olde Crusty Taverne at 255 George Street Sydney. This tavern, established by the winemaker Leo Buring in 1931, occupied ground level and sandstone cellar bar and dining areas in the surviving half of Sir John Jamison's two storey town residence built in the months prior to March 1822. It faced George Street, between Jamison and Grosvenor Streets. In 1835 the Bank of Australasia acquired the house as its first office. In the 1870s half the structure was demolished and replaced by a larger bank building. The remaining half of the old structure survived into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Jamison's 1822 house was believed to have incorporated parts of an earlier structure used as a public storehouse dating from as early as 1804. The building was demolished around the late 1970s and replaced by NAB House, completed in 1986. Its foundations and cellars may lie under the paved plaza area near the corner of George and Jamison Streets.

### Sources:

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Helen Frizell, 'Does your family get a\*\*\* rating?' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 Mar 1968:6.

Helen Frizell, 'A great-great-great kind of evening ', *Sydney Morning Herald* 28 Mar 1968.

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Information Page written by Michael Flynn 2022.

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