

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.*

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GOVERNOR KING TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS (Banks Papers.)

Sydney, April, 1801

Dear Sir,

.....I made Cayley an offer of going in the Lady Nelson, which he agreed to do. How far he has been successful in collecting I do not know, as he keeps his counsel to himself ; however, I hope you will have every reason to be satisfied with his returns. He no doubt will write by the conveyance this goes by. The articles that Lieut. Grant and the other gentlemen who went in that vessel collected I have sent by this conveyance, which I shall more particularly state and enumerate at the end of this letter. As soon as the Lady Nelson is refitted (which I hope will be about the middle of June), I shall send her to examine the Coal River, between this and Port Stephens, and as Colonel Paterson has offered to go in her, I hope we shall gain a perfect knowledge of that article and the facility of getting it. [See the reports of this expedition, post, pp. 404 *et seq.*

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.....Paterson, with his party, returned here after a six weeks' absence. As he will give you his idea of the place I shall say nothing on that head ; but from his letters to me I made the miner I had at work here leave off, and have established a small port at the river. It is a great misfortune that the entrance to this river is so very bad, and such little depth of water. However, with all its failings, I have no doubt of its turning out a great acquisition for many purposes, exclusive of the coals, of which I have sent you a small sample. When the miner I engaged to bore for coals here left off he had got down ninety-eight feet with the boring-rods. Although he had no present assurance of coming to coal, yet he was anxious to proceed. This I could not consent to, as it required much assistant labour, and coals being found so very plentiful, although further off, I have for the present given up the boring. The first cargo of coals brought from the Coal River in a Government vessel I exchanged with the master of the Cornwallis, who goes to Bengal from hence for iron, which he gave at 30 per cent. Profit for our coals at two pounds five shillings per chaldron. I believe this is the first return ever made from New South Wales. How many chaldron he will take from hence I cannot ascertain until he leaves this, as he has got several small vessels belonging to individuals bringing them round ; and as such a produce ought not to be without some advantage to the Crown, I have regulated the export of that article, as expressed in the inclosed printed notice. Whatever may arise from this *branch of our revenue* will remain unappropriated until I receive commands thereon. However, I believe

our exports will be small, except such ships as bring convicts out may choose to carry them on to India, as our Colonial vessel – that is, the Porpoise – I hope will be fully employed between this and Otaheite in procuring pork. There is a brig belonging to an individual here loading for the Cape, but as my instructions prohibit any vessel being kept here belonging to the colonists, she goes with my certificate and permission to sell her as a prize.

Yours, &c.,

21 August, 1801

PHILIP GIDLEY KING