

JOSEPH CLAYTON - CARPENTER

Joseph Clayton was a wheelwright by trade and was transported to New South Wales for life for his involvement in the handloom weavers riots of 1826. The weavers, fearing the loss of work through industrialisation, resorted to smashing newly-installed power looms in East Lancashire mills, in an area from Clitheroe in the North to Bury in the South. Clayton was identified as being involved at the scenes of two of the machine-smashing episodes, at Hargreaves's Irwell Mill in Bacup, on April 26th and at the mill of R. & J. Munn, Bacup, the same day. He was sentenced to death at Lancaster Assizes but the sentence was commuted to transportation for life. Leaving behind his wife and five children, he sailed from Gravesend in March 1827 aboard the 497 ton convict ship *Manlius*, arriving in Sydney in August 1827.

Described as being above medium height, fair and ruddy faced, with brown hair and grey eyes, bearing scars, one on the right thumb, and two on the face – one near his nose and the other on his underlip - the thirty year old Clayton was sufficiently educated to be able to read and write. His civil occupation had been as a wheelwright attached to the Engineer's Department. (See Personnel List AO,9/2742)

His life in Sydney was not without incident. He was given three days solitary confinement for drunkenness and twenty four hours for going to Sydney on Market Day. He was also detained in barracks on bread and water for having been 'detected coming out of a disorderly house at a late hour of night'.

However it was his carpentry skills as a wheelwright that were crucial to the success of Sturt's exploration of the Murray and the safety of the party who without him would have perished. He received a Ticket of Leave No. 30/423 on 13 July 1830 "granted in consequence of his good conduct whilst employed on the late expedition under Captain Sturt into the interior and he was allowed to remain the District of Parramatta". The ticket also has reference to "Vide Coldec Letter No. 30/494 dated 22nd June 1830." Regrettably Clayton's new won freedom was short lived as he died suddenly in Sydney in 1834.