

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF HUNTER'S RIVER

Exerpts from *Historical Records of New South Wales. Vol. IV. Hunter and King. 1800, 1801, 1802. Edited by F.M. Bladen. Sydney: Charles Potter, 1896.*

(p.205, 206)

GOVERNOR KING TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS (Banks Papers.)

Sydney, N.S. Wales, 28 September, 1800

Sir,

.....I send you by the hands of Capt. Kent, who is nephew to Governor Hunter, and commands the Buffalo, which he takes home with him, a cask in which is a water-mole, another animal that Paterson recommended, a fruit found growing about Port Stephens, two warratarrs, &c., which I hope will all get safe, particularly the mole, which you desired. I also forward, under Capt. Kent's care, two boxes from Cayley, and a third, packed by myself, with some stones brought from the Coal River, as Paterson thought they would be acceptable....

Nothing has yet been done respecting the coals. A small vessell [the Martha – she went ashore in Little Manly] went some time ago to the river between this and Port Stephens ; she missed the river and got into a barr lagoon, where she got loaded immediately with very fine coals, but in coming into this harbour she got ashore and was bilged. These rivers, which abound with coals, are not accessible to larger vessells than about forty tons. It is true a number of these could load a larger vessell, which may be done at Port Stephens. It is on this idea, and from the plots of the disaffected Irish, who were lately sent here for sedition and rebellion, that I have recommended the forming another settlement at that place with a very small establishment. Unfortunately we have only one miner in the country, who is a convict for life. He is very clever, and is now boring over a seam of coal at the head of George's River, which is on the south-west side of Botany Bay. I send a small sample of the coal procured there in the box, which appears to be much superior to that found to the northward. As the miner is intelligent and master of his business, I hope we shall get at that article, but our great want will be engines, for no doubt the water will come upon us. The situation is handy for loading, and for vessells lying in Botany Bay...

I have, &c.,

PHILIP GIDLEY KING