

## **Male Convicts in Newcastle – Occupations.**

### **Notes for teachers:**

This plan is drawn up with Year 9 in mind, though it can be easily configured for other Years. The documents listed below relating to the four convicts around whom this lesson centres are available from the Archives section of the University of Newcastle. They are part of the Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, 1788-1825 and may be photocopied at the University. They comprise only a small sample of the material available and are representative of many like them.

Further information on convict Newcastle, including copies and transcriptions of original documents, can be found at  
[www.newcastle.edu.au/coalriver](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/coalriver)

See also

J.W. Turner, *Coal Mining in Newcastle, 1801-1900*. Newcastle, N.S.W: Newcastle Region Public Library, Council of the City of Newcastle, 1982.

J. Comerford, *Coal and Colonials: the founding of the Australian coal mining industry*. Sydney: United Mine Workers Federation of Australia, 1997.

Teachers may make multiple copies of these documents, but must ensure that the header is included in all copies. Copyright remains with the author and the Coal River Working Party.

## **For Students:**

Listed below are the kinds of work undertaken by the convict population of Newcastle

Miner  
Hunter  
Fisherman  
Cedar cutter  
Carpenter  
Road worker  
Herdsman  
Timber worker  
Forge Worker  
Blacksmith  
Construction worker.

Now look at the information supplied about four convicts, Thomas McCarthy, William McCarthy, Samuel Beckett and Samuel Dell and answer the following questions:

How many of these men were married?

On what ships did they travel to Newcastle?

How long do the documents tell us each man spent in Newcastle?

What were their occupations?

How many of them are shown to have worked elsewhere?

Who are they and what did they do?

Samuel Dell is shown to have held two jobs, as a teacher and a parish clerk. What were his duties as the parish clerk?

How many of these men were paid a salary for the work they undertook?

Who from among these men sent a petition to the Governor and what did they request?

*Coal River Working Party - University of Newcastle*  
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**MCCARTHY, Thomas.** Per "Pilot", 1817; plasterer

- 1818 Jan 30 On list of prisoners embarked on "Duke of Wellington" for the Derwent (Reel 6006; 4/3498 p.35)
- 1818 Jan 31 Transferred from town gang, Sydney, to the Derwent (Reel 6047; 4/1741 p.224)
- 1819 Jan 19 On list of prisoners sent to Newcastle per "Lady Nelson" (Reel 6006; 4/3499 p.272)
- 1821 Nov Overseer of bricklayers and plasterers at Newcastle. Petition for mitigation of sentence (Fiche 3209; 4/1863 pp.22-22a)
- 1824 Oct 4; Affidavits re loss of his certificate of freedom (Reel 6028; 4/1690  
1825 Sep pp.94, 135)

**MCCARTHY, William.** Per "Pilot", 1817

- 1817 On list of prisoners to be sent to Newcastle per "Elizabeth Henrietta" (Reel  
Nov 20 6005; 4/3497 p.145)
- 1823 Jan On monthly return of prisoners punished at Newcastle (Reel 6023; 4/1718  
p.161)
- 1824 On monthly statement of changes in the convicts at Rooty Hill Station;  
May 6 from Prisoners Barracks, Sydney (Reel 6028; 2/8283 p.255)
- 1825 Appointed bush constable, Newcastle (Reel 6039; 4/424 p.399)  
Aug 31

**BECKETT, Samuel.** Per "Earl St Vincent", 1820

- 1821 Aug On list of prisoners transported to Newcastle per "Elizabeth Henrietta"  
30 (Reel 6008; 4/3504 p.286)
- 1824 Oct Sawyer. Assigned convict tradesman whose master was a defaulter in  
8 payment for (Fiche 3293; 5/3821.1 p.2)

**DELL, Samuel.** Per "Neptune", 1820; parish clerk and schoolmaster at Newcastle

- 1820 Nov Richard and John Evans tried by Court of Criminal Jurisdiction for  
22-Dec 14 stealing from Dell (Reel 6023; X820 p.19)
- 1821 Jan 2 Re salary as clerk at Sydney Hospital (Reel 6051; 4/1748 pp.8-10)
- 1821 Mar On list of prisoners transported to Newcastle per "Elizabeth Henrietta"  
14 (Reel 6007; 4/3503 p.170)
- 1825 Master of Newcastle School. Abstract of Return submitted to the King's  
Visitor (Fiche 3306; 4/1913.4A pp.44-5)
- 1825 Feb 1 Has combined the duties of Parish Clerk and School Master at  
Newcastle; recommended for a salary (Reel 6068; 4/1812 p.20b)
- 1825 May Parish Clerk & Schoolmaster at Newcastle. Petition to have his family  
3, Dec 5 sent out to the Colony at Government expense (Fiche 3285; 4/1112.1A)

pp.81-5)

1825 Jul 29 Order on the Colonial Treasurer for salary as parish clerk at Newcastle  
(Reel 6070; 4/6037 p.41)

### **Things To Do:**

1. Find out if there are any convicts in your family history and tell about one or more of them. .
2. If there are no convicts in your family tree, tell how, when and why your family came to Australia.
3. Use the information from the Colonial Secretary's Correspondence to invent a convict. Borrow from the records about each of the men to tell what may have happened during a week of his life. You might like to write about the work he did, the things he felt about his situation, any punishment he may have received, the reason he was punished, who were his friends and what they did when they were not working and anything else you may have learned

[http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/indexes/colse/r/F48c\\_ri-roc-09.htm#P4187\\_131059](http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/indexes/colse/r/F48c_ri-roc-09.htm#P4187_131059) is an address which will give you a lot of information about Australia's early convicts. Look up those with the same family name as yours or use another name and write down all the interesting facts you discover.

4. Prepare a three minute talk to give to your class and tell what you have discovered.
5. As a class exercise, draft a mural showing convict life in Newcastle which you could put on the wall of your classroom or display in the school library or local public library.