

Information Sheet 8

QUEENSLAND STATISTICS POLYNESIAN LABORERS

Digitised newspapers on the Trove website provide a wealth of information including statistical data for Queensland. A search from 1863-1910 has revealed some interesting information.

The Brisbane Courier dated Saturday, 5 September 1868

included the following article. A report dated 5th July, from the Immigration Agent at Brisbane, Mr. McDonnell, with reference to the Polynesian laborers at present in this colony, has been laid before Parliament. It is addressed to the Under Colonial Secretary, and is as follows:-

"I have the honor to forward a preliminary report on the returns made to me, in compliance with the requirement of the Polynesian Laborers Act, 31 Victoria, No. 47, clause 2, which states, - 'That

within four months from the passing of this Act all persons who have in their employment any Polynesian laborers shall make a return to the Immigration Agent or authorised agent of all such laborers in their employment, &c., &c.' And in doing so, I would state that the returns at present are incomplete to a certain extent; and in comparing the number taken from the returns (1147) with those shown in the census taken on the 1st March last (1492), I find that there is a deficiency of 345, distributed among the various districts. Returns of those will be collected as soon as possible, and when they are complete I will furnish a report on the subject.

"The four months alluded to having expired only on the 4th instant, I am unable to do more than forward a statement

showing, in a tabulated form, the information given in the returns received to that date.

"A few of the returns were imperfect, and they have been returned for completion. The imperfections principally consist of either the omission of the name of the Island from which the employees came, or the native name was given, which latter would tend to mislead.

"Two ships arrived since the Act came into operation - viz., the Spunkie with 138 laborers, and the Julia with 32, and three additional have been licensed to import, say 385 - viz., the Sir Isaac Newton 150, the Lyttona 85, and Spunkie 150."

Appended to Mr. McDonnell's report is a tabulated statement. The following portion only is of public interest:-

| District | No. of Employers | Pastoral | Agricultural | Town | Total in each district |
|--------------|------------------|------------|--------------|----------|------------------------|
| Burke | 1 | 10 | | | 10 |
| Bowen | 16 | 104 | 45 | 3 | 152 |
| Brisbane | 23 | 2 | 332 | | 358 |
| Clermont | 6 | 119 | | | 119 |
| Condamine | 1 | 13 | | | 13 |
| Dalby | 3 | 46 | | | 46 |
| Gayndah | 2 | 17 | | | 17 |
| Mackay | 14 | | 91 | | 91 |
| Ipswich | 9 | 7 | 46 | | 53 |
| Maryborough | 14 | 9 | 115 | 1 | 125 |
| Nebo | 3 | 47 | | | 47 |
| Rockhampton | 1 | | 2 | | 2 |
| Roma | 3 | 29 | | | 29 |
| Springsure | 2 | 23 | | | 23 |
| Taroom | 2 | 28 | | | 28 |
| Mitchell | 3 | 34 | | | 34 |
| TOTAL | 103 | 488 | 651 | 8 | 1147 |



POLYNESIAN RETURNS

The Brisbane Courier, Thursday 4 April 1878

The following returns showing the number of islanders under engagement, number of employers contributing towards return passages, and number of employers who have not yet contributed, have been placed at our (Wide Bay News) disposal. They will be read with interest just now.

| - | Paid | | | Unpaid | |
|--------------|----------|-------------|------------|---------|------------|
| | No. Emp. | No. Isldrs. | Amt paid | No. Emp | No. Isldrs |
| Aramac | 1 | 20 | £45 0 0 | 6 | 46 |
| Banana | .. | .. | .. | 1 | 2 |
| Beenleigh | 3 | 8 | 48 0 0 | 59 | 357 |
| Blackall | 2 | 74 | 120 0 0 | 8 | 120 |
| Bowen | 1 | 3 | 11 5 0 | 7 | 27 |
| Brisbane | 12 | 20 | 66 15 0 | 32 | 86 |
| Bundaberg | 2 | 4 | 3 0 0 | 63 | 260 |
| Cardwell | 1 | 4 | 3 15 0 | 20 | 226 |
| Charleville | 1 | 11 | 33 0 0 | - | - |
| Clermont | 1 | 16 | 75 15 0 | 8 | 114 |
| Condamine | 1 | 43 | 254 5 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Dalby | 5 | 32 | 88 15 0 | 2 | 21 |
| Gayndah | 1 | 9 | 27 0 0 | - | - |
| Gladstone | 4 | 14 | 46 10 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Ipswich | 2 | 6 | 18 0 0 | 9 | 38 |
| Leyburn | 2 | 13 | 36 0 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Mackay | .. | .. | .. | 101 | 1640 |
| Maryborough | 7 | 15 | 19 10 0 | 157 | 1345 |
| Nebo | .. | .. | .. 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Nanango | 1 | 4 | 15 10 0 | - | - |
| Rockhampton | 21 | 65 | 317 0 0 | 63 | 175 |
| Roma | 2 | 21 | 111 15 0 | 6 | 82 |
| Springsure | 5 | 18 | 95 5 0 | 14 | 173 |
| Tambo | 4 | 38 | 133 10 0 | 8 | 176 |
| Taroom | .. | .. | .. | 2 | 28 |
| Tenningering | 2 | 27 | 88 10 0 | - | - |
| Toowoomba | 2 | 18 | 75 0 0 | 14 | 157 |
| Townsville | 3 | 21 | 33 15 0 | 28 | 78 |
| Warwick | .. | .. | .. | 3 | 4 |
| Totals | 86 | 504 | £1760 15 0 | 616 | 5171 |

POLYNESIANS IN QUEENSLAND

| Year | Population | Males | Females | Ship loads | Brisbane | | Source |
|------|------------|-------|---------|------------|----------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | | Males/ | Females | |
| 1867 | 1,147 | | | | | | Brisbane Courier 05.09.1868 |
| 1870 | 2,235 | 2,220 | 15 | | | | The Queenslander 04.11.1871 'Statistical Register for 1870' |
| 1871 | 1,352 | 1,305 | 47 | 18 | 603 | 11 | Rockhampton Bulletin 30.11.1872 |
| 1872 | 2,607 | | | | | | The Queenslander 02.11.1872 |
| 1875 | 4,811 | | | | | | The Queenslander 28.10.1876 |
| 1878 | 5,630 | | | | | | The Queenslander 06.09.1879 |
| 1880 | 5,842 | | | | | | The Queenslander 09.07.1881 |
| 1883 | 12,204 | | | | | | |
| 1885 | 10,755 | | | | | | The Queenslander 04.09.1886 |
| 1886 | 8,723 | | | | | | The Sydney Morning Herald. 29.12.1887 |
| 1888 | 8,667 | 8,067 | 600 | | | | The Queenslander 31.08.1889 |
| 1890 | 9,428 | | | | | | The Brisbane Courier 29.10.1891 |
| 1891 | 9,338 | | | | | | The Brisbane Courier 07.05.1892 |
| 1896 | 8,603 | 8,003 | 600 | | | | The Brisbane Courier 23.08.1897 |
| 1900 | 9,324 | | | | | | |

26 JULY 1901

According to the Immigration Agents annual report during last year, 1743 Pacific Islanders arrived in Queensland, of whom 1675 were males and 68 females. Of these 1297 were new arrivals, 387 had served in Queensland before, and 59 in other

neighboring lands. It is only possible to give an approximate estimate of the number of islanders in the State on account of the migratory habits of the time-expired boys' but from estimates prepared by the several inspectors as on 31st December, 1900, it

appears that the number of 9321, being an increase of 529 during the year.

*The Northern
Miner (Charlers
Towers), Friday 26
July 1901*