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ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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6/9 Austral Street,

Kogarah. 2207

October, 1988

Dear Friend and Member,

The October Meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Friday, 21st. October, 1988 at 8.00 p.m.

Place: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.

Business: General.

Syllabus Item: Noel Thorpe, who is very well known to us, will tell about
'The Streets of Sydney' over the last hundred years or so.
The changes we will learn of will be most interesting.

Supper Roster Can we have two volunteers please??? Thankyou Ladies.

Ladies please bring a plate. Your goodies are always greatly
appreciated.

Mr. A. Ellis,
President and Research
Officer.

587 1159

Mrs. J. Price,
Minute Secretary.

587 7407

Mrs. B. Perkins,
Secretary.

587 9164

Mrs. E. Wright,
Treasurer.

599 4884

Mrs. E. Eardley,
Bulletin Editor.

59 8078

Nothing is so hard to learn, or so hard to apply as 'Experience'.

Put a value on yourself, if the value is right you will have no trouble to
live with yourself. 'Quote'

GUEST SPEAKER - November - Alderman Ron Rathbone
GUEST SPEAKER - December - Peter Sage

2N3C .. FM .. 90.1 .. ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1988 .. MONDAY EVENINGS .. 5.15 to 5.30p.m.,

TAPE 268 ..	5th September	. Scarborough Park	. J.Scholer
TAPE 269 ..	12th September	. St.George Hospital.	J.Scholer
Tape 270 ..	19th September	. Frederick Meredith.	H. Loring
Tape 271 ..	26th September	. St.George County Council	. H. Loring
TAPE 272 ..	3rd October	. James Cook Part 1	. C. Turner
TAPE 273 ..	10th October	. James Cook Part 2	. C. Turner
TAPE 274 ..	17th October	. Rosevale Nurseries.	C.Wilding
TAPE 275 ..	24th October	. Smithsonian's Wine Bar.	J. Price & Goat Island
TAPE 276 ..	31st October	. Thomas Birkby's Letter	. C.Wilding
TAPE 277 ..	7th November	. Arthur Phillip Part 1	. C. Turner
TAPE 278 ..	14th November	. Arthur Phillip Part 2	. C. Turner
TAPE 279 ..	21st November	. The Man & The Collection .. Mitchell Library	. A.Ellis
TAPE 280 ..	28th November	. Brighton.le..Sands	. J.Price
TAPE 281 ..	5th December	. Parramatta River Part 1	. A. Ellis
TAPE 282 ..	12th December	. Parramatta River Part 2.	. A. Ellis

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This list completes the weekly Historical Sessions broadcast over 2N3C..FM by the St.George Historical Society, since May 1983.

A sincere thank you to all who have participated in preparation and presentation, week by week.

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INTRODUCTION:

Back in 1984, permission was requested of the Society of Australian Genealogists to reproduce papers published in "Descent" - the official Journal of the Society.

Permission has been given both by the authors concerned and the Society itself. For this we record our gratitude.

Over the next two years these articles will appear in the monthly Bulletin of the St. George Historical Society, and hopefully whet the appetite for more historical information and interest.

Some of the titles are:

- . The Lands Records of N.S.W.
- . They Came by Convict Transport
- . Family History Research
- . Conservation of Historic Records at Home
- . The 1828-1856 Gap in N.S.W. Records.
- . Historians and Genealogists
- . Rookwood Project
- . Rev. O.B.Waldron-McCarthy.

This article is the first of what will prove to be a valuable and interesting collection.

THEY CAME BY CONVICT TRANSPORT ...

- Vaughan Evans
"Descent"
Vol.9 - December 1979
Part 4.p.126 - 129.
Scy.Austln.Genealogists
With permission.

In the last few months I have received a large number of shipping enquiries from people tracing their family history. I find it encouraging that so many enquirers look beyond the "bare bones" of history and seek to learn as much as they can of the background and circumstances of their families' origins. In many cases the request is merely for guidance as to where to look for the information required, and it is on this general topic that these notes are written. These notes cover some of the sources of shipping information readily available in the Society's library and many other general reference libraries.

Finding details of a Particular Ship.

One of the most common types of enquiry is where details of a particular ship are sought. This problem is not usually as difficult as it might seem. Let us take the easiest case first: where a convict ancestor is known to have come out to Sydney on a convict transport. Where does one go from there? Let us take the case of a female convict from the ship "Minstrel"

which arrived in Sydney in October 1812. The first step is to refer to the late Charles Bateson's excellently researched book - "The Convict Ships" - first published Brown, Son & Ferguson, Glasgow, in 1959 (second edition 1969), or preferably to the revised and expanded Australian edition published in 1974 by A.H & A.W Reed in paperback.

In addition to giving a detailed description of the whole subject of the convict transportation system, Bateson gives an account of many of the actual voyages of specific convict transports. The book has an index which includes the following major headings of particular use to the genealogist:

Convicts named	Shipowners
Exiles, ships carrying	Surgeons named
Masters of ships named	Transports, convict
Mates named	Regiments, British
Naval Agents named	Shipbrokers

Ships - carrying exiles (see Exiles)
convict transports (see Transports)
miscellaneous
privateers
storeships
warships (British)
warships (foreign)

Such an admirable index makes this book a delightful 'tool' for research: to trace the "Minstrel's" career as a convict transport would take only a few minutes. Incidentally this ship was chosen at random. Bateson has seven references to this one transport alone. For example:

p.189: "The smartest passages by female transports were those of the "Minstrel" and the little "Sydney Cove"... The "Minstrel" was a square-sterned flush-deck vessel of 351 tons, with an extreme length of 104.5 ft., a breadth of 28.9 ft. and a height between decks of 6.9 ft. A three-master of one and a half decks, she had a quarter gallery and a man's figure as a figurehead. She had been built at Hull in 1810, and two years later went out to Port Jackson in 143 days, taking 54 or 55 days from England to Rio, and making a direct passage from Rio to her destination in 75 days..."

Bateson obtained details of the ship from H.M. Customs & Excise in London, who supplied extracts from the Hull Shipping Register dated May 1811. He continued:

"At this time as far as available records reveal, only four convict ships excluding the "Minstrel" had made the passage from England or Ireland to Rio in better than 60 days... Only two other convict ships had bettered the "Minstrel's" run of 75 days (from Rio to Sydney), the female transport "Friends" having taken 72 days in 1811 and the "Sugar Cane" 65 days in 1793.

In other references (p.202 and 340) we read that the "Minstrel" sailed from London on 4 June 1812 in company with the

They came by convict transport

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"Indefatigable", a ship which had embarked 200 male prisoners, one of whom was re-landed and one of whom died on the passage. The ship's master on this voyage was John Reid, and the surgeon Alexander Noble.

For the purpose of the genealogist, this information on the ship is probably more than adequate. However, the dedicated researcher may wish to know something of her subsequent career. Here, Bateson can at least supply details of her other voyage as a convict transport. She came out again in 1825 carrying 121 female convicts. She left Portsmouth on 17 April and sailed direct to Sydney where she arrived on 22 August. Her master on this occasion was Charles Ancoll and her surgeon Hugh Walker. By this time the "Minstrel" was an old ship, her classification having declined from the A1 of her youth to E1, the lowest classification of all.

For information on other voyages of such a ship, we can turn to two main sources, the most convenient of which is J.S. Cumpston's "Shipping Arrivals and Departures, Sydney 1788-1825", and the complementary volume under the same title for the years 1826 to 1840 compiled by Captain I.H. Nicholson.

From Cumpston we find that after discharging her convicts, the "Minstrel" left Sydney in ballast on 14 January 1813 for Norfolk Island and the Southern Settlements (from which we gather that she was one of the ships used to transport the Norfolk Island settlers to Tasmania on the closure of the island settlement.)

We also find that she brought out from England as passengers Lt-Colonel Davey, the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Dieman's Land and John Oxley, R.N., Surveyor-General. She returned to Sydney in April, leaving again on 6 July 1813 for Rio and London with a cargo of sealskins, bullock hides, sperm and elephant seal oil, tallow, flour, wool and pearl shells. Cumpston also records that the "Minstrel" came out again from England via Hobart Town in January 1822 under Captain William Barnes (or Barns), with a valuable cargo of merchandise, leaving on 15 February for Penang.

Her second voyage as a female transport is recorded, confirming Bateson's information relating to the 121 prisoners, but adding that she also brought out a detachment of the 57th Regiment. She left one month later for Batavia, under Captain Arkcoll(sic). There is no record of any other voyage to Sydney.

In the event that even more information on the ship is required, one can refer to "Lloyd's Register", facsimile copies of which for nearly all years since its foundation in the late 18th century are available in most large libraries, such as the State Library of N.S.W, Macquarie Street Sydney. From the Register one can obtain confirmation of the tonnage and other physical details on the ships, of her master and owner, where and when built and registered, her classification, her armament (in 1812 the "Minstrel" carried 2 six-pounder guns of common construction and 8 nine-pounder carronades, the man-killing short-range guns so popular for use against pirates), and her current voyage. The 1812 Register shows that the "Minstrel" had made a voyage to Lisbon before setting off for Botany Bay. For a full history of the movements of a ship one has to check through each year's edition of the Register.

A very useful source of information is the series "Historical Records of Australia" - complete sets of which are in many public libraries. Other useful sources are the published accounts of the early days of the colony, such as Collins' - "An Account of the English Colony in N.S.W." - the facsimile editions of many of which are readily available to the research worker.

What Did the Ship Look Like?

The bald facts obtained from sources such as those described above fail in one regard: they do not tell us what the ship looked like. One good way to get an idea of the size of the ship is to relate her known dimensions to, say, a modern Sydney Harbour ferry. A large Manly ferry of the old variety, such as the "South Steyne", was more than twice the length of the "Minstrel", but the "Lady" class of ferries is almost exactly the same in length and beam. It is not a very pleasant thought that more than 120 female prisoners were packed into about two-thirds the length of such a small ship, accommodated in a double tier of bunks in a 'tween-deck' with headroom of just over 6 ft, for a voyage lasting nearly 5 weary months. If railways are more in your line, you can compare the convict ships with a modern double decker suburban railway carriage. Such a carriage is approximately 60 ft. long (19.457 metres), so the "Minstrel" would have been considerably less than the length of two carriages. There is about the same headroom in the centre of the carriages as in the ship's 'tween-decks'. The carriage can accommodate 94 people sitting down in the centre compartments for the comparatively short suburban journeys. Imagine the congestion on board the ship, where a comparable area was used for all purposes over a long voyage. The surprising thing is that so many of the transportees survived.

In a future article it is proposed to provide more clues as to the appearance of the various classes of ships used as convict and immigrant ships, to enable the researcher to differentiate between the various rigs, such as ship - barque - or brig, and to understand some of the cryptic entries found in such books as "Lloyd's Shipping Register".

It is not often possible to locate a specific portrait of any particular convict transport or immigrant ship, but at least one can say with reasonable certainty what was her general appearance, and can find a ship's portrait that is a reasonable representation of her class; with this we generally must be content.

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HOW MEDICINE WON THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL ...

-The Sydney Morning Herald
23rd July 1988
The Bicentenary.

From 1788 until the colony's assured survival under the administration of Governor Hunter, health was a critical factor in daily life at Sydney Cove. In a paper to be presented at next month's Terra Australis to Australia conference in Sydney, the Queen's Honorary Surgeon, Vice-Admiral Sir James Watt, examines the factors that influenced health in those early years.

In the early years of the colony, illness and malnutrition aggravated by the influx of successive fleets, resulted in a vicious cycle characterised by an ailing workforce incapable of producing enough food to sustain the expanding population.

Attempts to analyse available data are beset by statistical pitfalls. Official returns were intermittent and inaccurate, particularly in regard to the women and children and the crews of visiting ships, who contributed to the workforce and the medical workload. Demographic data supplied by the commissary, who was in the best position to compute the population's size, were at variance with those from other sources, and estimates of numbers were distorted by the constant flux between different settlements.

Factors affecting the colony's health fall into five categories: pre-embarkation conditions, conditions on the voyage, life in the colony, the quality of medical practice and philanthropic network.

Pre-embarkation considerations included the social, economic and medical history of the convicts and their experiences in prisons, where they were subject to deprivation and epidemics. Officers, seamen, marines and free settlers were drawn from different backgrounds and had a different health history.

Conditions on the voyage were affected by the priorities of masters and agents, profit often taking precedence over health to the point of peculation, which deprived convicts of the provisions and induced nutritional disorders. The profit motive also limited accommodation space and affected ventilation and hygiene, dictating ports of call, the number of days in harbour and the availability of fresh food.

Under such conditions, epidemics spread rapidly and often carried long-term implications for the colony's health. Typhus fever, mumps, malaria, dysentery and scurvy struck the First Fleet.

The Second Fleet convicts, also brought typhus fever from the hulks, and it may have continued throughout the voyage; but its distinctive clinical characteristic was a variety of nutritional disorders with their sequelae, infections and dysentery.

Convicts of the Pitt, devastated by scurvy, escaped the malaria epidemic which affected shore-going sailors and soldiers after calling at Rio de Janeiro.

The sickness of the Third Fleet, which arrived in late 1791, reached its height only in the early months of the following year when it contributed disproportionately to the colony's peak mortality rate during a period of unprecedented privation.

At that time, the nature and condition of the ration appears to have been more important than its quantity. Subsequent fleets, reflected, in their health records, the extent to which the lessons had been learnt, medical opinion sought and preventive measures applied. Of these, the most important was the appointment of surgeon superintendents.

Life in the colony was affected by environmental, sociological, administrative and nutritional factors which influenced health.

Environmental factors included the climate, season, terrain, shelter, clothing and the availability of natural resources.

Sharply-delineated social groups, and divisions within those groups determined by status and nationality, resulted in behavioural patterns which reflected attitudes towards work, the support of a family and responsibility to the community. Violence and unhygienic practices contributed to injury and disease.

The personal health problems of governors, their attitudes towards subordinates and convicts and their policies regarding the conservation of stores and stock, the composition of the weekly ration, fresh food supplements, hygiene, land grants, barter and alcohol touched every aspect of the colony's life.

Nutrition, upon which recovery from illness largely depended, was further influenced by the type of produce raised. In this respect, Norfolk Island differed from Sydney and private individuals from public farmers.

The role of natural and acquired immunity to disease is less readily identified, but may have had an important bearing upon the incidence of sickness in established colonists and newcomers following the arrival of the Second and Third Fleets. It was certainly a factor in the smallpox epidemic of 1789 among the Aborigines.

Aborigines contributed to the surgeons' knowledge of the medicinal and healing properties of plants, roots and barks.

The quality of medical practice was exemplified by the high professional standards established by the First Fleet surgeons, who provided the colony's first health service. They were under the able direction of John White, the Surgeon-General, a Naval Surgeon, who proved competent to handle a broad spectrum of disease and injury.

He had been strongly recommended for the appointment by his captain, Sir Andrew Snape Hammond, who well understood the medical requirements after applying enlightened medical

principles, at the suggestion of his surgeon, Charles Fletcher, during a previous commission on the America and West Indies Station. Fletcher's book setting out these principles was published in 1786 and, no doubt, recommended to White by Hammond, since its insistence upon cleanliness, fresh fruit, meat and vegetables, the use of cinchona bark (quinine) for fevers, drugs for other purposes and all the nutritional supplements Fletcher recommended figure in White's demands and practice.

The colony's medical establishment was predominantly naval, and naval medical practice, under the influence of its percipient medical writers (such as Sir Gilbert Blane), was often far in advance of contemporary orthodox thinking.

In the earliest days of the colony, hospitals quickly succeeded tented accommodation for the sick, and surgeons of the warships, with their facilities, complemented the medical provision on shore. Hospital staff were drawn from reliable convicts, and women acted as nurses and midwives.

Hospitals subsequently appeared in Norfolk Island and Paramatta, and White and his small team organised emergency medical care for the huge influx of invalids brought to the colony by the Second and Third Fleets. This fine tradition, despite further medical disasters in some convict transports, was maintained by later naval appointments to culminate in the opening of Sydney's splendid General hospital in 1816, whose chief surgeon (perhaps the most competent of all) was also naval, the emancipated convict William Redfern.

Finally under the influence of a philanthropic network upon the health of the colony was profound. It was composed mainly of Evangelicals and Quakers, who were active in political, naval and medical circles. They made a common cause in the anti-slavery movement, the re-settlement of England's black poor and the plight of the underprivileged.

They campaigned against the death penalty for anything other than heinous crimes and corresponded with Jeremy Bentham over the reform of prisons. They therefore, viewed transportation, not as a means of dumping unwanted convicts, but as offering an opportunity for reform, emancipation and responsible citizenship under the influence of a new environment.

William Wilberforce provided the public image, but Admiral Sir Charles Middleton, Controller of the Navy and responsible for the logistical support of the First Fleet, was often the driving spirit. The interest of Sir Charles and Lady Middleton in the slave trade had been awakened by James Ramsay, his surgeon in HMS Arundel, who first roused the conscience of the nation to its atrocities. Through the Middletons, Ramsay fired Wilberforce, Clarkson and Pitt, with the will to suppress it.

It is significant, that before the Second Fleet sailed, Ramsay had died, and Middleton resigned. Sir Gilbert Blane, the most influential of the naval medical reformers, and physician at St. Thomas' Hospital, drew heavily upon James Ramsay's "great knowledge of the sea service", which arose out of a "warm and disinterested zeal for its prosperity."

John White, the Surgeon-General, seems to have used Blane's book - "Health of Seamen" - published two years before the

First Fleet sailed from England, for he employed Allenson's techniques, which Blane had recommended, in an amputation he carried out at Rio de Janeiro, and the drugs he ordered imply that he followed Blane's advice in handling epidemics.

Middleton, presumably under Ramsay's influence, had long been interested in the preservation of health at sea and, in 1775, had introduced the divisional system, designed to make officers more responsible for the hygiene, appearance and welfare of their men.

Captain Samuel Wallis, whose discovery of Tahiti had paved the way for Cook's Endeavour voyage, was also associated with this group of philanthropic activists and was a close friend of the Quaker physician John Fothergill, patron and colleague of Dr. John Coakley Lettsom, another Quaker.

The contractor of the First Fleet, William Richards Jnr., was also motivated by strong humanitarian principles in contrast to the contractors for the Second and Third Fleets.

Feedback from the colony was provided by extensions of the network, which included Hunter Dawes, Johnson, Marsden, Hill, Southwell, and possibly surgeons such as White and Lowes.

White, for instance, refers to - "the humane promoters of the plan" - to colonise New South Wales and his attitude towards the Aborigines and friendship with an outcast like the Rev. Fysche Palmer, reveal his own humanity in sharp contrast to the character of Surgeon Balmain.

In conclusion, the health of the colony was influenced by a variety of external and internal factors, often mutually antagonistic, but the character, experience, practice and humanity of the colony's founding surgeons proved decisive in the struggle for survival.
