

Norfolk Island Records of Robert & Peter CHARLES

Robert CHARLES	Peter Love CHARLES
Offenses committed while at Norfolk Island	
Offence = sheep stealing - Life - 4yrs on Norfolk	Offence = Receiving stolen sheep - 14 years - 3 yrs Norfolk
22 nd Aug. 1845 - Arrived at Norfolk Island	
	2 nd Dec. 1845 - Stealing a turkey 10 days in cells
7 th April 1846 - Absent from duty 24 lashes	
July 1846 - the Cooking Pot Riot and the condemning of William Westward and others for murder	
<p>Nb. From a letter written by Wm. Westwood (Jacky Jacky) who was hung for the murder of John Morris in matters relating to the Cooking Pot Riot.</p> <p><i>"I was tried and sent to Norfolk Island and this place is now worse than I can describe. Every species of petty tyranny that long experience has taught some of these tyrants, is put in force by the authorities. The men are half-starved, hard worked and cruelly flogged. These things brought on the affair of the first of July, of which you have no doubt heard. I would send you the whole account, but that I know you will have it from better hands than mine. I am sorry that this will give you great pain, as there are several of the men that have been under your charge at Port Arthur concerned in this affair.. Sir, on the 21st of September 1846, Mr Brown arrived in the Island with commission to form a Court. Fourteen men were then arraigned for the murder of John Morris, that was formerly gate-keeper at Port Arthur. This trial occupied the court nine days. The Jury retired and returned a verdict and found twelve of the fourteen guilty of murder. On the 5th of Oct the sentence of death was then passed on us, and to be carried into effect on the 13th Oct 1846. Sir the strong ties of earth will soon be wrenched, and the burning fever will be leaven-a resting place for me, William Westwood. Sir, out of the better cup of misery I have drunk from my sixteenth year - ten long years, and the sweetest draught is that which takes away the misery of living death. It is the friend that deceives no man : all will then be quiet, no tyrant will then disturb my repose, I hope. Wm. Westwood.</i></p> <p><i>Sir I now bid the world adieu and all its contains</i></p>	
11 th Aug. 1846 - Disobedience of orders 1 month in chains	
	11 th Sept 1846 - disobedience of orders - 1 month hard labour in chains
	22 nd Sept 1846 - disobedience of orders - 24 lashes on breech
Scheduled hanging of William Westward & Larry Kavanagh - 12/13th October	
	11 th Feb 1847 - having scissors in hammock - 14 days in cells
18 th Feb. 1847 - Absent at ---	
11 th June 1847 - Having thimble & scissors in poss. 7 days in chains	
25 th Aug. 1847 - Having a hat in his possession ---	
2 nd Sept 1847 - Having a biscuit in his possession - discharged	
9 th Oct 1847 - Misconduct - 14 days in chains	

11 th Nov 1847 - ---- 6 days sol. Confinement	
	20 th Dec 1847 - having tobacco improperly in possession - admonished
19 th Feb 1848 - Using abusive language - 7 days in chains	
29 th Feb 1848 - Misconduct - 14 days in chains	
2 nd May 1848 - disorderly conduct --	
12 th may 1848 - having articles improperly in his possession - 2 months in chains	
15 th June 1848 - Disobedience of orders 7 days in chains	
17 th Oct 1848 - Having thread improperly in possession - 7 days in chains	
23 rd Oct 1848 - Misconduct - one month in chains	
23 rd Oct 1848 - Being away from his sation - 6 months in chains	
9 th Nov 1848 - Having tobacco - 14 days in chains	
	16th Dec 1848 Released from Norfolk Is. 3rd class pass holder
19 th Dec 1848 - Misconduct - 7 days in chains	
	20 th Dec 1848 - Arrives drunk, discharged no prosecution
24 th May 1850 - Neglect of duty - 1 month in chains	
	17 th July 1850 - Drunk - 6 days solitary confinement
	23 rd July 1850 - Drunk - 6 days solitary confinement
	23 rd July 1850 - Absconded
	2 nd Sept. 1850 - Out after hours, drunk and disturbing the peace - 3 months hard labour at old Wharf Station
25th Oct 1850 - Arrived from Norfolk Island	

Extract from the Catholic Mission in Australasia

By William Bernard Ullathorne who visited the isl. in 1835: (Unedited)

Norfolk Island is 1,000 miles from Sydney. It is small, only about twenty - one miles in circumference, of volcanic origin, and one of the most beautiful spots in the universe. Rising abruptly on all sides but one from the sea, clustering columns of basalt spring out of the water, securing, at intervals, its endurance with the strong architecture of God. That one side presents a low, sandy level, on which is placed that penal settlement, which is the horror of men. It is approachable only by boats, through a narrow bar in the reef of coral, which, visible here, invisibly circles the island.

Except the military guard, and the various officers and servants of government, none but the prisoners are permitted to reside on the island, nor, unless in case of great emergency, can any ship, but those of government showing the secret signals, be permitted to approach. The island consists of a series of hills and vallies, curiously interfolded, the green ridges rising one above another, until they reach the shaggy sides and crowning summit of Mount Pitt, at the height of 3,000 feet above the level of the sea. The establishment consists of a capacious quadrangle of buildings for the prisoners, the military barracks, and a series of offices in two ranges. A little

further beyond, on a green mound of nature's beautiful making, rises the mansion of the Commandant, with its barred windows, defensive cannon, and pacing sentry. Straying some distance along a footpath, we come upon the cemetery, closed in on three sides by close, thick, melancholy groves of the tear-dropping manchineal; whilst the fourth is open to the restless sea.

The graves are numerous and recent - most of the tenants having reached, by an untimely end, the abode to which they now contribute their hapless remains and hapless story. I have myself witnessed fifteen descents into those houses of mortality - and in every one lies a hand of blood. Their lives were brief, and as agitated and restless as the waves which now break at their feet, and whose dying sound is their only requiem. I have already observed, that such is the horror the convict of N. S. Wales entertains for this settlement, that we frequently hear the condemned, even from the gallows, thank God they are going to die, rather than to live at Norfolk Island.

The number of criminals at the settlement, in 1835, was 1200, of whom 450 were Catholic. Of late, this number has been augmented by nearly 200 annually. They are worked in heavy irons, and fed on salt meat and maize bread. Until lately, religion was utterly excluded from these miserable men. Their deep depravity had become a proverb even in N. S. Wales. So corrupt was their most ordinary language, as incessantly to present the imagination with the absent objects of the passions as though present - so perverse, that, in their dialect, evil was literally called good, and good, evil - the well-disposed man was branded wicked, whilst the leader in monstrous vice was styled virtuous. The human heart seemed inverted, and the very conscience reversed. So indifferent had even life become, that murders were committed in cold blood; the murderer afterwards declaring he had no ill-feeling against his victim, but that his sole object was to obtain his own release. Lots were even cast; the man on whom it fell committed the deed, his comrades being witnesses, with the sole view of being taken, for a time, from the scenes of their daily miseries to appear in the court at Sydney, although, after the execution of their comrade, they knew they should be remanded to their former haunts of wretchedness. So notorious is this fact, that it was made the ground of a legislative enactment, by whose power criminals are now tried by a special commission upon the island. This arrangement has, in a great measure, suspended such atrocities, though it has not altogether put an end to them. The life of these men was one of despair; their passions, severed from their usual objects, centred in one intense thirst for liberty, to be gained at whatever cost. Their faces were like those of demons. If a comrade was suspected of betraying their practices, he could no longer with safety sleep amongst them, but was separated to secure life.

In 1834, a conspiracy was formed by the prisoners to destroy the military and seize the island. They were defeated, and thirty-one of their number condemned to death. In 1835, I sailed to the island to prepare such of them as might be Catholic to meet their end. My unexpected appearance, late on the night of my arrival, came on then like a vision. I found them crowded in three cells, so small as barely to allow their lying down together - their upper garments thrown off for a little coolness. They had for six months been looking for their fate. I had to announce life to all but thirteen - to these, death. A few words of preparation, and then their fate. Those who were to live wept bitterly; whilst those doomed to die, without exception, dropped on their knees, and, with dry eyes, thanked God they were to be delivered from such a place. Who can describe our emotions! I found only three of the condemned to be Catholic - four others wished me to take them also to my care. During the five days permitted for preparation, they manifested extraordinary fervour of repentance.

The morning come, they received on their knees the sentence as the will of God. Loosened from their chains, they fell down in the dust, and, in the warmth of their gratitude, kissed the very feet that had brought them peace. Their death moved many of their comrades. On the two successive days of execution and burial, I preached, from the graves of the dead, to their former associates. During the week still allowed before the departure of the ship, twenty conversions followed, and one hundred and fifty general confessions. I left books behind me before departure, arranged a form of prayer for their use on Sunday, and obtained the appointment of one as reader, whose duty also it should be to teach those who were unable to read, at the intervals between labour and

food. At the close of 1836, my good Bishop permitted me again to visit Norfolk Island, a duty I had much at heart. I was received with great joy by my poor penitents, who, through all sorts of ridicule and persecution from their comrades, had persevered in their resolutions. I admitted them to the holy communion. Nearly sixty had learned to read their prayer books. The Commandant assured me that crime had considerably diminished, and that the Catholics were remarkably attentive to their duties of religion. Let me not forget how much of this was owing to the prudence and solicitude of the Commandant himself. I record the name of Major Anderson with unmingled satisfaction. His minute personal knowledge of the desperate men under his charge, and the discrimination with which he encourages the well disposed, whilst he strikes terror into the obstinate, has been attended with most salutary consequences.

What was my delight to find that, for the fifteen months elapsed since my last visit, there was not one Catholic to be brought before the judge. During the fifteen days allowed me before our return, three hundred confessions, and twelve conversions, rewarded my labours. I saw these dreaded characters con-se to the arms of religion like children. What may she not do with men when every hope from this world is departed, and nothing appears on their path but sufferings. The penitents, now become the greater number of Catholics, begged to be locked up in separate wards from the rest, that they might say their morning and night prayers together. Except these two visits, no priest has been at Norfolk Island. Since my arrival in England, I have received a letter from one of these poor prisoners, who consoles me in these terms: Rev. SIR,-Aware that your insignia is "Non ignarus mali, miseris succurere disco, therefore I feel no hesitation in writing. I rejoice to have to inform you that of the many who received your instructions, there are none, I am aware of, returned to their former wickedness; but notwithstanding the many enemies they have to encounter, the many instruments employed by Satan to debar them from those duties due to their Creator, they have withstood * I have also to inform you that in addition to the number which seemed to be zealous heretofore, there are three times that number at present. They are all desirous to learn, to be instructed, and earnestly look for books; even those who have not attended you during that happy time you have been with us, want books. The wicked are constantly endeavouring to bring back to their former vice those in whom they perceive any conversion. We earnestly request you will not be long absent from us. The constant prayers of your most humble but unfortunate servant,