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Victualling List New South Wales February-November 1788

This dataset records the names of 1,017 persons disembarked from the First Fleet at Sydney Cove in January-February 1788. They are listed on a victualling list recording those who received rations on land in mainland New South Wales between 26 February and 17 November 1788 under the new Commissariat.

The list begins with the Marine contingent in order of seniority and status from the Commandant Major Robert Ross down to privates and drummers in the garrison. Next come the small group of civil officers and their dependents, the wives of marines, their children, then the convicts and their children. The convict men and women are grouped separately, and the order of names broadly reflects groupings by ship of arrival.

The original manuscript is held in the UK National Archives in Kew, London (ref T1/668). The version recorded here is based on a typescript transcript of the document made by Dr Mollie Gillen prior to the mid-1980s. It was a key source for her book *The Founders of Australia: a biographical dictionary of the First Fleet* (North Sydney, Library of Australian history, 1989) as an important guide to who actually landed in the new colony in 1788.

A total of 16 children born in the colony between March and November 1788 (10 convicts' children and six marines' children) were added to the list, making a total of 1,033 individuals. The list does not include nine convict men who absconded into the bush within days of landing. Of these only one, John Wilson, convicted at Wigan in Lancashire, was ever heard from again, having survived in the bush for years with assistance from the Aboriginal population. Nor does the list include the party of 23 colonists led by Philip Gidley King who had already sailed to establish a settlement on Norfolk Island when the list was compiled.

Also not included in the list are the crews of the naval ships *Sirius* and *Supply* that were to remain based in the colony (including Captains Arthur Phillip and John Hunter), sustained by their own separate stores on board managed by a naval purser. The crews of the nine private transports and storeships of the First Fleet were also not included on the shore victualling list, being rationed from their own ship's stores and all due to sail for England during 1788. The crews of these 11 ships numbered at least 480.

The only other details given on the list are codes and exact dates and sometime place, beside some names (noting executions, a missing person and despatch to Norfolk Island). The codes are D = Discharged; DD = Died; R = Run or Absconded. For the purposes of this dataset an employment field label 'soldier' has been added editorially for search purposes. Only the marine's rank appears on the original document. Marines are part of the navy rather than the army though their military bearing and

training was somewhat similar to the infantry and they were sometimes referred to as 'sea soldiers'.

Many of the individuals on this list have been linked to BDA biographical reports by Malcolm Sainty. Further corrections and links will be made to this dataset in the future based on research and analysis by Michael Flynn, Glen Lambert and Gary Sturgess.

Mollie Gillen added the following comment to her typed transcript:

'The seemingly random order of names hereunder follows in general the landing lists from each of the transports rather than the embarkation lists, with a few variations where persons have been transferred to other transports in mid-voyage. Men from 296 to 490 were in general on board Scarborough: from 491 to 662 were on Alexander: from 663 to 757 on Friendship: from 742 to 821 on Charlotte. No male convicts travelled on Lady Penrhyn: a few were on Prince of Wales. [Sentence added in Dr Gillen's handwriting:] This arrangement happily aids differentiation between some persons of the same name…. Of the female convicts, No. 822 to No. 921 travelled on Lady Penrhyn: from 915 to 966, on Prince of Wales: from 967 to 1004, in general, on Charlotte.'

Background

One of the earliest civilian public servants appointed in New South Wales was the Commissary Andrew Miller, who arrived with the First Fleet in January 1788. Aged in his late twenties, he was a former purser's steward who had sailed with Phillip on earlier naval voyages. He was responsible for the weekly issue of public rations (food, drink and clothing). The process was known as victualling, based on the term victuals, meaning food and drink. The Commissary was also responsible for the management of public store houses, ordering future supplies from England, preventing fraud and theft and arranging security provided by the garrison. He also processed bills of exchange and compiled accounts for the Governor and the London bureaucracy.

The Commissariat was set up at Sydney Cove in February 1788, taking custody of supplies from Zachariah Clark, the agent for William Richards, the shipping contractor. Clark had been responsible for rationing the fleet on the voyage and handed over the stores and rationing function to Miller in February 1788 once temporary storehouses and food preparation areas had been set up on shore in the vicinity of modern Lower George Street between Bridge and Essex Streets. On 11 April 1790 the *Sirius* purser John Palmer succeeded the ailing Miller as the colony's Commissary.

In the early Australian colonies, each district or town had a government store where Commissariat officials kept records of this kind naming certain persons entitled to receive government support in the form of public rations of food and clothing. Very few of these volumes survive. They are of particular biographical value because in the first stage of settlement each colonist was wholly dependent on a government ration. They list all members of the settler community, including the military garrison as well as convicts, free settlers, wives and dependents. Those who died in the community were marked off the list and those born into it were added.

BDA Source Description Pages

Information Page written by Michael Flynn 2022.