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Norfolk Island Victualling Lists 1802-1809

This dataset currently contains 3935 entries for Norfolk Island residents derived from records dating from the years 1802-1804, 1806-1807 and 1809. Surviving victualling records for the island for the years 1805, 1808 and 1810 will be added at a later date. These records were transcribed by BDA volunteers, including the late Garry Wilson.

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 they list members of the military garrison as well as convicts and free settlers. The names of soldiers, their wives and children are otherwise rarely named in any muster or census record. Some people were marked 'on' or 'off' rations (stores) at different times, depending on their circumstances. Most frequently being marked off rations meant that a landholding farmer or their dependent(s) had become self-supporting.

Sources

The victualling lists for 1802-1804 are held by the UK National Archives in Kew, London, and were copied onto microfilm by the National Library of Australia's Australian Joint Copying Project. The remainder are held by State Archives New South Wales, Kingswood, Sydney, Australia.

1802 TNA CO201/28/210, reel 14

1803 TNA CO201/30/85, reel 15

1804 Jan-Jun TNA CO201/30/210, reel 15

1804 Jul-Dec SANSW 4/1167A reel 762 p 147

1805 Jan-Jun SANSW 4/1167A reel 762 p 299

1805 Jul-Dec SANSW 4/1167A reel 762 p 419

1806 Jan-Jun SANSW 4/1167B reel 762 p 17

1806 Jul-Dec SANSW 4/1167A reel 762 p 293

1807 Jan-Jun SANSW 4/1168A reel 762 p 285

1807 Jul-Dec SANSW 4/1168A reel 762 p 431

1808 Jan-Jun SANSW 4/1168A reel 762 p 24

1808 Jul-Dec SANSW 4/1168A reel 762 p 200

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1809 Jan-Jun SANSW 4/1168A reel 762 p 256

1809 Jul-Dec SANSW 4/1168A reel 762 p 326

Background

First settled in February 1788 with a party of just 23 people, led by naval officer and future Governor Philip Gidley King, a significant number of early convicts of both sexes were settled there in the decade following 1790, including a large contingent of convicts from the First, Second and Third Fleets. Many of them were granted land and raised families. A contingent of the New South Wales Corps (some with families) was continuously stationed on the island from 1790.

The overall population of Norfolk Island peaked at just under 1000 by 1801. A decision was made to phase out settlement on the remote outpost. The lack of a harbour made landing dangerous and caused a significant loss of life and shipping when people and goods were moved between ship and shore in difficult weather conditions. Between 1806 and 1814 the whole population was transferred to the mainland and to the new colony of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), where many settlers were given compensatory land grants. Norfolk Island's population fell to 255 by 1808 and it was completely evacuated by 1814.

Information Page written by Michael Flynn.

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