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THE SETTLERS' MUSTER BOOK 1800 DIGITISED: A PORTAL TO AUSTRALIA'S EARLY COLONIAL HISTORY REVEALED

***The Settlers' Muster Book 1800*, a surviving record of early European settlers in Australia, has been digitised and is now accessible to the public for the first time.**

This significant digitisation project is the result of a collaboration between the NSW Parliamentary Library and Museums of History NSW, making the Settlers' Muster Book available online for the first time through Parliament's new online database, [Parlimento](#).

You can now virtually leaf through the pages, which consists of two volumes documenting early settlers and convicts begun by Gidley King during the administration of Governor John Hunter. The book is a pencil record, later inked over, highlighting the scarcity of paper in the colony at that time. Additionally, the rough quality of the paper further underscores the resource constraints they faced. This record offers the people of NSW an opportunity to uncover potential links to their genealogy, while historians may discover new details that provide valuable insights into this formative period of the colony.

Honoured on the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register in 2021, the book is the earliest and most comprehensive surviving record of the colony.

The Hon. Greg Piper MP, Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly, expressed his enthusiasm at the launch of Parlimento, NSW Parliament's online archive database.

"The Settlers' Muster Book is a crucial part of the NSW story and a valuable inclusion to our digital archive, Parlimento. It's truly remarkable that anyone can now explore this historical treasure online at their convenience. This is such a valuable document that has not really seen the light of day.

"I encourage you to delve into the book—who knows what connections you might uncover? A prominent citizen of the past, a future governor or even a distant relative. The book explores the role of women, land transactions, livestock quota and so much more; you start getting a really good view into colonial life, simply by flipping through the pages digitally," Mr Piper said.



The Hon. Ben Franklin MLC, President of the Legislative Council, said the historical significance really strikes a chord with him as many of the names are significant in the early history of Australia.

“James Bloodworth is one name that stands out. He was a convict transported to Australia. As a master bricklayer and builder, he was responsible for the design and erection of Australia’s first buildings, including the first Government House, which lasted from 1788 to 1845.

“Parlimento is a game changer for understanding not only the history of our Parliament but also the lives of those who came before us. I encourage everyone to explore the digital archives, which will continue to be expanded,” Mr Franklin said.

There is everything from pictures of Queen Elizabeth II’s visit in 1954 to old images of Macquarie Street in Parlimento.

Martyn Killion, Director of Collections at Museums of History NSW, shed light on the technical challenges during the delicate digitisation process.

“Given the age and condition of the Muster Book, we employed specialised equipment to ensure no damage occurred during digitisation. The high-quality images we’ve produced not only enhance public access but also preserve this artifact for future generations.”

“It’s a true digital representation of the original, allowing people to explore its contents while safeguarding the document’s integrity,” Mr Killion added.

Visit [Parlimento](#) today to discover the Settlers' Muster Book.