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The dregs of a criminal population: Impression Bay and the origins of Tasmania's residential charitable system, c. 1839-1857 ¹

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One field of Australian convict research that has received scant attention is the history of the aged and infirm emancipist.² This article focuses on the relief of colonial Tasmania's aged and infirm poor, a population composed almost exclusively of male ex-convicts who were unable to maintain themselves in colonial society (there is a similar narrative to be told, elsewhere, for female emancipist paupers).³ Such individuals are referred to in this paper as pauper emancipists or simply paupers, while individuals who were still under sentence are referred to as invalids, according to the customary terminology used in Van Diemen's Land (VDL).⁴ Emancipist paupers

¹ This research was supported by an Australian Research Council Discovery Project, Landscapes of Production and Punishment (DP170103642), administered by the University of New England. I thank the editors and referees for their supportive and useful feedback on an earlier draft of this article.

² Exceptions include B. Earnshaw, 'The Lame, the Blind, the Malingerers: Sick and Disabled Convicts Within the Colonial Community', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* Vol. 8, Pt. 1, 1995, pp. 25-38; R. Evans, 'The Hidden Colonist: Deviance and Social Control in Colonial Queensland' in J. Roe (ed.), *Social Policy in Australia: Some Perspectives, 1901-1975*, Sydney, 1976, pp. 74-100. See also J. C. Brown, 'Poverty is Not a Crime': *Social Services in Tasmania 1803-1900*, Hobart, 1972; A. K. S. Piper, 'Emancipists, Destitution and Infirmity: The Role of the Cornwall Hospital', *Launceston Historical Society Papers and Proceedings*, Vol. 14, 2002, pp. 21-34; A. K. S. Piper, "'What is to be done with the men?': The role of invalids in the establishment of the Launceston General Hospital', in P.A. Richards, B. Valentine and T. Dunning, (eds), *Effecting a Cure: Aspects of Health and Medicine in Launceston*, Launceston, 2006, pp. 55-72; A. K. S. Piper, 'A Love of Liberty: Invalid Manipulation of the Colonial Tasmanian Charitable Institutional System', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Vol. 11, 2009, pp. 71-100; A. K. S. Piper, "'Mind-Forg'd Manacles': The Mechanics of Control Inside Late-Nineteenth Century Tasmanian Charitable Institutions', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 43, No. 4, 2010, pp. 1045-1063; J. Hargrave, 'A Pauper Establishment is Not a Jail: Old Crawlers in Tasmania 1856-1895', *Master of Humanities*, University of Tasmania, 1993.

³ For discussion of why there were more male than female emancipist paupers, see A. K. S. Piper, 'Admission to Charitable Institutions in Colonial Tasmania: From Individual Failing to Social Problem', *Tasmania Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, 2004, pp. 43-62.

⁴ The term invalid was initially used to refer to prisoners temporarily excluded from participating in the convict workforce due to illness or accident. Over time, the term

came to be distinguished by their incapacity to work due to physical impediments which defined them, in the vernacular of the nineteenth-century middle class, as non-able-bodied, resulting from congenital defects, injury, disease or old age.⁵ This article examines some of the measures used to manage convict invalids and emancipist paupers between 1839 and 1857, with particular reference to experiments on the Tasman Peninsula. This study covers the period from the introduction of the Probation system and ends with the transfer of governance from imperial to colonial control, the so-called advent of 'responsible government'. I explore the general attitude of authority to male paupers, examining changing practice and attitudes through an analysis of the principal invalid establishment at that juncture, the Impression Bay Probation Station.

Tasmania's colonial paupers were, in the words of Governor Thomas Gore Browne, 'the dregs of a criminal population'.⁶ The distinction between emancipist pauper and invalid convict was slender, if non-existent. Paupers were perceived and treated as if they were criminals. In life, and indeed death, the same legal and administrative instruments were used to compartmentalise their lives.⁷

became synonymous with chronic complaints, often associated with old age or visual impairments, causing either permanent exclusion from the workforce or an on-going reduced capacity to labour. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, those factors that marked a convict as an invalid increasingly changed from acute to chronic conditions, coupled with the effects of age; indeed, age-related illness increasingly came to be seen as the dominant cause of pauperism.

⁵ The typical male inmate of a colonial Tasmanian charitable institution was unmarried, aged at least 55 years but more likely to be aged closer to 70 than 60. In addition to being old they almost certainly suffered from an age related illness, such as dementia, rheumatism or chronic ulcers, as well as other debilities such as blindness, paralysis, missing limbs, imbecility and epilepsy. They would have been born in Britain or Ireland, and have arrived in Tasmania as a transported convict. For a discussion of the typical Tasmanian charitable institution inmate profile, see A. K. S. Piper, 'Beyond the Convict System: The Aged Poor and Institutionalisation in Colonial Tasmania', PhD thesis, University of Tasmania, 2003, pp. 437-83.

⁶ Comment made by Governor Browne, 29 June 1863, upon an inspection of the Port Arthur Penal Establishment. *Journals of the House of Assembly, Tasmania*, Vol. 10, No. 100, Hobart, 1863, p. 14.

⁷ For example, in May 1856 official approval was sought and granted for the on-going practice of burying both paupers and convicts within the precincts of Launceston's Cornwall Hospital. Champ to Sherwin, 9 May 1856, General Correspondence Young Period (CSD) 1/92/2432, Tasmanian Archives (TA). As in life, the pauper was to be joined with the convict in death. The sins of his earlier life, marred by subsequent poverty, were not so easily absolved. Also, see T. Laqueur, 'Bodies, Death and Pauper Funerals', *Representations*, No. 1, February 1983, for a discussion of how pauper bodies became objects of administration.

Emancipist paupers were initially managed through incarceration in government residential institutions, under strict discipline and supervision, the authorities utilising the same infrastructure and strategies created for the management of invalid convicts. Even after the establishment of self-government in 1856, Tasmanian paupers continued to be treated more as criminals than as patients, with many being off-loaded to still functioning imperial penal establishments such as Impression Bay and Port Arthur, both situated on the Tasman Peninsula, in the colony's south east (see Figure 2 in Introduction). In the 1850s and 1860s, the charitable system functioning in Tasmania for the management of paupers operated as a relic of the convict system. Its evolution into a health management system by Federation reflected a significant change in social perception.⁸

A policy of conveying disabled and infirm convicts, or prisoners likely to become infirm, initially practiced in New South Wales, was continued in Van Diemen's Land, leading to the establishment of a pauper emancipist legacy that successive imperial and colonial governments would need to tackle.⁹ In the 1830s age and infirmity were not listed amongst the criteria used to exclude a prisoner from transportation. As was explained to the Surgeon Superintendents on board convict ships, 'old age or bodily infirmity' was 'not to be a cause of rejection'.¹⁰ That principle was still maintained in 1840s when it was noted that the Inspectors of Prisons was:

in the habit of sending out to [Van Diemen's Land] ... persons who had lost limbs, provided they were not obliged to use crutches, and that age, unless accompanied by such weakness as rendered the person at the time incompetent to labour, was not considered by them as a sufficient reason for not carrying out the sentence of transportation.¹¹

⁸ This transformation is covered in Piper, 'Admission to Charitable Institutions', pp. 43-62.

⁹ Earnshaw, *op. cit.*, p. 26 concluded that 5.1 per cent or 446 male convicts in the 1820s, and 3.9 per cent or 338 men in the 1830s, were transported to new South Wales with some significant physical or mental impairment.

¹⁰ 'Instructions to Surgeons and Masters of Convict Ships', 1834, *Irish University Press series of British Parliamentary Papers. Crime and Punishment: Transportation* (hereafter *BPP*), Shannon, 1969, Vol. 6, p. 254. Note that references to *BPP* refer to the Irish University Press series. The volume number given refers to that series and not the original British Parliamentary Papers volume number.

¹¹ Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 17 March 1848, *BPP*, Vol. 9, pp. 231-2.

Criminal transportation to Van Diemen's Land operated on the principle that every convict 'who could bear the voyage, and who was able to support himself by his labour on his arrival there, was sent abroad'.¹² But the principle was very liberally interpreted. Charles Forrester, for example, was aged fifty-two when he arrived in 1841 after being convicted of housebreaking in Edinburgh. Transported for seven years, in 1848 he became free by servitude.¹³ Exactly how he was expected to support himself was a mystery, he having spent his entire period of imprisonment at the New Norfolk Invalid Depot on account of being blind (see Figure 2 in Introduction). George Smith was a highway robber and thief transported for life, initially to Norfolk Island, but subsequently to Van Diemen's Land. This red-headed fiddler from Liverpool was missing his right leg.¹⁴ George Morris, who ended his days as an invalid at Port Arthur, also only had one leg.¹⁵

These were not the skilled and strong men whom historian N. G. Butlin lauded as typical of the convicts sent to work in the Australian colonies.¹⁶ Rather, as Watt notes, the convict ships brought 'successive waves of invalids'.¹⁷ In November 1845, Matthew Forster, the Comptroller General of Convicts (in charge of the convict establishment in Van Diemen's Land) thought that the numbers of invalids were increasing.¹⁸ It was, as he had earlier noted, 'a very rare occurrence that Transports arrive without bringing some Convicts who are maimed, halt [limping], or otherwise Invalid'.¹⁹ Lieutenant

¹² 'Select Committee Report of the House of Lords Appointed to Inquire into the Provisions and Operation of the Act to Substitute, in Certain Cases, Other Punishment In Lieu of Transportation', 1856, *BPP*, Vol. 4, 1856, question 1193.

¹³ Despatch 74, Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 17 March 1848, *BPP*, Vol. 9, p. 232.

¹⁴ Pers. comm., Susan Hood, Port Arthur Historic Site, 29 October 1999.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18 November 1999.

¹⁶ N. G. Butlin, *Forming a Colonial Economy: Australia 1810-1850*, Cambridge, 1994, p. 4. This is a position also argued by S. Nicholas and P. R. Shergold, 'Unshackling the Past', in S. Nicholas (ed.), *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 3-13.

¹⁷ J. Watt, 'The Colony's Health', in J. Hardy and A. Frost (eds), *Studies From Terra Australis*, Canberra, 1989, p. 151.

¹⁸ Forster, Comptroller General, to Eardley-Wilmot, Lieutenant Governor, 15 November 1845, in Colonial Office, Original Correspondence Tasmania, CO 280/185, National Library of Australia (NLA), pp. 274-6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 281-2. This was also the situation in New South Wales with Earnshaw concluding that each time a transport arrived there was always a core of prisoners 'whose capacity to work was seriously impeded by pre-existing chronic illness or by varying degrees of physical and mental impairment'. Earnshaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-6.

Governor Sir John Eardley Eardley-Wilmot complained of the practice and called for it to cease.²⁰ His successor, Sir William Thomas Denison, also resented the burden of maintaining the aged and infirm.²¹ He was particularly critical of the men transported on the *Ratcliffe* (2) in 1848, reporting the condition of ten of these men to the Secretary of State. As can be seen from in Table 1, Denison was clearly justified in his concerns. It is difficult to imagine how these men were to be employed in a labour market over-supplied with able-bodied ticket-of-leave holders.

Table 1: Details of invalid convicts transported on the <i>Ratcliffe</i> (2) in 1848	
Name	Disability
George Davis	left hip deformed
George Hutchins	lost an arm
William Martin	lost part of an arm
George Martin	lame of left leg
Hugh McCulgan	lost an arm
James Patterson	lost a leg
William Rogers	lost left arm
Robert Staples	lame of left leg
James Whelan	lost a leg
John Ward	deaf and dumb

Source: Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 21 December 1848, *BPP*, Vol. 9, p. 130

In 1849, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Henry Grey, directed the medical officer of the convict hulk establishment to conduct more exacting examinations and to on no account pass any

²⁰ Eardley-Wilmot, Lieutenant Governor, to Stanley, Secretary of State, 17 November 1845, CO 280/185, NLA, pp. 278-9; Eardley-Wilmot, Lieutenant Governor, to Stanley, Secretary of State, 12 July 1845, CO 280/183, NLA, p. 90.

²¹ Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 21 December 1848, *BPP*, Vol. 9, p. 130.

prisoners suffering from infirmities.²² However, as late as 1853, the final year of transportation to Van Diemen's Land, invalid convicts were still being sent to the colony, becoming, in the words of the Principal Medical Officer, 'a permanent charge upon the convict establishment'.²³ There appeared to be a deliberate and systemic practice of sending invalid convicts to eastern Australia, although the trickle of arrivals was never significant enough to warrant a prolonged and concerted protest. The numbers were, however, large enough to leave a major mark on the composition of Tasmania's charitable institution population well into the late-nineteenth century. As Raymond Evans and Bill Thorpe put it, transportation left a 'legacy of broken human beings'.²⁴ That legacy became an on-going point of disputation between the imperial and colonial governments, which in many respects contributed to the general parsimony that characterised the treatment of emancipist paupers.²⁵

The Impression Bay depot for invalids was a product of the Probation system. From 1839, convicts were initially worked in gangs on the public works for a period of time determined by the length of sentence passed upon them by British and Irish courts.²⁶ Dozens of new Probation stations were built throughout Van Diemen's Land, including a number on the Tasman's and Forestier's Peninsulas. Agricultural stations were built at Saltwater River (1841-1851) and Wedge Bay (1842-1846), and timber-getting stations were set up at Flinders Bay (1841-1842) and the Cascades (1842-1855), while a combined agricultural and timber-getting station was established at Impression Bay (1841-1857, see Figure 2 in Introduction). The Impression Bay probation station, at the same time as it acted as a repository of gang labour, also became a charitable institution serving the needs of invalid convicts, pauper emancipists and both convict and

22 Grey to Denison, Lieutenant Governor, 29 June 1849, *BPP*, Vol. 9, p. 240.

23 Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Newcastle, Secretary of State, 5 May 1853, *BPP*, Vol. 11, p. 357.

24 R. Evans and B. Thorpe, 'Commanding Men: Masculinities and the Convict System', *Journal of Australian Studies*, Vol. 56, 1988, pp. 17-34.

25 See Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 73 and 96.

26 I. Brand, *The Convict Probation System: Van Diemen's Land 1839-1854*, Hobart, 1990; R. Tuffin and M. Gibbs. "'Uniformed and Impractical'? The Convict Probation System and its Impact Upon the Landscape of 1840s Van Diemen's Land', *History Australia*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2020, pp. 87-114.

emancipist lunatics.²⁷ During the 1840s and 1850s, Impression Bay was one of the larger establishments administrated by the Convict Department. It was to end its days as a quarantine establishment for geriatric ex-convicts who were ejected from Hobart Town's General Hospital when space was required for those untainted by convictism during various epidemics in the late 1850s and 1860s.²⁸

Until the mid-1840s, the Convict Department operated two invalid depots: one at New Norfolk (in conjunction with the insane asylum) and the other at Wedge Bay. New Norfolk housed 142 invalid convicts who were 'totally incapable of any description of labour'.²⁹ Wedge Bay was for male convicts unfit for standard probation gang labour, the location thought to be beneficial for invalids 'as regards climate and water', and it having, in the Comptroller general's opinion, 'good garden land for cultivation for men who can perform light labour'.³⁰ By June 1846 it accommodated 119 individuals.³¹ These depots were needed in the early 1840s to accommodate an increasing number of both convicts and emancipists who were unable to support themselves. The problem was compounded at that time by an economic depression which severely impacted the labour market, dramatically reducing the opportunity for aged and infirm emancipists to find even rudimentary work.³² At the same time, the practice of supporting paupers through the provision of out-door relief in the form of rations was abolished amid fears that it was expensive and open to abuse.³³

With its institutions at New Norfolk and Wedge Bay, the government was also asserting its authority over the management of pauperism in Van Diemen's Land. In a gambit to reinforce and justify its use of institutional space to deter, manage and explicate growing pauperism, the government selectively and strictly implemented

²⁷ While nowadays viewed as a pejorative, 'lunatic' was the common term used to refer to people suffering from a mental illness in nineteenth-century Tasmania. Likewise, psychiatric hospitals were normally referred to as insane asylums.

²⁸ See Hargrave, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-2.

²⁹ 'Comptroller General's Report for the half year ending 30 June 1846', *BPP*, Vol. 7, p. 582.

³⁰ Comptroller General's memo, 30 August 1844, Misc 62/3/A1092/2041, in I.Brand, *Transcripts*, Vol. 15, PAHSM, p. 125]

³¹ 'Comptroller General's Report for the half year ending 30 June 1846', *BPP*, Vol. 7, p. 582.

³² W. Rimon, 'Depression of the 1840s', in A. Alexander (ed.), *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, Hobart, 2005, p. 103.

³³ 'Minutes and Papers', 20 November 1843, *Van Diemen's Land Legislative Council Papers*, Hobart Town, 1843, p. 27.

elements of English poor law. It resolved to relieve none but the wholly destitute, to never give relief in cash and to only support paupers within an institutional setting.³⁴ There was a growing recognition of a need for institutions to help maintain and manage the colony's invalids and paupers. There was also increasing attention to the means by which invalids could be managed. In 1844, when plans for the establishment at Wedge Bay were well advanced, the Comptroller General suggested some guidelines, partially with a view to minimising the expense to government. They were to be 'classified [by the local medical officer] according to the nature of their complaints and the amount of labour they are capable of performing'. At least some were to be considered as 'capable of labour', although it was not in this instance specified what type of labour they were expected to perform. There was also an astonishing hint that invalids were being forced 'to suffer greater discomfort' than regular prisoners, 'in order to discourage malingerers'. Feigning illness and injury was a serious problem in convict work gangs, but the authorities were concerned to ensure that 'the invalids should not suffer for the guilty'.³⁵

There were invalids at Impression Bay from as early as April 1844, according to communications between the Comptroller General and the Superintendent concerning the expenditure of labour on the station's public gardens, although there is no calculation of their numbers in any official reports before late 1846 (Table 2).³⁶ By that time Impression Bay was a large station capable of accommodating some 500 inmates. A number of economic activities were undertaken there.³⁷ The core industry was the milling of timber for use at the nearby Coal Mines station.³⁸ It was otherwise regarded as 'principally a mechanical

³⁴ 'Report of the Finance Committee', 16 November 1844, *Van Diemen's Land Legislative Council Papers*, Hobart Town, 1845, pp. 15-16.

³⁵ Principal Medical Officer to Forster, Comptroller General, 2 September 1844, Misc 62/3, A1092/2041. In: I.Brand, *Transcripts*, Vol. 15, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHSMA), p. 128.

³⁶ Forster, Comptroller General, to Drew, Superintendent, Impression Bay, 23 June 1844, Misc 62/1, A1087/1092. 12. The presence of invalids in 1844 is confirmed by Surgeon Cascades to Principal Medical Officer, 3 December 1844, MISC 62/11, A1093/2363. In: I.Brand, *Transcripts*, Vol. 15, PAHSMA, p. 189.

³⁷ J. Purslowe, 'Reports of James Purslowe', (Dundee, c.1843) in J. Syme, *Nine Years in Van Diemen's Land: Comprising an Account of its Discovery, Possession, Settlement, Progress, Population, Value of Land, Herds, Flocks, etc.; An Essay on Penal Discipline; and the Results of the Working of the Probation System; with Anecdotes of Bushrangers*, Dundee, 1845, pp. 301-20.

³⁸ Eardley-Wilmot, Lieutenant Governor, to Stanley, Secretary of State, 5 October 1843, *BPP*, Vol. 7, p. 174.

station, the men being employed in the manufacture of carts, barrows, and other articles required for the Convict Service'.³⁹ Land was being cleared for the growing of wheat but that seems to have been of secondary importance, the Convict Department not placing much value on the quality of land at Impression Bay.⁴⁰

Impression Bay became a preferred site for managing invalid convicts from 1846 after Wedge Bay was declared 'ill adapted for the purposes of an invalid depot'.⁴¹ Actually, Wedge Bay seems to have been closed because William Champ, Forster's successor as Comptroller-General from October 1846, believed there was a high prevalence of homosexuality amongst its inmates. He attributed that to the 'idleness' and 'the want of sufficient supervision' which he felt were unwisely permitted in the case of invalids.⁴² Those fears were supposedly confirmed by the colonial assistant surgeon who conducted a physical examination of the Wedge Bay invalids in December 1845.⁴³ In that context, Impression Bay emerged as an alternative facility, primarily because it already had effective separate sleeping accommodation, and it seemed cheaper to relocate the men there than it was to upgrade the facilities at Wedge Bay. The Wedge Bay episode attuned administrators to the need for strict supervision of invalids and paupers. It also sullied and stereotyped the perception of this class for several decades.⁴⁴

³⁹ Forster, Comptroller General, to Eardley-Wilmot, Lieutenant Governor, April 1844, CO 280/194, NLA, p. 543.

⁴⁰ Eardley-Wilmot, Lieutenant Governor, to Stanley, Secretary of State, 5 August 1845, *BPP*, Vol. 7, p. 320.

⁴¹ 'Comptroller General's Report for the half year ending 30 June 1846', *BPP*, Vol. 7, p. 578.

⁴² Champ, Comptroller General, to Eardley-Wilmot, Lieutenant Governor, 14 March 1846, *BPP*, Vol. 7, p. 503.

⁴³ Black, Colonial Assistant Surgeon, to Stuart, Superintendent Wedge Bay, 23 December 1845, *BPP*, Vol. 7, p. 506.

⁴⁴ H. Reynolds, "'That Hated Stain': The Aftermath of Transportation in Tasmania", *Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand*, Vol. 14, No. 53, October 1969, p. 26. See, for example, the communications from Dr M. Gaunt of Windermere to the Secretary of State and the Colonial Secretary, alleging in 1848 that Impression Bay held 100 invalids 'of infamous habits under separate treatment'. Gaunt feared that these 'miscreants' would be eventually unleashed on the community. Lieutenant Governor Denison, when corresponding to the Secretary of State on this matter, assured him that: 'All these men at Impression Bay being invalids, will there remain during their lives'. Denison was stating that these suspected homosexual paupers were to be punished by a life sentence; the severity of this commensurate with community sentiment. See Despatch 218, Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 1 November 1848, *BPP*, Vol. 9, pp. 87-90.

Figure 1: Impression Bay Probation Station, c.1850



Source: W. L. Crowther Collection, Libraries Tasmania Online Collection, <stores.tas.gov.au/AUTAS001144582897> (26 October 2020)

The use of Impression Bay as a depot for invalids also coincided with a growing conviction that emancipist paupers could not be allowed to 'debase and contaminate' those who came into contact with them.⁴⁵ As if pauperism was contagious, there was a fear that the mere presence of paupers within the community could lead to 'demoralized habits consequent upon their example'.⁴⁶ Such thinking bolstered the case for separating these individuals and confining them in government institutions. The separate apartments at Impression Bay functioned as both an isolation hospital and an engine of disciplinary surveillance.⁴⁷ The intention was to engage the men in growing vegetables, sufficient for the needs of the station, and the profitable

⁴⁵ Aikenhead, editor of the *Launceston Examiner*, to Grey, Secretary of State, 1 September 1848, *BPP*, Vol. 9, p. 71.

⁴⁶ 'Report of the Bishop of Tasmania on Prison Discipline', 13 February 1847, *BPP*, Vol. 7, p. 448.

⁴⁷ This bears much similarity with the establishment of contagious diseases hospitals. See M. Ogborn, 'Law and Discipline in Nineteenth Century English State Formation: The Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1993, pp. 28-55.

cultivation of hops.⁴⁸ These hopes were extremely optimistic, the Impression Bay invalids being 'mostly cripples' according to a contemporary report.⁴⁹ Further, six months after indicating that the invalids would be able to exploit the horticultural potential of the station, it was determined that the farming was 'a failure', the soil being 'very indifferent'.⁵⁰

Table 2 presents data relating to the numbers of inmates present at Impression Bay between 1843 and 1856. It shows that the station's population peaked in mid-1845, when a major influx of prisoners brought the population to 614, although numbers were reduced in the second half of that year, falling to 426 by December. It is believed that substantial numbers of invalids began to arrive at Impression Bay, from Wedge Bay, shortly after this. By late 1846 there were 138 male convict invalids at the Impression Bay station, outnumbered three to one by 'effective' convicts (that is, by 214 first class and 93 third class probationary men).⁵¹ Thereafter, the numbers (combining effectives and invalids) were at their highest in 1849 and 1850, peaking at 591 at the very end of 1850. In those years the number of invalids as a proportion of the station's population increased dramatically, as Impression Bay became predominantly an invalid depot. By mid-1849 there were 337 invalids at Impression Bay, outnumbering effectives by more than two to one (Tables 2 and 3).

The demographic trend that is most notable at Impression Bay, however, was the rise in numbers of so-called 'free paupers' at the station (see Table 4). In 1851, when the records first identified them separately from the larger invalid population, there were 131 free paupers at Impression Bay, being 34% of the 378 non-effective men on the settlement at that time. Probably many of these were men whose sentences had expired while at the station, but who were not able or required to leave. In 1847 for example, questions were raised about whether Walter Parsley was 'in a fit state of mind to be at large', he

48 'Comptroller General's Report for the half year ending 30 June 1846', *BPP*, Vol. 7, p. 578.

49 J. Wood, 'A Short Account of Port Arthur and the Probation Stations on Tasman's Peninsula', in J. Wood (ed.), *Van Diemen's Land Royal Almanack, 1847, Being the Third After Leap Year, the Tenth and Eleventh Years of the Reign of Her Present Majesty, and the Forty-Third Year of the Settlement of the Colony, Launceston, 1847*.

50 La Trobe, Acting Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 31 May 1847, *BPP*, Vol. 8, p. 80.

51 Ballantyne, Superintendent, Cascades, to Denison, Comptroller General, 16 June 1849, Misc 62/3. A1092/2067. In: I.Brand, *Transcripts*, Vol. 15, PAHSMA, p. 153.

having recently received his pardon. In Parsley's case his removal was ordered on the grounds that he was 'troublesome' and he needed to be properly examined at Hobart Town.⁵² Samuel Johnson and Roberts Boyce, holding a ticket-of-leave and a conditional pardon respectively, were 'continued' at Impression Bay 'in the event of their not being able to ensure their own livelihood', until they were discharged at their request in May 1851.⁵³ Evidently many other emancipists were allowed to remain, their number peaking at 179 in mid-1856 (Table 2).

Other than blindness, the men at Impression Bay were likely to have been incapacitated as a direct result of old age or age related ailments such as chronic rheumatism, heart disease, or paralysis. In 1847, when it was mooted that 134 invalid convicts in NSW might be transferred to Van Diemen's Land as part of the break-up of that colony's convict establishment, these men were described as being 'aged and infirmed convicts, requiring not so much restraint as medical and other attendance'.⁵⁴ John Hampton, the Van Diemen's Land Comptroller General, inspected these invalid convicts and described them thus: 'Several of these persons have been bed-ridden for years; others are totally or partially blind from age (a considerable number being from seventy to one hundred years old)'.⁵⁵ The Van Diemen's Land invalids were similarly described as being men 'in a most wretched physical condition, blind, maimed, infirm, and debilitated from age, accident or disease'.⁵⁶ Overall, old age and/or age-related conditions were the prominent characteristics that resulted in men being classified as an invalid.

Notably, there was always sufficient accommodation for the numbers of men sent to Impression Bay, an exception to the general rule for charitable institutions of this period, both locally and internationally. The Comptroller General's Reports for the period 1846 to 1850 (see Table 5) indicate that up until sometime between mid-1846 and late-1847 the bulk were housed in separate huts (really

⁵² Drew, Superintendent, Impression Bay, to Hampton, Comptroller General, 14 March 1847, Misc 62/9, A1087/1102. 179.

⁵³ 'Tasman's Peninsula: Return of Men discharged from the Invalid Station at Impression Bay', 24 May 1851, CON89, TA.

⁵⁴ FitzRoy, Governor New South Wales, to Grey, Secretary of State, 16 February 1849, *BPP*, Vol. 9, p. 5.

⁵⁵ FitzRoy, Governor New South Wales, to Grey, Secretary of State, 5 April 1848, *BPP*, Vol. 9, p. 26.

⁵⁶ Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 27 June 1848, *BPP*, Vol. 9, p. 252.

dormitory/barrack rooms) accommodating twenty men per hut. There was limited night accommodation for those suspected of being homosexual, and only a small number of solitary cells were provided for inmates who infringed regulations. The number of solitary cells did not vary for the period for which we have data, suggesting that this particular form of punishment was not considered overly important or useful. From late-1847 onwards, allegations of homosexuality amongst inmates began to impact upon the architecture of the station and in particular the manner in which buildings, occupied by inmates at night, were subdivided.⁵⁷ In early-1848 the internal walls, which had previously partitioned the accommodation of convicts into rooms housing twenty men, were removed forming four major wards. This work was most probably undertaken as part of the renovations associated with converting the station into the Convict Department's general invalid depot. Probably the change in role for Impression Bay was used as an opportunity to repair generally dilapidated buildings, at a time when the arrangement and construction of the convict stations was generally considered inefficient.⁵⁸

The use of Impression Bay as a depot for invalids lasted for a decade, but it was also used sporadically, with the invalids being sometimes moved to and from other stations. From June 1846, when large numbers of prisoners were transferred from Norfolk Island to stations on the Tasman's Peninsula, Impression Bay received approximately one third of the 1,536 men forwarded.⁵⁹ To make room for them, the invalids who had been sent from Wedge Bay to Impression Bay were, sometime in the second half of 1847, relocated to the Lymington probation station (1845-1848), in the Huon Valley (see Figure 2 in Introduction).⁶⁰ In recognition of the special needs of invalids a number of modifications were made at Lymington, including the erection of a large hospital. Despite the cost incurred in

⁵⁷ See Catie Gilchrist, 'Male Convict Sexuality in the Penal Colonies of Australia, 1820-1850', PhD thesis, School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry, University of Sydney, 2004; J. S. Kerr, *Design for Convicts: An Account of Design for Convict Establishments in the Australian Colonies During the Transportation Era*, Sydney, 1984; R. Tuffin and M. Gibbs, 'The Archaeology of the Convict Probation System: The Labour Landscapes of Port Arthur and the Cascades Probation Station, 1839-55', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 24, 2020, pp. 589-617.

⁵⁸ La Trobe, Acting Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 31 May 1847, *BPP*, Vol. 8, p. 80.

⁵⁹ 'Comptroller General's Report for the half year ending 31 October 1847', *BPP*, Vol. 9, p. 180.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-1.

amending this station it was broken up in mid-1848 and the invalids were subsequently transferred to the asylum at New Norfolk.⁶¹ The move proved to be short lived and, after the Norfolk Island prisoners had passed through their period of probation, the invalids were relocated back to Impression Bay in May 1848.⁶²

Not all the invalids, however, wished to be relocated. Part of the reason for this was that, as noted above, some had served their sentences and were now free. Although the use of the word 'free' is technically correct, it does not accurately represent the perceptions of both officialdom and the wider community. The term 'free pauper' might sometimes have referred to people who were never convicts. However, it was frequently the designation given to ex-convicts, who either through illness, injury or age were no longer able to support themselves.⁶³ John Hargrave, in his work on paupers in Tasmania, concluded that '[o]nly on rare occasions were people without a convict background admitted to invalid depots'.⁶⁴ Similarly, Lynette Ross concluded that Impression Bay 'had a high percentage of men who had completed their sentence'.⁶⁵ Increasingly, Impression Bay became an institution set aside to house former convicts unable to support themselves by other means owing to a lack of family networks or an unwillingness by benevolent associations and governments to furnish them with outdoor relief. As noted above, and as represented in Table 2, the station accommodated relatively high numbers of emancipist males in its final years.

In 1848, 29 emancipist invalids (16 of whom were hospital patients) and James Day, who had come free to the colony, all objected

⁶¹ 'Comptroller General's report for the half year ending 30 April 1848', GO 46/1, TA, pp. 175-6.

⁶² Police Officer, New Norfolk, to Burgess, Chief Police Magistrate, 18 May 1848, CSO24/47/1615, TA, p. 366.

⁶³ Ex-convicts were usually referred to as freed, free men or emancipists. According to Hirst there existed a social convention by which the term ex-convict was not used due to the implied degradation that it carried, especially for those former convicts who had risen to positions of authority in the new society. See J. B. Hirst, *Convict Society and its Enemies: A History of Early New South Wales*, Sydney, 1987, p. 153. William Gates, a political prisoner transported to Van Diemen's Land recorded that convicts who were granted pardons or had served out their sentences were known as 'Emancipationists'. G. MacKane (ed.), *Recollections of Life in Van Diemen's Land, by William Gates, One of the Canadian Patriots*, Dubbo, 1961, p. 32.

⁶⁴ Hargrave, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁶⁵ L. S. Ross, 'Death and Burial at Port Arthur 1830-1877', unpublished Bachelor of Arts (Honours) dissertation, University of Tasmania, 1995, p. 21.

to being sent to Impression Bay. The Principal Medical Officer described these men as 'old and infirm'.⁶⁶ Only 7 were under the age of fifty. William Jillett and Thomas Throssell were both 88 but one Samuel Pollard, an epileptic, was only 28 years old. Seven of the men suffered from paralysis, eight from rheumatism and another six from age related infirmity. Pressure was brought to bear on these free paupers with only 13 of them (including Day) maintaining their opposition to the move.⁶⁷ They were warned by the Medical Officer at New Norfolk and the Police Magistrate that they could not remain in the hospital and they would have to find other means of maintaining themselves if they refused the offer of accommodation at Impression Bay.⁶⁸ On this matter the government was resolute, believing that these men, having accepted government relief, had no say in how or where such relief would be dispensed. Indeed, a note made on correspondence related to this subject, and initialled W. D. (presumably William Denison), stated baldly:

The men who have thrown themselves on the charity of the Government must be content with the conditions which are annexed to the grant of such charitable assistance. If therefore they wish to be supported at the Government expense they must go to the Hospital at Impression Bay which is the only place where such assistance can be given. I have no wish to compel them to go. Indeed I have no power but I cannot afford them any assistance unless they do.⁶⁹

The men, however, remained determined not to be sent. According to the Colonial Surgeon and Visiting Magistrate at New Norfolk the justification for the strength of the men's resolve was that they equated the proposed transfer with being sent to a penal settlement for a crime, that they would be forced to interact with convicts and that they would not receive the same attention as at New Norfolk.⁷⁰ The men possibly had good reason to worry about the

⁶⁶ Principal Medical Officer to Bicheno, Colonial Secretary, 19 April 1848, CSO24/47 1615, TA, p. 350.

⁶⁷ 'Return of Free Paupers who refuse to proceed to Impression Bay, 28 April 1848', CSO24/47 1615, TA, p. 356.

⁶⁸ Bicheno, Colonial Secretary, to Principal Medical Officer, 4 May 1848, CSO24/47 1615, TA, p. 358.

⁶⁹ Denison, Lieutenant Governor, Memo, 4 May 1848, CSO24/47/1615, TA, p. 354.

⁷⁰ Colonial Surgeon to Principal Medical Officer, CSO24/47/1615, 9 May 1848, TA, pp. 360-2; Police Officer, New Norfolk to Burgess, Chief Police Magistrate, 18 May 1848, CSO24/47/1615, TA, pp. 366-8.

nature of the conditions at Impression Bay. If attentiveness at New Norfolk was reliable it did not follow that such would be the case at their new accommodation. Moreover, since many of the invalids had prior experience of Impression Bay, comparisons between the two institutions were likely to have circulated within the group. More often than not the conduct of subordinates in the colony's then existing charitable institutions was characterised by cold neglect, constrained service, and indifferent and unkind spirit.⁷¹ They were also right in thinking that they were being treated as criminals. The choices they faced were to voluntarily accept what was on offer, refuse 'transportation' to Impression Bay and thus risk being forcibly re-entered into the penal system via the vagrancy laws, or starve. In this case these men chose not to be institutionalised in a penal context.

Those that undertook the journey would hardly have their minds set at ease. Reverend Fry published an account of their relocation in 1850:

A pitiable tale was told, I believe with perfect truth of a number of aged men and invalids, who were summarily ordered to be transferred to the probation station at Impression Bay from the town of New Norfolk, where these poor creatures enjoyed many advantages, and were not wholly cut off from communication with free people. It was deemed advisable that the station at Impression Bay should be permanently maintained, and the invalids were conveyed on a wet and stormy day, many of them on the deck of the steamer, a distance of nearly forty miles. I was informed by the medical officer and the religious instructor, that several of them died, and many suffered from exposure to the cold and wet.⁷²

There is evidence that those who survived the voyage were not slow to exercise their agency. George Drew, Superintendent of Impression Bay in the late 1840s and early 1850s, found his infirm emancipist charges to be 'far more troublesome to deal with than effective men'.⁷³ He viewed them as not quite sane and had difficulty managing some of the problems arising from their physical state.

⁷¹ *Hobart Town Courier*, 9 August 1844, p. 2.

⁷² H. P. Fry, *A System of Penal Discipline: With a Report on the Treatment of Prisoners in Great Britain and Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1850.

⁷³ Drew, Impression Bay, Superintendent, to Hampton, Comptroller General, 16 September 1851, CSO24/289/6450, TA, p. 180.

Complications also arose from their status; they were free men in a penal establishment. Under the then existing law they could not be confined at Impression Bay against their will. This effectively limited the disciplinary repertoire available and also permitted paupers to move between the institution and the wider community. They had some control over their lives. If they were not satisfied with their treatment at Impression Bay, or resented Drew's efforts to control their behaviour, then they could leave. This made them difficult to manage and, of course, distinguished them from the station's regular inmates.

From about 1850 onwards Impression Bay also functioned as a repository for the overflow of lunatics admitted to the New Norfolk Asylum, and it still retained a sizeable population of effective probationary convicts. The role of convict stations as repositories for both convict and emancipist, invalids and lunatics, was common in Van Diemen's Land (it occurred at Port Arthur, New Norfolk, the Cascades Female Factory in Hobart and at other stations), as well as in other Australian penal colonies, such as the Parramatta Female Factory in New South Wales and at the North Fremantle Depot in Western Australia. From sometime in 1849 until at least mid-1854, Impression Bay forwarded its own excess of insane inmates to the Saltwater River station, helping to keep that station active long after it had been deemed unviable as an agricultural station. In late-1849, with the likelihood that transportation to Van Diemen's Land would soon end, the Convict Department looked to reduce the number of penal stations dedicated to the maintenance of imperial convicts.⁷⁴ The Comptroller General wrote in early 1850 that it was proposed to abandon Saltwater River following that year's harvest.⁷⁵ It was, however, retained a little longer in case Impression Bay required additional accommodation for pauper lunatics.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 31 January 1850, *BPP*, Vol. 8, p. 423.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ 'Comptroller General's Report for the half year ending 31 December 1849', *BPP*, Vol. 8, p. 426; Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Grey, Secretary of State, 31 January 1850, *BPP*, Vol. 8, p. 423. In the first half of 1850 a small detachment of invalids (most probably insane invalids) were sent from Impression Bay to the Saltwater River probation station. Returns for mid-1851 state that there were 45 lunatics and 20 invalids stationed at Saltwater River. See: 'Comptroller General's Report for the half year ending 30 June 1851', *BPP*, Vol. 11, p. 89. At other times detachments of invalids were sent from Impression Bay to other probation stations on the Tasman's Peninsula. For example, there was a party of invalids present at the Cascades in 1853. The necessity for despatching numbers of invalids from Impression Bay was related to the availability of accommodation for differing categories of inmates.

As the British government strove to minimise the cost of its convict responsibilities, especially after transportation to Tasmania ceased in 1853, Impression Bay was increasingly viewed as impracticable and unaffordable, especially as its inmates did little to contribute towards the operation and maintenance of the settlement.⁷⁷ While the imperial government would continue to have an interest in various penal stations for many years to come, Impression Bay would not be among those retained in for the longer term. And yet, Impression Bay was not to be abandoned immediately. In 1853, when seeking reductions to the Convict Department, the Comptroller General stated that the number of convicts at Impression Bay would 'gradually diminish' but that it would 'certainly be required for the next two years'.⁷⁸ One reason for retaining it was for it to receive the insane patients from Saltwater River, who were relocated after the end of June 1855.⁷⁹ Impression Bay finally ceased to operate as a convict station in 1857. Between April and June of that year the invalids, paupers and lunatics were transferred to Port Arthur and accommodated in old barrack buildings formerly occupied by convicts.⁸⁰ All 238 invalids and 74 insane inmates at Impression Bay were removed. This concentration of convicts, lunatics, invalids and paupers into the same location was intended to provide an 'economical and convenient' solution to the problem of managing an ageing and increasingly infirm population.⁸¹

⁷⁷ 'Acting Comptroller General's Report for the period 1 July 1856-30', June 1857, *BPP*, Vol. 14, p. 180.

⁷⁸ Denison, Lieutenant Governor, to Newcastle, Secretary of State, 2 July 1854, *BPP*, Vol. 11, p. 371.

⁷⁹ Principle Medical Officer to Hampton, Comptroller General, 28 June 1855, Misc. 62/34, A114/21046. In: I.Brand, *Transcripts*, Vol. 15, PAHSMA.

⁸⁰ Young, Governor, to Labouchere, Secretary of State, 22 August 1857, *BPP*, Vol. 14, pp. 178-82.

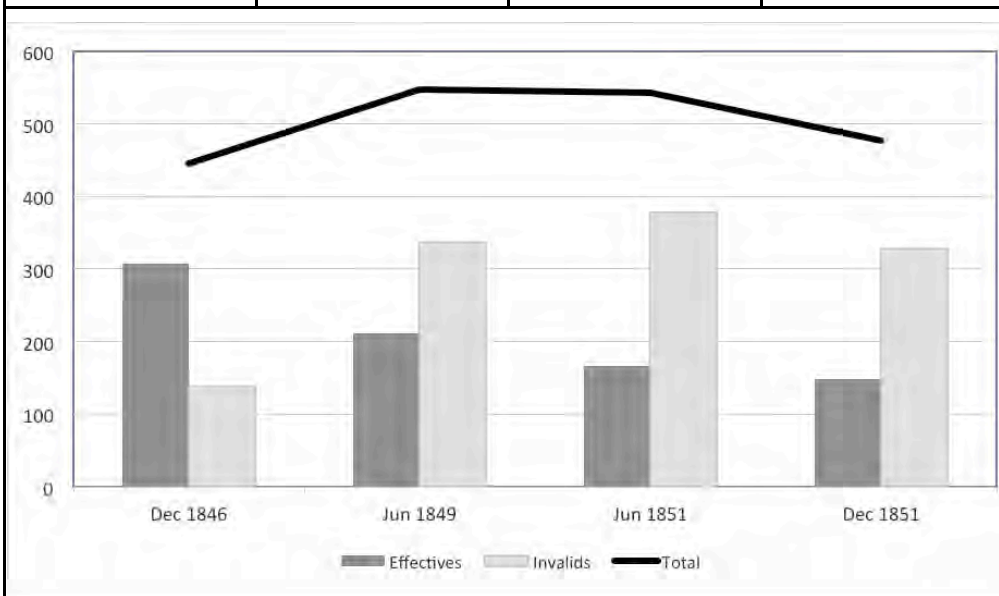
⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

Date	Total Number of Inmates	Number of 'effective' convicts	Number of invalid convicts	Number of effective and invalid convicts combined	Total Number of Male Convicts in Van Diemen's Land	Percentage of convicts at Impression Bay	Number of Free Paupers	Number of free insane
1.9.1843	374	374	—	374	21,389	1.8	—	—
27.9.1843	374	374	—	374	21,387	1.8	—	—
31.3.1844	385	385	—	385	—	—	—	—
29.6.1844	399	399	—	399	23,078	1.7	—	—
1.7.1844	400	400	—	400	—	—	—	—
31.12.1844	487	487	—	487	24,824	1.9	—	—
30.6.1845	614	614	—	614	24,513	2.5	—	—
31.12.1845	426	426	—	426	25,133	1.7	—	—
30.6.1846	303	303	—	303	26,690	1.1	—	—
31.10.1846	388	388	—	388	31,481	1.2	—	—
31.12.1846	445	307	138	445	—	—	—	—
30.10.1847	346	?	?	346	30,701	1.1	—	—
31.10.1847	520	?	?	520	24,659	2.1	—	—
30.10.1848	365	?	?	365	22,678	1.6	—	—
30.6.1849	548	211	337	548	19,740	2.8	—	—
30.6.1850	551	?	?	551	17,101	3.2	—	—
31.12.1850	591	?	?	591	17,016	3.5	—	—
30.6.1851	544	166	247	413	17,016	2.4	131	—
31.12.1851	477	149	204	353	15,514	2.3	124	—
30.6.1852	368	?	?	232	14,564	1.6	136	—
31.12.1852	479	?	?	361	14,672	2.5	118	—
31.12.1853	517	?	?	415	12,575	3.3	102	—
31.12.1854	451	?	?	315	8,408	3.8	136	—
30.6.1856	501	?	?	347	4,358	8.0	179	75

Summarised chiefly from Comptroller-General's reports as they appear in the British Parliamentary Papers. The 'Number of Free paupers' includes those who were free, free by servitude, or pardoned.

Table 3: Number of Inmates at Impression Bay defined as effective or invalid, 1846-1859

	Total	Effective	Invalid
Dec 1846	445	307	138
Jun 1849	548	211	337
Jun 1851	544	166	378
Dec 1851	477	149	328



Summarised chiefly from Comptroller-General's reports as they appear in the British Parliamentary Papers.

The Convict Department had learnt something from the earlier transfer of the invalids from New Norfolk to Impression Bay. The Comptroller General gave the Principal Medical Officer very specific instructions as to the care and wellbeing of the men being moved.⁸² Apparently his instructions were carried out satisfactorily, the Civil Commandant at Port Arthur reporting that 'the entire removal was effected without the occurrence of a single accident', even though 'a

⁸² Hampton, Comptroller General to Principal Medical Officer, 31 March 1857, Misc. 62/34, A114/22564. In: I.Brand, *Transcripts*, Vol. 15, PAHSMA.

large number of these people were perfectly helpless, having been bed-ridden for years'.⁸³ As with the move from New Norfolk to Impression Bay, there was insubordination on the part of the 'free' paupers to the relocation to Port Arthur.⁸⁴ There exist a number of memoranda, dated May and June 1857, exposing a pattern of resistance in which pauper invalids discharged themselves from Impression Bay and returned to the two major centres, Hobart Town and Launceston, even though they lacked any real means of support. As these paupers were technically free men the authorities had no power to detain them unless they committed a crime.⁸⁵ The following memorandum records a widely held middle-class bias towards these men:

The town [Hobart Town] has lately been infested with blind beggars and men from Impression Bay, many of them men of most disreputable character. Most of these men should be sent to the asylum provided for them by the Govt. and in cases of refusal, the police should prevent them becoming a nuisance in the town.⁸⁶

In response to this Governor Young noted that similar complaints regarding Impression Bay paupers had been made to him in Launceston. He further stated that paupers begging in Hobart Town should be removed to the accommodation afforded them on the Tasman's Peninsula.⁸⁷ The problem the authorities faced was that the men were 'very unwilling to go'.⁸⁸ In Launceston, the Benevolent

⁸³ 'Acting Comptroller General's Report for the period 1 July 1856-30', June 1857, *BPP*, Vol. 14, p. 182.

⁸⁴ Davies, Archdeacon, to Young, Governor, 20 June 1857, CSD 1/120 (Y121)/4292, TA.

⁸⁵ A return tabled in the Legislative Council and dated 17 February 1857, just prior to the removal of men from Impression Bay to Port Arthur, states that there were 268 invalids and paupers at the station. Of these, 153 were the financial responsibility of the colony (with a few exceptions almost certainly all these men were emancipists) and only 115 were an expense to the imperial government (and in all likelihood convicts under sentence who were old and infirm). Of those chargeable to the colony, 59 were hospital cases and designated invalids, while the remaining 94 cases were termed paupers. It is interesting to note that in this case the distinction between pauper and invalid appears to be related to the degree of infirmity and requirement of medical care. It is also worth noting that 15 cases on the colonial books were defined as having been originally free. This is taken to mean that there were non-emancipist invalid paupers detained at Impression Bay who had originally been immigrants. Whether or not they were under sentence is unclear.

⁸⁶ Davies, Archdeacon, to Young, Governor, 20 June 1857, CSD 1/120 (Y121)/4292, TA.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Connell, Launceston Benevolent Society, to Henty, Colonial Secretary, 24 October 1857, CSD 1/120 (Y121)/4310, TA.

Society was concerned by the appearance of so many paupers on its streets who had formerly been resident at Impression Bay. They found themselves in a difficult position, as they did not have the means to permanently care for them, but at the same time found it hard to punish them as vagrants when they had no means of subsistence.⁸⁹ The compassion shown by this Society to the poor was sincere. Throughout the nineteenth century the Launceston Benevolent Society, as opposed to its Hobart Town counterpart, placed equal importance on checking the imposition of the idle and fraudulent with succouring the real destitution of the distressed. The Hobart Town Society always placed far greater emphasis on the detection of mendacity. As early as 1847, the Launceston Society understood something of the reality of poverty. They recognised that the 'famished will obtain food by theft when no other means are available'.⁹⁰

Hargrave concluded that the treatment of pauper emancipists unable to care for themselves 'reflected the link, both physical and intellectual, between the convict system and the pauper establishments'.⁹¹ The history of Impression Bay and its use as a holding station for such persons clearly illustrates this point. Invalids and paupers, while technically free, were sent to a working penal station to die, and die they did. Surviving burial registers for Impression Bay indicate that several hundred invalids and paupers never left and were interred within the station's graveyard. Following the closure of Impression Bay as an invalid and pauper depot in 1857 the disdain of Tasmanians towards this group was reflected in the fact that the survivors were sent to the ultra-penal establishment of Port Arthur. They remained until its closure in 1877.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Launceston Examiner*, 7 July 1847, p. 434.

⁹¹ Hargrave, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

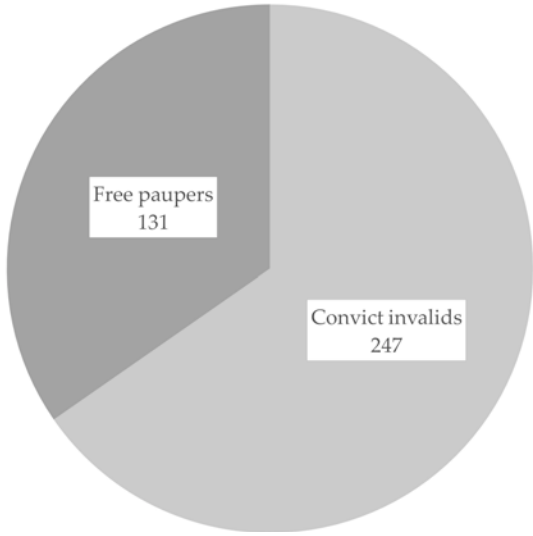
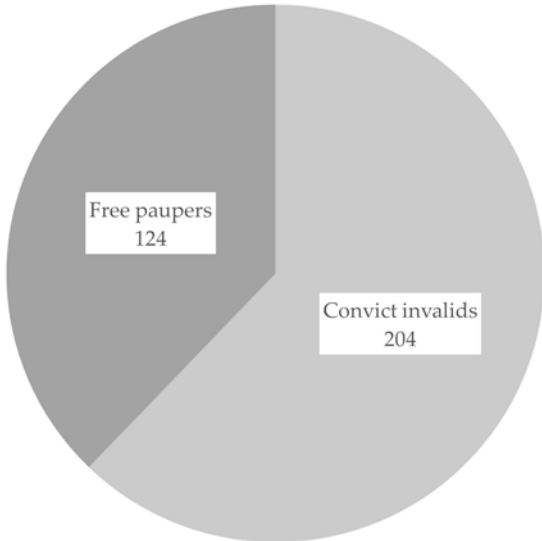
Table 4: Number of invalids versus free paupers at Impression Bay in 1851										
<p>June 1851 Total: 378</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Data for June 1851</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Free paupers</td> <td>131</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Convict invalids</td> <td>247</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>378</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Count	Free paupers	131	Convict invalids	247	Total	378		
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Category	Count									
Free paupers	124									
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<p>As seen in Table 2 above, 1851 is the only year for which convict invalids and free paupers were counted separately. The number of invalids at the station was not recorded from 1852.</p>										

Table 5: Number of huts, separate apartments and solitary cells at Impression Bay, with the number of men who can be accommodated.				
Date	Wards or Huts	Number who can be accommodated in the Huts	Separate apartments	Solitary Cells
30.06.1846	28	560 20 men per hut.	12	12
31.10.1847	25	496 16 in bed places separated by battens & 480 in bed places separated by boards.	78	12
30.04.1848	25	460 318 in bed places separated by battens & 142 in bed places completely separated by side boards	78	12
31.12.1848	4	432 All in bed places completely separated by side boards	78	12
30.06.1849	4	432 All in bed places completely separated by side boards	78	12
31.12.1849	4	432 All in bed places completely separated by side boards	78	12
30.06.1850	4	432 All in bed places completely separated by side boards	78	12
31.12.1850	5	451 All in bed places completely separated by side boards	78	12
Summarised chiefly from Comptroller-General's reports as they appear in the British Parliamentary Papers				

This review of Impression Bay's involvement in regulating Van Diemen's Land's male invalid and pauper population throws light on aspects of the subsequent development of Tasmania's charitable institutions. The Impression Bay episode shows how the management of the invalid poor developed within the existing convict system in response to a numerical increase in numbers of both aged and infirm convicts and emancipists from the mid-1840s. If the mid-century anti-transportationists are to be believed, the system of transporting convicts to Van Diemen's Land was the progenitor of pauperism in Tasmania. In the early 1850s, paupers were widely perceived as being the wretched outcasts of the convict system; a group not to be viewed with sympathy and respect but despised for having dishonoured and abused their world.⁹² Outdoor relief, by either public or private bodies, was not a favoured solution, the preference being to remove them to isolated and confined institutions such as Impression Bay, where they became indistinct from the effective and non-effective convicts with whom they shared its spaces.

In many respects Impression Bay was the incipient charitable institution, housing an undifferentiated pauper population in which the emancipist was inextricably linked with, and viewed as, a criminal. The warehousing of convicts, lunatics and a generalised pauper population (made up of the aged poor, the simple minded, the injured, the lame and the blind) within the same institution, was characteristic of a lack of classification and specialisation in the management of those individuals who formed the lowest ranks of society. The experience of Impression Bay was illustrative of many of the problems that plagued the colonial government for the remainder of the nineteenth century.

The relocating of paupers, to and from Impression Bay, as and when the Convict Department required its buildings for a different use, was to be emulated by the early charitable institutions managed by the colonial government. It was symptomatic of a lack of forward planning, of a failure to recognise and predict the longer-term institutional requirements for managing this section of society, and of the lowly status of such individuals in the eyes of those responsible for their care. Their treatment in the final decade of imperial rule exemplifies a lack of awareness of the requirements and capabilities of the largest pauper constituent – the aged and infirm emancipist. This is laid bare in the manner in which such individuals were transported,

⁹² Address from the Anti-Transportation Delegates to the Colonists of Australasia, 25 August 1850, *BPP*, Vol. 11, pp. 150-2, 154-7.

with little or no regard to their health in appalling conditions; and, in the belief that they were able to, and should be made to, labour. Lamentably for Tasmania's nineteenth-century pauper population, the attainment of this knowledge took the remainder of the century.