Daniel Ritchie graduated in medicine (Edinburgh, 1836) before joining the Royal Navy as a surgeon. His tours of duty took him to the West Indies, Mediterranean, Baltic Sea (during the Crimean War) and penal settlements at Hobart and Fremantle.

Ritchie was a vocal advocate for improving the treatment of convicts, opining that they could be redeemed if given the right opportunities. As surgeon-superintendent on the convict transport ship Pestonjee Bomanjee in 1852, Ritchie produced The Pestonjee Bomanjee Journal. This included weekly news, poetry, ballads and notes on places visited, much of which was written by convicts on board.

An anthology of these essays, sketches and poems, edited by Ritchie, was published in 1854. The voice of our exiles: Or, stray leaves from a convict ship includes comments by Ritchie on the characters of the people whose writings he selected for this publication.

The extensive collections of the Ritchie family held at University of Melbourne Archives include material relating to other family members and their pastoral and business interests in Victoria’s Western District. Daniel’s older brother, James Ritchie (1812–1857), also revealed a sensitivity to shared humanity when writing in 1841, in his diary of exploration, of the effects of pastoral settlement on Victoria’s Indigenous people.

**Teaching ideas**

The University of Melbourne’s curriculum is rich and varied, and changes from year to year. For more teaching ideas, [contact a collection manager](#).

**Poetry**

Analyse a selection of the convicts’ poems included in the weekly newspaper The Pestonjee Bomanjee Journal, considering both author and audience.

**Australian History**

Find five objects from University of Melbourne collections that communicate the narrative of the experiences of a 19th-century Australian. Consider the differing experiences of convicts, free settlers, and Indigenous Australians.

**Creative Non-Fiction**

Discuss the aspects of the Pestonjee Bomanjee Journal that could be synthesised into a piece of historical writing, and consider more broadly the role of primary source material in writing creative non-fiction.

**Controversies in Australian History**

Discuss the types of convict who were sent to Australia in the 19th century. Choose an essay or poem from the book The voice of our exiles: Or, stray leaves from a convict ship, and discuss what it tells us about the prisoners’ lives on board.

**Exhibition Management**

Investigate exhibitions that include archival materials in the displays. Discuss the opportunities and challenges that are faced in curating and exhibiting documents such as The Pestonjee Bomanjee Journal.

**Migrant Nation: Culture and Identity**

Beyond being a nation built on immigration, Australia is a nation built on penal colonies, with approximately 20 per cent of current-day Australians descended from convicts. Consider how this aspect of Australian history may shape society today, and consider current attitudes to the country’s convict past.
**Intersecting objects**
Daniel Ritchie (ed.) (Scottish/Australian, 1816–1865)
*The voice of our exiles: Or, stray leaves from a convict ship*
Edinburgh: John Menzies, 1854
Ian McLaren Collection
Rare Books Collection
University of Melbourne Library
(also available [online](#) from the library of Oxford University)

Matthew Everingham (English/Australian, 1769–1817)
*Letterbook*
Richie Family and Business Correspondence, 1974.0084.05378
University of Melbourne Archives

Valerie Ross (b. 1932)
*Matthew Everingham: A first fleeter and his times*
Sydney: Library of Australian History, 1980
University of Melbourne Archives
994.402092 EVER/ROSS

Additional material relating to convicts in Australia can also be found in:

*Sir Wilfrid Russell and Lady Mabel Grimwade Collection*, 1975.0089
University of Melbourne Archives

*Papers of the Bright family and the Manners Sutton family*, 1999.0009
University of Melbourne Archives

For further information, visit the website of [University of Melbourne Archives](#).

**References**
Melinda Barrie & Sophie Garrett, ‘A man, his dog and a diary: James Ritchie’s journey in the Western District, 1841’, *University of Melbourne Collections*, issue 12, June 2013, pp. 29–33.

‘Shipping intelligence’, *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 28 July 1852, p. 3.