

Chapter Five

The Western Road Convict Sites

The convict stockade and road party sites on the Western Road from Mt Victoria to Bathurst in the 1830s were a manifestation of the growing concern with convict security in an increasingly free, mobile and dispersed society. The colony of New South Wales had emerged from its infancy and free immigration was on the increase.

This chapter documents for the first time the Western Road convict sites as physical entities. The structures, their longevity relative to the original intent, and their varying interactive functions reflected changes in the convict system. As explained in preceding chapters, these changes derived from transportation and penal reform debates in Great Britain and the colony, but were also influenced by the complexities and conflict inherent in the road making process. The data on which the chapter is based has been sifted from numerous sources, many of which were imperfect and incomplete. Nevertheless, a general, though patchy, picture has developed. The most comprehensive view is that of No. 2 Stockade, which as the administrative centre and focal point for the period of interest, was better documented.

A process of ‘triangulation’,¹ whereby disparate evidence is assembled into a narrative of verifiable facts, was employed to piece together a sense of the scale, role and physical nature of each place. In this instance, however, to take the surveying allusion further, it has been a case of *multi-* or *quin-tabulation* since the evidence relies at times on references embedded within multiple sources. These sources could include a reference in a letter of instruction from the Surveyor General to an assistant

¹ Eleanor Conlin Casella, Ellen Cornwall and Lucy Frost, “‘your unfortunate and dutiful wife’”, *Chain letters: Narrating convict lives*, Lucy Frost and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart (eds.), Melbourne University Press, 2001, p.105.

surveyor, a place/work reference in the movement register of the assistant surveyor, the name of an overseer witness in a document emanating from the local bench of magistrates, details within evidence to the Supreme Court, and reference to an event by Thomas Cook in *The Exile's Lamentations*.²

Finally, there was the effect of the accumulation of data over time which has facilitated the careful drawing of inferences. For example, there are a few specific, albeit sporadic, references to No.10 Road Party working on the line of road on the Honeysuckle Range, to the west of the No. 2 Stockade from March 1833 until July 1835. From mid 1833 James Pumphrey was their overseer. There are no references to No.10's employment elsewhere and other gangs have the other work sites accounted for. Although they may have occasionally assisted with emergency repairs to the stockade or elsewhere along the line it has been concluded, despite a lack of consistent evidence, that the No.10 Road Party under overseer James Pumphrey (from mid 1833) was located on the Honeysuckle Range and Honeysuckle Flat for this entire period.

The physical conditions and the isolation were important factors in the road construction process. The stockades and work sites were, like the line of road itself, the stage on which the various issues of concern in this thesis, outlined in Chapter One, were experienced by all those associated with the site and often their families. The cast included prisoners sentenced to the road, ticket-of-leave overseers, assigned servants, free assistant surveyors, the military, free civil staff associated with the road works and also the office of the Superintendent of Convicts, police, representatives of the supply contractor and assorted wives and children. The relationship of the places to each other, the standards of accommodation and the type of facilities each offered are particularly relevant to the analyses offered in Chapters Seven and Eight.

² Thomas Cook, *The Exile's Lamentations*, The Library of Australian History, North Sydney, 1978.

Convict Housing - Concerns and Solutions

In 1829, Major Edmund Lockyer, the outgoing Surveyor of Roads and Bridges, suggested that:

... the Road Parties should be placed under Canvas ... by which their removal to the place where any work is carrying on could easily be effected; and the necessity of frequently Building new Huts on the present plan which occasions delay, or of travelling a long distance to their Work, would be avoided ...³

He thus voiced some of the practical concerns associated with accommodating convicts working on the roads. The experience of accommodating and controlling convicts across the 1820s and early 1830s on the Great North Road, the Western Road and the Great South Road resulted in the gradual adaptation of the slab hut. Increasingly secure complexes, that more effectively contained prisoners and provided for their welfare, were created. Despite the recommendation of tents and their endorsement by the Governor, over the next decade a series of substantial stockades in association with road party sites, consisting of unenclosed rude slab huts, were constructed along the Western Road.

Stockades grew in size and complexity as regulations for the security and health of the convicts were introduced by Governors Darling and Bourke. They were established where major works such as bridges, cuttings, walls and buttresses were required. The sites were centrally located, in terms of the anticipated work, near potable water where it was expected that gangs would be employed for a considerable period. By 1834 the word 'stockade' was used to refer to the assemblage of buildings itself rather than just the fence that enclosed them. Un-ironed road parties generally lived in un-stockaded huts at more distant sites. To curb the more rambunctious road parties and to secure smaller ironed gangs, portable

3 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., 24 Jul 1829 - 31 Dec 1829, 4/3906, p.367. R.3014.

wooden houses were investigated and a prototype commissioned in March 1833.⁴ Mitchell's experience of finding the No. 2 Stockade inconveniently constructed on the line of road was a motivating factor. With prisoners in the habit of disassembling and rearranging stockade huts to suit their own purposes, the 'boxes' as they became known, meant less work needed to be invested in ongoing maintenance. In October 1833 the notorious No.9 Road Party was to be shut up in these structures in a trial to see if they were effective in containing them. By the end of 1833 the boxes had been approved by the Governor.⁵

Each box could accommodate from 18 to 24 convicts. They were usually 14 feet long and varied in width from 7½ feet to 10 feet. Gang members slept on the floor and on two shelves with each having about a 17 inch width of space to himself.⁶ Boxes for the accommodation of an ironed gang were placed at Bowen's Hollow in 1835 and Hassan's Walls in 1835.⁷ By 1838 wheels had been added and they were considered to be indispensable, whereas previously when enclosed in stockades they had been fixed for months or even years.⁸ There is no mention, however, of boxes being moved in an itinerant fashion even though they may have been designed with that intent. The Western Road references imply semi-permanent camps rather than a nomadic convict workforce inching snail-like along the route to Bathurst. **[Figure 5.1]**

The following discussion firstly examines the stockades in order of their establishment. It explains the physical organisation and infrastructure that underpinned work on the road and the penal experience there. The more ephemeral

4 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., 16 Feb - 31 Jul 1833, 4/3914, p.161. R.3017.
5 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 21 Feb 1835 - 31 Dec 1835, 4/5401, pp. 85; 451-453. R.2840; Col. Sec., Papers Regarding Bathurst and Southern Roads, 1827-1849, SZ 854, pp.110-112. COD 207; Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., 16 Feb - 31 Jul 1833, 4/3914, p.266. R.3017; Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., 1 Aug 1833 - 11 Apr 1834, 4/3915, pp.138-139. R.3017.

6 James Semple Kerr, *Out Of Sight, Out Of Mind*, S. H. Ervin Gallery in assoc. With The Australian Bicentennial Authority, 1988, p.29; See also Kerrs discussion in *Design For Convicts*, Library of Australian History in assoc. with The National Trust of Australia (NSW) and Australian Society for Historical Archaeology, Sydney, 1984, pp.62-64.

7 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 21 Feb 1835 - 31 Dec 1835, 4/5401, pp. 85; 451-453. R.2840.

8 PRO: George Gipps to Lord Glenelg, 14 July 1838, T 1/4347.

road party sites are subsequently detailed. Although less well documented, they too were a crucial element, serving both road making goals and penal policy. They provided the flexibility to adapt to sudden changes in priority and allowed greater freedom and less scrutiny for better behaved convicts.

No.1 Stockade, Mt Victoria⁹

When Mitchell decided on Mt Victoria for the new descent from the mountains, a site for barracks to accommodate iron gangs was selected at the base. Ironed prisoners were transferred there from Mt York in June 1830.¹⁰ Later that year, Governor Darling issued instructions that iron gangs at Lower Portland Head on the Great North Road were to be accommodated in huts arranged in a square with a single entrance. The sides exposed to the wind were to be screened or fenced. This form was adopted at Mt Victoria. A fire was to be maintained in the centre of the square and a lamp similar to a Sydney street lamp was to be burnt at each corner.¹¹

When, in early March 1831, the numbers of ironed men increased to around 200, huts were constructed for a military guard following a tightening of regulations, after an epidemic of escapes from the gangs on the Great North Road. In May, however, the Mt Victoria stockade square had expanded to the extent that its size was considered a security risk. On advice from the Major of Brigade, the Governor ordered that the number of huts be reduced to accommodate only 200 men, the maximum (inaccurately as it eventuated) envisaged for the facility. The physical area was to be correspondingly diminished. Nevertheless, the overall facility continued to grow incrementally with a commissary and commissariat residence ordered in November 1831. Despite almost constant work, the commissariat was still under construction in February 1832 and there were complaints about the poor condition of

9 See also Ollie Leckbandt, *Convict Stockades from Mount Walker to Mount Victoria*, Ollie Leckbandt, Lithgow, 1999, pp.81-114 for an account of the relics found at this site and for Leckbandt's interpretation of the area.

10 Mitchell to Alexander Macleay, 23 June 1830, *HRA*, Series I, Vol. XVI, Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, Sydney, 1923, pp.135-137; 146; Mitchell to Sir George Murray, 28 March 1831, *Ibid.*, p.132.

11 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., 20 May 1830 - 7 Oct 1830, 4/3908, pp.477-481. R.3015.

the officers' quarters and huts. The assistant surveyor was ordered to rectify the situation. A new guard house was constructed in April 1832.¹² It is difficult to say whether the continual repair of buildings was necessary because of poor workmanship, sabotage by the prisoners or ordinary wear and tear, or some combination of the above, but it was a perennial issue. Facilities construction was the responsibility of the assistant surveyor and was undertaken by the road gangs, inevitably drawing out the road construction process.

In June 1832 the commanding military officer at Mt Victoria complained that the prisoners' camp was constructed on a slope that enabled them to climb onto the roof, drop down outside the square and escape. Palisading, similar to that recently constructed for the new stockade at Cox's River, was called for.¹³ Approval came through in the following month. Contrary to the original estimate of only six weeks work being necessary there, the focus of road works remained at Mt Victoria and construction of the fence ensued. Of the 730 men working on the Western Road in mid 1832, there were 343 in irons and 35 un-ironed men under five overseers at Mt Victoria. These included between 120 and 140 men transferred from Wiseman's Ferry, originally destined for Cox's River. The facility, which was intended to accommodate 200, was crowded, with frequently more than twice that number and ad hoc adaptations were made as necessary. The Mt Victoria Stockade was 150 feet square with accommodation for ironed gangs on 2¼ sides in some 330 feet of hut space. The remainder was occupied by overseers, stores, cook and tool houses and smith and carpentry shops.¹⁴

Near the stockaded prisoners' area were soldiers' barracks, constables' huts and a cottage for the officers. On the opposite side of a swamp that took up much of the

12 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Copies of Letters to Surveyor of Roads and Bridges, 3 Jan 1831 - 31 Mar, 1832, 4/3935, pp. 9; 40; 80; 203; 241. R.3002; Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562 pp.1; 112. R.3080.

13 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Lambie, 1829 - 1836, 2/1548, p.32. R.3072.

14 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, pp.118; 152-154; 158; 214-216. R. 3080; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Jun 1831- 17 Nov 1832, 4/5398, pp.318; 407. R.2839.

valley floor there were a log store house and a neat thatched cottage, the residence of the commissariat officer. The commissariat area was accessed by a bridge constructed by the military.¹⁵ [Figure 5.2]

The swamp, as described by Govett, was destitute of timber, and a beautiful green in colour. But in the dry season with water draining into the swamp, wells had to be dug to guarantee an adequate supply of drinking water. At the top of the mountain, where the new line branched from the old, a bridle path descended into the valley.

Travellers admired the romantic beauties of the descent:

Its narrow windings and grotesque passages, sometimes overhung by huge masses of rock, and again overshadowed by luxuriant shrubs, the water in places tricking down from the sides of a rocky indentation forming a small pool at the base, icy cold, tend at any rate to remove the tediousness of the way.¹⁶

In November 1832 the ironed gangs were moved to No. 2 Stockade. The Mt Victoria Stockade was partially demolished and materials removed to undertake repairs at Cox's River. A few huts remained in which No.9 Road Party was accommodated. The facility was left as a shell composed of the roofless military barracks, the square and possibly the commissariat. With additional work on the pass anticipated, in May 1833, it was decided that the military buildings at Mt Victoria should be repaired for occupation by an escort party. The stockade was to be left to be repaired as and when required and the commissariat house and other 'excellent' buildings were to be maintained. However, in September another catastrophe hit the stockade when the huts occupied by No.9 Road Party were accidentally burnt down.¹⁷ These were

15 William Romaine Govett, 'Mount Victoria, with an Account of the Stockades and Iron Gangs' in *Sketches of New South Wales*, Melbourne, Gaston Renard, 1977, p.47.

16 Govett, *op. cit.*, p.48.

17 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 2 Jan 1830 - 25 July 1831, 2/1561.2, pp.214-216. R.3080; Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., 16 Feb - 31 Jul 1833, 4/3914, p.382. R.3017; Surv. Gen., Register of Letters Received from Roads Branch, 1833-1836, 1846-1850, 2/1417. R.2804; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Feb 1836 - 20 Dec 1836, 4/5402, pp.39-40. R.2840; ML SLNSW: Deputy Surveyor General Perry to Governor Bourke, 10 May 1833 in Bourke Family Papers, CY 2798.

rebuilt to accommodate the gangs and road parties that were regularly, but intermittently, stationed there until late 1838. Depot huts were added in April 1835. In January 1836 the Governor requested that the old buildings at Mt Victoria be repaired to be temporarily occupied by a magistrate to be appointed to the Vale of Clwydd. Public buildings, including the Court House, were erected at the River Lett (Hartley).¹⁸

No. 2 Stockade Cox's River

In terms of size, complexity and administrative importance, the No. 2 Stockade site is representative of the pinnacle of all sites concerned with the secondary punishment of convicts outside the penal settlements in New South Wales. With many auxiliary buildings, it was a focus of activity for over six years of occupation by convicts, the military and their families, surveyors and other officials. For at least another two years it retained a lesser role, with the hospital and commissariat facilities continuing to serve the network. Thus, in total, the stockade functioned longer than many other such sites, as by their nature they were largely ephemeral. It became the administrative and judicial centre for other Western Road work sites from Mt Victoria to Bathurst. Four iron gangs and occasionally unironed road and bridge parties were accommodated there. Estimates of the numbers housed, including military and civilian functionaries, vary between 500 and 800, with another 200 to 300 at associated sites administered from the facility.

Located about 12 miles westward from Mt Victoria, the No. 2 Stockade Cox's River was described by Surveyor Govett as:

... situated on a long narrow tongue of land, immediately under the above named mountain [Mount Walker], around which, in a sharp angle, flowed a never failing rivulet, one of the tributaries of the Cox's River. The width of the ridge on which the Stockade was built

18 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Letters Received, Roads in the Colony, 1828-1856, 4/7168; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Feb 1836 - 20 Dec 1836, 4/5402, pp.39-40. R.2840; Courts of Petty Sessions, Vale of Clwydd Bench Books, 16 Feb 1836- 2 June 1839, 4/5673, p.1. R.669.

could not much exceed a hundred yards ... High, steep forest ridges, stony, and but thinly clad with verdure, encircled the spot, and frowned like the gigantic walls of a prison all around.¹⁹

Confusion can arise over the words used to describe the various components of the No. 2 Stockade Cox's River site. Historically, the whole complex has been referred to as the 'Stockade', though in fact the only stockaded (fenced) areas were those occupied by the convict huts, situated on the tip of the eastern peninsula area, marked 'Military/Stockade Area' on the site plan and the convict hospital building also located in that vicinity. **[Figures 5.3 and 5.4]** This area also contained the military barracks, officers quarters and associated support buildings immediately to the east of the stockade. Eventually, the commissariat stores complex of buildings developed on the opposite, western, side of the river. This contained the main storehouses and associated accommodation. The area is indicated on the site plan as the 'Commissariat Area'. Adjacent to the commissariat area on the western peninsula was an area granted to Commandant George Deedes in 1834, where he built a house which was used subsequently by successive commanding officers. This is the area referred to on the site plan as the 'Deedes Grant Area'. **[Figure 5.5]**

Construction of the Stockade

Work began on the construction of the No. 2 Stockade Cox's River in early 1832 under the direction of Assistant Surveyor Lambie. It was completed later that year by Assistant Surveyor Nicholson. The layout was generally based on directions issued by Governor Darling in 1830 and a plan prepared by Assistant Surveyor Nicholson in August 1832, suggesting work was initiated without a specific plan in place. The system was in a state of flux and almost continuous adaptation to demands for security and convict welfare issues. From Perry's sketch, drawn a few months later, it is evident that no single, specific plan was ever fully implemented. **[Figure 5.4 and 5.5]**

19 William Romaine Govett, *op. cit.*, p.48.

In March 1832, notice was received that 120 ironed prisoners were to be escorted from Wiseman's, where they were no longer required on the Great North Road, to the Cox's River crossing on the new Bathurst Road. They were expected to arrive in late May. The 60 strong No. 20 Road Party under overseer William Bell began preparatory work for a stockade to accommodate them. During April, nine huts, two cook houses and two blacksmiths' shops were built using slabs and bark sheets provided by No.44 Road Party stationed at Honeysuckle Range. Altogether, almost 100 men were engaged in the undertaking.²⁰

As seen in Chapter Four, the official reports of work on the road or associated with it are characterised by a gross underestimation of work required, and completion of the No. 2 Stockade is a typical example. The work was not completed by the end of May and, despite an assurance it would be ready by 25 June, it was not. The stockade was finally fit to be occupied by iron gangs in late November. But road work continued at Mt Victoria for several more years. It took a lot longer to achieve 'perfection' than was ever anticipated.²¹

In looking for reasons for the long delays, it is difficult to go past the pressures derived from the penal reform debates in the United Kingdom as reflected in inter- and intra- departmental politics of colonial New South Wales discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Add to this the exigencies of a coerced workforce reluctantly labouring under a colonial sentence and there is a recipe for a very tedious complex process. The reasons for the continual underestimation of works by persons who ought to have known better included the politics of the situation on the ground, occasional unreasoned optimism and poor planning, inadequate tools and equipment, and at other times the elements and plain bad luck.

20 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., 13 Mar 1832 - 7 Sept 1832, 4/3912, pp.33-34. R.3016; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Jun 1831- 17 Nov 1832 , 4/5398, p. 318. R.2839; Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Lambie, 1829 - 1836,2/1548, pp.23, 29.R. 3072.
21 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, pp.152-154. R. 3080.

According to Nicholson's plan, by August 1832 the military and officers' quarters had been established and a 12 feet high stockade approximately 155 feet square had been erected.²² Some 25 feet inside the perimeter fence, housing for the ironed gangs, also in the shape of a square, with a lock up in the inner courtyard had been constructed. There was a single entrance to each square. The bark prisoners' huts were joined together except at the entrance and faced toward the centre of a square. Huts for the overseer and assistant overseers were on either side of the stockade, outside the fence. The guardhouse, a military barracks and store were also outside the fence immediately opposite the stockade entrance. **(Figure 5.5)** The officers' quarters were some distance from these buildings, on a hill overlooking the facilities. The plan indicates that a hospital, 30 feet by 15 feet with a stockade around it, a store and quarters for the commissariat officer and kitchens were still to be built.²³

Even when first due to be occupied, the structure did not survive an inspection by Governor Bourke unscathed. On his tour, undertaken on the opening of Victoria Pass, he described the stockade as being '... in an incomplete and wretched state'.²⁴ Shortly after the Governor's visit, there was a flurry of activity as Nicholson attempted to address the Governor's numerous complaints.

Surveyor Romaine Govett, who visited the stockade on a number of occasions, described it as similar to that at Mt Victoria. The square was divided by rail-fencing into several compartments for the different companies of prisoners, which facilitated prisoner classification, and on which they hung their washing. On the outside, about four yards back and surrounding the huts, there was a fence of split logs with two great gates at the entrance. Outside, facing the gate on either side, were two rows of soldiers' barracks constructed with bark and split timber, with mud chimneys; some were internally plastered and white-washed. At the head of the barracks were the

22 Govett, *op. cit.*, p.48 described the fence as 14 to 15 feet high, Nicholson's figure is likely to be more accurate as Govett was writing several years later as a visitor to the site.

23 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Sketch Books, Vol.2, Fol.17, X752.

24 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to the Surveyor General, 7 Jun 1831- 17 Nov 1832 , 4/5398, p.327. R. 2839.

officers' quarters, 'forming a kind of parallelogram with the stockade'. The quarters consisted of a shingle cottage with two tolerably-sized rooms, back kitchens and a verandah in front. On one side was a hospital and storehouse and tents for the commissary, on the other side there were a cooking shed, a butchery and bakery and huts for their personnel and for the overseers and constables. Although temporary, to Govett they presented as a small town and usually contained some 700-800 inhabitants.²⁵

Court records indicate that the inhabitants ranged over the area with a considerable degree of freedom. There was more housing than is indicated by Govett, Perry or Nicholson as there were military families and civilian staff living there with attendant domestic arrangements. Children, chickens, house cows, and vegetable and flower gardens were all part of the scene.²⁶

Deputy Surveyor General Perry's 1833 sketch [Figure 5.8 and 5.9] clarifies Govett's description. It indicates that the second military barracks building was constructed at the eastern end of the first barrack building rather than opposite as originally planned. The superintendent of iron gangs' hut and store were outside the stockade, opposite the main entrance. The sergeant major's quarters were parallel to the eastern barracks. The lock up was not inside the stockade as indicated in Nicholson's plan, but was located in a central position between the houses of the superintendent, the sergeant major and the barracks.²⁷ The painting, *Fort on the Cox's River near Bathurst, NSW c.1832-1833*, also confirms this general layout. [Figure 5.10]

The painting depicts a square subdivided by rail fencing into four areas, as described by Govett, with a triangle in the south west ward and poles with lanterns located near

25 Govett, *op cit.*, p.48.

26 SRNSW: Clerk of the Peace, Quarter Sessions, Depositions and Other Papers, CGS 845, Bathurst, 4/8371, pp.21-33. R.2395.

27 ML SLNSW: Bourke Family Papers, CY 2798.

each corner. This square was where prisoners were mustered and their irons checked prior to marching out to work through the gates, and it was here that Overseer John Hamilton was attacked as he identified men who had been refusing to work.²⁸ The slab-walled skillion-roofed huts for the convicts are in a continuous range with the windows and doors facing into the courtyard formed within the square. The painting closely conforms to the description provided by Govett, Nicholson and Perry. Perry's plan, discovered since the excavation, enables the verification of the tentative identification of the relic sites excavated in 1995 and 1996 and of the buildings depicted in the painting. The arrangements, particularly the use of the double squares, were intended to maximize security, with the additional compartmentalisation designed to facilitate classification of prisoners. In 1995 and 1996 the author and Dr. Michael Pearson conducted an historical and archaeological investigation of the No. 2 Stockade site at Cox's River prior to its further inundation following the augmentation of Lyell Dam.²⁹ Dr. Pearson correlated the structures shown in *Fort on the Cox's River near Bathurst, NSW* and Nicholson's plan with surface and excavated features remaining at the site. [Figures 5.7, 5.10 and 5.11]

The military huts, located to the east of the stockade, correlate with site A11, the barracks building shown in the Nicholson plan as completed in 1832. Site A12 is possibly the site of the assistant overseers' huts as indicated by Nicholson. Site A5 was part of the second barrack building. Sites A7 and A9 can be confirmed as the Officers' Quarters. Structures I and K as indicated in Nicholson's Plan were not built where stipulated. Site A6 is part of the Sergeant Major's accommodation indicated in Perry's plan. Site A10 is part of the new hospital constructed by Perry in 1833. Site A2 is either the cook house rebuilt by Perry or the accommodation of the superintendent of iron gangs and store. This was found to have a comparatively small hearth and chimney base, with a flagged area in front of the hearth and a clay floor

28 SRNSW: Courts of Petty Sessions; CGS 2772, Bathurst, Bench Books, 28 Dec 1832 - 19 Mar 1833, 2/8324, pp.38-40; 97-100. R. 663.

29 Sue Rosen and Dr Michael Pearson, 'The No. 2 Stockade Cox's River- Its Life and Times: An Historical and Archaeological Investigation', Pacific Power, 1997.

constructed on a substantial rubble filled building platform. A retaining wall supported a large platform abutting and extending north from the building. [Figure 5.4 and 5.7]

In the general vicinity of the upper Area A, a range of fine earthenware tableware pieces and a large number of clay tobacco pipe pieces were recorded. Local fossickers, who have named the ridge as it rises from the river 'Officers' Hill', have found military buttons, musket balls, coins and eating utensils there,³⁰ which provides further corroboration for the above interpretation.

Occupation

On 17 November 1832, Nicholson supervised the move of the ironed gangs from Mt Victoria to the new stockade. A temporary hospital had been established and over the rest of the month gangs moved stores and tools. It was hoped that by keeping the men in irons together at the new stockade there would be the advantage of needing only one military facility and one blacksmiths' workshop.³¹

The ironed gangs from Mt Victoria were now in more spacious accommodation with approximately 400 feet of hut room which rarely accommodated more than 360 men. At Mt Victoria there had been only 330 feet with frequently more than 400 men.³² Nevertheless, on arrival the ironed gangs rioted and did so much damage that Nicholson ordered anything that could be salvaged from Mt Victoria Stockade to be removed to undertake repairs at Cox's River. The Bridge Party and Nos.10 and 11 Road Parties were engaged in this work for some months, hampered by convicts

30 Olaf Leckbandt and Lester Batchelder. See Ollie Leckbandt, *The Mount Walker Stockade, Cox's River*, Ollie Leckbandt, Lithgow, 1998 for an account of the relics found at this site and for Leckbandt's interpretation of the area based on his finds.

31 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, pp.118; 152-154. R. 3080.

32 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, p.42. R. 3080.

dismantling work as quickly as it was done, removing the roofing bark to make private spaces and inevitably leaving some men in the cold.³³

In March 1833, in replying to concerns about the level of scrofula³⁴ and rheumatism at the stockade, Nicholson responded that the situation had arisen because the neglect of the late superintendent of iron gangs had caused so much ‘insubordination and discontent’ among the men, they had destroyed the work almost as fast as it was completed. The new appointment to the position had seen the situation improve and repairs by the Bridge Party and No.11 Road Party were ‘rapidly progressing’, but were retarded by the difficulty of obtaining bark locally.³⁵

Continued problems with disease amongst the convicts prompted the Governor, in May 1833, to order Deputy Surveyor General Perry personally to inspect Cox’s River Stockade. Perry found the hospital, which was only some seven months old, in such a poor state of repair that he decided to build a new one. At the time there were 40 patients, many of whom were outside because of insufficient accommodation. He immediately put up more ‘guard beds’ in ‘the miserable hovel’ and began work on a more capacious site for a building that could accommodate about 5% from the ironed gangs and also casualties from road parties extending 30 miles each side of the stockade. The building, site A10 referred to above, was 36 feet by 18 feet and 14 feet at the pitch of the roof. It was constructed of slabs with a stone chimney on a platform foundation of stone and earth. The windows were set high in the gables, some 8½ feet above the floor, allowing a good light and air flow. He also constructed the cook house and undertook other general work to improve the facilities.³⁶

[Figures 5.8, 4.6 and 4.7]

33 SRNSW: Surv. Gen, Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, p.219. R. 3080; Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 2 Jan 1830 - 25 July 1831, 2/1561.2, pp.214-216. R.3080.

34 According to *The Macquarie Dictionary* scrofula is a tubercular complaint characterised by swelling and degeneration of the lymphatic glands, especially of the neck and by inflammation of the joints.

35 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, p.221. R. 3080.

36 ML SLNSW: Bourke Family Papers, CY 2798.

The stockade guard beds were a particular concern and figured prominently in the correspondence. They were again an issue in July 1833 when the Principal Superintendent of Convicts reported on the Stockade and ironed gangs at Cox's River and '... pointed out the present imperfect state of the Guard beds and the roofs of the Huts ...' He advised that the frames of the guard beds were to be made of strong posts and loosely covered with flooring boards cut to six feet lengths, which could be removed for cleaning.³⁷ The Surveyor General responded to this instruction by informing the Colonial Secretary that difficulties arose because the men, who were under the charge of the superintendent of convicts while in the stockade, used the loose boards from the guard beds to make 'private berths' and they used the bark from the roof also for this purpose. The roof had been repeatedly replaced, but because the men had not been prevented from rearranging the facilities some men were left to sleep exposed on the ground.³⁸ Unless there was to be closer supervision of the prisoners at night, maintaining the stockade to the specifications required was nigh impossible. As was pointed out in Chapter Three, conflict between the departments responsible for the convicts and the road works plagued the effective administration of both areas of their governance. Thomas Cook, a convict who recorded his experiences there, also refers to the practice of using bark to make a private sleeping 'berth'. From Cook's account it appears to be an illusory attempt by individuals to gain mental and physical space and an aid to the pursuit of private relationships between the men. Cook also refers to large draught inducing gaps between slabs, a result of using green timber in construction.³⁹

In July 1833 a building for the accommodation of the Commissariat Clerk was under construction and an additional room was added for the accommodation of an assistant surgeon. The room was finally ready for occupation in early September.⁴⁰

37 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., 16 Feb - 31 Jul 1833, 4/3914, pp.484-485. R.3017.

38 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 20 Nov 1832 - 23 Nov 1833, 4/5399, p.273. R.2839.

39 Cook, *op. cit.* p.21.

40 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to the Col. Sec., 20 Nov 1832 - 23 Nov 1833, 4/5399, pp.263; 326-327. R.2839.

The excavations in 1995 revealed three buildings with chimneys (C2, C3 and C40) suggestive of either residential or office use on the western side of the Cox in the commissariat area. **[Figure 5.4]** Site C2 was the site of a building measuring 7 metres by 3.5 metres, with stone chimneys at each end, having timber end and side walls supported on a timber plate let into the ground. The floor was made up of clay, with fragments of brick tamped into it, paved with flat slate stones in front of each fireplace. The two fire places suggest that the building was divided into at least two rooms by an internal wall. A small stone room was built onto the western side of the northern chimney, accessed by a door opening to the north. Building C5, with stone foundations, a level floor and no chimney, is likely to have been a store. There is no mention in the official correspondence of any detail concerning the smiths' establishment or the Commissariat area, but a Department of Land and Water Conservation portion plan indicates an area on a peninsula of land opposite the stockade site as a Commissariat and outlines five buildings there. **[Figure 5.5]**

Surveyor Nicholson's management of the facility continued to be under attack. In June 1834 he tersely responded to criticism from Governor Bourke, that the No. 2 Stockade reflected 'no credit' on him, by stating that the original layout of the buildings and their construction were largely the responsibility of his predecessors in the position. More recent work had been instigated by the Surveyor General and on the hospital, by Deputy Surveyor General Perry.⁴¹ The state of the palings of the stockade, the condition of the commissariat store at Cox's River and the guard beds at Mt Victoria were matters that were referred to head office at this time rather than dealt with in situ, a situation which reflected the breakdown in relations between Assistant Surveyor Nicholson and the Superintendent of Convicts at the stockade.⁴² In August Nicholson reported that:

41 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, pp.414-419. R. 3080.

42 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., 12 Apr 1834 - 31 Dec 1834, 4/3916, pp.177; 206, 295. R.3018.

... I have caused a small lockup to be built sufficient for the purpose of that station, out of materials of the old store - and have given up the old lockup which is shingled and both secure and weather proof to the commissariat officer for a store; such arrangement requiring far less work than repairing and shingling the old store would have caused.⁴³

About this time, Baron Charles von Hugel observed that the site of the No. 2. Stockade '... must have originally been a charming spot, [but] is now one of the ugliest places in the world, as all the trees and shrubs have been burnt down.'⁴⁴. Von Hugel stated that:

... the stockade is situated on a small isolated hill, the last foothill of a high mountain, Mount Walker, round which Cox's River winds. Another small valley, without water, (sic) runs between high mountains on the other side of the stockade, a few hundred paces away. Here stands the house of the officer commanding the guard, which consists of a full company ... The house is a cottage built by the last Commandant, is quite prettily situated, and a big vegetable garden and a small flower garden make it attractive in this wilderness.⁴⁵

Captain George Deedes of the 17th Regiment was the commanding officer for the 12 months to June 1834. At that time he purchased a grant adjoining the Commissariat Reserve at Cox's River. Deedes, according to von Hugel, built a cottage that was later occupied by his successor as commandant, McCumming.⁴⁶ Newly married, he was accompanied by his wife. So too was the subsequent Commandant, Samuel Moore, who probably also had his children with him. This cottage was relatively removed from the Commissariat and Stockade areas so as to protect the families from the convicts and military riff raff. Such a site has recently been tentatively identified by Olaf Leckbandt, at a location that on close examination has clearly been

43 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, p.429. R.3080.

44 Baron Charles von Hugel, *New Holland Journal*, November 1833- October 1834, Dymphna Clark (trans. and ed.) Melbourne University Press at the Miegunyah Press in Assoc. With the State Library of New South Wales, 1994, p.341.

45 *ibid.*

46 Society of Australian Genealogists, File. 4/9271/4.

levelled, fits Von Hugel's description and at which artefacts suggestive of an officer's domestic arrangement have been found. The site overlooks the creek running into the Cox. It roughly corresponds to the location of a number of buildings in the portion plan referred to earlier.⁴⁷ [Figure 5.5]

Nicholson was replaced by Assistant Surveyor Dulhunty in mid 1835. By that time, prior to the transfer of gangs to Hassan's Walls there was a total of 300 prisoners plus military and civilian staff. In September 1835 James Backhouse reported that there were more than 150 prisoners employed under Captain Faunce of the 4th Regiment at No. 2 Stockade which he referred to as "The Junction Stockade".⁴⁸

Backhouse noted:

... These men are lodged in rude huts of rough timber, covered in with bark, within a stockade, near to which are the dwellings of the commanding officer & surgeon, & the barracks of the military....⁴⁹

He continued,

Near the barracks, we saluted a native Black and his wife, and they returned our tokens of notice ... We took some refreshment at a decent public-house, at Solitary Creek, and afterwards visited a small road party, on the way to an inn, at Honeysuckle Hill.⁵⁰

In a massive amount of official and unofficial documentation, Backhouse's report of 'a native Black and his wife' is one of only two references to Aboriginal people in

47 SRNSW: Clerk of the Peace, Quarter Sessions, Depositions and Other papers, CGS 845, Bathurst, 4/8371, pp.21-33. R.2395.

48 Cox's River was commonly referred to as "The Junction Stockade". Further, the route as described took Von Hugel directly passed the stockade site so it would be unusual for him not to mention it. Von Hugel's description referring to the junction of Farmer's Creek and the Cox, considered with the likely extent of the No. 2 facility, suggests that the nomenclature of "The Junction Stockade" was an appropriate, if generalized, term. Besides, Hassan's Walls Stockade was not yet operational and Bowen's Hollow Stockade had not been constructed; the No. 2 Stockade Cox's River was the only stockade in existence in the area at that time. Later evidence also confirms that "The Junction Stockade" and "No. 2 Stockade, Cox's River" were one and the same place. For example, Christopher Scally, of the 28th Regiment of Foot located at Cox's River described himself in August 1836 as being 'stockade sergeant at the Junction'. See also Figure 5.12.

49 Backhouse's Journal, Temp MSS 556. Library of the Religious Society of Friends, p.307.

50 James Backhouse, 'A Journey Across the Blue Mountains to the Wellington Valley in 1835', in *Fourteen Journeys Over The Blue Mountains*, George Mackaness (ed.), Pt. 3, 1951, p.12.

the vicinity during the Stockade's occupation. It is possible that they generally kept away.

A year later, when the iron gangs at Bowen's Hollow and Hassan's Walls were strengthened by transfers from Cox's River, only 40 men remained.⁵¹ However, the 'Return of Iron Gangs' for October 1836 indicates that, although the road there was in relatively good order, 132 men in irons were still stationed there. Other than the ironed gang at Hassan's Walls, no other ironed gangs on the Western Road are indicated. Cox's River remained the principal establishment on the road, until almost the year's end.⁵²

A sketch plan from December 1836 suggests that the stockade fence may have been dismantled with the removal of the iron gangs to Hassan's Walls and Bowen's Hollow. The area had largely been taken over by the contractor supplying provisions to the gangs [Figure 5.12].⁵³ At the beginning of 1837 most prisoners had been transferred to Hassan's Walls, Bowen's Hollow and Bathurst.⁵⁴ Some administrative and support functions were retained. The military commandant, the assistant surgeon to the regiment, and hospital staff still worked and resided there. The contractor's agent, Enderby and his family were in residence as were their assigned servants and stockmen associated with the supply operation until at least November of that year.⁵⁵ No specific documentation signalling the official closure of the facility has been located.

51 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Feb 1836 - 20 Dec 1836, 4/5402, p.367. R.2840.

52 SRNSW: Supreme Court, Letters, Petitions and Returns Received by Mr Justice Burton, 1834 -1843, Return of Ironed Gangs, 5/4765.

53 SRNSW: Supreme Court, Criminal Jurisdiction, Clerk of the Peace, Papers and Depositions, 1824 - 1946, CGS 880, 9/6311, No.71.

54 SRNSW: Col. Engineer, Copies of Letters Sent, Jan 1837-Nov 1842, 4/457, p.81.

55 SRNSW: Supreme Court, Criminal Jurisdiction, Clerk of the Peace, Papers and Depositions, 1824 - 1946, CGS 880, 9/6316, No.76; No. 26; Courts of Petty Sessions, Vale of Clwydd Bench Books, 16 Feb 1836 - 2 June 1839, 4/5673, pp. 143, 192, 251-252; 255-258. R.669; Courts of Petty Sessions, Bathurst Bench Books 1825-1936, CGS 2772, 2/8325, p.152. R. 1259.

Four years later, in September 1839, recent immigrant and writer, Louisa Anne Meredith described a stockade in ruins:

The next point of our route having any claim to the picturesque was the rocky ravine at Cox's River; the sight of clear running water is always pleasant, but nowhere more delightful than in so dry and thirsty a clime as this. The ruins of numerous huts, formerly occupied by a convict-gang at this spot, gave it rather a desolate look, but the clear little brook (for such in England would we call this river) gurgling merrily over its pebbly bed, had a sweet music in its voice that made me forget all disagreeables. We tasted, and then crossed it, and immediately began the steep ascent of Mount Lambey, which rises abruptly from the river's bank.⁵⁶

No.3 Stockade Hassan's Walls⁵⁷

The first reference to convicts located at Hassan's Walls was in the period from March to June 1832, when a bridge party was reported as working on the road there. They were accommodated in huts that had been erected on a damp piece of ground, near a creek a quarter of a mile from the new line.⁵⁸ These were loosely arranged slab and bark huts that were typically unfenced.⁵⁹ From October 1833 until at least September 1834 No.11 Road Party, under overseers George Morley and James Dew, worked on the road under the walls.⁶⁰ Little is known of the use of the site but its status from an unsecured site to a secure stockaded site, in theory at least, changed in mid 1834 when a stockade superintendent was appointed. Unfortunately, the

56 Louisa Anne Meredith, 'A Lady's Journey to Bathurst in 1839' George Mackaness, *Fourteen Journeys over the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, 1813-1841*, Horwitz-Grahame, Sydney, 1965, p.251.

57 See also Ollie Leckbandt, *Convict Stockades from Mount Walker to Mount Victoria*, pp.41-69 for an account of the relics found at this site and for Leckbandt's interpretation of the area based on his finds.

58 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 21 Feb 1835 - 31 Dec 1835, 4/5401, pp. 69-72. R.2840.

59 SRNSW: Surv. Gen, Copies of Letters Sent to Surveyors, 2 Jul 1832 - 27 Sep 1834, 4/5424, p.193. R.2826; Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, pp. 42, 86, 112, 132. R.3080

60 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, p.330. R.3080

appointee, William Smith, died in August 1834.⁶¹ It was about that time that Mitchell suggested that a detached iron gang could be stationed at Hassan's Walls and approval was received for this to go ahead as soon as the 'wooden houses' were ready. These were the caravans or boxes designed by Percy Simpson described above.⁶² [Figure 5.1]

In April 1835, there was yet another directive from Mitchell to construct a new station for the accommodation of an iron gang at Hassan's Walls, at the crossing of the new line and Major Lockyer's line just beyond the River Lett. This may imply a short move to better ground, from the former poorly situated road party site. Officers' quarters, barracks, guard room and a shed were erected shortly after and the remainder of the buildings for cooking and use of overseers were in progress. One of the boxes had been moved onto the stockade and a second one was ready, with others expected to be finished by the first week in May. Other buildings were of slab and bark as at Cox's River and Mt Victoria. By mid 1835, there was a post office and a public house in the vicinity. Despite the facility being declared ready to receive the first iron gang in June 1835, by late September the facility was described as 'falling to decay'. It was again declared ready for the reception of a gang in December 1835.⁶³

By February 1836, Hassan's Walls was certainly functioning as an iron gang stockade with a military superintendent and constable stationed there.⁶⁴ A lieutenant and a detachment of the 4th Regiment were in charge of security and occupied

61 SRNSW: Col. Sec. Letters Received from the Surv. Gen., 33/5367. Transcribed by Jean Francis and sent to author, file no. unknown.

62 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 25 Nov 1833 to 21 Feb 1835, 4/5400, pp.256-259. R.2839.

63 SRNSW: Col. Sec., Letters Received, Naval and Military, 1835, File No. 35/4094 at 4/2287.2; Clerk of the Peace, Quarter Sessions, Depositions and Other Papers, CGS 845, Bathurst, 4/8382, pp.165-202. R.2398; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 21 Feb 1835 - 31 Dec 1835, 4/5401, pp. 166; 344; 451-453. R.2840; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Feb 1836 - 20 Dec 1836, 4/5402, p.170. R.2840.

64 SRNSW: Courts of Petty Sessions, Vale of Clwydd Bench Books, 16 Feb 1836 - 2 June 1839, 4/5673, pp.4-6. R.669.

barracks there which continued to be used throughout the year.⁶⁵ In August 1836 there were reputedly 69 men in the ironed gang and it was planned to bring them up to their full complement of 80 by drawing men from Cox's River.⁶⁶ In November, the ironed gang was under assistant overseer James Greer and the 28th Regiment had relieved the 4th Regiment.⁶⁷ By May 1837, the works were under the supervision of the 80th Regiment and the ironed gang was engaged at a nearby quarry. Little else is known of the stockade as a physical structure. The last mention of the Hassan's Walls stockade uncovered in this study was in December 1839 in the accounts of the Auditor General, where it appears the stockade had been maintained until at least the end of 1839.⁶⁸ The last figures for its occupancy that have been located were: 43 men in irons and 12 servants, artificers etc out of irons in August 1838.⁶⁹ **[Figures 5.13 and 5.14]**

Bowen's Hollow Stockade and Lumber Yard⁷⁰

In May 1832 a hut and stable were to be constructed for the sub- inspector who at that time was Clement Doughty. They were to be located a small distance beyond Hassan's Walls and two miles beyond the River Lett. Bowen's Hollow was selected for the site. The house over-looked the stockade and lumber yard which were established some years later. The construction of a bridge commenced in October 1832 continued until at least January 1833. The Bridge Party was accommodated in huts probably on the flat near the creek at the bottom of the hollow around which the stockade was formed. After completion of the bridge, work in this area focussed on the descent to the bridge and was undertaken by No.11 Road Party. Both the Bridge

65 SRNSW: Clerk of the Peace, Quarter Sessions, Depositions and Other Papers, CGS 845, Bathurst, 4/8382, pp.147-164. R.2398; Supreme Court, Letters, Petitions and Returns Received by Mr Justice Burton, 1834 -1843, Return of Ironed Gangs, 5/4765.

66 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Feb 1836 - 20 Dec 1836, 4/5402, pp.367. R.2840

67 SRNSW: Courts of Petty Sessions, Vale of Clwydd Bench Books, 16 Feb 1836 - 2 June 1839, 4/5673, pp.99-101. R.669.

68 PRO: T1/4347; SRNSW: Auditor General's Returns, 1839, 2/836; SRNSW; Superintendent of Convicts, Convict Indents, 1827-1828, 4/4013, p. 171. R.398.

69 SRNSW: Col. Engineer, Copies of Letters Sent, Jan 1837 - Nov 1842, 4/457, p.81.

70 See also Ollie Leckbandt, *Convict Stockades from Mount Walker to Mount Victoria*, pp.15-40 for an account of the relics found at this site and for Leckbandt's interpretation of the area based on his finds.

Party and No.11 were mostly resident in the first quarter of 1833, although they also spent a considerable amount of time assisting with the repairs to No. 2 Stockade.⁷¹

William Smith, a free immigrant and stone mason, succeeded Clement Doughty in the position of sub inspector. He later became a superintendent of Hassan's Wall's stockade but, as was noted above, he died of a heart attack in 1834. Alexander Binning was the next incumbent and his family took up residence at the turn of the 1834/35 year. The next reference to Bowen's Hollow with regard to works was Nicholson's request in December 1834 to detach 40 men from an ironed gang to work at a quarry there.⁷²

In response to the security problems and those of maintaining infrastructure, Mitchell's recommendation to use portable wooden houses to accommodate gangs at Bowen's Hollow was approved in January 1835. But it was not until the end of the year that an iron gang under military guard was established there. Aside from the boxes for sleeping, the facilities included a mess shed where the men ate, a lock up and a stockyard. It appears that there were at least two areas, 'the stockade', although it is not known if it was actually fenced, where ironed men were located, and the Lumber Yard which may have been a work area, but may also have accommodated unironed men. It had the usual complement of support staff, including a scourger. They used the nearby waterhole for bathing.⁷³

In September 1836, the iron gang at Bowen's Hollow was 15 below its full strength of 80 men so replacements were sought from Cox's River, where the road was in

71 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, pp.85; 179; 241. R.3080; Surv. Gen, Copies of Letters Sent to Surveyors, 2 Jul 1832- 27 Sep 1834, 4/5424, p.193. R.2826

72 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, pp.501; 507. R. 3080.

73 SRNSW: Register of Letters Received from Roads Branch, 1833-1836, 1846-1850, 2/1417. R.2804; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 21 Feb 1835 - 31 Dec 1835, 4/5401, pp. 451-453. R.2840; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Feb 1836 - 20 Dec 1836, 4/5402, p.66. R.2840 Courts of Petty Sessions, Vale of Clwydd Bench Books, 16 Feb 1836 - 2 June 1839, 4/5673, pp.11-29; 37-39. R.669; Supreme Court, Criminal Jurisdiction, Clerk of the Peace, Papers and Depositions, 1824 - 1836, CGS 880, T170.

fairly good order.⁷⁴ In January 1837 there were: 81 men in irons, six servants and artificers out of irons and 34 un-ironed road or bridge party men at Bowen's Hollow. It continued to be occupied across 1837 by an ironed gang. By late 1838 a road party was stationed there and it was finally broken up in 1839.⁷⁵ [Figure 5.15]

The Road Party Sites

Honeysuckle Hill/Flat

Honeysuckle Hill is today known as Mt Lambie. It is the culmination of a long gradually rising ridge as one leaves Solitary Creek (Rydal) on the old line of road heading toward Bathurst. Honeysuckle Flat, 24 miles from Bathurst, was likely to have been at any one of a number of flat areas on this ridge. It was 'encircled by precipitous Ridges, and perfectly secluded from view'. The accommodation was dilapidated and 'exposed the inmates to the inclemency of the Weather ...'.⁷⁶ The No.44 Road Party (later No.10), stationed at Honeysuckle Hill in early 1832, prepared slabs for the construction of the No. 2 Stockade. They were still employed on the Honeysuckle Range in February 1833. In mid 1835, No.10 Road party was located there when it was involved in one of the more infamous crimes - an attack on Lydia Barnes at her inn, discussed further in Chapter Eight. In November 1835 the huts on the Honeysuckle Range had been readied to receive 40 men, who were to undertake widening work and side cutting. By March 1836 huts and barracks for the 2nd class gang⁷⁷ beyond Honeysuckle Hill had been ready, but vacant, for eight months.⁷⁸ [Figure 5.16]

74 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Feb 1836 - 20 Dec 1836, 4/5402, p.367. R.2840.

75 SRNSW: Supreme Court, Letters, Petitions and Returns Received by Mr Justice Burton, 1834-1843, 5/4765; Col. Engineer, Copies of Letters Sent, Jan 1837 - Nov 1842, 4/457, pp.41; 81; Col. Sec., Copies of Letters Sent to Surv. Gen., Land Board etc., 5 April 1839 - 6 May 1840, 4/3921, p.249. R.3019.

76 Cook, *op. cit.*, p.18.

77 Intelligent and well conducted convicts according to Deputy Surveyor General Perry's classification, referred to in Chapter two.

78 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 2 Jan 1830 - 25 July 1831, 2/1561.2, p.112. R.3080; Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, p.219. R.3080; Supreme Court, Criminal Jurisdiction, Clerk of the Peace, Papers and Depositions, 1824-1836, CGS 880, T162; Supreme Court, Criminal Jurisdiction, Informations and Other Papers 1824-1947, CGS 13477, T 30, No.18; T 42, No. 20; Register of Letters Received from Roads Branch, 1833-1836, 1846-1850, 2/1417. R.2804; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 21 Feb 1835 to 31 Dec 1835, 4/5401, pp. 451-453. R.2840; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 7 Feb 1836 - 20 Dec 1836, 4/5402, pp.126-129, 170 R.2840.

Meadow Flat

Accommodation for eight soldiers at a military station was established at Meadow Flat in March 1831. It consisted of a room 18 feet by 30 feet with a fireplace and windows and was fitted up with two rows of hammock poles and pegs. Road parties were stationed there intermittently, at times for considerable periods, until at least late 1838.⁷⁹ The accommodation consisted of un-stockaded slab and bark huts.

[Figures 5.17 and 5.18]

Stoney Range/Ridge

The Stoney Range or Ridge was located about 12 miles from Bathurst.⁸⁰ Very little else is known of it except that No.45 Road Party was situated there in early 1832 and that it was also in use in April 1836.⁸¹ Many sites were re-used as works required repairing or improving. On 12 September 1835, the Quaker missionary, Backhouse recorded:

We visited a small road party between Honeysuckle Flat (the place where we lodged) & a neat small inn kept by a person named Levistone near the foot of the Stony Ridge, & another between that place & Bathurst ... held a meeting in a rude blacksmith's shop (for we were glad to be in a sheltered place, on account of the cold).⁸²

Diamond Swamp

Virtually nothing is known of this site, except that a bridge party and then a road party was stationed there in at least the latter halves of both 1833 and 1834. A road party was either still or again employed there in April 1835.⁸³ The location of the site has been identified by Olaf Leckbandt.

79 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters from Surveyors, Nicholson, 2 Jan 1830 - 25 Jul 1831, 2/1561.2, pp.480-481. R.3080; Courts of Petty Sessions, Vale of Clwydd Bench Books, 16 Feb 1836- 2 June 1839, 4/5673, pp.268, 334. R.669.

80 Mitchell to Sir George Murray, 28 March 1831, *HRA*, Series I, Vol. XVI, p.132.

81 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, p.42. R. 3080.

82 Library of the Religious Society of Friends, Backhouse's Journal, Temp MSS 556.

83 SRNSW: Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 25 Nov 1833 - 21 Feb 1835, 4/5400, pp.256-259. R.2839; Surv. Gen., Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, pp.330, 446-447. R. 3080; Surv. Gen., Copies of Letters Sent to Col. Sec., 21 Feb 1835 - 31 Dec 1835, 4/5401, pp. 69-72. R.2840.

Mt Clarence Surveying Depot

Mt Clarence, which was off the line of road, was the base for the assistant surveyor in charge of the line. Given that the military and the sub-inspector, Alexander Binning, lived with their families, and the appointments were lengthy, it is reasonable to assume that Mt Clarence was both a domestic and working situation. While little is known of the surveyor's domestic arrangements, it is known that in mid 1835 a "Miss Dulhunty" was resident there. A number of convicts are also known to have lived and worked at the Mt Clarence depot. In 1832, William Beswick, a Cheshire highway robber and wheelwright, made barrows and carts there. A convict clerk helped manage the stores and office, and in late 1832 a medical attendant was stationed there.⁸⁴ Some of these functionaries may have moved to No. 2 Stockade once the commissariat, hospital and smith shop were constructed. The siting of the surveyor's headquarters at Mt Clarence was due to its proximity to earlier lines of road from the Mt York descent. The location of the site has been identified by Olaf Leckbandt.

Conclusion

As has been shown, the Western Road construction process generated a series of vibrant, dynamic work sites that were inter-related and inter-dependent. No. 2 Stockade Cox's River was the largest and most important of all the sites. At its peak it accommodated in excess of 600 convicts, support personnel and their families, thus resembling a small village. The other sites, though smaller and less significant, nevertheless played key roles.

The physical form of the sites reflected the numerous dilemmas faced by the authorities, alluded to in earlier chapters, and forming an underlying theme throughout this thesis. These dilemmas included the transportability of these

84 SRNSW: Report of the Daily Occupation of Assistant Surveyor John Nicholson in Charge of Road Parties in the Central District from 1st to 30th of April 1832, Surv. Gen, Letters Received from Surveyors, Nicholson, 14 Feb 1832 - 22 Dec 1834, 2/1562, pp.48; 158; 189. R. 3080; Courts of Petty Sessions, Vale of Clwydd Bench Book, 16 Feb 1836 - 2 June 1839, CGS 3064, pp.68-9. R.669; Supreme Court, Criminal Jurisdiction, Clerk of the Peace, Papers and depositions, 1824 -1836, CGS 880, T169.

facilities versus security; longevity over transience; investment in the colony's infrastructure or satisfying the conflicting demands arising from the penal reform debate in Britain; and the over overriding concern of cost. Such cross purposes were never effectively resolved. Depending on the demands of the road building task, some accommodation was ephemeral and transitory, while others became relatively long lasting establishments, remnants of which remain today. By the late 1830s the major roads were near completion and, as it was no longer necessary to employ such large numbers of men in any single undertaking, the facilities became redundant as a tool of convict management.

This chapter has explained in detail the design, construction, location and occupation of the Western Road work sites in general and No. 2 Stockade in particular. The following chapter will examine the available evidence to build up a picture of the convicts who worked on the road's construction from these sites.

Figures

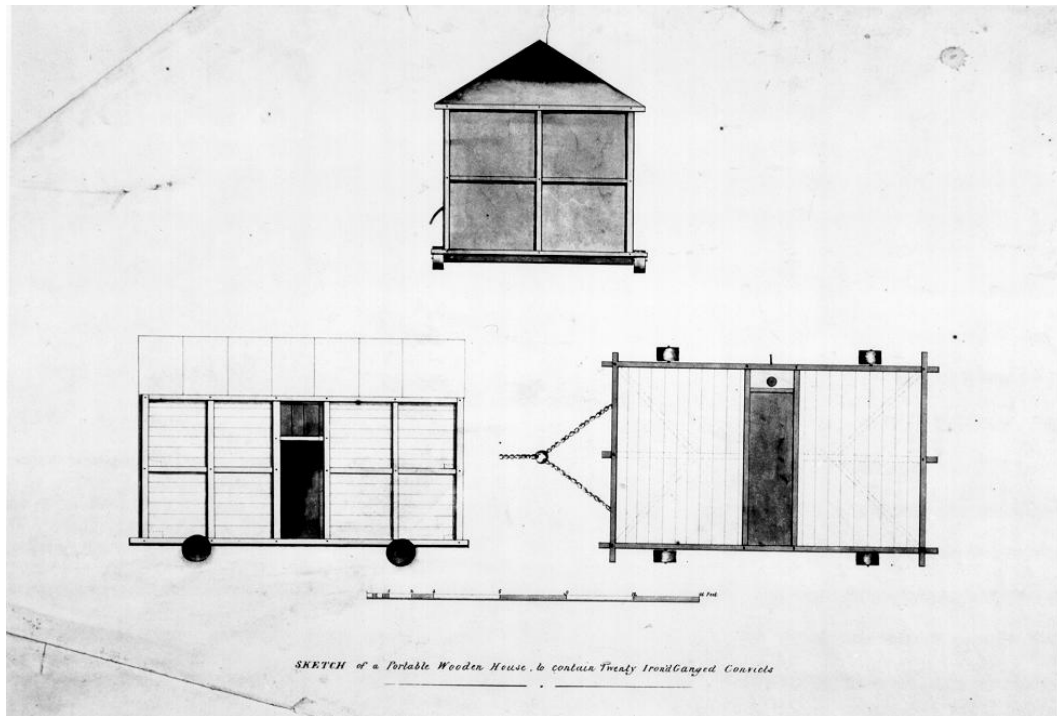


Figure 5.1 *Sketch of a Portable Wooden House to contain Twenty Iron'd Gang Convicts* from the Colonial Architect's Office shows the type of accommodation being experimented with in the 1830s. These were used at Bowen's Hollow and Hassan's Walls stockade. They were colloquially known as 'boxes'. Boxes Creek near Hassan's Walls takes its name from the location of these structures there. [Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW]