

BDA Source Description Pages

<https://www.bda-online.org.au>**Convicts sent to NSW & Norfolk Island 1829-1850**

This dataset records details of convicts sent to New South Wales and Norfolk Island in the period 1829-1850. The direct transportation of convicts to mainland New South Wales (then including Victoria) ended in 1840. Convicts continued to be sent to Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) during the 1840s. The Norfolk Island penal settlement was wound down from 1847 and the last of the island's convicts had been transferred to New South Wales or Tasmania by 1855.

Convict indents were lists of convicts sent from the United Kingdom (then including Ireland) to Australia. In New South Wales they usually give the name date and place of trial and sentence of a convict. These details were entered onto musters held when each convict ship arrived. Each convict was examined and interviewed at the muster and details collected at the interview were added to the indent details to create an identifying record for each convict. They included details of age, marital status, occupation, place of birth, physical description (including tattoos) and other remarks, including related convicts in the colony.

From 1830 onwards, arrival musters for convict ships landing at Sydney were printed in large bound volumes. It is thought that about 30 copies of each yearly volume were printed and distributed to the District Magistrates who could use them to identify convicts and make annotations in blank columns for their use. The Mitchell Library in Sydney has an incomplete set, all with no annotations. (Mitchell Library ref ML F365.944025/1). Additional copies are held by New South Wales State Archives.

Method of Data entry

Each entry ran right across a double folio page measuring 75cm. Transcriptions have been based on the printed versions, (with the exception of 1829) which are much easier to read than the original manuscript volumes. For most years the printed entries are listed in a different order to the manuscript version.

Because of the length of time needed to capture every detail for each convict, the details in the column "Particular Marks or Scars Remarks" have not been transcribed at this stage but "yes" has been added if there were any in the original manuscript. The printed and manuscript versions held by State Records New South Wales should be consulted for this information as well as for a complete catalogue of Bound Manuscript Indents (NRS 12188) and Annotated Printed Indents (NRS 12189).

After 1840

Thirteen convict ships were sent direct to Norfolk Island between 1840 and 1850. These were the *Nautilus*, *Augusta Jessie* and *Mangles* (1840), the *Maitland*, *Blundell* and *Agincourt* (1844), the *Hydrabad* and *David Malcolm* (1845), the *Mayda*, *China* and *John Calvin* (1846), the *Tory* (1847) and *Eliza* (1849). Several of them called at Hobart and Sydney en route to the island.

Transportation to New South Wales was briefly resumed in 1849 when the *Hashemy*, *Randolph*, *Havering* and *Adelaide* landed convicts at Sydney in the face of protests from the local population.

Between 2013 and 2018 all details from printed convict arrival musters for the period 1829-1842 were added to BDA. In 2021 minimal indent details for nearly all other ships arriving in New South Wales and Norfolk Island up to 1850 were added to BDA, the exceptions being the ships *Hashemy*, *Randolph*, *Havering* and *Adelaide* (1849) and the *Eliza* (1850). These will be included in the near future. The post 1841 indents are sourced from AJCP reel 91, HO11/13, replicated on SANSW CGS1155.

Where only indents survive from the 1840s they have usually not been annotated with details of convicts who died on the voyage. Those who died will be identified from Royal Navy Medical Journals kept by ship's surgeons.

For more information see 'Convict transportation to NSW' guide at New South Wales State Archives (www.records.nsw.gov.au). Digitized indexed page images of indents and arrival musters can be viewed on www.ancestry.com.au and www.findmypast.com.au.

For more information on convict indents and ship musters see:

[Convict indents and ship musters: general introduction](#)

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<http://www.bda-online.org.au>

[Convict indents and ship musters 1787-1812](#)

[Convict indents and ship musters 1813-1828](#)

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Information Page written by Michael Flynn 2021.

For all Convict Indents and Ship Muster records included in the BDA see:

www.bda-online.org.au/sources/convict_indents

For all Norfolk Island records included in the BDA see:

www.bda-online.org.au/sources/norfolk-island

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