

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

JOHN CAMPBELL

Diary, 1850-51

Reel M385

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**National Library of Australia
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Filmed: 1961

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Campbell was licensed by the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, in 1834. In 1846 he graduated from Kings College, University of Aberdeen, as a Doctor of Medicine.

In July 1850 Campbell received a commission from the Admiralty as the surgeon-superintendent on the convict transport *William Jardine* (master: James Raitte). The ship carried 261 male convicts, together with some women and children, from England to Van Diemen's Land. It arrived in Hobart in November 1850. Campbell returned to England on the barque *Wellington* in 1851.

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John Campbell. Diary kept as Surgeon-Superintendent on the convict ship *William Jardine* on a voyage from London to Hobart, 12 July – 21 November 1850.

The diary begins on the day that Campbell took up his commission as a surgeon and refers to his embarkation on the *William Jardine* at Deptford, the construction of a prison on the vessel, the transfer of convicts from hulks and the Millbank Prison, the departure from Tilbury (29 July 1850), the transfer of further convicts at Portsmouth, and the departure from Portland (12 August 1850). There is an entry for each day of the voyage, recording the position of the ship, the winds, and the control, behaviour and health of the convicts and women and children on the ship. The entries describe the daily routines, hygiene, illnesses and injuries of convicts and children, deaths and a post-mortem, inspections, the employment of convicts, exercises on deck, the issue of food rations, thefts and the punishment of convicts. The final entries refer to the ship's arrival at Hobart (15 November 1850), inspections by the Governor and the Comptroller-General of Convicts, and the disembarkation of the convicts. The entries are followed by several pages of remarks on the ship, diseases of convicts and children, and medical treatment.

At the end of the volume are copies of several letters written by Campbell in Hobart in November 1850 and in London in May 1851. The former were written to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir William Denison, the Colonial Secretary, the Comptroller-General of Convicts, John Hampton, and the Physician-General of the Royal Navy, Sir William Burnett. The latter were written to the Comptroller of Victualling, James Meek, and the Surveyor-General of Convict Prisons, Colonel Joshua Jebb.

At the beginning of the volume are four documents written in a different hand:

1. List of male convicts on the *William Jardine*, giving name, age, marital status, birthplace, sentence, crime, original trade or occupation, conduct in prison, literacy, years of separate confinement and public works, conduct on board, height and sometimes weight on embarkation. (pp. 2-36)
2. General regulations. (pp. 38-43)
3. Daily routine. (pp. 44-46)
4. Office bearers, comprising a list of overseers, constables, cooks, barbers and clothesmen. (p. 48)

These pages were written by a convict, John Byron, who had been sentenced to ten years' transportation for forgery.

Note: The diary was filmed twice, in both instances from right to left, with the title page at the end of the reel.