

## CBD HISTORIC SITES



- |                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 The Landing Place        | 12 Female Factory (Women's Gaol) |
| 2 Royal Hotel              | 13 St Thomas Church              |
| 3 Commissariat and Granary | 14 Hospital                      |
| 4 The Historic Court House | 15 Dispensary                    |
| 5 Lumber Yard              | 16 Surgeon's Residence           |
| 6 First Burying Ground     | 17 Wesleyan Church               |
| 7 Government House site    | 18 Prisoners barracks            |
| 8 Military Enclosure       | 19 Sandstone pavers              |
| 9 Police Office            | 20 Barrel Drain                  |
| 10 Sugar Plantation        | 21 Remains of Overseers cottages |
| 11 Munster Street Well     | 22 Port Macquarie Museum         |

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Map: Port Macquarie 1831, Frederick D'Arcy

On 8 October 1818 a party led by Surveyor General John Oxley reached the east coast of New South Wales after an overland journey from the Macquarie River which they had left almost three months earlier.

## About PORT MACQUARIE

For thousands of years before Oxley's arrival the district had been part of the traditional lands of the Birpai people and was known as 'Guruk'. But Oxley, believing the place might be suitable for settlement, named it Port Macquarie in honour of the then Governor of New South Wales, Lachlan Macquarie.



Oxley revisited the area in May 1819 and his favourable report led to the decision to establish Port Macquarie as a penal settlement for prisoners convicted within the colony of offences punishable by transportation.

The first contingent of soldiers and convicts, under the command of Captain Francis Allman, arrived in April 1821 to form the settlement. Some of the earliest buildings, such as the overseers' cottages and the commandant's residence, occupied sites included in this tour.

The settlement grew quickly over the first few years. Government farms were established and large amounts of cedar and rosewood were felled, provoking conflict with the local Aboriginal people.

By then, however, Port Macquarie was becoming increasingly insecure owing to the rapid spread of free settlers through the Hunter region, making it easier for convicts to escape.

In 1830 Port Macquarie was opened to free settlers and progressively came under civil administration. Land along the Hastings and Wilson Rivers was quickly taken up. Together with timber, agriculture constituted the district's economic base, providing opportunities for further commercial and professional activity. Some prisoners remained in the area but the convict establishment was finally disbanded in 1847.

Painting: Port Macquarie 1826, Augustus Earle

## HISTORIC SITES & HERITAGE WALK



## PORT MACQUARIE MUSEUM Our Place, Our Stories

This guide enables visitors to view historic sites within the CBD and to imagine what life was like in the early settlement. The heritage walk is approximately 2½ km (allow 1½ - 2 hours).



Scan this QR code to access the izi.TRAVEL audio guide on your device. It includes extended information and historic images.



Painting: Port Macquarie c.1840, Joseph Backler





**1 The Landing Place**  
It was here in April 1821 that Captain Francis Allman, together with 40 soldiers and 60 prisoners, landed from three ships - Lady Nelson, Prince Regent, and Mermaid - to begin establishing the new penal settlement of Port Macquarie.



**2 Royal Hotel**  
The original hotel was built by Major Archibald Clunes Innes, a former commandant of the penal settlement, in 1841. It was destroyed by fire in 1886 but re-built the following year. The hotel was restored to its 1880s glory in 1999.



**3 Commissariat and Granary**  
The government store and granary stood on the site now occupied by the Police Station. Grain grown on government farms along the Hastings and Wilson Rivers was ground using a treadmill operated by prisoners, often as punishment for their misdeeds.



**4 The Historic Court House**  
The building was erected on the site of an earlier court house in 1869, more than two decades after the convict establishment had been disbanded. It is the oldest government building remaining in Port Macquarie and was in use until 1986.



**5 The Lumber Yard**  
The yard contained saw pits where convict sawyers prepared cedar and rosewood logs from camps up the river for shipping to Sydney. Carpenters, blacksmiths, cabinet makers, wheelwrights and other skilled mechanics also worked in the yard.



**6 First Burying Ground**  
At least 28 people were buried here before the ground was closed in 1824 but only four headstones or slabs remain. They include that of James Vaughan, a soldier who, while out searching for escaped convicts, was shot by a fellow soldier who was afterwards convicted of manslaughter.



**7 Government House Site**  
Presently Focus Apartments this was the site of Government House, the commandant's residence. It was a large single-storey house with wide verandahs and magnificent views up the coast and over the town. An archaeological survey in 2001 revealed the original brick foundations and a variety of artefacts.

## 8 Military Enclosure

Just to the east of Government House and on the site now occupied by Port Macquarie Public School, were a guard house, officers' quarters, married soldiers' houses, military barracks, a temporary school and a military post office.

## 9 Police Office

The Police Office, said to have been a small brick building, stood on what is now the corner of School Street and New Street. It was needed for civil administration, especially after the area was opened to free settlers in 1830.

## 10 Sugar Plantation

In 1821 the commandant procured 8 joints of sugar cane. Under the tender care of James Williams, a West Indian convict, these were increased to 7000 and planted on about half a hectare of ground to produce the first sugar crop grown in Australia.



**11 Munster Street Well**  
There were a number of wells in early Port Macquarie, fed by groundwater or rain water. This one was used by inmates of the Female Factory. The convict-made bricks around the rim bear various identification marks known as 'frogs'.

## 12 Female Factory (Women's Gaol)

Most women convicts were assigned to households as domestic servants. Those in the Factory cooked, laundered, mended clothes, straightened nails for re-use, or picked oakum (tarred fibres used for caulking) from old rope.



**13 St Thomas Church**  
Work on the church began in 1824 with the first service being conducted by the Rev John Cross in 1828. The church is notable for its box pews and the grave of Captain John Rolland, who died in November 1824 while in command of the settlement.



**14 Hospital**  
The hospital was situated where St Agnes Church now stands. It consisted of four weatherboard buildings and one brick "dissecting room". Injuries caused by accidents, fires, assaults and floggings were treated by the surgeon but surgical techniques and medicines were primitive.



**15 Dispensary**  
Medicines used in the hospital were formulated and stored here. When the last military surgeon left in 1847 the church took over the building to use as a Parish School. It has since been extensively altered and is now the Colonial Chapel of Christ the Healer.



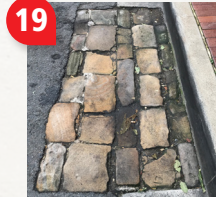
**16 Surgeon's Residence**  
After 1847 the church used the building as the Rectory. Over the years it has been greatly modified and now serves as the parish offices. However, the cellars still contain the original baking ovens.



**17 Wesleyan Church**  
This was the first Methodist Church on the North Coast. It was built by voluntary subscription in 1840 but closed in 1848 due to a declining congregation. It was reopened in 1857 and underwent alterations in the 1870s and 1928. The church was fully restored in 1995.

## 18 Prisoners Barracks

Convicts were housed in barracks and huts running parallel to the shoreline from the north-west corner of the intersection of William Street and Horton Street. After Port Macquarie was opened to free settlers in 1830 new convict barracks were built on Clarence Street above the lumber yard.



**19 Sandstone Pavers**  
In the late 19th century ships' ballast stones were used to pave the sides of some of the town's main streets to improve drainage. Three small sections of paving have been left exposed near the kerb on the north side of William Street between Horton and Hay Streets.



**20 Barrel Drain**  
Constructed from locally made red clay sandstock bricks bonded with mud and shell mortar, the drain dates from 1823 and was part of an ordered system of water and waste management.



**21 Remains of Overseers Cottages**  
On the lower ground floor of the Glasshouse can be seen the footings of some of the original overseers' cottages dating from 1823. View the display of artefacts recovered from an archaeological survey made in 2006.



**22 Port Macquarie Museum**  
The building was erected between 1835 and 1840 from convict-made bricks and served as a shop with upstairs residence. It is the oldest commercial building remaining in Port Macquarie.