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"WILLIAM HAMMOND"**

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SURGEONS JOURNAL - GENERAL REMARKS

During the period of this Journal the "William Hammond" has been employed in embarking male convicts in England and conveying them to Fremantle, Western Australia. The embarkation took place during the winter season of the year at several of the ports along the coast of England yet, notwithstanding the very heavy gales and cold wet weather which prevailed in the channel, the general health of the convicts and others did not suffer but continued remarkably good during the whole of the voyage which was performed without touching at any intermediate port. There were a few cases of Diarrhoea which were speedily relieved by the exhibition of aperients, astringents, and restoring the proper action of the surface combined with light unirritating diet. On getting into cool weather south of the line, a few cases of Catarrh and Rheumatism appeared but these were of no import and soon disposed of by the remedial measures usually adopted in such cases. There were two cases phthisis pulmonalis under treatment. One patient was a convict who had evidently suffered from disease of the lung previous to embarkation and was sent to hospital on arriving in Australia.

The other subject of this disease was a **CORPORAL IN THE PENSIONER GUARD** who came on board in an emaciated state having been recently discharged from the Military Hospital at Plymouth where he had been for some months under treatment for disease of the chest. Haemoptysis accelerated the fatal event, and this was the only death which occurred during the voyage.

The Dysentery ... was removed by aperients calomel and opiumetc but when the patient was in a state of convalescence – much emaciation being present, he was seized with headache wandering and other symptoms of diseased action within the head followed by coma and hemeplegia. Cold lotions to the shaved head epispastics (?) aperients stimulants, after a time mercurials ... had recourse to and after lying in a hopeless state for some days consciousness returned with the gradual restoration of power and sensibility in the side and lower limb but without any improvement in the paralytic condition of the arm. On being sent to the hospital at Fremantle the general health had much improved – appetite keen with some increase in the muscular development.

The Ophthalmias soon disappeared under the use of the Nitrate of Silver in strong solution as will be seen by a reference to the cases Nos. 8 and 9.

In the cases of Nyctalopia the retina was no doubt in a state of impaired sensibility arising from exposure to the brilliant light of the day and must have been rendered prone to irregularity of action in consequence of the sudden transitions to which the prisoners were necessarily subjected in passing from the obscure light of the prison to the glare of the upper deck and vice versa. There was no scorbutic tendency in any of the prisoners and in no way did the complaint appear to be connected with that particular state of the system though some seizures were entirely confined to the inmates of the prison it is to be supposed that an impaired condition of the nervous energy peculiar to this unfortunate class of men lent a pre-disposing influence in promoting the accession of the disease. Aperients repeated blistering etc. combined in one or two cases with generous diet effected the cure.

Nos. 12, 16 and 17 in the Journal are examples

On embarkation the general state of health of the convicts was good and as already mentioned continued so during the whole of the voyage.

At Woolwich, 67 male prisoners were embarked on the 8th of December 1855, 58 at Portsmouth on the 17th, 80 at ... land on the 18th and 45 were received in Plymouth Sound from Dartmoor on the 31st of the same month making in all 250. The whole number were disembarked at Fremantle Western Australia on the 1st and 2nd of April 1856 at which time the general condition was very high indeed the appearance of the prisoners was far superior to what it was on embarkation – many having become quite stout -

The Guard consisted of thirty Pensioners, accompanied by a train of 20 women and 40 children.

It now becomes necessary to mention some of those points of economy which in all probability were the means of contributing to the high tone of health on board the "William Hammond".

Those grand adjuvants in the preservation of human health on board ship- cleanliness, dryness and ventilation were made the subject of constant and serious attention and became especially necessary where so many persons were huddled together in a small place - with the nervous system depressed and agitated by a variety of conflicting influences inseparable from convicted criminals on their way to a penal settlement

The dietary scale included the occasional use of preserved meat and potato, wine and the daily issue of lemonade.

The bedding was stowed on deck during the day and frequently spread open to the air - personal cleanliness was strictly attended to and every opportunity for employment and amusement embraced.

The Chloride of Zinc was in constant use and by virtue of its power in decomposing putrid emanations lent much to health and comfort.

But there is yet another circumstance to which I am inclined to attribute in no small degree the excellent state of health on board. It was the frequent removal of the convicts in part or in whole when practicable especially before sunset to the upper deck so as to allow the atmosphere of the prison to become pure and wholesome while at the same time the men had the beneficial influence of the open air for in my opinion without this all other sanitary efforts would have proved ?...gatory.

George MacLaren

Surgeon Superintendent

PENSIONERS LISTED IN DAILY SICK BOOK

1856

Jan. 15	..	McGuire	43	??	9 days sick list
Jan 20		Robert Sly	42	Catarrhus	34 days sick list
Feb 7		Bernard McCaffrey	40	Furunculus	3 days sick list
Feb 13		Henry Fraser	47	Phthisis	29 days sick list
		Corporal			Died March 13
Feb 16		Robert Hellewell	37	??	6 days sick list
Feb 29		Robert Hellewell	37	Ulcur	8 days sick list
Mar 2		Robert Frett	42	Ulcur	16 days sick list
Mar 4		Joseph Kelly	45	Otitis	5 days sick list
Mar 14		Robert Hellewell	37	?Phlemon	11 days sick list
Mar 17		Joseph Cable	41	Pneumat	1 day sick list

Editors Note: We thank Jean McDonald for this interesting piece of history.

Extract from "The West Australian" 10th September 1936 Coastal Trade - Retired Captain Memories

Now in Fremantle, revisiting the scenes of his boy hood, is Captain John Sheridan, aged 88 years, a retired sheep farmer of Kangaroo Island, South Australia. He arrived in this state recently by the "*Katoomba*", and intends to leave again on September 17. One of his first visits was to the Fremantle Round House, where he spent one of the best remembered nights of his long and varied career for refusing to pay a fine inflicted for throwing stones, a misdemeanour of which he says he was wrongly accused. In recent years Captain Sheridan has several times revisited the State, and on one occasion he flew across. An interview with the captain recalled vividly to mind the romance of the early convict days, when Fremantle, then a straggling limestone town, was the centre of a flourishing whaling industry. He arrived in this State at the age of nine with his family in the convict vessel "*Clara*", the date of its arrival was 10th July, 1857. His father, a corporal in the 47th Royal Irish Regiment, was an officer in charge of the contingent of convicts aboard the vessel, and on his arrival they took up quarters on the site of the present Immigrants' Home. Perilously near to being blown ashore south of Garden Island in a gale, the "*Clara*" had a stiff time of it for several days, but eventually the vessel was brought into Gage Roads and the complement transhipped into flats which were run up the beach. Then followed several happy years for young Sheridan, whose eyes were agog at the bustling activity along the waterfront, where Bateman's whalers used to beach their boats after stirring tussles out by the Stragglers and Garden Island. Twice he heard of the open whaleboats being bitten in halves by ferocious whales. Many times he had heard of missing men and missing ships. But the sea was in his blood, and when 17 years of age he signed aboard the barque "*Tien-Tsin*" (Captain Jarman) for one pound a month.

Genesis of North-West Settlement

This vessel had an interesting history. In 1863 it conveyed Walter Padbury's party, with stock and requirements, to the site of the present town of Cossack (originally called Tien- Tsin harbour) for the first attempt at opening up the North-West. When Sheridan signed on the "*Tien-Tsin*" Padbury's