

BDA Source Description Pages<http://www.bda-online.org.au>***General Musters of New South Wales, Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land 1811***

Edited by Carol J. Baxter. Pub. by Australian Biographical and Genealogical Record in Association with the Society of Australian Genealogists, Sydney, 1987.

The following has been copied from the published volume, and whilst some of it is not relevant in terms of viewing the Database, it does give the reader a complete view of the data collected, the original records from which it came and other useful and interesting information. Some Appendix tables have not been reproduced here but can be viewed in a copy of the volume in major libraries.

Content of this Information Page – prepared by Carol Baxter.

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Historical Background to the NSW General Musters

Shortly after the arrival of the First Fleet in New South Wales, the first systematic check or “muster” of the population was taken. Musters enabled the government to count the population and note whether individuals were self-supporting or victualled from the government stores. They also served as a control over the convict population and assisted officials in determining the colony's ability to support itself without recourse to the public stores.

From 1795 onwards general musters appears to have been held annually. Those required to attend included all inhabitants in the settlement except members of the military and civil officers. They were usually supervised by the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor, and an officer of the commissary who was responsible for the collection of land and stock returns was always present.

General Musters for 1811

In 1811 General Musters of the population were taken in all four settlements: New South Wales, Norfolk Island, Hobart and Port Dalrymple [Launceston].

New South Wales – Collection of the Muster

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The General Muster for New South Wales was taken between February and March 1811. On Saturdays 19 and 26 January 1811, the *Sydney Gazette* included the following announcement for the settlement of New South Wales in the section devoted to Government and General Orders:

His Excellency the Governor is pleased to direct that a GENERAL MUSTER of the whole of the Inhabitants (Civil and Military excluded) shall take place at the several Settlements on the following days under the Inspection of His Honor Lieutenant Governor O'Connell and William Broughton Esquire, Acting Commissary.

The Muster was to commence at 9am on the days and at the places listed below. Pardons, Emancipations, Tickets of Leave and Expired Sentence certificates were to be produced. Personal attendance was required and "any who act in Disobedience thereto will be punished with the utmost Severity agreeable to the Several Colonial Regulations relating thereto".

At the Church at Windsor:

—Tuesday 5th and Wednesday 6th February:

All Free Men residing at Green Hills, Windsor, Richmond, Nepean, Caddi, Portland Head and any of the districts adjacent thereto:

—Thursday 7th:

All Male Prisoners including Ticket of Leave Men residing at any of the above places;

—Friday 8th and Saturday 9th:

All Free Women residing at any of the above places;

—Monday 11th:

All Female Prisoners residing in any of the above places.

At the Public School-Room, Parramatta:

—Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th

All Free Men residing at Parramatta, Prospect Hill, Baulkham Hills, Toongabbee, Northern Boundaries, Field of Mars, Dundas or any of the Districts adjacent thereto;

—Friday 15th and Saturday 16th

All Male Prisoners including Ticket of Leave Men residing at any of the above places;

—Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th:

All Free Women residing at any of the above places;

—Wednesday 20th:

All Female Prisoners residing at any of the above places.

At Mr Knight's House, at Liverpool (formerly George's River):

—Thursday 21st: All Men and Women of the several Classes.

At the Public School-Room, Sydney:

—Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th:

All Free Men residing at Sydney or any of the Districts adjacent thereto:

—Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th:

All Male Prisoners including Ticket of Leave Men residing at any of the above places;

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—Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd March:

All Free Women residing at any of the above places;

—Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th:

All Female Prisoners residing at any of the above places.

The Orders also noted that women were to provide the names and ages of their children. Free men who were settlers or landholders were to provide an account of their land under cultivation together with the stock and grain in their possession. The Civil and Military Officers although not mustered themselves were to make a return of the land and stock in their possession, however no returns of lands granted or leased between 26 January 1808 (the day Major Johnston arrested Governor Bligh and assumed the Lieutenant-Governorship) and 31 December 1809 were to be included in the latter returns until they had been confirmed by Governor Macquarie.

Collection began on 5 February 1811 and officials soon realised that many were failing to attend. On 23 February 1811 the *Sydney Gazette* included the notice:

His Excellency the Governor having Reason to believe that many Persons have omitted to come forward and muster themselves agreeably to the General Orders

of the 19th of January last, under a Presumption that no further Notice would be taken thereof, or that no Measures would be resorted to, in order to discover such Delinquents; His Excellency with a view to afford such Persons an Opportunity of escaping the Punishment already due on Account of their Disobedience, is pleased to order all Persons who may come within the Meaning of this Order to repair to the Magistrate nearest the Place where they reside, for the Purpose of answering such Questions as may be judged necessary to put to them; and if they are found after this Admonition to act in Disobedience to such Order, they will be punished with the utmost severity, agreeably to the Colonial Regulations provided for in that Case. – The Muster, when finished, will undergo the strictest Examination with a view to discover such as may be guilty of so gross a Neglect; and the Constables of the several Districts are strictly enjoined to make this Notice as public as possible, and to take up and forward all such Persons as shall refuse to obey, to the Magistrate nearest to where they reside, that they may be transmitted to Sydney, and dealt with accordingly.

New South Wales Muster – Record Repositories held by

The original return is held by The National Archives (previously the Public Record Office, London). Located at source reference HO 10/5, it carries the follow title:

A Return of the Names of the Convicts taken in the General Muster agreeable to the order of His Excellency the Governor and Commander in Chief by Lieutenant Governor O'Connell and Mr William Broughton Acting Commissary between the 5th February and 5th March. As also those who are not actually convicts but have been so and are at present in the colony.

State Records NSW holds a contemporary alphabetised transcription of the Muster under the reference 4/1224. It has the following title:

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An Alphabetised List of Convicts and Free Persons taken at a General Muster agreeable to the order of His Excellency the Governor and Commander in Chief by Lieutenant-Governor O'Connell and Mr William Broughton Acting Commissary between the 5th February and 5th March 1811 and also those who are not actually Convicts but have been so and are at present in the colony, also a List, in continuation, of those persons who may appear to have arrived in the colony by Musters taken subsequent to the above -Sydney, New South Wales.

All entries found in both versions of these musters are included in this work.

New South Wales – Missing Information

The original returns for the 1811 General Musters evidently contained considerably more information than is found in the extant volumes. Statistics extracted from the collated returns include references to residential district, sex, current status, ration status, age group of children, and so on. Detailed information about land usage, stock and crops were also tabulated. Yet both extant volumes merely record arrival and pre-arrival information such as trial details, ship of arrival, and arrival status. No details of the residents' current circumstances are recorded although these are found in the extant volumes of all the other General Musters. It is a curious anomaly. This additional information appears to have been lost or destroyed.

New South Wales – Statistics

On 18 October 1811 in his Despatch to the Earl of Liverpool, Governor Macquarie included a General Statement of the Inhabitants of New South Wales dated 5 March 1811. Containing statistics extracted from the recent General Muster, the Statement recorded a total population of 10,025 including civil and military staff, free people, convicts and children.

As the extant volumes of the 1811 Musters record only free adults and convicts, statistics were extracted from the General Statement for the same categories of inhabitants and reveal that there were 6209 free adults and convicts in New South Wales at that time. These statistics do not tally with the entries recorded in the extant volumes. The original version of the 1811 Muster (now stored in The National Archives) lists 5583 free adults and convicts. The alphabetised copy held by State Records NSW lists 5581. A number of persons were included in the former and not in the latter and vice-versa so when combined, the two versions record a total of 5683 adults, 526 fewer than were noted in the General Statement.

For statistics extracted from the extract versions of these Musters, see General Statistics below.

Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land - Collection

General Musters were taken of the inhabitants of Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land at various times during the year 1811: Hobart Town on 21 March 1811, Port Dalrymple [Launceston] on 30 June 1811, and Norfolk Island on 6 August 1811. No General Orders or Government Proclamations announcing the collection of these Musters appear to have survived.

Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land – Record Repositories

The original return incorporating the information collected at these musters is held by The National Archives (previously the Public Record Office, London) under the reference HO 10/42. It carries the follow title:

Return of Settlers who have been Convicts and are at present in His Majesty's Settlement Hobart Town, River Derwent, Van Diemen's Land and one of the Dependencies of the Territory of New South Wales from a General Muster held the 21st day of March 1811 and also of Norfolk Island on the 6th day of August 1811 and of Port Dalrymple on the 30th June 1811.

State Records NSW contains a contemporary alphabetised transcription of the Muster sub-divided into localities. Located at reference 4/1233, the return carries the following title:

An Alphabetical List of Convicts and Free persons residing in the Settlements of Hobart Town, Port Dalrymple (sic) and Norfolk Island, taken at a General Muster agreeable to the order of His Excellency the Governor in the Year 1811, as also of those persons, who are not actually Convicts but have been so; with a Continuation of such as may have appeared by Musters taken Subsequent to the above who have since arrived in those Settlements

All entries found in both versions of these musters are included in this work.

Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land – Missing Information

As the information collected for the Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land Musters was almost certainly of an identical nature to that collected in NSW.

Method of Collection

The returns for the 1811 General Musters appear to have contained considerably more information than is found in the extant volumes. Statistics extracted from the collated returns provide details of residence, sex, present status, age group of children and ration status. Details of land and stock were also tabulated. The extant volumes however only include arrival or pre-arrival information such as trial details, ship of arrival and arrival status. No details of the subject's life or family in 1811 were included although these details are recorded in the extant volumes of all the other General Musters. The additional information from which these statistics must have been extracted appears to have been lost or destroyed.

Statistics

No population statistics have been found for the 1811 General Musters for Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land.

Population statistics extracted from the extant versions of the 1811 Musters are shown in Appendix 3.

Land and Stock Statistics extracted from the 1811 General Musters are included in *Historical Records of Australia*. These are reproduced in the accompanying table.

Inconsistencies and Difficulties

The 1811 Musters include many factual errors which as explained in the section on Editing Parameters, have not been corrected by the Editor. The principal difficulties were encountered with the date of trial, a problem that is not surprising in view of the difficulties people generally have in remembering dates. By comparing all the entries in the New South Wales Muster with the Indents, it appears that approximately one in every three dates in the Musters contains a difference. These differences however would not all be mistakes as the Indents themselves are only a secondary source; the primary source for the trial details is the actual trial transcript.

In recording details of the sentences received by convicts the second largest number of differences between the Musters and the Indents occur. Approximately 6% of sentences were recorded differently. Of these differences, in 75% of cases the Indents showed a longer sentence than the Musters and in 25% of cases the Musters showed a longer sentence than the Indents. In approximately 2% of cases no sentence was listed in the Musters. Convicts also occasionally provided the incorrect ship and place of trial.

Many of the differences would be mistakes resulting from hazy recollection; some would be the result of a deliberate intent to mislead and others errors by the clerk.

A second problem area results from the differences between the two versions of the Musters. In the early days of the colony it was necessary to transcribe by hand onto new sheets of paper any record requiring a copy. In copying the 1811 Musters to produce the colonial versions (now in SRNSW) the clerks were obviously not concerned with providing an exact duplicate as one in every three entries contains a difference. The majority are minor spelling differences in names, for example "Brown" in one record, "Browne" in the other. In fact, if a name could be spelt in one of two ways (e.g., with or without a word-final "e"; with a single or double letter word-finally) almost invariably one version would spell the name one way and the other version the other way! Nor were the versions consistent in the way they spelt names when a variation was possible.

Some of the differences were more important and clearly show that the clerks did not check their work. Entries were left out or copied so that they contained half of the correct entry and half of the previous or following entry. The months "Jan" and "Jun", and "Mar" and "May" were interchanged. Numerous other differences/mistakes occurred as well. In some instances the SRNSW version agrees with the Indents suggesting that an attempt was made to correct the information when producing the copy. However so many other obvious errors occurred that this cannot be concluded for all the differences.

The different versions of the Musters were also inconsistent in providing additional information about free people. In some cases one version would provide information such as the ship of arrival or "Born in the Colony" and the other version would omit this information; in other cases the reverse occurred. For the free people it would have been useful to have combined the information however this would have corrupted the integrity of the original records.

Research Value

The 1811 Musters include information about convicts and free people that would be difficult to locate elsewhere.

For many of the convicts the Indents record only the county name when referring to the place of trial in Britain and Ireland. The 1811 Musters however often record the specific town or even court of trial. Mary Stephens *Earl Cornwallis* was listed in the Indents as tried in Somerset; the 1811 Musters records her place of trial as Ilchester, a town in Somerset. The Indents list John Brooks *Canada* as tried in Surrey; the 1811 Musters records that he was tried in Horsemonger Lane, in Surrey.

Some of the Convict Indents contained little information. The transport *Anne* which arrived from Ireland in 1801 had no Indent papers with her, nor were any sent until 19 years later. When the Indents arrived they contained only the names of the convicts and their sentences. The 1811 Muster records details of the date and place of trial of those who were still alive and resident in the colony. This information provides the link with Irish records that was omitted from the Indents. For example, the following three men were listed in the *Anne* Indent with a life sentence - Louis Bulger, Hugh Crabtree and John Ferack. The 1811 Musters records against their names: Lewis Bulger - tried 1800 at Wexford; Hugh Crabtree - tried February 1800 at Carlow (and received 7 years) and John Ferrick or Jerrick - tried August 1799 at Castlebar (Mayo).

Due to the illiteracy of many of the early settlers a surname was merely a group of spoken sounds rather than a written word of consistent form. The transplantation of people with different dialects and even native languages into a single community meant that many surnames gradually experienced quite significant sound and spelling changes. These often made it difficult to link a person recorded in the various colonial records with a person listed in pre-arrival records such as the Convict Indents. By recording similar information to the Convict Indents, the 1811 Musters make it possible for a person to be located in the Indents through the use of the trial details rather than the spelling of a surname. For example, the 1811 Musters record a man by the name of "Thomas Abury" who arrived on the *Fortune*. Comparison of trial details shows that he was Indented as "Thomas Yerbury". The 1811 Musters records a "John Alsworth" who arrived on the *Duke of Portland*; the Indents list him as "John Oswell". The only way to accurately determine the identity of these two men is through the use of the trial details recorded in the Indents and the 1811 Musters.

The Musters refer to numerous colonial convictions, the majority additional sentences for those who had arrived as convicts. Some provided full trial details: John Curran received a 7 year colonial sentence in September 1806 in New South Wales in addition to his English sentence. Some provided few details: John Fitzgerald was also tried in New South Wales. A number of entries included the colonial sentence as the only sentence: Thomas Baker (*Neptune* - 1790) was tried in February 1806 in New South Wales and received a 14 year sentence. The majority of entries recording only a colonial sentence were for free people who received the colonial conviction as their only conviction, however few entries provide this evidence. This evidence is found in the entry for Garratt Armstrong who arrived

aboard the *Recovery* and was tried in June 1809 in New South Wales. In the Remarks column it is noted that he was from the 102nd Regiment.

For a number of convicts the nature of the trial was recorded. The PRO version records 35 men who were Court Martialled. Others with "No Sentence" listed were probably court martialled as well. The SRNSW version lists another four men who received sentences at a Court Martial. The identity of these men can be established by scanning Appendices 1 & 2.

For many of the people who arrived free the Musters record the ship of arrival or note that the person was born in the colony. The preachers Rowland Hassall and W.P. Crook were recorded as arriving on the *Nautilus* and *Ocean* respectively.

Rebecca Oakes, the wife of Superintendent Francis Oakes, was recorded as "Born in the Colony".

Unusual and Interesting Entries

The 1811 General Musters include various interesting places of trial and unusual remarks. Those listed below were recorded in the PRO version unless otherwise stated. Entry numbers have been included where other people are listed with the same name.

Although 99% of the convicts listed in the Musters with a trial place were tried in Britain or Ireland, 1% were tried in other countries. A number are shown below. The majority of these convicts were probably British subjects serving overseas with the army. Where "Court Martial" or "No Sentence" (suggesting a court martial) was noted in the Remarks column of the Musters, (CM) or (NS) has been listed after the name.

Ten men were tried at Gibraltar. John Crute (NS), John Hines (NS), Patrick McCarty (NS), James Taylor and Sanders Van Starten (NS) were all transported aboard the *Calcutta* : George Berryman (CM) and John Sudds aboard the *Canada*; Gregory Brennon (CM) and David Robinson aboard the *Indian*; and Edward Fletcher aboard the *Minorca*.

Seven men were tried in India of whom five were transported aboard the *Eagle* - Robert Stiles tried Bengal, Hugh McLean and James OHerne tried Bombay, James Campbell tried Calcutta and George Clydesdale tried Madras. Patrick Flaherty (NS) also tried in Bengal was transported aboard the *Hunter* and John Sorrell tried Madras aboard the *Duke of York*. These ships were merchant/trading vessels rather than convict transports.

Six men were tried in Sicily. William Austin, John Cullen and John Moffett (CM) were transported aboard *Admiral Gambier*; Mathias Miller and two men with Italian-sounding names - Felix Patcho and Carman Rigo were transported aboard the *Indian* . The *Indian* also carried two men from Malta - Francis Murphy and Dominique Papilo; a third man from Malta - Lewis Evans - was transported aboard the *Anne*.

Four men aboard the *Tellicherry* were State Prisoners: Martin Bourke, Hugh Burne, Michael Dwyer and John Merney. The SRNSW version records that Timothy Laughlan of the *Friendship* was transported for sedition.

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A number of colonial sentences were received and in a few instances the crime was noted. Patrick Farrell (1770) was transported in New South Wales for theft. William Skinner was tried on 2nd January 1811 at Sydney and convicted for distilling. He received a 5 year sentence.

Some of the convicts appear to have been transported without trial. In the Remarks column these entries contained the following information: Thomas Dwyer - "Had no trial"; Lawrence Kerney - "No trial"; and Mary Tomlinson - "Says she was not tried". The SRNSW version of James Dunn's entry (1764) notes that he was "Sent to Geneva from Donlavin [Dunlavin Town], Wicklow without trial December 1799". Geneva was a parish on Waterford Harbour with a military barracks.

Various interesting remarks about free people are included as well.

Mark Antonia who arrived aboard the *Hebe* is listed in the SRNSW version only and recorded as having come free from Bengal. William Ellick was a deserter from the transport *Anne*. The SRNSW version records that Henrietta Fletcher was "Born on the Passage".

Matthew McCabe was recorded as having been discharged from the 61st [Regt.] at the Cape and sent here to serve in the New South Wales Corps. John Smith (5398) of the *Porpoise* was not so lucky; the SRNSW version records that he was sent from the Cape to join the 102nd but not received and kept as a prisoner. Charles Whalan was recorded in the SRNSW version as a Light Horseman.

Two Aborigines are listed in the Musters - Roy Bull (0749) and Musquito (4342). Both were Port Jackson natives sent as convicts to Norfolk Island by Governor King.

A number of people were listed with their nationality or colour. Datarra was a New Zealander, Richard Mahammed an East Indian, and Poppera and Christopher Topuo both Otaheitans. James Toussaint was a black. Osin Wan was listed in the SRNSW version as a Lascar.

Given names and given name/surname combinations produce some interesting entries. Although the majority of people listed in the Musters had common given names a sprinkling of unusual names were found throughout the Musters. See Appendix 7 for the complete list of given names recorded in the Musters.

Religious parents or perhaps even a Jewish background are suggested by some of the unusual Biblical names: Absolam (sic) West, Elias Burke, Ezekiel Lock Thurston, Jedediah Cotteril, Lazarus Graves, Malachi Ryan, Obadiah Iken, Sampson Phillips and Zachariah Sponsford.

Some given names are more familiar as surnames and probably were family names or maiden names of a previous generation: Bishop Thompson, Davis Lloyd, Finch Harrison, Hopkin Linton, Kearns Fitzpatrick, Kennedy Mundy, Lyons Ingram, Ormsby Irwin, Randall Ore and Wright Elwood.

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Non-British origins are suggested by the names of the following: Carman Rigo, Dominique Papilio, Richetto Orio, Sabea, Warley Siletto and Zimran Uram.

Historical resources available from the BDA Shop

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

For Other Musters included in the BDA see

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

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