

## Thomas Akers

Thomas Akers was born in 1758, son of Thomas Akers and Mary Hussen of Devon, England.



Thomas was a Shoemaker by trade. Not much is known of his early life until 1785 when, at the age of 27, he was arrested and charged in the company of John Smith with assault and robbery of Mr. John Squance on the King's Highway. Their combined haul was 10 shillings and when tried at Exeter Castle, Devon on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1785 Thomas was found guilty and sentenced to hang.

After a little more than 2 years on the prison hulk "Dunkirk" on the Thames River, while he awaited execution, his sentence was commuted to 7 years on condition of transportation to the colonies. Both Thomas and John Smith were together on the hulk and were reported to be "troublesome at times"...

Thomas found himself bound for Botany Bay aboard the 'Charlotte' which contained 88 male and 20 female convicts, with 213 Marines, 27 wives and 14 children.

Thomas' surname is on record as being spelt ACRES but he signed his name AKERS, the spelling which is used today.

Thomas appears to have been a model prisoner and by 1792 was emancipated and found is partner in Ann Guy.

Ann (Hinchley) was born in 1757 and married Alexander Guy on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1789. She was convicted of stealing linen shirts and a cotton petticoat, a combined value of 17 shillings. She was sentenced at the Old Bailey and found herself bound for Botany Bay with the Third Fleet on board the convict transport "Mary Ann".

It is thought she and Thomas were married in 1792. A daughter called Mary Ann was born in 1792 and in 1794 Thomas received his first land grant of 20 acres with 10 others at Mulgrave Place on the Wilberforce Reach of the Hawkesbury River. A second daughter, Sophia, was born in 1795, my great, great grandmother. Thomas was reported to have been speared by aborigines at Mulgrave Place in 1798.

The 1814 muster stated that Thomas was free by servitude and a landholder and owned 40 acres at Airds, Campbelltown. Ten years later on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 1824 Thomas died aged 66 at Cowpasture and is buried at St. Peters Anglican Church Campbelltown as a Catholic. His wife Ann died at age 74 in 1831.

Thomas Akers Public School (established 1986) at Ambervale was named in his honour and is built on his original land grant at Campbelltown. The first Principal, Mr. Ralph Brown was also a descendant of Thomas Akers. There is also a reserve named in his honour at Ambervale.