

PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS INC.

NEWSLETTER - ISSUE NO: 71

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2026

Email: contact@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au or PO Box 2489 North Parramatta 1750
PFFF website: parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pfffriends/
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/parramattafemalefactoryfriends/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/pfffriends/
YouTube: https://www.youtubecom/channel/UCON2Yp3db1AgVLHc7JdmXxQ
Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com.au/parramattafemalefactoryfriends/
Ph: 0456 787 252

NATIONAL HERITAGE PLACE



The Parramatta Female Factory - Augustus Earle 1826 - nla.pic-an 2818460 National Library of Australia (NLA).

Patrons: Meg Keneally & Thomas Michael Keneally AO
President: Gay Hendriksen; Vice President/Technical Officer/Tour Coordinator: Kevin Dodds; Public Officer/Treasurer: Sharyn Byrne; General Secretary: Jane Clain; Committee: Site Watch: Judith Dunn OAM; Publicity/Newsletter Editor: Ronda Gaffey; Membership Secretary: Lorraine Henshaw; Guest Speaker/Workshop Coordinator: Lyn Watkins

2026 - AGM: Friday 16th October. Bi-monthly meeting at 12pm followed by afternoon tea 1pm Guest Speakers at 1.30pm.
Venue: PFFF Rooms, 5 Fleet Street, North Parramatta.
Parking available at Parramatta Leagues Club Car Park.
Parramatta Light Rail from Parramatta Square to Ngara - short walk to site.

Content

President.....
Noticeboard.....
The Wells Family Bicentenary.....
'Our Girls' - Fourteen Thousand Miles
Research Centre Muster & History Bytes
Project 111.....
A-Roving on Trove.....
Reports.....
Out & About.....
PFFF Calendar 2026.....

© PFFF 2026 Artwork - PFFF logo by Amiel Dizon dizonbydesign.com.au

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Factory Friends,

Spring has arrived with all the wonderful blossoms and nature's renewal. The season brings an active schedule for the Factory Friends including our Annual Riot Day.

Firstly, we had our 15th Annual General Meeting in August. Congratulations and welcome back to our newly elected Committee, all familiar faces: Sharyn Byrne, Jane Clain, Kevin Dodds, Judith Dunn, Ronda Gaffey, Lorraine Henshaw, Lyn Watkins and me.

Our Minute Secretary, Lyn Watkins has stepped down from this role. Thank you to Lyn for her years of keeping these records in good order. Lyn is still an active Committee member, so you will certainly see her around the Rooms and at events. If you think you would like to step into the Minute Secretary role please email contact@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au

We had a very busy couple of months with the Parramatta Open event, hosting the Wells Family Reunion, the PFFF Workshop and Guest Speaker program, Members' Morning Teas, tours and Research Centre activities. Parramatta Open was organised by Museums of History NSW and was our busiest event. Our participation was considerable by Committee members, Jane Clain, Ronda Gaffey, Lorraine Henshaw and Lyn Watkins, the catering team, Eileen Avery and Jeanette Moles and the research team, Gary Carter, Luanne Fagan, Angela Gibson, Pip Palmer and Mel Ridge.

The Wells Family Reunion was a family affair with support from the Friends, coordinated by Kevin Dodds with assistance from, Ronda Gaffey, Lyn Watkins, Eileen Avery, Jeanette Moles, Mel Ridge, Angela Gibson and Pip Palmer.

A heart felt thank you to all who made these events so successful.

The next activity on our horizon is, *'It's a Riot'* day which is Saturday 24th of October. We can only do this day with volunteer help from our members so if you think you would like to assist please email our Membership Secretary, Lorraine Henshaw: membership@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au

All the best and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Gay Hendriksen
President PFFF

A warm welcome to new PFFF members: *Louise Riles, Anne Maree Murphy, Leanne Russell, Rebecca Rands, Janine Wood, Julie Taylor, Dianne Drake, Lesley Hume, Janelle Lavers, Sandra Franceschini, Deidre Chance, Lyndal & Alan Keller (family membership), Kathryn Mulligan, Danielle Lautrec, Kathryn Murphy, Jennifer Ling, Lorraine Taylor, Ailsa Wilson, Heather & Geoff Taylor (family membership), Carmen Graham, Gary Friedland and Richard Nicholls.*



A floral tribute - Riot Day 2025

NOTICEBOARD - DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - 2026

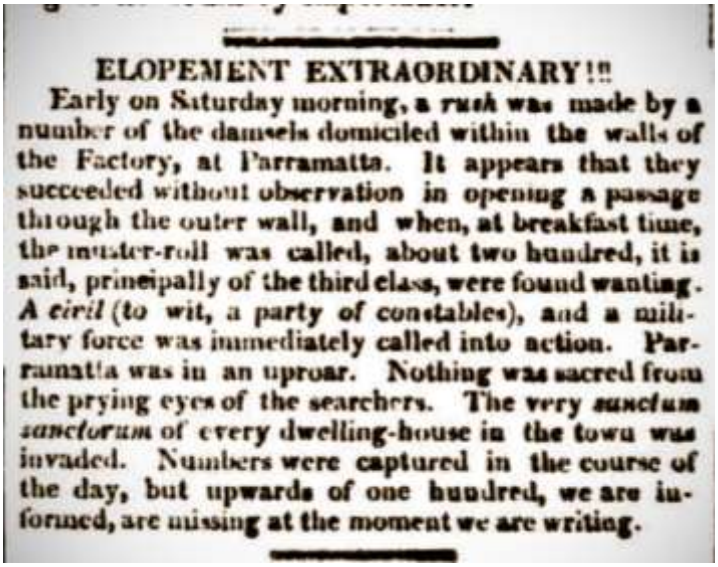
- **Next Bi-monthly Meeting is Friday 16th October - 12pm with afternoon Tea at 1pm followed by Guest Speakers at 1.30pm, Lyn Watkins & Kevin Dodds, PFFF Committee and descendants of women in the Factory at the time of the 1827 &1831 Riots: Topic: *Against All Odds*.**
- **Annual Riot Day** - 199th Anniversary, **Saturday 24th October - tickets open 5th October.**
- **November 13th/14th Workshop - Colonial Craft Catch Up with Lyn Watkins (more details soon).**
- **Parramatta Foundation Day** - **Saturday 31st October** at Hambledon Cottage Reserve - 9am to 2pm.
- **A final reminder that PFFF Annual Fees were due 1st July**. Please complete the form and return to Lorraine Henshaw, Membership Secretary - thank you for your invaluable, continuing support, Lorraine. membership@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au
- **Congratulations to PFFF -** winners of *the Joy Vost Memorial Prize* - $500! Well done to our VP Kevin for the successful grant application. We will soon have a new microphone for meetings and events!

HISTORY CORNER - 199 YEARS AGO

In the months and days leading up to the October Riot of 1827, there had been much unrest at the Parramatta Female Factory.

Matron Elizabeth Fulloon had resigned and the incoming Matron Ann Gordon had cut rations to curb any further action by the women.

According to one newspaper report, on the morning of Saturday 27th October, 1827, about 200 women were missing from the Morning Muster and within hours, all Parramatta was 'in uproar' when the women broke out of the Factory and dispersed into the Town.
(See Jane Clain's article - page 8)



ELOPEMENT EXTRAORDINARY!!!

Early on Saturday morning, a rush was made by a number of the damsels domiciled within the walls of the Factory, at Parramatta. It appears that they succeeded without observation in opening a passage through the outer wall, and when, at breakfast time, the muster-roll was called, about two hundred, it is said, principally of the third class, were found wanting. A ciril (to wit, a party of constables), and a military force was immediately called into action. Parramatta was in an uproar. Nothing was sacred from the prying eyes of the searchers. The very sanctum sanctorum of every dwelling-house in the town was invaded. Numbers were captured in the course of the day, but upwards of one hundred, we are informed, are missing at the moment we are writing.

Sydney Gazette & NSW Advertiser (1803-1842) 29th October 1827 article, p2

THE WELLS FAMILY BICENTENARY EVENT AT THE PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY & ST. JOHN'S CHURCH - SATURDAY 12th SEPTEMBER-2026

A huge thank you to the Parramatta Female Factory Friends volunteers for the Wells Family Reunion and Commemoration of the 200th Wedding Anniversary of Martha Shaw and Thomas Wells.

A fantastic fact-filled day was experienced by all the attendees. The PFFF walked beside us and shared the history of the extraordinary women who lived and worked there.

PFFF carefully catered to all our needs with a delicious Devonshire Tea, a BBQ lunch and afternoon tea.

The Family gathered in between eating to share the history of our ancestors that began 200 years ago.

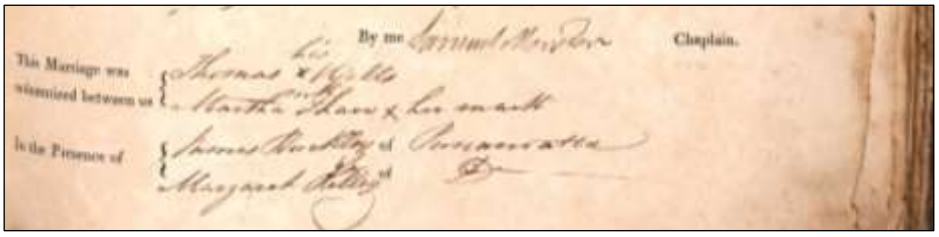




At the end of our time at the Parramatta Female Factory, we moved on to St. John's Cathedral in Parramatta where the Reverend David Ould 'officiated' at an re-enactment of the wedding ceremony of our ancestors Martha Wells (a Factory woman) and Thomas Wells (a Ticket of Leave man).



The Cathedral archivist had the marriage register open for us to view the original record which was rather special.



Mari-Anne Wells

Postscript:
Kevin Dodds writes:

In conversation with St. John's Rev. Ould, I learned that the female convicts were escorted to the church for the banns and for the marriage ceremony. The front doors were usually closed during the service which meant that the military guard could wait either inside or outside.



The Rev. Ould also pointed out that it was not a matter of walking the bride down the aisle - the bride's hand was given to the minister and from the minister's hand, to the groom for his vows, then her hand was placed on top of his for her vows - rather unique and quaint I think!

Once the vows were taken, the doors of the church were opened and the officiating chaplain (in the case of Martha and Thomas, the Reverend Samuel Marsden), in a loud voice announced the marriage to the world.

The bride Martha Shaw was played by Madeleine Miller and the groom Thomas Wells was played by Henry Nelson.

The bride was escorted to the church by an unknown local military officer of the 57th Regiment garrisoned in Parramatta (played by PFFF's Kevin Dodds who is also on the Shaw/Wells Family tree!).



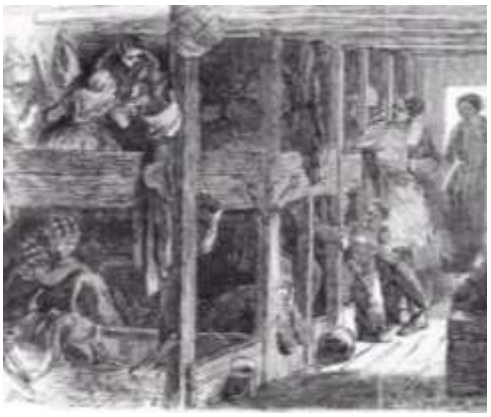


The Commemorative cake was made and donated by Kim Nelson and on the day, was cut by Marilyn Mercer, descendant of Martha and Thomas' eldest son, Thomas.



Photography: Kevin Dodds and Mari-Anne Wells.

Life on board a convict ship was about discipline and structure; there were well-defined rules with the women organised in 'a mess' or group of about twelve and allocated particular tasks. Being responsible for his 'cargo of women', was quite a challenge for many of the ships' surgeons who were not only responsible for the morality of the women but also for their well-being and safe delivery to Port Jackson. The journey would have been tedious at times and there were many anxious moments for women who had embarked in various stages of pregnancy[1].



Living conditions on female convict ships were cramped, there was the lack of privacy and below deck was airless, damp and unsanitary. In various surgeons' journals, there are numerous references to the need to maintain routines and cleanliness on board. For example the *Lord Sidmouth*'s Surgeon Robert Espie wrote quite specific rules[2]:
3rd Cleanliness being especially necessary for the health and comfort of the convicts and passengers both…persons occupying each berth…shall make or fold their bed blanket and pillow in a tight roll…for being stored on deck and that they will the make their portion of the sleeping places and the deck as clean as judged by the Surgeon & Supt….
Each morning, weather permitting, all bedding was brought up on deck to be aired while below deck was thoroughly cleaned. The prisoners' quarters were inspected before breakfast each morning and non-compliance was met with punishment. Personal hygiene was mandated. Women bathed in sea water with a ration of soap provided. Espie expected women to wash two days a week.



Daily routines included minding and teaching children, sewing, mending and washing clothes of the crew. Women were also selected to assist the ship's surgeon on occasion.

It was on the convict ship that women encountered a harsh punishment regime for *bad* behaviour. Common misbehaviour was repeated disobedience, dirty habits, unruliness, stealing from other women and consorting with the crew. Women were punished harshly with time spent in irons, in the wooden box on bread and water or they were confined to a barrel. Hair shaving was the ultimate humiliation.

Punishment on board was an indication of what was to come in the Colony and in the Factory system. Transportation was punishment enough but the prisoners' misbehaviour which impacted others and the smooth running of the ship. Their resistance to following orders and disregard of authority was not to be tolerated.

Keeping a respectable distance between the crew and the prisoners was part of a surgeon's responsibility. Dr. James Hall (*Mary Ann* 1822) recorded a number of prisoners charged with prostitution on board. He did not hold back in his description of some of the women. His frustrations were very clear. For example, in the case of Sarah Fenton aged 28: *This woman is supposed to be as desperate and depraved a character as ever has been transported, capable of doing murder; turbulent reprobate; never easy but in mischief and hypocrite; a Devil Incarnate…has been repeatedly punished with temporary effect… kind treatment has no effect*[3].

Though he faced many challenges throughout the voyage including diseases he did not easily recognise and dealing with some women who shocked him to the core, he was satisfied that he had discharged his duty in the end:
I feel myself justified in saying that no ship has arrived here in a more quiet decent state than the Mary Ann and very few have or can equal it…all is harmony and decency[4].

References:
[1] *Our Girls* - Anne Mathews and Beth Matthews - unpublished work sourced from original papers SRNSW;
[2] *The voyage of Lord Sidmouth*' research, Noela Vranich, *Herstory Book 1*., pub., PFFF 2016;
[3] *Voyage of Ship Mary Ann - 1822 - jenniwilletts - freesettlerorfelon.com;*
[4] Ibid.

The voyage of the convict ship *Elizabeth* 1828 was especially challenging for the Surgeon Dr. Joseph Hughes. Prior to embarkation (July 1827), a riot had been put down in the Cork Depot and the first casualty recorded in Hughes' journal was convict woman, Honora Higgins. She was boarded suffering horrific musket wounds on her legs - her face was cut and her legs were ulcerated and needed a lot of attention on the voyage[5].

Three pregnant women had also embarked *Elizabeth* - Honora Walsh aged 24, Mary Ann Robinson aged 23 and Margaret McRemond, aged 30. Honora and Mary Ann gave birth on 17th September 1827. The two baby girls were named *Elizabeth*. Margaret gave birth on 16th November. Sadly, Honora's baby died 15th December and Margaret's child died three days later on 18th December - both were buried at sea, *wrapped in a single hospital sheet*[6].

Though the women were challenging, they were treated with care and diligence. There was also a sense of relief once the ship reached Port Jackson. Hughes wrote: *I cannot refrain…from expressing my painful feelings for the want of decent gratitude on the part of the prisoners but my consolation is I have faithfully discharged my duty towards them*[7].

The women prisoners brought to NSW were mostly all ages ranging from 14 years old to early 80s. They were from so many different rural and urban backgrounds, traditions and religions, occupations, family and life circumstances and dispositions. They would have been resentful and felt the pain of dislocation and loss. Friendships were formed on coaches bound for Newgate or in Newgate itself and then on the voyage. There were times when women would have supported each other in their darkest moments. One such narrative is that of Sarah Halliwell/Hallowell per *Hadlow* 1818.

Sarah was one of five female convicts apprehended in the Cape as runaways and returned to NSW. Sarah Halliwell, from Lancashire, sentenced to 14 years transportation per *Lord Melville1 1817, for passing bad money,* had been at large for almost a year. When Sarah embarked the *Hadlow* in the Cape, she was aged about 30 and heavily pregnant. The ship arrived in Sydney Cove on December, 1818. Governor Macquarie noted the *Hadlow's* arrival in a despatch to Earl Bathurst dated 24th March 1819: *10th.The ship Hadlow Commanded by Captn.John Craigie arrived from England on the 24th December with 149 Male Convicts…This ship having touched at the Cape of Good Hope brought back thence Five Runaway Female Convicts who made their escape from the Colony on board the Harriet, Private Merchant ship in Decr.*

Before the men were finally landed at King's Wharf on Monday 4th January 1819, a life and death drama was unfolding on board. In his journal entries from 23rd to 26th December, the ship's Surgeon, Dr. Thomas Roylance gives a very detailed and moving account of Sarah's labour. He refers to unnamed women assisting - one of whom was a mother of ten. After a prolonged labour, Sarah gave birth. The child was still born. Soon after, Sarah passed away. Roylance's journal entry for Saturday 26th December 1818 reads: *10.40 Departed this life - Sarah Hallowell convict, in her birth - 5pm Sent the body on shore to the General Hospital for burial…*[8]

After 140 to 150 days at sea, imagine coming up the coast, past Botany Bay and sighting the Heads…the signal station on South Head, signalling to Flagstaff Hill high up on the Rocks that another ship had arrived, another cargo of workers, another cargo of potential brides and perhaps news from home. For some there was the prospect of family reunions once ashore.



Imagine the relief, the excitement and yet the anxiety the women prisoners would have felt. The women would have been wondering what their next journey would be - inevitably there would be another journey or a series of journeys to come…

References:

[5]Elizabeth 1828 the worst and most turbulent From Celtic Cross to Southern Cross, Suzanne Voytas, Springwood, 2010; [6] Ibid;

[7]Journal- Joseph Hughes; Historical Records of Australia.Vol x Ancestry.com UK, Royal Navy Medical journals 1817-1857 the National Archives, Kew, Richmond Surrey; [8] Journal of Dr. Thomas Roylance; PRO Series: CO ref. Adm. 101/32 ML ref. AJCP reel 3197; Images: Below Decks; Woman in Barrel; Entering the Heads 1788.

The Research Centre is abuzz with activity, inquiries and visitors. We are continuing our State Archives project and the Creative Initiatives Exhibition 2027, is well under way.

We have reached our first milestone completing a commissioned Research Project and Report on Pottery at the Female Factory for Parramatta Clay Arts. The publication can be found in the Research Centre if you would like to know more. It certainly uncovered some important social histories and meaning of these archaeological finds. A great example of this was the uncovering of the history of our first female potter.

Work on the 1827 Riot - 'fight for rights' continues with some great finds. Watch this space as this is our main project for the next 12 months.

The visual upgrade of the Herstory Displays continues and registration for our CD, microfilm and microfiche collections is progressing well. Our resources are being sorted with Dewey Decimal ordering, an important aspect of making our resources accessible.

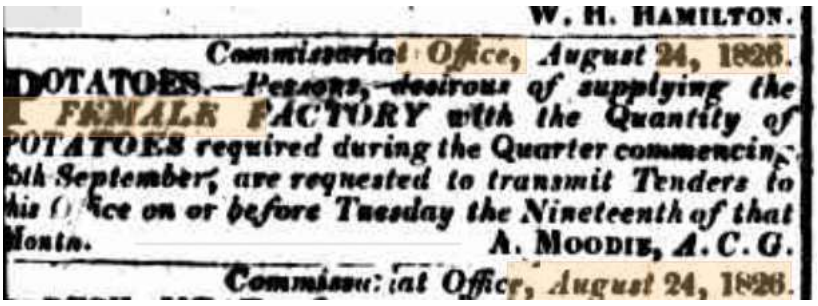
Our public programs continue well. The latest one was a research workshop by Christine Yeats: *Unlocking the NSW Archives Collection.* With Christine's many years as Senior Archivist at State Archives this was a must for any family historian searching NSW records.

Don't forget our time capsule. If you would like to be included, fill out the form in our Rooms or email the Research Centre researchcentre@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au

Our Factory women's list continues to grow so please keep those names and stories coming in. Given there are over 5,000 names we really need your help to give back the life stories to these names. You can give directly to us at the Research Centre or email it to: gayhendriksen@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au and put 'Research Centre' in the subject field.

If you are particularly interested in being involved with the Research Centre you can email or visit us on a Friday. Of course if you would like to visit and explore our resources you are welcome 10am to 2pm on Fridays.

Here is an interesting excerpt from a newspaper of the day (August 24, 1826) offering a little insight into supplies needed by the Commissariat - tenders are called for the supply of a *Quantity of POTATOES* for the Female Factory!



W. H. HAMILTON.

Commissariat Office, August 24, 1826.

POTATOES.—Persons, desirous of supplying the FEMALE FACTORY with the Quantity of POTATOES required during the Quarter commencing 5th September, are requested to transmit Tenders to this Office on or before Tuesday the Nineteenth of that Month.

A. MOODIE, A. C. G.

Commissariat Office, August 24, 1826.

Good read and online history adventures: *This month A Cargo of Women*: *Susannah Watson and the Convicts of the Princess Royal* by Babette Smith is highly recommended.

This book is a good read if you want to know more about the journey of the *Princess Royal* or if you are thinking of writing your own book on female convicts or family history.

Babette was not only the generous donor of a significant part of our Research Centre library, but one of Australia's great history writers on convict women.



HISTORY BYTES

https://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/convicts-bound-for-australia/criminal_entry_books_h013
The State Library of NSW has a wealth of resources for family historians.
This link is one of many.

Judith MYERS 1788-1825

Researcher Gary J Carter and contributions by Peter Keeda

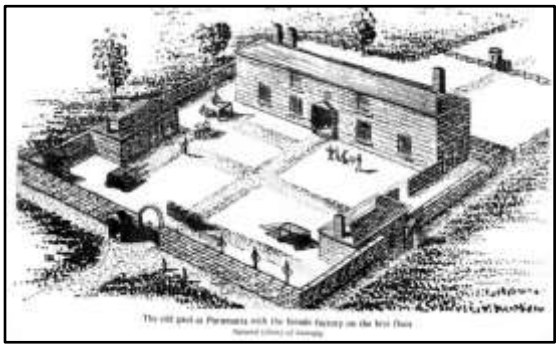
Aliases: Meyers, Miers. Married name: Myers (married in England c.1811–1812)

Judith is on Commissioner Bigge's 111 list when he inspected the First Factory above the Gaol. In February 1821 Judith and 110 other women were marched to the new Macquarie commissioned Female Factory in Fleet Street, North Parramatta. The new Barracks and Factory was to provide regular work and accommodation for convict women not otherwise assigned as servants.

Biographical narrative of Judith Myers.

Judith Myers was born around 1788 in London and married **Frederick Myers**, a German-born sugar refiner, in England around 1811–1812. The couple had three children between 1811 and 1817. In April 1818, Frederick was arrested with four others on a charge of stealing 200lbs of lead valued at 20 shillings from a dwelling house in Mortimer Terrace, Kentish Town, London. He appeared in court per Middlesex Gaol Delivery on 6 May 1818 and was duly convicted of larceny and transported for seven years to Van Diemen's Land aboard the *Caledonia*, arriving in Hobart in November 1820.

Judith's own conviction came two years later. Tried at the Surrey Assizes in March 1820 for larceny, she was sentenced to seven years' transportation and embarked the *Morley* with her three children. Upon arrival in Sydney on 12 September 1820, she was forwarded with the children to the Parramatta Female Factory, where she lived in the cramped upper storey above the Gaol on Gaol Green (located where Prince Alfred Square is today.)



During her time in the Factory, Judith received **nine letters** from her husband in Hobart, a remarkable survival noted in the Colonial Secretary's Correspondence. Lieutenant-Governor Sorell petitioned on Frederick's behalf for Judith and the children to be allowed to join him. Permission was given and on 25 August 1821 Judith and her three children boarded the *Campbell Macquarie* for Hobart.

In Van Diemen's Land, Judith lived at Pitt Water where Frederick was employed and receiving government stores. The 1821–1823 Musters list her as *wife of Frederick Myers*, though the children do not appear with her, suggesting they were placed in different households or orphan schools, a common practice for children over four.

Judith's life ended tragically. On 18 June 1825, while crossing Pitt Water in a ferry-boat, the vessel overturned and she drowned almost immediately. The **Hobart Town Gazette** described her as leaving *a most affectionate husband* and *a large family to mourn her.*

Her three sons survived into adulthood, though scattered across the Colony. Frederick became a tailor; Benjamin a boot maker; Thomas an apprentice. Frederick remarried in 1833 and went on to have a second family in both New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.

Judith's story is one of the most vivid examples of the hardships faced by convict mothers: transportation, Factory confinement, family separation, inter-colonial movement, and an early death far from home.

References:
PFFF Data Base - 111 Project
Convict Record for Judith Myers and Frederick Myers - online.

A-ROVING THROUGH TROVE - RETROSPECTIVES OF THE PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY

Jane Clain

A combination of the French word *Trouver* (to find or discover) with the English idea of a *treasure trove* led to the name ***Trove*** for our wonderful digital archive platform. And that is precisely what happens each time you search on Trove - you discover treasure. Frequently it happens; a subject line caught by search words chosen for a research topic will catch your eye. Instantly you are whisked away from the task at hand.

However, being sidetracked is not always in vain. Little interesting gems are found. In this way I found the newspaper articles I reference below which provide retrospectives of the Parramatta Female Factory after it was closed and through to the 1950's. Many of these articles were nationally syndicated or appeared as part of a series of articles. You are free to accept a challenge to find other similar articles, or to work out how many times each article was reprinted. Let's see what we can uncover collectively.

The content of some of these articles I suggest provides real understanding as to why the recognition and proper place of the Parramatta Female Factory in our national narrative has been buried or inaccurately portrayed. Many of the articles ridicule and scorn the women. There are a few articles that touch on the role of the Female Factory or which discuss the 1827 Riot. However, historical accuracy or scholarship is not evident. No wonder previous generations were anxious to *forget*.

One article that stands out as somewhat *bucking the trend* in tone is by Herald journalist Nigel Palethorpe. The title at first glance is not encouraging: *Convict Belle Started a Brawl*. The article contains inaccuracies. However, when discussing the 1827 Riot, Nigel Palethorpe writes: *The Factory militants answered by staging a stay-out strike….*He opines at the end: *But most of the community and no doubt Ann Rumsby* among them, must have been delighted to see what a womanly sample of direct action could do*.

As we approach the 199th anniversary of the 1827 Riot, we thank Mr. Palethorpe. I have done some research and Nigel Bruce Palethorpe was a journalist for the Sydney Morning Herald and a wartime correspondent. He has some historical leanings as he wrote the official history of the 1939-1940 NZ Centennial Exhibition.

The Articles of Interest you may wish to read are (I have chosen a baker's dozen):

1. **AUSTRALIAN DISCOVERY AND COLONIZATION. CHAPTER XV.** | The Convict System. Assignments - benefits and defects-its general results and characteristics. Article - Empire (Sydney, NSW: 1850 - 1875) Friday 9 February 1866 p2.
2. **CHAPTER XII.—THE FEMALE CONVICTS**. Article - Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal (NSW: 1851 - 1904) Saturday 2 March 1889, p4.
3. **PARRAMATTA — Past and Present. PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES BY ROAD AND RIVER.** Article Illustrated - Illustrated Sydney News (NSW: 1881 - 1894) Thursday 3 October 1889, p18.
4. **THE GOOD OLD DAYS OLD-TIME PARRAMATTA -THE CONVICTS** the Coronation- Illuminations-Bushrangers- Bluecap-Honour Amongst Thieves. An Interesting Interview.
Article - The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950) Saturday 17 December 1904 p12.
5. **The Old Convict Days in Australia. Part 2. Fifty Years Under the Lash**, (All Rights Reserved.) **CHAPTER II. THE FEMALE CONVICTS (**Continued).
Article - Daily Mercury (Mackay, Qld: 1906 - 1954) Wednesday 2 May 1906 - p4.

*Ann Rumsey arrived per *Mary Ann* 1822 and caused quite a stir in the Colony. Ed.

CHAPTER II THE FEMALE CONVICTS - was also published in NSW.
Article - Windsor and Richmond Gazette (NSW: 1888 - 1965) Saturday 28 July 1906 p14.
6. **"THE FEMALE FACTORY" Notorious in Early Days.** Article - The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950) Thursday 26 October 1933 p4.
7. **TERRORS OF THE FACTORY How Female Convicts Worked MARSDEN'S SUCCESSFUL APPEAL**
Article Illustrated - The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950) Wednesday 26 October 1938 p5.
8. **THOSE WERE THE DAYS; Convict belle started a legal brawl;**
Article Illustrated - The Sun (Sydney, NSW: 1910 -1954) Sunday 29 February 1948 by N. Palethorpe.
9. **OLD AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S PRISON WAS A CURIOUS MARRIAGE BUREAU. The Story of The Female Factory**
Article Illustrated - Daily Mirror (Sydney, NSW:1941-1955) Wednesday 12 October 1949 p17.
10. **PARRAMATTA'S 150 YEARS OF WOOL MANUFACTURE;** Early settlers recognised the value of Australian wool to make our own cloth.
THE WORLD'S NEWS (Sydney, NSW: 1900 -1955 Saturday 10 October 1953 p22, Article Illustrated.
11. **Our Strange Past, LADIES IN REVOLT** Article Illustrated - The Newcastle Sun (NSW:1918-1954) Monday 15 March 1954 p12.
12. **IF THEY MARRIED THEY WERE FREED** Factory for brides blotted our early days; Female convicts were lined up for selection by officers, NCOs, and men (in that order).
Article Illustrated - News (Adelaide, SA: 1923-1954) Saturday 5 June 1954 p8.
13. **COMEDY OF TERRORS** Smith's Weekly, (Sydney, NSW: 1919-1950) Saturday 28th December 1940 p10.


Comedy of Terrors
Parramatta At Mercy Of Two Hundred Wild Women

As I reflect on these articles, and their lack of historiography, three main thoughts arise:
1. That in the writing of history we need to be conscious of Method and Evidence. We must be guided by primary source verification as paramount. The consideration of secondary material is just that - secondary. And we must apply principles of critical source evaluation. Yes, there is narrative storytelling, but history is no longer about listing dates and events. We need to evaluate and provide an interpretation based on the evidence.

2. The fabulous role that the Friends have played in Factory women's research since the early 2000s and continues to play through the Research Centre at the Parramatta Female Factory.

3. That we must continue to fight and advocate for our Female Factory women so often maligned in past commentary. They were not failures, just failed by the society in their time. Isn't it time for us to call for an apology from the British Government to recognise the many wrongs and injustices of the Transportation System, of which one part was the widespread and state sponsored abuse (physical, sexual and psychological) and mistreatment of convict women? We will of course need to be prepared for the argument that we are not objective, and are judging past actions based on modern moral standards. But as the evidence unfolds I think a different story is emerging and we will be able to hold the past to account as in the case of Slavery.


OLD AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S PRISON WAS A CURIOUS MARRIAGE BUREAU
The Story of The Female Factory


THE FEMALE FACTORY AT PARRAMATTA.

THE PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY -
MUSEUMS HISTORY NSW (MHNSW) PARRAMATTA OPEN - Saturday 29th August












Parramatta Open was a truly special event with the opening of at least 16 of the Parramatta heritage sites as well as some more contemporary sites, destined to be iconic in the future. Thank you to Museums History NSW for this initiative and for giving PFFF the opportunity to participate. The visitation numbers to the Factory site were phenomenal. People were hungry for information, our printer was working overtime and the Matron Gordon Tea Room ran out of scones!

Thank you to all the PFFF volunteers for all your hard work - to Eileen, Jeanette, Lorraine, Lyn, Jane, Gary, Mel, Luanne, Pip, Angie and Ronda.

Photography: Jane Clain

OUT & ABOUT -
REGENCY PROMENADE & FAIR at OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PARRAMATTA



Photography: Jane Clain

Sunday 20th September was such a glorious Spring Day this year at Old Government House for the Annual Regency Promenade & Fair.

History and historical costume buffs descended on this wonderful venue, strutting their stuff and reliving the genteel world of the Regency period (and Jane Austen). There were lively talks, parades and stalls of all kinds and, a couple of local 'convict' lasses spotted in the crowd, in their crisp pinnies and mop caps!

Wistaria Gardens, a little further into Parramatta Park was also open for its Spring Festival - there were blooms a-plenty and the wisteria was quite a sight to see.

Congratulations to the National Trust for such an enjoyable and successful day. Thank you to Kerima-Gae Topp and everyone who helped on the publicity stall for Parramatta Heritage Partners and in spreading the word about our 'heritage' sites and their events, tours and talks.

PORT MACQUARIE ANNUAL CONFERENCE - NSW & ACT ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY HISTORIES SOCIETIES

Lyn Watkins.



Each year, the NSW/ACTFHS attracts many researchers and family historians to their Annual Conference. This year, the Conference held at historic Port Macquarie and hosted by the Port Macquarie HS, met all expectations.

The Conference attracts many researchers and family historians and there is much to share and learn.

This year, highlights included being organised in the method that you save information so you can find it again and knowing where you found the information. Another was thinking about our history in 100 years' time - where will all our digital files be then? Maybe we should still print documents and save photos taken of special moments so people will be able to understand the way we live now. All talks were very informative.

The Conference, held over three days, offers fellow family historians all-important networking, catching up with old friends, sharing new ideas and approaches to research as well as discovering new connections.

Postscript:

Thanks to Lorraine, Kevin and his wife Kathryn for making my 80th Birthday special by surprising me with a purple feather boa and Crown and a beautiful scrumptious cake at the Conference Dinner on Saturday night, for which I say, thank you very much.

Congrats Lyn! Ed.

Photograph: PFFF members, Lorraine Henshaw, Lyn Watkins, Kathryn Dodds and Kevin Dodds.

A DEDICATION: *STOLEN HEARTS - BROKEN BONDS* MEMORIAL

Jane Clain

On Sunday 20 September 2026 the *Stolen Hearts - Broken Bonds Memorial* was unveiled in the Parramatta North Precinct. It is located at the southern end of the outdoor Pavilion immediately adjacent to the oval, north of the National Listed Parramatta Female Factory & Institutions Precinct boundary. The Memorial was commissioned following the Apology of the NSW Government for Forced Adoption Practices delivered on 20 September 2012.

Angela Gibson and Jane Clain attended to represent the Parramatta Female Factory Friends.

The unveiling ceremony was extremely moving. The program included powerful addresses delivered by Robert Tickner (previously Australia's Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs), Dr. Alison Ingram, and Dr. Christine Cole, each of whom shared their personal lived experience of forced adoption practices. The NSW Government was represented by the Hon. Kate Washington MP, Minister for Families and Communities and Minister for Disability Inclusion. Donna Davis MP, the Member for Parramatta was also in attendance.

Dr. Alison Ingram and Dr. Christine Cole both spoke passionately and forcefully about the misuse of language, the harm caused by government agencies in the past and continuing, and the grief and trauma resulting from wrong policies. I believe these addresses were recorded and they are essential listening. Dr. Christine Cole paid homage to the women in the Parramatta Female Factory who were also forced to survive under government oppression and were separated from their children. We thanked her on behalf of the Parramatta Female Factory Friends for her words and recognition.

It is just a short walk to the memorial and I recommend members take the first opportunity to visit. The memorial is stunning and stands as testimony to the Museum of Conscience. It is a place to remember, to mourn and to reflect on the wrongs that were done. We cannot allow the forced adoption practices to be forgotten, just as we cannot allow the stories of the Factory women to be forgotten. Robert Tickner in his address said it was important to understand and remember the true history of this country. Hear! Hear!





Sculpture by acclaimed Australian artist Christophe Condor.
Photography: Jane Clain.

MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS 10.30AM.
BI-MONTHLY MEMBERS' MEETING 12 - 1PM FOLLOWED BY AFTERNOON TEA. GUEST SPEAKER 1:30PM.
PFFF RESEARCH CENTRE IS OPEN 10AM - 2PM EVERY FRIDAY. RESEARCH ASSISTANCE BY APPOINTMENT.
REGULAR & BESPOKE SITE TOURS - BY APPOINTMENT. CONTACT: TOUR COORDINATOR:
contact@parramattafemalefactoryfriends.com.au

2026	PFFF MEETINGS - DATES	EVENTS & ANNIVERSARIES
October	Friday 16th Committee Meeting Guest Speakers: Lyn Watkins & Kevin Dodds General Meeting RIOT DAY -199th Anniversary Event 24th Oct The Annual Thomas Keneally Lecture - Heather Garnsey OAM - *Unravelled*	Riots: 27.10.1827; 11.10.36 Saturday 31st October - Parramatta Foundation Day at Hambledon Reserve Riot: 29.11.1831 - PFFF stall.
November	Newsletter 20th Committee Meeting Workshop Fri 13th Saturday 14th - Craft Circle Catchup with Lyn Watkins.	
December	Friday 11th Committee Meeting General Meeting	*(2nd Friday) PFFF Christmas Afternoon Tea





Greater Sydney Parklands - Wistaria Gardens, Parramatta Park - 2026