

## BDA Source Description Pages

<https://www.bda-online.org.au>**Bathurst NSW Catholic Church Parish Registers 1839-1844**

This dataset currently contains Catholic baptisms and burials for the District of Bathurst, central west New South Wales, for the following years:

Baptisms 1839-1840

Burials 1839-1844.

**Background**

In 1838 Fathers Michael O'Reilly and Thomas Slattery, two Catholic priests recently arrived from Ireland, were appointed to a new church district based in Bathurst. A parish based on Bathurst was established in 1839 and St Michael's Church on the corner of George and Keppel Streets was commenced in 1841 and completed by about 1843. The building was replaced by a new church at 107 William Street built 1857-1861 and consecrated as a cathedral of a new Diocese of Bathurst in 1865, known as the Cathedral of St Michael and St John.

Work commenced on the parish church, situated on the corner of George and Keppel Streets and known as St Michael's. The Parish of Bathurst was created in 1839 and St Michael's was opened for worship in the middle of 1841, though its building was not completed for a further two years. After about 10 years, subsidence made it unfit for public worship, though it was used as a school for a number of years.

The first three entries in the parish register took place on 26 January 1839 when two adult men and a child were baptised by Father Michael O'Reilly. All three were residents of Stoney Creek. The first of them was an English Protestant convict named James Silvester, aged about 30 (BDA reference B#17011213101).

The priests based in Bathurst made regular tours of the broader frontier region west of Bathurst, but events recorded in the register, (particularly baptisms and marriages), could have been performed in Bathurst when participants in the ceremonies were visiting the town. The register generally does not make it clear whether the event took place in Bathurst or while a priest was touring the parish's very broad catchment to minister to Catholics.

The parents of adult Catholic converts baptised are usually given in the register. For babies the register records name, names of parents (including mother's birth or maiden surname), residence of family, father's occupation and name of priest officiating. Ship of arrival in the colony is sometimes given, usually for convicts. It records baptisms in 1839-1840 for children resident in places hundreds of kilometres from Bathurst, ranging from Kings Plains (Carcoar-Blayney area), the Lachlan River, Cangooroby (aka Kangaroooby near Gooloogong and Cowra),

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Tubbo (Dubbo), Vale of Clwydd (Hartley), Mudgee, Wattle Flat, Summer Hill (Orange), Cullin Roy (Cassilis), Breeza, Namoi River and Peel River.

The burial register records names of deceased, age, date of burial, residence, occupation and name of priest officiating. Ship of arrival in the colony is sometimes given, usually for convicts. Burials outside Bathurst were usually recorded when the individual died when the priest was present travelling in the district. Places of burial recorded 1839-1844 reflect places of residence in a slightly more restricted range than the baptisms but including Mudgee, Orange and Blayney.

Many of the records were transcribed by Michael Flynn at the Catholic Diocese of Bathurst Archives in the 1980s. He transcribed the remainder from a CD-Rom copy of the parish register held by the Society of Australian Genealogists in Sydney (ref B7/1/CD.9a).

### **Sources for Bathurst NSW Catholic Church Registers 1839-1844 parish registers:**

Bathurst Catholic Parish Registers, Catholic Diocese of Bathurst Archives, Society of Australian Genealogists (ref B7/1/CD.9a).

NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages indexes: [www.familyhistory.bdm.nsw.gov.au](http://www.familyhistory.bdm.nsw.gov.au)

State Archives New South Wales, Births, Deaths & Marriages Registers, 1787-1856:  
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-andindexes/births-deaths-and-marriages-registers-1787-1856>

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Information Page written by Michael Flynn 2023.

For more detailed information about the different types of church registers and for the list of other church registers included in the BDA see:

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