

BDA Source Description Pages

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Churchings of Women

In Christian tradition the Churching of Women is a ceremony wherein a blessing is given to mothers after recovery from childbirth. It is performed even if the child was stillborn.

A history of Churchings can be found in Wikipedia.

The only known register of Churchings in Australia was kept by the church of **St. Philip**, Sydney's first church. However the Register only survives from 6 January 1811 to 27 December 1818, which details 800 Churchings, conducted by the incumbent Rev William Cowper, who had been appointed in 1809. Details have been included in the BDA.

The register does not name the child, but if a child survived and its baptisms was not recorded or lost, it narrows down the birth date to within a week as the Churching normally took place six weeks after a birth. In the case of still births it may be the only indication that the mother had been pregnant.

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

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

Historical resources available from the BDA Shop

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