

## BDA Source Description Pages

<http://www.bda-online.org.au>**Applications for Convict Workers NSW 1826-1828**

This dataset is an extract from a UK House of Commons Parliamentary Paper published 1 July 1830 (Vol XXIII, 70 pp) titled:

‘Return of the number of applications made to the land board in New South Wales, from 1826 to 1828, for convicts as servants’.

By the late 1820s the system of assignment had been in operation in New South Wales for almost four decades. As the colonial economy expanded and more land was granted to settlers, the British administration sought to assign convicts to private employers who agreed to feed, clothe, employ and supervise them in return for their labour. By 1830 changes in the way the assignment of convicts and the sale or grant of colonial land were under consideration.

The document has three main sections:

1. Return of the number of applications made to the land board in New South Wales, from 1826 to 1828, for convicts as servants.
2. statement of the number of convicts employed by the government in certain gangs, in 1828; and,
3. average number of female convicts confined in the factory at Parramatta, in 1827 and 1828.

The first item is the only one of the three listing persons by name. The fields transcribed are:

- ) Name of applicant,
- ) residence of applicant,
- ) number of convicts applied for, and
- ) number of convicts actually assigned.

The 3,376 named applicants, both male and female, were employers and landholders who resided, or held land, in areas ranging from the Sydney region, Newcastle, Port Macquarie, Bathurst to the Illawarra region (Wollongong). Some employers made multiple applications. Only the number of convicts applied for and assigned is given, not the names of the convicts. The document is a useful supplement to surviving musters listing employers in 1825 and 1828.

The National Library of Australia, the State Library of New South Wales and other State Libraries provide access to the original printed document as an electronic resource. It can be accessed online via Google Books or by registered users of those libraries through the libraries’ links to ProQuest UK Parliamentary Papers. The document can be located on library catalogues by searching under the title:

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'Return of the number of applications made to the land board in New South Wales, from 1826 to 1828, for convicts as servants'.

Once the document is open, the text can be searched. The State Library of New South Wales provides this citation:

Title: Return of the number of applications made to the land board in New South Wales, from 1826 to 1828, for convicts as servants; statement of the number of convicts employed by the government in certain gangs, in 1828; and, average number of female convicts confined in the factory at Paramatta [sic], in 1827 and 1828 [electronic resource].

Cockton index title: Return of Convicts employed in New South Wales as Servants or in Public Works, 1826-28.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online. 1830, Vol.XXIII, 70 pp.

Series: Parliamentary paper (Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons) [1830] (585). Publisher: London : House of Commons, 1830.

Available for use in the Library. Available from home to registered NSW residents.

1 online resource (70 p.: Table). Cambridge, UK. Copyright (c) ProQuest LLC 2008. All rights reserved.

### Select news items re applying for convict servants 1826-1830

Publication details	Text
<i>Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser</i> 9 Jan 1826: 1. <a href="http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2185011">http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2185011</a>	'All Applications for Convict Servants, are to be addressed to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts, who will, from Time to Time, make up an Abstract of the Applications according to their Dates, and will lay it, with the several Documents, before a Board, which will be appointed to report thereon.--The Board will submit its Report to the Governor; and His Excellency's Decision will be communicated by the Colonial Secretary to the respective Applicants.'
<i>Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser</i> 19 Jan 1826: 1. <a href="http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2185073">http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2185073</a>	'PUBLIC NOTICE. IN Consequence of the new Arrangement in the assigning of Convicts, and to enable me to make the necessary Returns to the Board, I request that all Applications for Government Servants may be made to me, in Writing, stating the Residence, and Trade or Calling of the Applicant; together with the Description of Servant he wishes to obtain. FREDERICK A. HELY, Principal Superintendent of Convicts.'
<i>Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser</i> 28 Jan 1826: 1.	'GOVERNMENT NOTICE. COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, 27th JAN. 1826. 1st. PERSONS, desirous of receiving Convict Servants, will be pleased to send in their Applications to the Principal

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<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2185139>

Superintendent of Convicts, agreeably to the annexed Form.

2d. Those who have made Applications, which have not yet been complied with, are requested to renew their Applications, conformably to the present Regulations.

3d. Convicts will not be assigned, as Servants, to Persons holding "Tickets of Leave." And no Person need apply for Servants whose Circumstances are such, as to leave a Doubt of his being able to maintain them.

4th. Applications from Settlers, residing in remote Districts, or from Persons who are not sufficiently known, must be accompanied by a Certificate, as prescribed in the Form of Application.

By His Excellency's Command,  
ALEXANDER McLEAY.

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Date and Place of Abode.

SIR,

In Conformity with the Regulations, I request Convict Servants may be assigned to me of the following Description ; viz.

[Here note the Descriptions of Persons required]

1st. I reside at     in the County of

2d. I am a Settler, or \* and hold † Acres of land, of which † Acres are cleared, and † Acres are in Tillage.

[\*Specify the Trade or Calling.]

3d. I possess † Head of Cattle, and † Sheep.

[† State the Numbers.]

4th. I now employ † Free, and † Convict Servants ; viz. ‡

[‡Here specify their several Occupations.]

† of the above have been in my Service upwards of three Years, and † upwards of one Year.

† assigned Servants have been returned by me to Government within the last two Years, and † others have absconded from my Service, during that Period.

[The Applicant may here state any other Circumstance, particularly if a new *Settler*, as requiring Assistance more immediately, than Persons whose Land is already in Cultivation.]

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

To the Principal Superintendent of Convicts.

[\* Person's Name] [‡ Time.] We do hereby Certify, that \* has been known to us ‡ ; that we believe the foregoing Statement to be correct; that                    has the Means of maintaining and furnishing Employment for the Number of Servants applied for ; and that                    is of sober, honest, and industrious Habits.

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	[The Certificate is to be signed by a Magistrate and Clergyman, or by three Landholders of known Respectability.]'
<p><i>Colonial Times</i> (Hobart, Tas) 22 Oct 1830: 3. <a href="http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8645410">http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8645410</a></p>	<p>'LATEST BRITISH INTELLIGENCE. (Down to June 28, 1830.) Several very important questions concerning these Colonies have lately occupied the attention of Parliament; and as they are of such considerable moment to every inhabitant of this part of the world, we shall make our extracts rather more lengthy than is our usual custom. On the 11th of June - Mr. Hume moved for an account of the expenses of maintaining convicts at the Penitentiary at Millbank, from January 1820 to December 1829, showing the number of convicts in each of those years, the expense per head, the earnings of each convict, and the net expense to the public - also an account of the expense of keeping the convicts at the hulks, with a return of the number sent to New South Wales in each year, and net charge of each, and similar accounts for those sent to Van Diemen's Land and Bermuda. Sir M. W. Ridley was glad these returns had been called for. He had received various communications relative to the improper liberties allowed to some of those who were transported by way of punishment. He understood it was common to see some of those persons, in a week or a fortnight after their arrival at the settlement, living in a style of comfort and extravagance, superior to what they could have done here. He alluded particularly to those who were transported for forgery. He was informed that it was not unusual to see such persons possessed of their carriage and horses, and enjoying themselves in a degree equal or superior to those who were in situations of high confidence. He believed some steps had been taken to correct this impropriety - but the system was so objectionable, that he thought it well deserved the attention of the Right Hon. Secretary of State. Sir Robert Peel said he agreed entirely with the Hon. Baronet, and the observations he had just made formed one of the reasons why he (Sir R. Peel) objected to the remission of capital punishment for forgery; because, he said, if you transported a man who had amassed 5 or £6,000 to New South Wales, make what regulations you might, there would be still extreme difficulty in placing a man of education, and possessing a large sum of money, to labour under the direction of a person very much inferior to him in intellect and education; but, although there was a difficulty in setting these persons to hard labour in a colony some thousands of miles from home, yet he agreed that there ought to be some limit to the indulgence allowed them. If his Right Hon. Friend, the Secretary for the Colonies, were present, he could give more</p>

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	<p>information on this subject, as it came under his department. If the Hon. Baronet would communicate any cases in which persons had abused the trust confided to them, means would certainly be taken to put an effectual check to such practices. Mr. Hume said he feared the Right Hon. Gentleman was very ill-informed on the subject of New South Wales. If he would agree that a Committee should be formed, he (Mr. Hume) would undertake the labour of bringing forward such evidence as would convince the Right Hon. Gentleman of the futility of that mode of punishment. As long as the Governor of the Colony possessed a discretionary power, and the vast patronage which accompanied it, it was hopeless to think of making transportation a punishment. He hoped that an alteration would be made, and that the Government would confiscate the property of persons who were enabled by it to turn what was intended as a punishment for crime into an enjoyment. He then moved for a return of the number of convicts at New South Wales in each of the years from 1826 to 1828; the number assigned as servants, and those not assigned; distinguishing the individuals kept to hard work, and those waiting for masters; the number of ex-officio informations filed by the Attorney-General of the Colony; and certain other papers relating to the expenses of the convicts. After a few words from Sir George Murray, the motion was agreed to.'</p>
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Information Page written by Michael Flynn, January 2020.

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<https://www.bda-online.org.au/sources/convict-records/>

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