Trades, Skills and Occupations

A Statistical Analysis

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The Data

• From the Female Convicts in Van Diemen’s Land database
• Using trades from description lists, conduct records, indents, appropriation lists and Tardif
• 11,579 convicts with trades recorded (85%)
• 14,959 entries (1.3 trades per convict)
1. Trade qualifiers have not been included in this analysis.
2. Skills have not been included in this analysis.
3. Skills are usually written as verbs on the convicts records, whereas trades are written as nouns (though something like ‘cook’ can be either!).

Analysis

- Trade categories – for standardisation to enable analysis
- Trade qualifiers – 1,240 entries
  - Eg, plain, professed, fancy, thorough
- Skills – 733 entries
  - Eg, get up linen, wash, iron, truss poultry, work with needle, teach piano
1. Many of the trade categories overlap – eg, house maid, house servant.
2. Most trades are traditional female occupations.
Classifying Trade Categories

- Armstrong Skill Classifications – 5 skills
- Nicholas-Shergold Skill Classifications – 9 skills
  - Skill 1: urban unskilled
  - Skill 2: rural unskilled
  - Skill 3: construction, skilled or semi-skilled
  - Skill 4: manufacturing or transport, skilled or semi-skilled
  - Skill 5: skilled rural
  - Skill 6: dealers
  - Skill 7: military personnel
  - Skill 8: professionals
  - Skill 9: domestic servants

1. Several ways to classify trades – for the women, Nicholas-Shergold Skill Classification system seems to work best.
2. Skill 7 does not pertain to females.
3. Classifying trades is fraught with difficulty – eg, does nurse and housemaid mean ‘nurse’ and ‘housemaid’ or ‘nursemaid’ and ‘housemaid’? Also for some trades it is difficult to know what they involved. Not always listed in A Dictionary of Old Trades, Titles and Occupations and other similar resources.
1. Note there is no Skill 7 as this is military personnel.
2. Most female convicts fall into the domestic servants category (70%).
3. Rural unskilled is next (15%).
### Nicholas-Shergold Skill 1 (n=20)

- **Urban unskilled**
  - char woman (19)
  - country girl (3)
  - factory girl (14)
  - factory woman (5)
  - feather dresser (1)
  - fortune teller (1)
  - girl (4)
  - gypsy (2)
  - hawker (12)
  - house girl (28)
  - huckster (5)
  - isinglass picker (1)
  - kitchen girl (5)
  - labourer (2)
  - needle girl (29)
  - nurse girl (425)
  - pot girl (1)
  - pottery girl (2)
  - prostitute (3)
  - washer girl (1)

1. I have classified all the ‘girls’ in this skill category as they are likely to have been in training and so unskilled.
2. The largest category is **nurse girl**. This could be considered a domestic servant (Skill 9) category.
1. Many of these trades overlap – eg, farm worker, farm labourer, farm servant, country servant, country maid, general farm servant.
Nicholas-Shergold Skill 3 (n=2)

- Construction, skilled or semi-skilled
  - brick maker (1)
  - painter (1)

1. These are both traditionally male trades.
   - Charlotte Jones per *Angelina* 1844.
   - Painter is Mary Wade per *Sir Charles Forbes* 1827.
None of the women are engaged in transport in this category, they are all in manufacturing.

Nicholas-Shergold Skill 4  
(n=112)

- Manufacturing or transport, skilled or semi-skilled
  - needle woman (693)
  - dress maker (316)
  - shoe binder (87)
  - stay maker (41)
  - tailoress (41)
  - straw bonnet maker (39)
  - seamstress (33)
  - weaver (19)
  - boot binder (18)
  - bonnet maker (15)
  - mantua maker (14)
  - shirt maker (13)
  - silk weaver (13)
  - upholsterer (11)
  - remaining trades <10 convicts
1. Most of the convicts have trades involving **needle work** – eg, needle woman, dress maker, stay maker, tailoress, milliner, seamstress, bonnet maker, mantua maker, shirt maker, upholsterer, lace maker, hat trimmer, cap maker, glove maker, artificial flower maker, flowerer, furrier, hatter, lace worker, needle maid, tambour worker, waistcoat maker, cloth cap maker, embroiderer, sewer, cape maker, corset maker, factory piecer, flouncer, glove liner, hat binder, lace embroiderer, lace runner, muslin flowerer, satin stitcher

2. **Bone work** includes: pearl button maker, shirt button maker, button maker, button cramper

3. **Food work** includes: baker, confectioner, ornamental confectioner

4. **Leather work** includes: shoe binder, boot binder, shoe maker, boot closer, child’s shoe maker, boot maker, ladies boot binder, ladies shoe binder, ladies shoe maker, leather dresser, leather shoe binder, shoe closer

5. **Metal work** includes: nailor, french polisher, nail maker, silver burnisher, steel pin maker, varnisher, bench polisher, cutler, lathe turner, needle maker, screw maker, wire worker, brace maker


7. **Pottery work** includes: potter, earthenware manufacturer, pipe maker, tile dresser

8. **Textile work** includes: straw bonnet maker, weaver, silk weaver, cotton spinner, cotton weaver, spinner, straw plaiter, straw worker, ribbon weaver, silk winder, stocking weaver, carpet weaver, knitter, net maker, straw hat maker, beaver cutter, beaver puller, broadcloth weaver, cotton reeler, dyer, feather maker, frame work netter, fur cutter, fustian cutter, hair weaver, linen weaver, lint maker, mat maker, netter, ribbon maker, silk binder, silk dyer, steam loom weaver, stocking maker, straw bonnet plaiter

9. **Wood work** includes: chair bottomer, box maker, brush maker, umbrella maker
1. Farrier may be a mis-transcription of farmer – this is not traditionally a female occupation.
   • Margaret Hurley per Navarino 1841.
   • Elizabeth King per Navarino 1841.
2. Planter is Justine per Ocean Queen 1844.
3. Farmer is Ann Harper per Lady Juliana 1790.
### Nicholas-Shergold Skill 6
(n=16)

- **Dealers**
  - brothel keeper (1)
  - dealer (4)
  - fruit seller (1)
  - grape seller (1)
  - lodging house keeper (1)
  - market woman (4)
  - poulterer (2)
  - poultry dealer (1)
  - public house keeper (1)

- **Publicans**
  - publican (1)

- **Shops**
  - shop keeper (3)
  - shop keeper’s assistant (1)
  - shop woman (1)
  - silk factor (2)
  - stall keeper (1)
  - victualler (1)

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1. Some of these could possibly be classified as Skill 1 with hawkers.
1. Actress is Rosetta Farrell per *Garland Grove* 1843 – actress at the Adelphi Theatre.
2. Library keeper is Ann Frances Clifton per *Mermaid* 1828.
3. School mistresses are:
   - Mary Martin per *Canada* 1810 and *Emu* 1815.
   - Mary Kelly per *Alexander II* 1816 and *Kangaroo* 1816.
   - Mary Stewart per *Lord Auckland* 1849.
   - Sarah Leggatt per *Providence II* 1826.
   - Elizabeth Frankland per *Sovereign* 1827.

Nicholas-Shergold Skills 7 and 8  
(n=0) and (n=3)

- Military personnel
  - none

- Professionals
  - actress (1)
  - library keeper (1)
  - school mistress (5)
Nicholas-Shergold Skill 9  
(n=56)

• Domestic servants
  — house maid (3,852)
  — house servant (1,657)
  — cook (1,184)
  — laundress (1,075)
  — nurse maid (801)
  — servant (603)
  — servant of all work (358)
  — laundry maid (234)
  — kitchen maid (183)
  — nurse (94)
  — nurse woman (74)
  — washer woman (56)
  — general servant (50)
  — house keeper (49)
  — child’s maid (42)
  — ladies maid (38)
  — mid wife (16)
  — governess (15)
  — house woman (15)

• remaining Skill 9 trades have less than 10 convicts
1. **House Servant** most common (54%), includes: house maid, house servant, house keeper, ladies maid, house woman, town servant, family servant, chamber maid, maid, domestic servant, house wife, ladies servant, parlour maid, serving maid, table maid, under house maid, upper house maid

2. **Child Care** includes: nurse maid, nurse woman, child’s maid, mid wife, governess, nursery governess, child’s nurse, nurse servant, dry nurse, under nurse maid, child’s servant, nanny, upper nurse maid

3. **Cook** includes: cook (including plain, etc), pastry cook, under cook

4. **General Servant** includes: servant, servant of all work, general servant, maid of all work, general house servant, under servant

5. **Kitchen Servant** includes: kitchen maid, kitchen servant, pantry servant

6. **Laundry Servant** includes: laundress, laundry maid, washer woman, laundry servant, laundry woman, under laundry maid

7. **Nurse** includes: nurse, hospital nurse, sick nurse, monthly nurse, ladies nurse, sick maid
1. Skill 2 (rural unskilled) least likely to be able to read.
2. Skill 4 (manufacturing) most likely to be able to read.
3. Little difference in ability to read between Skill 1 (urban unskilled) and Skill 9 (domestic servants).
1. Skill 2 (rural unskilled) least likely to be able to write.
2. Skill 4 (manufacturing) most likely to be able to write (excluding Skill 8 where numbers are too low to be valid).
3. Little difference in ability to write between Skill 1 (urban unskilled) and Skill 9 (domestic servants).
1. The majority of convicts in Skill 2 (rural unskilled) category are Irish-born.
2. Irish-born convicts are least represented in Skill 4 (manufacturing).
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