

Mary Small and John Parker.

The descendants these two First Fleeters form the largest First Fleet family in Australia numbering 25,200.

Mary Small was born in 1758 in Chelsea, Greater London. Not a lot is recorded of her early life but she worked at a Mrs. Hickman's Boarding House in Coptic Street London before working for a time as a Prison Nurse. When she returned to work at Mrs. Hickman's House she was accused of stealing and subsequently sentenced to transportation aboard the *Lady Penryn*. On arriving at Sydney Cove she was working in a hospital tent where she met First Fleeter John Parker.

John Parker was born November 30th, 1781 in Birmingham, Warwickshire. At aged 19 he became a bit maker and then joined the 33rd Company of the Plymouth Division of the Marine Corps at Birmingham on 16 April, 1781. When discharged from the Navy two years later John Small had no income and had little chance of finding employment in overcrowded London.

In 1875, in company with 3 others, John was charged with Highway Robbery and sentenced to transportation for 7 years. He was held in a hulk on the Thames, the *Dunkirk* Prison Ship, for two years before boarding the *Charlotte* for the long sea voyage to New South Wales.

On arrival in Port Jackson he was employed in the laboratory tent where he met Mary Small. They were married by Reverend Richard Johnson in Port Jackson, under the *great tree* on the 12th October, 1788. John was unfortunately removed from work in the hospital tent when he, and a number of others, were found drunk on hospital wine. Otherwise he was apparently trustworthy and had a gentlemanly manner as he became Captain Phillip's personal servant. The newly married couple lived in a hut at Parramatta before John received his Land Grant at Eastern Farms in 1794. He had 30 acres of land, all cleared, 20 acres of which was cultivated. In 1825 John also received a pension after 17 years as District Constable for Kissing Point.

John & Mary were married for 36 years. They had 7 children. There was a history of multiple births in their family over the generations - apparently 120 sets of twins, one set of quintuplets and one family having 7 children in 13 months!

In 1824 Mary drowned in a well at Ryde, aged 65. John lived a further 25 years until aged 88 and is possibly the longest living male First Fleeter. He is buried at St. Anne's cemetery, Ryde.