

**MEDICAL and SURGICAL JOURNAL of Her Majesty's Hired Convict Ship  
"Minden"**  
**between 15<sup>th</sup> June 1851 and the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1851 during which the said Ship has  
been employed in conveying Male Convicts from England to Western Australia.**

**General Orders for the Guidance of the Convicts**

The following Regulations to be strictly attended to by the Prisoners and duly enforced by the Boatswains of the Prisons and Decks, or such other as the Surgeon Superintendent may place in authority over them.

Rule 1<sup>st</sup>: The main prison is under the immediate superintendence of two Boatswains (one on each side) and two on the upper deck who are to maintain order in their respective stations. They are to attend to the cleanliness of the Prison and people and to report any irregularity that may occur to me.

Rule 2<sup>nd</sup>: The whole of the Prisoners are to be formed into Divisions of which one division is in its regular succession to be on deck at day light with beds lashed, ready for stowing. Exercise and cleanliness is the object of this regulation, and the division of the morning is intended to pump, hand water etc. and to be ready for inspection, bare legs and arms, in such time as to allow the rest of the prisoners time to come on deck, stow their beds, wash their hands and faces and comb hair in good time before breakfast.

Rule 3<sup>rd</sup>: Breakfast to be given out as soon after 8 o'clock as possible. Dinner at 1 and supper not later than 4. Decks to be swept after every meal. Two men from the messes alternately to attend and see the rations issued and justice done.

Rule 4<sup>th</sup>: A man of the Mess to conduct the business of the messes for the day and any misconduct or injustice to be reported to me.

Rule 5<sup>th</sup>: Two messes alternately to clean the prisons and water closets under the superintendence of the Boatswains and when done they are to report to me for inspection and so soon as this duty is done the Prisoners are to be permitted free ingress, egress and regress as I deem them to merit that indulgence.

Rule 6<sup>th</sup>: The messes who clean the prison are to remain in charge and responsibility from 8 in the morning until 8 in the evening.

Rule 7<sup>th</sup>: Tuesdays and Fridays are appointed for scrubbing clothes, it is strictly forbidden on any other day and as proper clothes lines will be rove for the occasion, it will be considered punishable to hang clothes by any other than the clothes lines as accidents have occurred by doing so in the rigging.

Rule 8<sup>th</sup>: Wednesdays and Saturdays are appointed for shaving and on Sundays all are to be mustered in clean clothes before Divine Service.

Rule 9<sup>th</sup>: I desire that everyone behave in a becoming manner during Divine Service.

Rule 10<sup>th</sup>: It is my desire that proper respect be paid to the Military Officers, Master and Mates of the ship, the Non-Commissioned Officers, Sentinels on duty and Sailors - Neglect on this point shall be punished.

Rule 11<sup>th</sup>: The utmost respect is to be shown to the Religious Instructor and serious attention paid to his instruction.

Rule 12<sup>th</sup>: No smoking or spitting between decks and no filth to be thrown into the Water Closets.

Rule 13<sup>th</sup>: Theft, fighting, blasphemous or mutinous language or conduct tending to disturb order shall be strictly punished.

Rule 14<sup>th</sup>: Other crimes such as gambling and etc shall meet a certain and commensurate punishment and if any of you have retained any of those articles which I prohibit such as knives, are instantly to give them up. If found after this second notice I shall certainly punish the delinquent.

Rule 15<sup>th</sup>: All complaints to be reported to me in the forenoon after the sick visit.

Rule 16<sup>th</sup>: All to be in bed and all noise to cease by half past 8.

Rule 17<sup>th</sup>: I strictly forbid all communication between prisoners and the ships company or guard. Any breach of this I shall instantly punish

John Gibson, RN  
Surgeon Superintendent.  
Minden Convict  
Ship Plymouth, July 21, 1851

## GENERAL REMARKS

After a favourable passage of 85 days from Plymouth the anchor was cast at Gage Roads Fremantle on the 14<sup>th</sup> October. Amid so vast a concourse of Convicts, Pensioners and Families and ships company (total 459) it is satisfactory to be able to state that good health generally pervaded the ship throughout the voyage. 4 cases of death occurred, viz. 2 children aged from 3 months to 1½ years from Scrofula and Colicky attacks, 1 sailor boy from a serious attack of dysentery, terminating in inflammation of brain and one convict from fever of a low lingering type in a constitution much vitiated (bide cases 8,9,31,39). Diarrhoea cases are the most numerous in the forgoing journal, but were of a mild nature, occurring chiefly on a change from fresh to salt diet, and on approaching the cool Southern Latitudes. The symptoms are readily checked by 10 to 20 grain doses of Chloride Hydrarg followed by Gregorys Powder or Olea Rean two hours afterwards, and the Mista Cretae Co. cum tinct. Cinnam Co. for a few days in the convalescent stage. The other cases narrated were of no serious nature with the exception of the Phthical case (case 47) which seemed deeply confirmed. A Pensioners wife was confined on the passage of twins, labour natural with a slow but favourable recovery.

To preserve and secure good health a rigid adherence to cleanliness in the Prison Barracks and Crews berth was practised with attention to dryness, ventilation and occasional fumigation by the swing stoves, The families were encouraged as much as possible on the upper deck, weather permitting and within the tropics the bath filled with alt water was in use, morning and evening by the parents and children, the latter improving wonderfully from its effects. A copy of my Regulations are here enclosed to which I respectfully refer - Rule 2. I personally enforced to the day of disembarkation and found it of the greatest benefit - cleanliness and exercise were here aimed at and occurred. I may here digress for a little and state that having obtained by a representation of the Directors of Prisons a tolerably liberal supply of Marine Soap, I found it a valuable help in preserving health serving it out in proportions that enabled the Prisoners to have personal ablution daily with the salt waters. The soap supplied as medical comfort being very inadequate and of no use in salt water bathing. I would respectfully suggest that the Convict Establishment Directors attention should be called to the contribution to an allowance of Marine Soap to all convict ships.

After inspection and breakfast, the Prison was dry holystoned daily with occasional washing out in a drying wind, wind sails down and the fumigating stoves used frequently. Bedding and blankets of convicts and Pensioners were also shaken out and often aired. One half of the prisoners were employed at school in the prison in the forenoon, the other half on the upper deck making up cut garments, shoemaking and like. In the afternoon these duties were reversed so that the whole had the benefit of fresh air one half of the day and immediately after supper their beds being all made, the whole of the Prisoners were allowed on deck and encouraged in diversions such as dancing, music, leapfrog and the boxing gloves until the roll was called which I firmly believe materially contributed to their health. No symptoms of Scorbutus was observed during the voyage. The lime juice and wine used together with a due proportion of water and sugar was regularly served out half an hour after dinner and every man made to drink it in my own presence. The victualling on preserved meats and potatoes is certainly also a great boon and antidote to disaster. An allowance of medical comforts was also carefully and sometimes liberally supplied to the women and children to counteract the effects of salt beef. Due attention was paid to the cleaning of the water closets, 3 or 4 times a day and the chloride of zinc freely thrown into them. The excellent effects of the valuable fluid were very evident at the commencement of the voyage and for sometimes afterwards a most offensive bilge water odour escaped for and aft on lower deck from sides of ship and particularly before the ship was pumped out. A plentiful supply of the solution after pumping dry was poured down the pumps and the air holes in the sides of prison and Barracks for some days when the offensive and sickening effluvia disappeared, much to the satisfaction and comfort of the families and prisoners.

The voyage throughout was a fine weather one heat within the Tropics was moderate with very little rain. Temperature in South Latitude was mild. The highest range of thermometers was 84, the lowest 48. Winds varied in the courses steered.

The anchorage at Fremantle is in open Roads head with numerous adjacent reefs, shoals and islands. The main land low and of a very sandy nature along the coast, capable of little cultivation until you reach the Eastern and Southern districts about 60 or 100 miles inland, where rich and fertile farms, sheep and cattle runs are met with. The Colony, since the founding of the penal Establishment in 1850 (I having had charge of the first draft of convicts) has made a rapid and wonderful rise to prosperity, after slumbering for 20 years. The men who have been sent out have generally conducted themselves very satisfactorily and obtained their ticket of leave early. The settlers have rapidly hired them at reduced wages to what they were accustomed to give to free labourers and the work done by them and their behaviour have met with great approbation from their employers and they are materially aiding in pioneering and opening up the resources of the colony.

The Government expenditure in improvements to roads, buildings etc has been beneficial and already altered the face of the Port of Fremantle from that of a dead deserted looking fishing haven to a busy bustling nucleus of commerce. The colony was healthy when I left, but the proceeding winter months had brought along with them a severe influenza attacking the families in the towns and country. It suddenly disappeared on spring approaching. The weather was delightful in October and November with refreshing showers.

The news of the gold discoveries in the sister colonies had just reached on my leaving the colony and had created a mania in search of the metal, but up to 1<sup>st</sup> December, no discovery had been made in Western Australia. Vast quantities of lead was being worked up to the northwards and copper in considerable veins was found. Excellent fields of coal were also discovered of excellent quality it was said and as exploring parties were gradually finding resources in the Northern locality I have no doubt but Western Australia will in long become as flourishing as her sister colonies.

John Gibson  
Surgeon RN  
Her Majesty's Hired Convict Ship "Minden"  
Fremantle October 24th 1851.

**Daily Sick Book on board Convict Ship "Minden" between 15<sup>th</sup> June 1851 and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1851**

When put on Sick List 1851	Names	Age	Quality	Disease or Wound	When off Sick List	How disposed of	No. days on Sick List	Case History No.
July 14	Peter Jackson	29	Convict	Febris Intermittens	July 20	To duty	6	1
July 16	Henry Walker	30	Convict	Febris Intermittens	July 20	To duty	4	2
July 16	Charles Page	20	Convict	Rheumatism	July 27	To duty	11	3
July 20	Charles Knight	17	Convict	Diarrhoea	July 22	To duty	2	4
July 20	Charles Carpenter	16	Convict	Diarrhoea	July 22	To duty	2	5
July 20	John Nickleson	17	Convict	Diarrhoea	July 22	To duty	2	6
July 20	Eli Angel	19	Convict	Diarrhoea	July 22	To duty	2	7
July 20	Adah Rider	9 months	Pensioner's child	Scrofula	August 24	Died	34	8
July 24	Jonathan Maynard	14	Seaman	Dysentery	August 4	Died	11	9
July 25	Joseph Preemer	28	Convict	Hydrocele	October 11	To hospital	88	10
July 26	Darius Jones	19	Convict	Haematemsus	September 1	To duty	36	11
July 26	John warren	44	Pensioner	Pneumonia	July 31	To duty	5	12
August 2	Mrs M Gorman	22	Pensioner's wife	Parturitus	August 21	Recovered	19	13
August 6	Edward Butt	15	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 16	To duty	10	14
August 6	Richard Pritchard	22	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 18	To duty	12	15
August 6	Thomas Searle	35	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 16	To duty	10	16
August 8	Henry Dickson	32	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 24	To duty	16	17
August 8	William McLeod	26	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 24	To duty	16	18
August 8	James Atkinson	33	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 24	To duty	16	19
August 8	John Wilson	35	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 26	To duty	18	20
August 8	Hall Holt	56	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 26	To duty	18	21
August 8	John Williams	26	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 26	To duty	18	22
August 19	Henry Storey	42	Convict	Colica	August 25	To duty	6	23
August 19	Charles Whitehurst	25	Convict	Catarrhus	August 26	To duty	7	24
August 25	George Adams	24	Convict	Phthisis	September 3	Relieved	9	25
August 27	William Hulmes	29	Convict	Diarrhoea	September 3	To duty	7	26
August 27	Edward Wyard	21	Convict	Diarrhoea	August 31	To duty	4	27
August 29	Luke Dill	34	Convict	Colica	September 1	To duty	3	28
August 29	Henry Offer	30	Convict	Catarrhus	September 2	To duty	4	29
September 1	Charles Page	20	Convict	Rheumatismus	September 9	To duty	8	30
September 3	Henry Jones	26	Convict	Febris (synochus)	September 12	Died	9	31
September 5	William Bazley	32	Convict	Catarrhus	September 10	To duty	5	32
September 5	George Grant	44	Pensioner	Diarrhoea	September 9	To duty	4	33
September 5	William Shephard	39	Convict	Catarrhus	September 9	To duty	4	34
September 8	Henry Offer	30	Convict	Catarrhus	September 13	To duty	5	35

September 10	Richard Pritchard	22	Convict		Diarrhoea	September 15	To duty	5	36
September 10	Henry Hughes	22	Convict		Diarrhoea	September 15	To duty	5	37
September 13	William Allan	20	Seaman		Ascites	September 24	To duty	8	38
September 13	James Campbell	3 months	Pensioner's child		Colica	September 27	Died	14	39
September 14	William Tummin	39	Convict		Diarrhoea	September 24	To duty	7	40
September 15	David Elder	22	Convict		Catarrhus	September 21	To duty	6	41
September 15	William Alinutt	16	Convict		Catarrhus	September 20	To duty	5	42
September 19	Mr R Charlton	20	4 <sup>th</sup> Mate		Vulnus	September 22	To duty	3	43
September 20	George Ryder	25	Convict		Ulcus	September 24	To duty	4	44
September 20	John Island	28	Pensioner		Catarrhus	September 24	To duty	4	45
September 21	Peter Jackson	25	Convict		Febris Intermittens	September 28	To duty	7	46
September 24	George Adams	24	Convict		Phthisis	October 16	To hospital	22	47
September 25	William Sheppard	38	Convict		Dyspepsia	October 9	Duty	14	48
September 27	James Newnham	33	Convict		Ischuria	October 6	Duty	9	49
September 27	John Kelly	24	Convict		Phlogosis (Abscess)	October 16	Hospital	19	50
September 29	William Sewell	19	Seaman		Pneumonia	October 14	Duty	15	51
October 4	Charles Messner	27	Convict		Catarrhus	October 12	Duty	8	52
October 7	Mr Augustus Barr	40	Religious instructor		Catarrhus	October 17	Duty	10	53
October 7	David Blundell	42	Pensioner		Catarrhus	October 12	Duty	5	54
October 15	Charles Page	20	Convict		Rheumatismus	October 16	Hospital	1	55

John Gibson  
Surgeon RN

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