

## The road builders

Cox began with 38 convicts, four free persons and a guard of eight soldiers. The number increased "when the road became more difficult" and after the completion of Cox's Pass at Mt York "some were discharged on account of their good conduct".

For the convicts it was an opportunity to gain emancipation—labour in exchange for liberty. Cox never referred to the men as 'convicts' or 'prisoners' but rather as 'the people', 'men' and 'workmen'. Unlike other convict road gangs, these men were not in chains.

Cox was accompanied by two Aboriginal men from the Darug Tribe, Colebee from the Booroerongal Clan and Joe from the Mulgoa Clan.

## THE ROADMAKERS

### FREE PERSONS

Thomas Hobby Esq  
Assistant on the Expedition  
500 acres of land and six cows  
Chief supervisor  
Richard Lewis  
200 acres, one horse, four cows  
John Tighe  
100 acres, two cows and £5  
Samuel Ayres  
Servant to Mr Cox  
Two cows

### CONVICTS

James Watson  
Leader of the Road Makers  
Thomas Gorman  
Charge of stores  
Samuel Freeman  
Rough Carpenter  
William Dye  
Rough Carpenter  
Thomas Carpenter  
Sawyer  
Thomas Cook  
Sawyer  
James Richards  
Blacksmith  
Samuel Waters  
Bullock Driver with two Government carts  
Henry Cryer  
Bullock Driver with two Government carts  
John Hanley  
Bullock Driver with two Government carts  
James Dwyer  
Leader of the Fire-making Gang  
Robert Fowler  
Quarryman  
William Herdman  
Shoemaker  
John Crawley  
Thomas Cross  
John Toom  
Samuel Stanley  
Thomas Frost  
Samuel Whitney  
Patrick Harragaddy

### LABOURERS

Samuel Crook  
John Allen  
Thomas Adams  
Stephen Purke  
\*Thomas Ruddocks  
Samuel Davis  
Henry Morton  
John Manning  
John Tindall  
James Thelby  
William Lawrence  
Harry Sullivan  
John Ross  
James McCarty  
\*William Appledore  
Stephen Hockey  
Patrick Hanrahan

The convicts and labourers were granted emancipation.

❖ Free pardon

\* Ticket of leave

## After the construction of Cox's Road

1813 to 1815 were two significant years in the history of the colony. Macquarie laid the foundation for the future—the future of European settlement west of the mountains, of further journeys of exploration and the beginnings of an inland pastoral industry and agriculture.

Regrettably, for Aboriginal people, the future was one of a clash of cultures, conflict and dispossession.

On 24 August 1824, martial law was declared at Bathurst in an attempt to gain the upper hand as the Wiradjuri people fought to protect their lands. It was Cox's Road that carried the army that imposed martial law.

Initially settlement was strictly controlled by Macquarie.

*"The military guard, stationed at the first depot on the mountains will receive full instructions to prevent the progress of any persons who shall not have obtained regular passes to visit the country only."*

In 1818 a few settlers were placed on small allotments but by the late 1820s the area still remained relatively undeveloped and low in population. Cox's Road set the course for the development of inland Australia.

## Cox's Road today

When travelling the Great Western Highway from Glenbrook to Mt Victoria you are essentially travelling on Cox's Road. From the Fish River to O'Connell the local roads are on the line of the road. From O'Connell to Bathurst, little evidence remains of Cox's Road as it followed the ridges across what is now farmland.

The significant precincts containing the archaeological evidence of Cox's Road have received State heritage listing. The Mt York, Linden and Woodford precincts are the most easily accessed.

### References:

Karskens G. (1988) *Cox's Way: An Historical and Archaeological Study of Cox's Road and Early Crossings of the Blue Mountains, New South Wales*. Crown Lands Office

Mackanness, George Ed, *Fourteen Journeys Over the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, Parts 1-3*. Ford, Sydney

Website: [www.coxsroaddreaming.org.au](http://www.coxsroaddreaming.org.au) Cox's Road Dreaming Project and outlets for Cox's Road Dreaming Guidebook



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# Experience Cox's Road

## The Western Road Emu Plains to Bathurst 1814 - 1815



The first road over the  
Blue Mountains  
to the West  
Through Dharug, Gundungurra  
and Wiradjuri Country