

# HISTORY

MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH 2018 Number 135 \$5.50

(inc gst)



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Michael Bennett - Trackers and Trains: The impact of rail on Aboriginal people in NSW

Obituary - Emeritus Professor Kenneth (Ken) Stanley Inglis AO (1929-2017)

Sue Steggall - Women sculptors and World War I Memorials

Kathrine M. Reynolds - Female felons to NSW 1800-1836: Thieves, receivers, arsonists and forgers

Crichton Smith with Nick Parr, Lucy Taksa, Nikki Balnave and Brian Croke - Making New South Wales statistical history accessible: The Religion, Education and Population Statistics (REPSStats) Project  
2017 Annual Report

Robin McLachlan - Reflections on the Bathurst Flag Staff

Christine Yeats - Colonial Secretary's Letters, 1826-1856, now on Ancestry

Donna Newton - The RAHS collections of Captain James Henry Watson



# MAKING NEW SOUTH WALES STATISTICAL HISTORY ACCESSIBLE: THE RELIGION, EDUCATION AND POPULATION STATISTICS (REPSTATS) PROJECT

Crichton Smith with Nick Parr, Lucy Taksa, Nikki Balhove and Brian Croke

New South Wales (NSW) has an extensive collection of official statistical records through Colonial censuses and annual Statistical Registers. These records provide historical and other researchers with significant information on the Colony (later State) of NSW, its development and its people, providing a 'reliable and permanent record of the social growth, state, and progress of the community when questions of greater temporary magnitude have passed away and are forgotten.'<sup>1</sup> Accessing and exploring data available can be a barrier for researchers, with few hard copies of early statistics remaining and access generally restricted. The [www.REPstats.info](http://www.REPstats.info) website provides free online access to NSW statistics on Religion, Education and Population, commencing from the first colonial census in 1828. REPStats allows nineteenth and twentieth century data to be explored through tables and time-series graphs, which can be copied into Microsoft Excel or other software. REPStats includes Excel files with data in the structure of the published tables, complete with technical notes, to provide context for the data.

## The REPStats Project

In 2015, Catholic Education Commission, NSW partnered (financially and intellectually) with researchers from Macquarie University's Faculty of Business and Economics on a project to develop REPStats (Religion, Education and Population Statistics). The project aimed to make accessible a significant collection of publications from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which consisted of ninety boxes of statistics, including the almost complete collections of NSW Statistical Registers, colonial censuses, and national censuses. To liberate these statistics from the hard copy publications the REPStats project developed longitudinal datasets for researchers in 21st century accessible format.

Two hundred and fifty Excel files were created that allow historians and other researchers to access statistics for individual years from 1821 to 1971, and the first longitudinal dataset (religion by sex for NSW) released enables users to see a graph and table of the entire composition of religions and denominations reported for NSW from 1828 to 2011. REPStats has since expanded the selection of datasets.

## Colonial Statistics

The first census (1828) enumerated and reported on the population and its characteristics by age, sex, year of arrival, occupation and religion. The 1841 census included marital status and free and bond, natives and immigrants, housing and education. Males and females by age who 'Cannot Read', can 'Read only', or who could 'Read and Write' were enumerated. Education was 'perhaps the most important of the inquiries which have been conducted through the Census' in 1861, and the depth of educational statistics provided a foundation for REPStats.<sup>2</sup>

The collection and publication of reports from the Registrar General commenced in 1857, and these publications provide annual statistics for time-series graphs. The first annual report included births, deaths, and marriages (by 11 denominations in Sydney and country NSW), but within a decade topics also included Sunday school attendance, crime, industry, weather and university enrolments. By the 1890s, Statistical Registers had increased to 600 pages, providing a wealth of diverse data for REPStats.

## The REPStats Approach

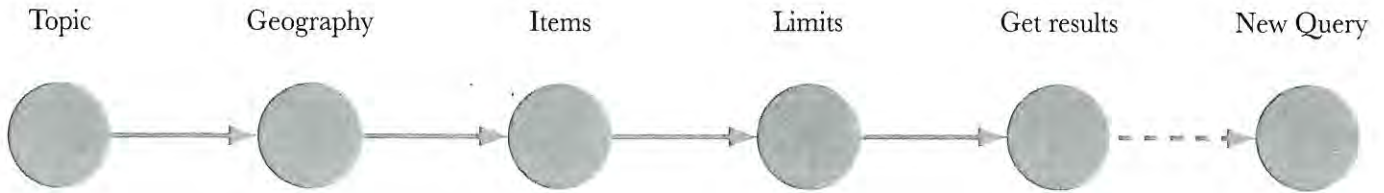
REPStats offers historians online access to statistical data and data visualisation through graphs to better identify trends and/or unusual events. The project provides Excel files for individual years of Statistical Registrars and Census tables. While time consuming to transcribe, Excel files provide greater contextual information of the table structure, classifications of the data, and nomenclature than graphs allow. These files include the original reports' technical notes and notes from the researchers transcribing the information.

REPstats provides researchers with easily accessible information for all years in a single table. Time series statistical data is complicated by changes in definitions and classifications from census to census. The intention of the REPstats project is to provide data, rather than determine the appropriateness of including or excluding data. To achieve this, datasets include every category, even when categories may be similar or archaic, maintaining the historical integrity of the data. A feature of REPstats is that rather than users being deterred by the multitude of statistical categories over time, users can graph aggregates of all relevant classifications. For example, Catholics have been a religious category in every census, but there have been 31 different sub-classifications throughout the 27 censuses since 1828.

Maintaining the nomenclature of the day results in multiple categories, but provides researchers with new insights into the social and statistical construct over time. For instance, the contemporary statistical nomenclature of 'Islam' has been reported by eight categories including 'Mahomedans and Pagans' in 1851, Mahhometan, Mohammedan, and more recently, Muslim. Eleven categories for Hebrews includes Jews, Jewish, Judaism, Israelite and Synagogue. Shifting nomenclature from Jews to Jewish to Judaism offers insight into the evolution of Australia's statistical classifications from the person (Jews) to the statistical/technical (Judaism). Two hundred and seventy-three Christian Sects and twenty-two Freethinkers categories in the 1891 to 1911 censuses provide insight into shifts in statistical practices, and also religious and social constructs at the birth of Australia's Federation.

## Using the Website

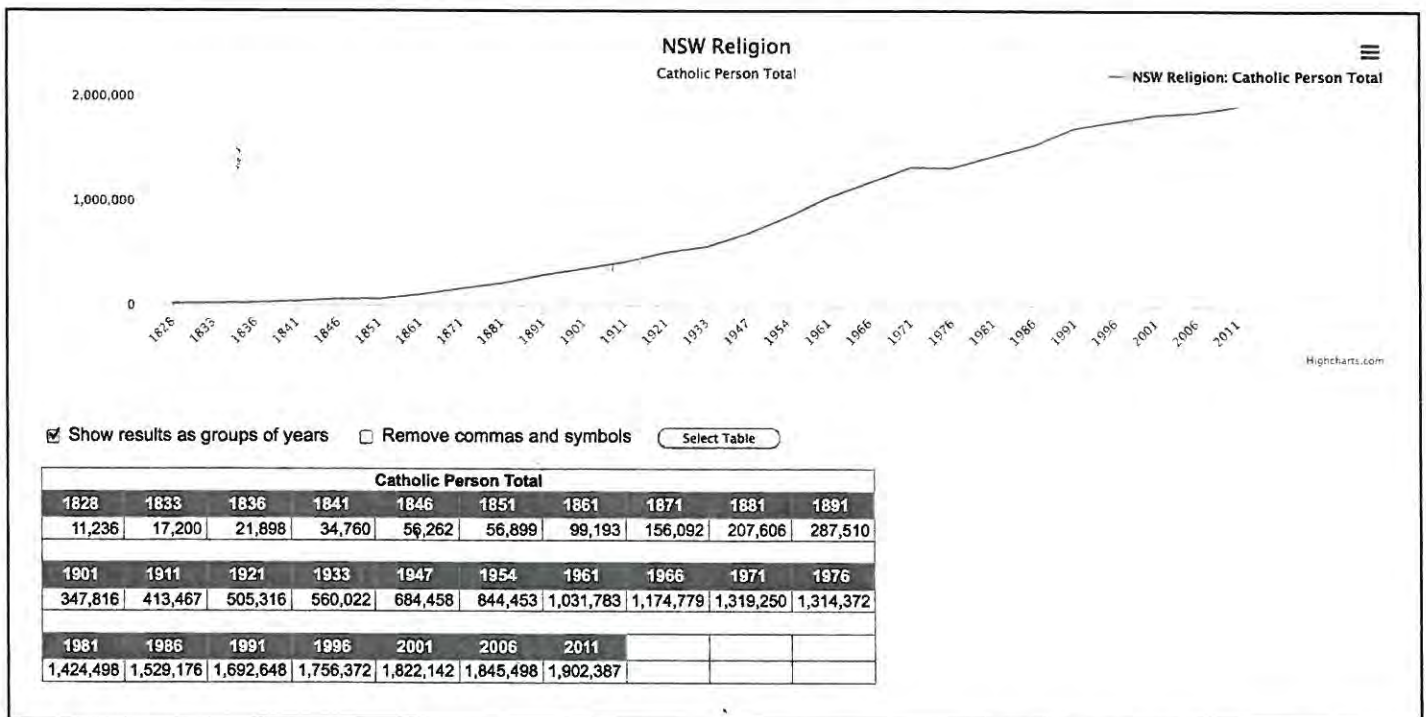
At the [www.REPstats.info](http://www.REPstats.info) landing page, those interested in accessing Excel files for individual years click 'Excel Files'. Searching for a word identifies all relevant files, which obviates the need for users to open each file individually. Users interested in exploring longitudinal data click 'Graphs and Tables'. REPstats takes researchers through a straightforward process for selecting the data and output, visualised by the following steps:



As an example:

1. Choose a topic ..... Religion
2. What Geography do you want? ..... NSW Total
3. Select the Data ..... Choose the item(s) (eg. Total Catholic Persons)
4. Set some limits ..... Leave it at the default of 'All years'
5. Get the Data ..... Choose a line chart

This screen capture shows that both a graph and table are produced. The graph and table show a complete time-series of censuses, where 11,236 Catholics in the 1828 Census had become 1,902,387 by the 2011 Census.



At this point, researchers can print or download the chart, copy and paste the table into Excel, or go back to explore further. There is also a capacity to include different datasets in the graph (tick 'include results from previous query'), and to do simple calculations on-screen (additions, subtractions and percentages).

## Where next?

REPstats is a work in progress, and the datasets and features are being refined in 2018. Priorities for 2018 include: documenting Excel files and expanding search keywords are priorities and improving usability of time-series datasets by increasing on-screen information about these datasets. Expanding datasets to include other States is also a future aspiration for which additional resources will be needed. Adding new statistics is straightforward, so if you would like to suggest datasets to add, please email [crichton.smith@hdr.mq.edu.au](mailto:crichton.smith@hdr.mq.edu.au) or phone (+61) 0410544157 to discuss.

## Acknowledgements

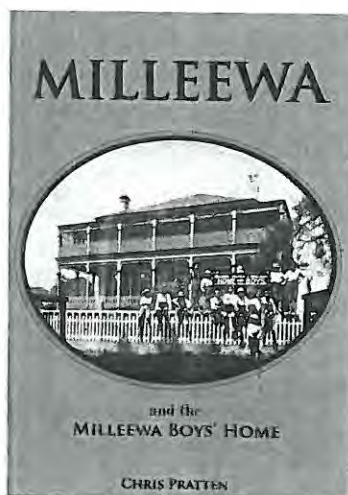
REPStats is governed by Professor Nick Parr, Professor Lucy Taksa, Dr Nikola Balnave, Dr Brian Croke and Crichton Smith. The project has been funded by financial contributions from the Catholic Education Commission NSW and Macquarie University through Macquarie University's Enterprise Partnership Scheme. We wish to also acknowledge the contribution of our team of Research Assistants: Amy Lo, Josephine Hendricks, Marcela Covarrubias, Sheruni De Alwis, Stephanie Hull, Victoria

Morley, Virginia Mandelburger, and our website developer Scott McDonald. REPStats would not be possible without their efforts.

## References

- 1 C. Rolleston (1862) *Census of the Colony of New South Wales, taken on the 7th April 1861* Thomas Richards, Government printer, Phillip Street, p. 22.
- 2 Rolleston (1862), *Census of the Colony of New South Wales* p. 16.

## BOOK NOTES



### **MILLEEWA AND THE MILLEEWA BOYS' HOME**

Written by Chris Pratten. Published: [Ashfield, NSW], Ashfield & District Historical Society Inc., 2017

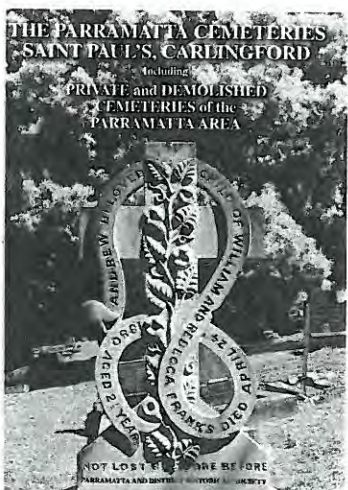
*Milleewa* was built in Ashfield around 1860, when Ashfield was still very much heavily timbered with 20 to 30 metre trees in an open forest structure. Author Chris Pratten is well qualified to tell the story of *Milleewa* – both due to his close connection to the house through his family, and through his work at the National Trust and in heritage conservation. Pratten seamlessly tells the story of the people who created, loved, changed, misunderstood, adapted and used the grand old Ashfield home over the years. The book comes in three parts: early owners and occupiers; the house and its setting; and the Milleewa Church of England Boys' Home. Each section shows attention to detail, but in particular, the third section on the boys' home presents a vivid picture of life at the time, through interviews with some of the residents.

Available from the Ashfield & District Historical Society: [adhs@tpg.com.au](mailto:adhs@tpg.com.au)

ISBN 978-0-949842-02-2 (paperback)

116 pages: illustrations (some colour), portraits, facsimiles, plans; 30 cm.

Book note by RAHS Volunteer, Elaine Phillips



### **THE PARRAMATTA CEMETERIES - SAINT PAUL'S CARLINGFORD - INCLUDING PRIVATE AND DEMOLISHED CEMETERIES OF THE PARRAMATTA AREA**

Written by Judith Dunn OAM and Rosemarie Morris. Published: [Parramatta, New South Wales] Parramatta and District Historical Society, 2017.

Judith Dunn OAM and Rosemarie Morris, Fellow of the Parramatta and District Historical Society, have written the fifth book in their Parramatta Cemeteries series. This book includes records and transcriptions from the following seven cemeteries in the Parramatta area: St Paul's Cemetery (Carlingford); Pearce Private Cemetery (Seven Hills); Burns Private Cemetery (North Parramatta); Marist Cemetery (Old Toongabbie); Oatlands Private Cemetery, and the Benedictine Monastery Cemetery (Rydalmere). Dunn and Morris have included an outline of some of the characters buried, and some history of the seven cemeteries, in particular St Paul's Cemetery. The book provides a further source of information for historians, genealogists and others who have a general interest in such records, and in the cemeteries described. Not only is the book a valuable

resource for those researching local and family history in the area, the historical notes are an enjoyable read.

Available from the Parramatta and District Historical Society: 02 9365 6924

ISBN: 978-0-9803449-4-3 (paperback)

208 pages: illustrations, maps, plans, facsimiles; 24 cm.

Book Note by Elaine Phillips, RAHS Volunteer