

ANGLESEA FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

OF THE

ANGLESEA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

NEWSLETTER NO. 3

OCTOBER 1999

Welcome to our October newsletter, to bring those members who have been sunning themselves up north, up to date with what has been happening at home. The group has expanded the research facilities and at present we have three fiche readers plus two computers, with fiche and cd-roms covering all the Victorian B-D-M's released to this date, as well as a lot of overseas research material. The most interesting, is the Victorian B-D-Ms on cd-rom, as it is a whole new method of researching available on these, and it is possible to find new family members that were impossible to discover on the fiche records.

The visit to Geelong Genealogical Society and Deakin University was a great success, the members who attended also enjoyed lunch at the University restaurant.

We are now exchanging newsletters with several other groups and also have several Members Interest lists from some groups, these are now available for members use in our growing library.

The Monday and Friday opening of the club rooms for research is becoming more popular with the growth in membership, and as mentioned previously, to avoid missing out, it is advisable to book a time, as recently a couple of members arrived but were unable to do any research because all equipment was busy.

A lot of interest was shown in our group when several of our members put on a small display, at the Angair Wild flower Show, it is hoped we may get some new members from this effort.

THE EXILES

Today, to have a convict ancestor is "in". But as some 160,000 convicts came to Australia, claiming convict antecedents does not put one in a truly select group. How much better to be able to claim convict ancestry and be numbered in a very select band.

You can achieve this status if you are descended from one of the 1,751 "exiles" who sailed from Great Britain to this country between 1844 and 1849, but not all arrived in the Port Phillip District. One of the more common name for these convicts was "Pentonvillians".

Most people think of Victoria as a colony founded without the benefit of convicts, but this is not so. Convict gangs were sent to Port Phillip to labour on Public Works, overlanders brought convict servants with them, numerous expeerees and emancipists crossed Bass Straight to find work here. And there were the exiles.

After the cessation of transportation to N.S.W. in 1840, Van Diemen's Land became the main receptacle for convicts in Australia. But the depression there in the early 1840's decreased the need for convict labour, so Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, sought another place to receive them. He could not land convicts in N.S.W. but he could land free men. Consequently he sent to Port Phillip, convicts who had undergone 15 months to two years imprisonment in Pentonville, Millbank and Parkhurst penitentiaries and landed them with a conditional pardon. They were free men as long as they did not set foot in England until the term of their original sentence had expired.

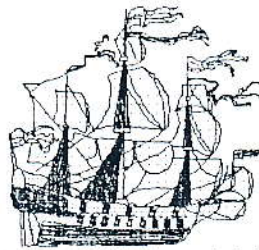
Altogether nine ships arrived with exiles: Royal George (1844, 21 men Melbourne) Sir George Seymour (1845 175 men, Point Henry Geelong), Stratheden (1846 52 men Melbourne), Maitland (1846 294 men Melbourne), Sir Thomas Arbuthnot (1847 290 men Melbourne), Joseph Somes (1847 250 men Point Henry Geelong), Marion 1848 298 men Melbourne) Anna Maria (1848 168 men Point Henry Geelong), and Eden (1849 203 men Point Henry Geelong and Portland).

All the exiles had undergone instruction in prison and many were tradesmen before their incarceration. However when these men disembarked they were on their own, no jobs, no shelter and probably no money, at least the normal convict was assigned to somebody, or put in prison here, where they were at least fed and clothed, but not the exiles. Only a few found employment in their trades, the bulk were employed by the squatters as shepherds or labourers at wages ranging from 15 pounds to 25 pounds per annum plus rations.

The exiles received a mixed reception at Port Phillip; the squatters were desperate for labour of any sort and welcomed them, but the inhabitants of Melbourne saw their introduction as the resumption of transportation. The Argus, in particular maintained its

opposition to them throughout the forties. When Earl Grey did reintroduce transportation in 1849 by sending ticket of leave men on the Hashemy, the opposition was so strong in Melbourne that Superintendent La Trobe ordered the ship on to Sydney.

Melbournians saw the exiles as the cause of a crime wave in their town, but the figures available suggest only a small number relapsed into their old ways. It is easy



enough to find evidence of the exile's criminal activities, but more difficult to unearth the facts about those who settled down to become law abiding citizens. Journalist, "Garryowen" speaks of some who had become magistrates and by the 1880's two brothers established at Geelong, what became the largest tannery in the southern hemisphere.

If any members are interested, I have a full list of the names of the exiles and the ships they arrived on.



GENIES ON THE WEB

Following are some interesting web sites to look at for shipping information, The British Shipping Index is meant to be an index of "unassisted migrants to Australia, however there are many "assisted" passengers among the list.

<http://shipping.cohsoft.com.au/db/britship.html>

Another good site is by the PRO. The Index to Inward Overseas Passengers from Foreign Ports. This index is by surname only and contains many of Irish, Scottish and English origin.

<http://home.vicnet.au/~provic/185259/5259index.htm>

Another site that has links to migration to Australia and New Zealand

<http://www.pcug.org.au/~kenblair/immre.htm>-----also try

<http://www.benet.net.au/~brandis/links/ships.html>.

And whilst we are on ships a couple of sites on shipwrecks are very interesting

<http://www.mm.wa.gov.au/Museum/toc/dasetoc.html>---also

<http://dbase.mm.wa.gov.au/WEBFM/shipwrecks/shipsearch.html>.
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The next site has some interesting shipping information, as well as some very nice pictures of ships.

<Http://www.ozemail.com.au/~jsnelson/blacball.html>.
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A list of Irish orphans from County Cork can be found on,

<Http://world.std.com/~ahern/morph.htm>.
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And of course Cindi's list always has something for everybody,
<http://cyndislist.com/>.

As mentioned on page one, the B.D.M indexes we now have on cd-rom has opened up a new method of researching, but they take a little while to learn how to get the most out of them.

One of the most satisfying methods of researching the births is by entering the females' maiden name only, in some cases this may produce a very large list, depending on how common the name is, but what it can produce are births in the name of the father that you were not aware of, whether they were illegitimate or whether there were marriages you were unaware of.

By searching the death indexes, once again using only the mothers' maiden name, it is possible to ascertain births later than the indexes go, and also discover the married names of some of the females.

One aspect of these indexes, is the use of abbreviations of Christian names, it is possible for instance to put in MARGARET and get a certain number, and the total can be different if you enter MGT. or MARGT., so you may have to try all the possibilities to get a full result. However I think they are the best indexes yet released.

POINT ROADKNIGHT

Point Roadknight, a very prominent part of our own coast line, was named after William Roadknight and possibly his son Thomas. It first appeared on the Victorian map in 1847, it is believed that it was in recognition of their having in 1846 found the route and cut the first track through the dense forest and steep slopes of the Otway Ranges, to enable the building of the Cape Otway lighthouse.

About that time William Roadknight was baselessly blamed for the massacre of nine aboriginals near Cape Otway,

examination of the evidence completely exonerated him from this libel.



William Roadknight was born in the Warwickshire village of Dunchurch in 1792 and at an early age moved to London, where he served for eleven years in the Bank of England, in that time he married and had a family. In 1820, he and his family along with his father and brother migrated to Tasmania.

At the village of Hamilton he was chief constable, flour miller and general storekeeper, and also had grazing interests. At various times he had convicts assigned to him—almost the only way to get labour in rural Tasmania then, with wages high in Hobart and Launceston.

In 1836, having heard of good grazing land in Victoria, took his second son Thomas with livestock, and installed him on land on the Barwon River, near the Ceres Bridge near Geelong.

In 1838 William, himself moved to Victoria, and very soon acquired land at Birregurra, Winchelsea, Deans Marsh, Gerangamete, Colac, Cape Otway as well as Geelong, where he built his town house.

In his time William Roadknight gave over 300 migrants their first job, included in these were many "Exiles" as mentioned in a previous article. A list of these employees appeared in the Autumn 1988 edition of the Ancestor.