

## BDA Source Description Pages

<https://www.bda-online.org.au>**Ship Musters Sydney NSW Departures 1816-1825**

This dataset is a transcript of lists of crew and passengers given clearance by port authorities to leave the colony on departing civilian ships. The clearances were not required to be lodged by ships leaving for ports close to Sydney such as Newcastle and Port Macquarie. To prevent smuggling and the escape of serving convicts departing ships' captains were required to submit lists of departing passengers and crew that were rigorously checked by Sydney port authorities.

At this period typical destinations for departing Sydney shipping were ports in what are now England, Scotland, India, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, South Africa, North and South America, New Zealand, Tasmania and various Indian and Pacific Ocean Islands, including Fiji, Tahiti and Mauritius, as well as whaling and sealing voyages and Melville Island in Australia's far north.

The lists give the name and rank of crew members and name and status of passengers, often mentioning whether they had been born free in the colony, arrived free or arrived as convicts, giving certificate of freedom and pardon numbers for emancipated convicts. Sometimes an individual's original ship of arrival in the colony is given. Passengers could be departing the colony permanently or temporarily in order to return to the British Isles, or to travel there or elsewhere for personal, business or family reasons.

Ethnicity or non-British or Irish nationality is sometimes noted, usually for crew members who were Maori, Aboriginal, American, African-American, Tahitian, Malay, Indian, Chinese, continental European and others.

Entries will be progressively linked to biographical profiles on BDA, allowing a more complex understanding of the movement of free and emancipist people in and out of early New South Wales.

Many children and young people are listed, travelling with or en route to reuniting with family members or travelling to attend school, noting if the consent of a parent or guardian had been given for a minor to travel. Family relationships, occupations, employers, physical descriptions and a variety of other original remarks have also been transcribed.

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The original documents are a series of registers held by New South Wales State Archives (NSWSA) catalogued as NRS-1289 Ships musters 10-12-1816 to 08-04-1825 ref: 4/4771-4775 ([www.records.nsw.gov.au](http://www.records.nsw.gov.au)). Page images have been indexed and digitized online by Ancestry.com.au under the title New South Wales, Australia, Departing Crew and Passenger Lists, 1816-1825, 1898-1911.

This dataset has been adapted from a CD published privately in 1990 by Norma Tuck under the title 'Index to ships musters 1816-1825: passengers & crew departing Sydney / compiled from primary records of the AONSW by Norma M. Tuck'.

The CD data was donated to the Society of Australian Genealogists, Sydney and is reproduced with the Society's permission. Norma Tuck died on 22 November 1998, aged 60.

The Tuck index was an incomplete transcript and omitted many names and details of crew and passengers. BDA staff and volunteers have considerably expanded the coverage of the transcript to cover every ship in the period 1816-1825.

Later returns survive for the period 1826-1832 which will be transcribed and added to BDA at a later date.

For more information see:

Alan Kelley, "How many of them did that?": Freed convicts who left New South Wales', *Descent*, Vol 44, No 3, Sep 2014: 141-153.

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Information Page written by Michael Flynn 2021.

For other Passenger Lists included in the BDA see:

[www.bda-online.org.au/sources/passengers](http://www.bda-online.org.au/sources/passengers)

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