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## Granted by the Governor of New South Wales

Introduction by Keith A. Johnson.

From articles in *Descent* Vol. 8 Part 2, pp.74-77, March 1977 & Vol. 8 Part 3, pp. 137-160, September 1977.

Within eight weeks of assuming office as the Governor of New South Wales, Lachlan Macquarie proclaimed on 24 February 1810 his intention “to reprobate and check, as far as lies in his power, the scandalous and pernicious custom so generally and shamelessly adopted throughout the territory of persons of different sexes cohabiting and living together unsanctioned by the legal ties of matrimony”.

The Governor further proclaimed that he was “anxious to hold forth every inducement to the formation of lasting and virtuous connexions, and to encourage lawful marriage by every possible means, as he is convinced that from such connexions alone can be expected to arise either habits of industry or decency of conduct”.(1)

In response to an application by the Colonial Chaplains a Government and General Order was issued on 22 December 1810.(2) It detailed the scale of fees for Marriages by Licence and by Banns, and for Christenings and Funerals. The fees were to apply to free persons only. At the same time the Governor requested the Principal and Assistant Chaplains to keep or cause to be kept exact registers of marriages, christenings and funerals for all classes of society - convicts and free persons alike.

Many marriages took place at the settlements of Sydney, Parramatta, the Hawkesbury and Liverpool during the following decade. Free persons, convicts and the children of many colonists who had not themselves been through the formality of a marriage ceremony complied with the Governor’s proclamation. Most marriages were celebrated after the publication of banns, but applications for licences to marry also increased year by year.

This was in marked contrast to the situation when the N.S.W. Muster was taken in 1806. Governor Bligh reported in a General Letter to Secretary for War and the Colonies, William Windham, on 7 February 1807 that: “The inhabitants are healthy and marriages increase. In my late surveys I ascertained the married women were 395, legitimate children 807, natural children 1025”.(3)

In February 1811 the fees for Special Licences for Marriage were increased to £5-5-0.(4) Earl Bathurst in his Despatch to Governor Macquarie of 23 November 1812 requested that the fee for a Marriage Licence be reduced to £4-4-0, the fee payable in England at the time.(5)

## BDA Source Description Pages

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A licence to marry in New South Wales was granted by the Governor as there was not a Bishop of the Church of England closer than London at first, and Calcutta from 1814. The licence was an official statement that there were no known obstacles to a marriage. A licence was obtained as an alternative to the publication of banns in a church on three successive Sundays prior to the marriage. However, on occasions, licences were obtained to avoid any impediments that might arise from the publication of banns in the parishes in which the parties resided.

On account of the fees payable licences were restricted to the class of persons who could afford to pay £4-4-0 for the privilege. With very few exceptions free persons only were married by licence. Convicts still serving sentences were married by banns with the Governor's permission; a licence was not granted.

The listing of Licences for Marriage granted from 17 March 1813 to 26 December 1827, was extracted from the British Plantation Registry and Licences for Marriage at the Archives Office of New South Wales.(6)

### REFERENCES

- (1) *HRNSW* Vol. VII, pp. 292-3.
- (2) *HRNSW* Vol. VII, pp. 292-3.
- (2) *ibid.*, pp. 474-5.
- (3) *ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 247-9.
- (4) *HRA* Ser. 1, Vol. VII, p. 452.
- (5) *ibid.*, p. 668.
- (6) NSW Archives 4/1710, pp. 151-221. [now SRNSW].

No attempt has been made by the compiler to correct surnames or place-names incorrectly spelt in the original listing. They appear as deciphered from the hand-written register. A random check of parish registers has revealed that there are some discrepancies between the date of marriage recorded hereunder and the entry in the parish register. The latter source is considered less prone to error. Information frequently recorded in the following listing, concerning the parent of one of the parties to the marriage, is seldom contained in entries in parish registers of the same period.

Many pioneer families are represented. Licences were granted for the marriages of two sons and a daughter of the missionary, Rowland Hassall on the same day, 22 November 1819, at Parramatta. A further son, the Rev. Thomas Hassall, and another daughter are recorded in 1822 and 1827 respectively. Three children of Thomas Arndell; the Rev. Henry Fulton; the surgeon Edward Luttrell; and the merchant Mrs Mary Reibey were granted marriage licences during the fifteen years covered by this listing. There are six Cox marriages; six Broughtons; five Mackenzies; four Bowmans and four Hutchinsons during the period.

Mariners are well represented: some sixteen ship names are recorded. Marriage by Licence was probably more convenient while ships were in port than the publication of Banns in a church on three successive Sundays, prior to the marriage. A number

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of widows and widowers paid fees for Licences granted by the Governor rather than marry by Banns. In this category are several persons known in the history of New South Wales - Solomon Wiseman, James Underwood, William Faithfull, Robert Cooper, Eber Bunker and Mrs Ann Minchin, Henry Marr and Mrs Ann Wood, formerly Driver (née Robinson) who was colonial-born and had been widowed three times when aged 35.

There are two entries with significance for the Society of Australian Genealogists: (a) The marriage in 1824 of Maria Johnston of Annandale to Lieut. Thomas Brotheridge of the 48th Regt.; he died in 1827. An oil painting of him hangs in the Society's Library. (b) Thomas Barker (1799-1875), whose correspondence is preserved in the Society's Primary Records. Mr Barker was married in 1823 to the niece of John Dickson of the Steam Mill, to whom he had been apprenticed following his arrival in Sydney in 1813.

The ship names with licence numbers bracketed are: *Active* (23); *Campbell Macquarie* (28); *Broxbornebury* (30); *Three Bees* (39); *Lynx* (43); *Lord Melville* (48); *Harriet* (51); *Elizabeth Henrietta* (56); *Batavia* (66); *Mary* (82); *Medway* (100); *Venerable* (142); *Woodlark* (149); *Competitor* (152); *Elizabeth and Mary* (155); *Isabella* (265). There are other Mariners recorded whose ship name is not given - Richard Siddons, Thomas Reibey, John Powell, Thomas Hammant, Richard Heaney, Thomas Mitchell, Edmund Cliffe, and John Grimes.

### KEY to CLERGY'S INITIALS

(All Church of England except J.D. Lang)

| Code   | Clergyman  | Born - Died   | Arrived | Sydney Year |
|--------|--|---------------|---------|-------------|
| S.M.   | Samuel MARSDEN<br>(Senior Chaplain from 1810)                          | (1764-1838)   | "       | 1794        |
| R.C.   | Robert CARTWRIGHT  | (1771-1856)   | "       | 1810        |
| W.C.   | William COWPER   | (1778-1858)   | "       | 1809        |
| H.F.   | Henry FULTON   | (1761-1840)   | "       | 1800        |
| B.V.   | Benjamin VALE  | (1788-1863)   | "       | 1814        |
| J.Y.   | John YOUL  | (1773-1827)   | "       | 1800        |
| J.C.   | John CROSS   | (1781-1858)   | "       | 1819        |
| G.A.M. | George Augustus MIDDLETON  | (1791-1848)   | "       | 1820        |
| R.H.   | Richard HILL   | (1782-1836)   | "       | 1819        |
| T.R.   | Thomas REDDALL   | (1780-1838)   | "       | 1820        |
| J.D.L. | John Dunmore LANG<br>(1st Presbyterian Clergyman in N.S.W.)            | (1799-1878)   | "       | 1823        |
| T.H.   | Thomas HASSALL   | (1794-1868)   | "       | 1798        |
| J.E.K. | John Espy KEANE  | (1795-c.1860) | "       | 1825        |
| F.W.   | Frederic M. WILKINSON  | (1796-1866)   | "       | 1825        |
| M.D.M  | Matthew Devenish MEARES  | (1800-1878)   | "       | 1825        |
| T.H.S. | Thomas Hobbes SCOTT<br>(Archdeacon of New South Wales, appointed 1824) | (1783-1860)   | "       | 1825        |

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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