The settler evolution: space, place and memory in early colonial Australia

GRACE KARSKENS
University of New South Wales

For a hundred and forty years, between the 1830s and the 1970s, the shame over Australia's convict origins led to elision and silences over the early colonial period. But the 'birth stain,' as it was called, had its origins not in the actual founding of the colony of New South Wales but in the English 'enemies' of the penal colony of NSW, in the fears and assumptions of free immigrants who arrived in increasing numbers from the 1830s onwards, and in the growing class and race consciousness emerging in that period too.[1] In the minds of migrants arriving in New South Wales in the 1830s and 1840s, transportation *was* the equivalent of slavery. Convicts were thought to corrupt society merely by their presence, and associating with them, even unknowingly, involved a devastating loss of social status. These were the ideas—and scare tactics—promulgated by the ultimately successful anti-transportation campaigns. They argued that no colony could 'progress' when weighed down by such a disability.[2]

The 'gaol colony' images have a basis in truth, of course, in the few places of secondary punishment, especially in the later, more severe, convict period after 1822 (Hughes *Fatal Shore*; Maxwell Stewart *Hell's Gates*). But the convict system itself was never slavery, and the early colonial period of 1788-1822 was not a time of incarceration and terror. In this paper I want to explore the recovered world of those colonies as dynamic human places. James Belich has argued that these early new world colonies made little contribution to the remarkable 'settler revolution' of migrants who left Britain in their millions later in the nineteenth century. But in Australia, the vital economic, social and cultural foundations were laid in the early colonial period. Later free immigrants in turn built new lives upon those foundations. In terms of economic and social development and place-making, the story of the early Australian colonies is one of settler evolution, not revolution (Belich 82-6, 178ff, 261-7; Hirst viii-ix).

The feminist geographer Gillian Rose discusses conceptualisations of 'space' and 'place,' which are useful in thinking about the early colonies of Australia and New Zealand. Space is the imagined, the abstracted, the planned, and is thus conceived of as neutral, transparent and unproblematic (Rose 43-5). 'Colonial space' as Paul Carter similarly expresses it, is New South Wales as imagined by the British government: unpeopled, un-owned, empty, a land waiting for British colonisation, for time to begin (Carter). But 'place' refers to *particular* sites, invested with meaning through repeated human use, through occupation, through shared understandings, and through stories told about them. Places can also have overlaid meanings invested by different groups of people with diverse and opposed interests. Places are sites of particular ecologies, societies, histories and cultures (Karskens, *The Colony* 1-18).

Thus there is a key distinction between the colonies as spaces of authority and control, abstract rules and regulations, plans and expectations; and the colonies as sites of human experience and place-making which often upended those plans, rules and regulations. Dynamic, complex places emerge partly from the dialogue and the struggle between the two. They were made not just by those of wealth and power, but by humbler folk too (Karskens, 'Dialogue of Townscape' 88-102).

Over the past forty years, and especially in the last decade, scholars have recovered much of that lost early colonial world, particularly by paying close attention to the interplay between space and place. This recovery has been made possible by the close-up, ethnographically detailed study of *particular* places, events, people and actions, in all their variety and contingency. The historical ethnographic approach has been essential because it also asks us to understand past societies on their own terms, rather than ours, and to reconstruct, as best we can, the deeper structures and rules, the motivations and distinctions which shaped them (Isaac 323-60; Atkinson *The Europeans*; Karskens *The Rocks*; Karskens *The Colony*).

As for memory, narratives of slavery, torture, tyranny and depravity eventually came to dominate the popular imagination of convict Australia, as they still do. Yet counter-narratives of the colony as it was lived persisted too. Witnessing the dramatic changes of the later nineteenth century, old colonists, as they were called, wrote memoirs and reminiscences for audiences curious about the early times. Tom Griffiths calls these phases the 'high seasons of memory' (197). As we shall see, these writings revolved fundamentally around places. Nevertheless, gothic tales of horror had and still have wide appeal, and so works like *For the Term of His Natural Life* and *Ralph Rashleigh* are much better remembered than those of old colonists like J. T. Ryan, William Walker, John Benson Martin, Obed West and many others (Clarke; Tucker; Ryan; Walker; Martin; Doust; West; Morrison).

The 'gaol-colony' narratives, revolving around incarceration, terror, hopelessness and failure, had a profound effect on Australian historiography. Early Australian historians portrayed the convict period as one of shame and evil, a most unfortunate start to a nation, best played down, ignored, or treated as the great challenge which the 'real'—that is free—colonists had to overcome (West; Rusden; Jose; Scott 54). Others declared it irrelevant, burned out by gold fever, swamped and extinguished by free immigration; though some remained anxious about the long-term negative legacies of convictism on Australian society (Roberts 39-40).

The 'birth stain' continued to skew the shape of Australian history. Since the first thirty-odd years were dominated by convicts, the early colonial period could not be considered 'normal' history—so it tended to be quarantined. Despite the efforts of poets and novelists (for example Mary Gilmore and Eleanor Dark) to acknowledge the convicts as pioneers, the period tended to be considered irrelevant to the national story, or at best a primitive prelude. The imagined shift from 'gaol' to 'free' colony was the ordering principle of many a book, article and report, despite the fact that such a shift never occurred (Dark; Gilmore; Hirst viii-ix). Darkness, tyranny, corruption, sadism and torture also sell well, of course, so Australian bookshop shelves are still lined with titles like*: Buried Alive, 1788: The Brutal Truth of the First Fleet*; *Tour to Hell;* and of course *The Fatal Shore* (Egan; Hill; Levell; Hughes*).*[3] Today, the early convict period ought to be symbolised by the hoe, the cradle, or the colonially-built ship; yet the instant visual representation is still the ball and chain.

<div align="center">oOo</div>

Many Australian historians looked automatically to the arrival of free settlers as the point where Australia 'really' began, the trickle that swelled into Belich's 'settler revolution,' swarming the earth in their 'full-frothing boom frenzy' (Belich 558). There was one exception in the historiography, one iconoclastic historian who turned this model upside down and audaciously stitched the convicts into a national narrative, not just as pioneers but as 'founding fathers,' the first true Australians. Russell Ward's famous book *The Australian Legend,* published in 1958, argued not only that there was such a thing as a distinctive

Australian mystique, but that its hallmarks—mateship, anti-authoritarianism and a disregard for respectability—originated with the convicts. Ward was correct in pointing out that convicts, ex-convicts and their children dominated the population well into the 1840s. But, like most others, he thought that Australia was 'for nearly the first half-century of its existence …primarily an extensive gaol.' The convicts he described—or, perhaps, the ones he thought mattered to Australia's emergent identity—were exclusively male rural workers assigned to pastoralists from the 1820s onwards. Yet these original 'white nomads' made up a tiny proportion of the convict population. Ward was, unsurprisingly, unaware of what the vast majority of convicts actually did in those first forty years (Ward 15).[4]

The Australian Legend was a hit when it was first published in 1958, yet another 'high season of memory,' a period of massive change, modernisation and mass immigration. Perhaps it was a progenitor of the great sea-change in popular attitudes to convicts in the 1970s—they went from skeletons in the family closet to badges of family pride (Karskens, 'Banished' 26-34). And *The Australian Legend* kindled scholarly interest in convicts and the early colonial period too (Shaw; Robson). A trickle of new works swelled to a torrent, and eventually, ironically, it was this research that overturned the gaol colony narrative altogether.

Among the fundamental findings was that the settlement at Botany Bay was not planned as a gaol in the first place, but as a colony. It was a social and penal experiment aimed at reforming convicts and creating a new society. Governor Arthur Phillip's Instructions were unambiguous: once convicts had served their time, they were eligible for small land grants (Watson, ed. series 1, vol. 1 14-15; Aveling 1-12).[5] These were to be subsistence farms, worked by hand with hoes. Men and women, reformed by hard, simple, agricultural work, would eventually become small landowners, anchored to a new earth (Karskens, *The Colony* 64-5, 100-1, 109).

Over a decade ago, historian Alan Frost effectively demolished the widely-held belief that the Botany Bay project was ill-thought-out, poorly resourced, that the colonists were promptly abandoned and that the venture failed (Frost *Mirage* and *First Fleet*). As in most colonies, those early years were tough, and some people, like immigrants everywhere, were disoriented and homesick. But rather than being shackled, the convicts had their chains *knocked off* after they arrived. They wore their own clothes, not uniforms. Hideous floggings and hangings did occur, just as they did on ships, but the victims were those caught breaking the law, not the general populace. The floggings of the naval governors were barbaric—but I think that is partly because it was so easy for convicts to evade detection and arrest. There were no walls or bars around the settlement. Convicts could walk out into the bush at will. Nor were they guarded. There were no guards, except to protect public buildings. There was no gaol until nine years later, and it was built to hold debtors, as well as those awaiting trial. Convicts did not live in gaol, but in houses they built themselves, which they were soon claiming as their own property. This system continued for over thirty years—until Hyde Park Barracks was opened in 1819. Even then, many convict men continued to live in the town, 'on their own hands,' as though they were free (Karskens, *The Colony* 74-9, 162-5, 177-88; Karskens, 'Naked Possession' 325-57).

What of the convicts themselves? Who were they? Popular imagery reduces them all to pathetic or comical figures, invariably male, wearing pyjamas with arrows on them and dragging a ball and chain. These images were apparently already trans-Tasman in the early twentieth century. A photograph of Armistice Celebrations underway in Levin, New Zealand, in 1918 shows two local men dressed as 'A Maori Chief' and 'a convict.' The 'convict' wears

the classic loose clothing stamped with broad arrows of the popular imagination. Both 'Maori chief' and 'convict' pull ugly, idiotic faces for the camera and together presumably represent New Zealand's 'pre-history' (Adkin).

Fig. 1 Popular performance of New Zealand's 'pre-history': Lesley Adkin, 'A Maori Chief (Mr F. Proctor) & a convict (Mr G. Noble): Armistice Celebrations in Levin Nov. 13, 1918,' (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa collection, reg. no O.031592)

In fact convicts were a diverse lot, around 160,000 men, women and children, arriving in waves over eighty years between 1788 and 1868. Among them were people from all the regions of the British Isles, all speaking different dialects and accents, Jews and African-Americans, black West Indians, and later Aborigines, Maori and Khoisan (Nicholas & Shergold 30; O'Farrell; Levi & Bergman; Pybus; Harman). There were thieves, forgers and political prisoners, artisans, tradespeople, unskilled and unlettered people, men and women, old and young. Their image as the helpless and hopeless dregs of humanity was abruptly overturned more than 20 years ago, when economic historians showed that they had a slightly higher literacy rate than their contemporaries back home, were reasonably young and healthy and brought a large range of useful skills with them. This 'human capital,' as economic historians like to call it, makes sense of the economic success of the colony (Nicholas & Shergold 43-61, 62-84).

But what about convicts as human beings? What of their culture, their world view? Russell Ward was first to identify their drinking, gambling, prodigious swearing and insubordinate attitudes, not as moral failings, but *culturally*, as a preindustrial *culture of resistance*, distinct from respectable middle class culture, but also from the servile and downtrodden stance of English workers. This was a remarkable insight, a breakthrough. Since then the work of cultural historians like Alan Atkinson, Richard Waterhouse, Hamish Maxwell Stewart and

my own work on early Sydney, have sought to understand convicts *on their own terms*, rather than only as default resistors of capitalism and middle class values. What emerges is that the early colonies *as a whole* were pre-industrial—not just the convicts, not just the bush workers (Atkinson, *The Europeans* and 'Four Patterns' 28-50; Waterhouse; Maxwell Stewart; Karskens *The Rocks*, *Inside the Rocks*, and *The Colony*).

The early settlements were after all powered by wind, water and the muscles of men and animals, not by machinery, coal and steam. Governors tried to impose clock time but people measured their days by sunrise and sunset, by tides and the arrival of ships. Poorer people still regarded access to common land as their right, and hunted native game as their right too. Literacy was relatively high, but around half the population was illiterate nevertheless. This was a world that *broached* oral and written cultures. It was an age of symbolic gestures and grand oratory, as well as rumours and stories that travelled like wildfire by word of mouth. It was still the age of the visual too, of splendid public processions, led by the great and the good in their fluttering ribbons and plumes, with the lowliest convict servants bringing up the rear. It was an age when winners were hoisted on chairs and carried about the towns followed by vast and boisterous crowds, when losers were put in the stocks and pelted with rotten eggs, when jeering crowds followed the condemned to the hanging grounds. It was still an age where governors would personally face down a rebellious mob, or ride out to isolated settlements to see and be seen by the people (Karskens *The Rocks*; Bolton, *Spoil and Spoilers* 15-17; Boyce 5-7; Atkinson *The Europeans*; Karskens, *The Colony* 167, 226-28).

These were expressive, passionate people, quick to anger, lovers of company and sociability. Both higher and lower orders, and later Aboriginal people, enjoyed the riotous, exciting and often bloody and violent pleasures of preindustrial popular culture: bare-knuckle prize fights; horse racing; cock-fighting; as well as drinking and gambling. Enjoyment for its own sake was given high priority. Life without such pleasures and sociability was not worth living. Drinking alcohol was not just about resistance—it was a normal part of everyday life, and considered necessary for hard physical labour. Even governors thought so. It was also a world that entwined eighteenth-century-style consumerism and commercial activity with much older communal habits. People now ate from modern, matching, individual ceramic plates, but those drinking together still drank from the same glass, the circling glass. Their attitudes to sex, marriage and children and public behaviour were not much affected by modern ideas of respectability and self-discipline. Those interested in achieving respectability focused on the material signs: solid houses, land, ships, trades and businesses (Waterhouse *Private Pleasures* chap 1; Karskens, *Inside the Rocks* 48-74 and *The Rocks* 42-9 chap19 and *The Colony* 215, chap 11&12).

Social relations were personal and face-to-face, with contracts often made by verbal agreement. The ambitious especially might make their way in life by vertical links up the social hierarchy. These were not deferential people, but by putting on a mask of deference, they obliged superiors to play *their* proper roles as patrons (Karskens, *The Rocks* 8-9, 19, 30-1, 38-9, 134-35, 147-50, 156, 169-70, 203-4, 216, 226-33, 236-7). At the other end of the social spectrum were men and women who desired freedom above all else—those same 'shell-back and salty, polyglot, multi-racial and multi-ethnic…seafarers and allied sorts' who rose up, absconded, mutinied, turned pirate, and sailed for distant shores (Duffield 45). They dreamed, in Ian Duffield's words, of a utopian space 'without masters, magistrates, landed gentry…flogging, lawyers, courts and canting clergy' (61). For such people, fierce loyalty to one's own was paramount (Karskens, *The Rocks* 10-12, 201-2, 237-8; 'This Spirit').

If I had to put this culture in a nutshell, I would say it was one of risk, of chance, of gambling—though not necessarily recklessly: this was a culture of reckoning the odds in an uncertain world. People's world views, and the colonies as a whole, were marked and made by opportunism—for profit as much as for escape. But the reverse side of this was a wellspring of fatalism and resignation to things beyond human control. It was this pre-industrial culture and world view, its unruly energy, which shaped the early colonies, not silent subservience, endless toil and brutal punishments.

<div align="center">oOo</div>

But, given the original plan for an isolated, agrarian penal *space*, how were the colonies actually made as human *places*?

The early ex-convict farmers of New South Wales are still often dismissed as pathetic failures, yet it was ex-convict initiative that resulted in both the first successful farming on the Hawkesbury River from 1794, and the achievement of self-sufficiency in grain by 1804 (Jeans 88-9; Kociumbas 45-9; Henzell 10; Fletcher, 'Agriculture' 1 & 195).[6] Those first Hawkesbury farms offer a fascinating window onto space and place, and old dreams in a new country. The ex-convict move to the Hawkesbury may have been may have been partly inspired by Cockaigne: the centuries-old mythical dreamland of the poor and hungry of Europe, a place where food and drink were plentiful without hard work, where people could live as they wished in peace and pleasure (Atkinson, *The Europeans* 248; Pleij). In 1794, ex-convicts and a few soldiers, completely independent of officialdom, trekked out to the rich alluvial Hawkesbury River flats, the lands of the Booroberongal, 50 kilometres north-west of Sydney. Their crops of wheat, maize and potatoes flourished magnificently, and news travelled fast. Soon hundreds of people were grabbing patches of land on the river, wanting a share of this good life, and the Hawkesbury was quickly dubbed the Nile of New South Wales (Collins 406-7, 413; Bladen 817; Fletcher, 'Grose, Paterson' 342-3).

Fig. 2 An Antipodean Cockaigne? Farms and huts on the banks of the Hawkesbury in about 1806. John William Lewin, 'View from Governor Bligh's farm, Hawkesbury, New South Wales, c1806. (Art Gallery of South Australia)

And for a time it was a sort of Cockaigne. These early farmers had not only escaped the surveillance of law, church and state—for the time being at least—but the rich soils and abundant wildlife allowed plenty of time for leisure and popular culture. Much to the disgust of officers back in Sydney, they spent their days in 'riot and dissipation,' drinking, gambling fighting and socialising. Some settlers befriended Aboriginal people, sharing corn and conviviality with them. But the taking of Aboriginal land, as well as stealing of women and children, soon led to the outbreak of the first frontier wars, which continued sporadically on the Cumberland Plain until 1816 (Atkinson, *The Europeans* 248; Karskens, *The Colony* 120-28).

The farms themselves were not pretty. They were roughly cleared, strewn with fallen timber and studded with tree stumps. Unlike their betters, these farmers did not conceive of their farms as discreet blocks of 'civilisation' set in the menacing 'wilderness' at all. Their boundaries were blurred, fenceless farms running into the bush, and the bushland and wetlands were regarded as extensions of farms, as grazing land for stock, hunting grounds and an inexhaustible source of timber and bark. The early farmers and their families lived in tents and bark huts. They worked hard and they drank hard, and many were kept very poor by frequent floods and freshes, on the lowlands especially (Karskens *Vanished Country*).

Most work was still done by hand with hoes, sickles and flails—then again, this was also true in England and Ireland right up to the 1850s. Yet as agricultural historian Geoff Raby has shown, their simple farming methods were both innovative and efficient—and necessary, given the imperatives of labour, skills, capital, soils and markets. They worked the soils hard, planting two crops a year of wheat and maize, and when it was exhausted they simply let it lie fallow for several years to recover. These methods meant that no manure or crop-rotation was required (Fletcher, *Landed Enterprise* 21-2; Raby 48-57; Henzell, *Agriculture* 1-11; Freeland 10ff; Broadbent 19, 23, 25, 103-9). Nevertheless, newly arrived 'gentlemen farmers' were scathing about the 'slothful' and 'wasteful' farming methods, and the low moral character of the poor ex-convict farmers (Atkinson, *An Account* 28ff). But the subtext was political: ex-convicts were not the 'right' settlers, not deserving of this land—for they had not utilised it 'properly.' Of course these were the same justifications used to dispossess Aboriginal people.

These denunciations did not go entirely uncontested. When free settler James Atkinson published his largely damning account in 1826, the normally stuffy and moralistic *Sydney Gazette* charged to the defence of the emancipist farmers:

> …his sneers at the simple and rude methods which they had to adopt in their agricultural pursuits, we think manifests a great want of liberality…It is to the exertions of these very men that the Colony is indebted for almost everything…At this hour what would numerous respectable families do, who have come free to the Colony, were it not for the assistance they have received, and are still receiving, from those very men who are talked of with so much contempt? (20 January 1827)

The pioneering work of those first thirty years were thus firmly asserted. Then again, ex-convicts and their children didn't see *themselves* and their places simply as preparing the way for free settlers. They believed that the colony was intended for *them*, and theirs by right. 'What business have [you] here in the prisoners colony?' a bushranger demanded of a free settler in the late 1820s. The cashed-up free settlers favoured so heavily after 1822 were

especially resented as interlopers and usurpers (Harris 34; Molony). The convict generations, like those who followed, were generally silent on the Aboriginal people they themselves had displaced, and their losses and sufferings.

oOo

It is one of those marvellous foundational ironies that Sydney, now the largest city in a highly urbanised nation, was not actually supposed to be there. Urban growth was deliberately left out of the original scheme—the last thing the British government wanted to do was reproduce the squalor and dangerous disorder of English cities. So in imagining colonial space, they omitted the urban entirely. There were no instructions on urban planning, no treasury, no economic plan, no money, visiting ships were to be discouraged, ship-building was forbidden. And yet the colony of New South Wales soon developed thriving maritime industries, and a polyglot port town, alive with people, ships and goods (Karskens, *The Colony* 64-5).

How did this happen? Basically through a remarkable combination of factors which were completely incompatible with a remote, harsh agricultural colony, let alone a 'gaol.' Sydney was founded on a deep-water harbour and so it was not isolated for long. Soon ships began calling and it was incorporated into global shipping and trade routes. Ship-building flourished as a result (even though forbidden), enabling traders to assemble colonial crews and sail to New Zealand and the islands of the Pacific for cargoes of timber, flax, pork and sandalwood. The crossings went both ways: Maori chiefs, whom the colonists found to be shrewd businessmen, began to sail for Sydney on trade and diplomatic visits, and eventually to buy guns (Kamira). The legal status of convicts meant that, unlike their counterparts in England, they were not under attaint, and so they could use the colonial courts to sue their debtors. A sophisticated and complex monetary system soon emerged, and the high demand for labour gave convicts money to spend. Meanwhile the convicts' own consumer tastes and desires created a market for goods, and a consumer economy was born (Kercher 1-10; Decker, *The Emergence* 185, and 'Bills, Notes' 74; Povey; Karskens, *The Rocks* 157-8, 160-1, 164-5, and, *Inside the Rocks* chaps1-2; Hirst, *Convict Society* 36ff; Elliott).[7]

Underpinning all of this were the expectations and ambitions of the colonists themselves. As D. R. Hainsworth demonstrated over forty year ago, there were enterprising souls among them, especially the military officers, but also the convicts. They saw New South Wales not as an isolated agrarian penal colony, but in much the same way as other colonies of empire: a place to make money. Soon officers and enterprising emancipists were profiting richly from trade, amassing property in town and farms on the plain, and building fashionable houses (Hainsworth 82-5, 128-56; Parsons 102-19; Irving 44-8). In the first decade of the nineteenth century, this private economy far outstripped the government economy, and the town was studded with warehouses and shops, all jockeying to be closest to the water, wharves and ships. Already by 1802, visiting Frenchman Francois Péron could marvel at 'this assemblage of grand operations, this constant movement of shipping' (Hainsworth 84-5; Aplin and Parsons 161-62).

Fig. 3 Who made the town? Convicts' and ex-convicts' houses, shops and pubs in the most populous part of the town, the Rocks, in 1810. George William Evans (attrib.), 'Sydney Cove West Side, Taken from the East Side of the Cove,' 1810. (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales)

The Sydney traders were soon looking for an export commodity and they found it in the bloody and ruthless industry of sealing. Seals were hunted for their fur, skins and oil in Dusky Bay on the South Island of New Zealand in the 1790s and, from 1798, on the Furneaux Group of islands in Bass Strait. In subsequent years, sealers also moved on to other islands in search of their prey, from the east coast of Tasmania, right along the southern seaboard and over to King Georges Sound and the islands off Western Australia. In all these places they encountered Aboriginal people, often kidnapping women, and made settlements years before officials arrived. They too had escaped law, church and state. The sealers also returned to New Zealand, successively wrecking the rookeries at Dusky Sound, Foveaux Strait and Rakiura/Rak-e-ura (Stewart Island) (Frost, *The Global Reach* 241, 308-9, 317; Boyce 15-19, 89-91; McAloon 56-7; O'Malley 71-2, 88-92).

By 1791 convict transports also went whaling after they left Port Jackson. Offshore whaling was more capital intensive than sealing, and was at first carried on largely by British companies in competition with the French and Americans. The whalers called into the ports at Sydney, Hobart and the Bay of Islands for fresh food and water. Later colonial whalemen established shore based whaling, negotiating in New Zealand with Maori landowners to lease whaling rights and land for cultivation. The coastlines of New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land and New Zealand were dotted with the odorous whaling stations, their watch towers and forests of bleaching bones (Lawrence 7; Boyce 47; McAloon 57; Stokes 37; O'Malley 58-9).

These trans-Tasman voyages of traders, sealers and whalers underscore the fluid, restless maritime character of these colonies, and also that the ocean was not considered a barrier, but a highway, the site of great human activity, zones of colonial and imperial competition. So colonists considered New Zealand/Aotearoa not as a separate place, but in much the same way they did the lands of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land—as spaces for profit and possibilities, places of escape, encounters and chances, linked by the sea.

oOo

The official 'spread of settlement,' duly mapped and reported, all but hid another significant history: the movements and explorations of convicts. The settlements were not walled or barred, and the Australian bush, though it could be inhospitable and dangerous, was no deterrent. There was nothing to stop convicts, and soldiers and sailors, from walking off in search of food, collectables and sex. And so they did, right from the start. Some men went to live with Aboriginal people, learned their languages, underwent scarification—the lucky ones were allowed wives. Others went on exploratory journeys to the river or into the mountains (Karskens, *The Colony* chap 9).

Meanwhile, the ship-building, shipping and trade that underpinned the economic development of the colony were also inimical to a penal colony because they offered escape routes for convicts. Runaways most commonly stowed away on the labour-hungry ships. As a result of the steady rate of escapes, convicts from New South Wales fetched up in Calcutta, the Dutch East Indies, Ceylon, South America, Mauritius, Fiji, and of course in New Zealand (Karskens 'This Spirit'; Anderson).

These voyagers moved constantly in the hinterlands and along the coastlines of the continent. They made discoveries and built up geographical familiarity well before the officials made their maps and wrote their journals. They fostered disorder and violence, as in the sensational careers of ex-convict whaler Jackie Guard and his wife Betty in New Zealand, whose stories are known in New Zealand, and told so well in Te Papa/Museum of New Zealand, but forgotten in Australia. But they also created exchange, trade and social networks of both loyalty and betrayal. They were in anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose's words the 'outriders of civilisation,' the carriers of information about country beyond the horizons, guides for official expeditions and tourists. In Van Diemen's Land, as James Boyce tells us, a distinctive dog and kangaroo economy emerged, which allowed convicts and ex-convicts to become 'masters of the hinterlands.' For around two decades before the arrival of free settlers, before the rise of Tasmania as a 'little England,' they lived independently on the grasslands, co-occupied as a kind of vast common with small farmers, stock-owners and Aboriginal people (O'Malley 161; Rose 19-36; Boyce chaps1-4).

oOo

The sites of the early colonies had already been human places for millennia, of course. The British blundered and barged into Aboriginal country already intimately known, divided, named and invested with songlines and law legends. But 1788 and the contact years that followed did not mark instant transformations of black into white space. None of the settlers' rural and urban settlements were wholly 'white' places in the early years, and even less so the edgy, dangerous and unpredictable frontier areas. The early farmers, the runaways, sealers, sailors and explorers constantly encountered and negotiated with Aboriginal people, just as those who voyaged to New Zealand dealt with Maori. Within the larger, relentless process of

dispossession in Australia, convicts' relations with Aboriginal people were marked by exploitation and violence, but also localised contacts, negotiation, familiarity, friendships, shared enjoyment. There were settler-Aboriginal families just as there were Pākehā-Māori (Karskens, *The Colony* chap 2 and 386-401; O'Malley 89-91, 95-8).

The oceans and ships beckoned Aboriginal men too. Whereas Eora women dominated the harbours around Sydney, from 1791, young Aboriginal men went pelagic. They learned to sail and voyaged beyond the horizon. They went to Norfolk Island, Nootka Sound, Hawaii, and Bengal, as well as joining the sealing gangs at the Bass Strait islands. Maritime culture grew among them, and returned sailors often became leaders and elders among their peoples (Smith *Mari Nawi*; Karskens, *The Colony* 425-31; O'Malley chap 2).

The towns were polyglot in these years. People from all over the Britain were joined by African-Americans, Māori, Fijian, and Indian settlers, sailors and sojourners, as well as Aboriginal people, some of whom became urban dwellers very quickly. Unlike the farming areas, early Sydney did not actually dispossess them of much land, and so Aboriginal groups continued to occupy their ancestral country around the town. In November 1790, after Governor Phillip's repeated invitation, the first group of Eora also 'came in,' led by the famous cross-cultural envoy Bennelong. This breakthrough in race relations was achieved after a long process of kidnapping, retribution, diplomacy and reconciliation. It was met with relief and delight by the British officers (Karskens, *The Colony* 386-401).

Fig. 4 Aboriginal people in Sydney in about 1803. The artist shows men, women and children camped on the Rocks behind the town's first hospital. Detail from George William Evans, 'Sydney from the West Side of the Cove,' c1803. (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales)

Sydney attracted Aboriginal people from many areas over the succeeding decades. They were part of the social fabric of the town, and many were well known Sydney identities. They were the 'carriers of news and fish; the gossips of the town; the loungers on the quay,' for they 'know everybody; and understand the nature of everybody's business' (Field 435-36). But perhaps most importantly, Aboriginal people made certain parts of early Sydney their own—Farm Cove for initiation ceremonies for example. And though notionally occupying British legal 'space,' they continued to impose their own Law via the great contests, and used the streets and public places for this purpose intermittently until at least 1824. Thus British and Aboriginal law existed side by side in the same place, just as Māori law prevailed in New Zealand before 1840, even though two thousand Pākehā lived there. Sydney became a great centre and meeting place for Aboriginal people, and white people as well as black thronged the contest ground at the south end of Hyde Park to watch the great contests (Smith, *King Bungaree* 117-18; Karskens 'Red Coat'; Ford 75-9; Stokes 38).

Racial attitudes in Sydney hardened with the arrival of free settlers in the 1820s and 1830s. Images and accounts of Aboriginal people, especially those living in or visiting towns, grew increasingly harsh, describing them as debased, corrupt, ugly and diseased. Where once they were courted and welcomed, now they were considered a blight on Sydney, as they would be in later Australian cities. Eventually Aboriginal people tended to withdraw, finding refuge in the places beyond the settlers' gaze. Theirs was an on-going retreat to peri-urban places which were shunned by settlers, to bushland, public lands, and commons. They became invisible people. So in Sydney and on the Cumberland Plain beyond, dispossession was not a single event, but a cycle repeated continually as the city expanded into its hinterland (Karskens, 'Naked Possession' 325-57; Goodall and Cadzow).

oOo

The goldfields, outback and pastoral frontiers celebrated by Russell Ward were marked by transience, ruthless economies and a rootless, mobile male population. Yet where soil and climate allowed, the early colonists also founded *places:* neighbourhoods, towns and farming districts. Colonial identities and loyalties were powerfully bound up with such places, particularly through family and community networks and familiar landscapes. There were emotional bonds too. In 1804 the ex-convict settlers of Norfolk Island, founded in 1788, learned that the British government had ordered their settlement abandoned. The men presented a petition of protest, saying they wished to stay on their farms, they had wives, and children born on the island. They were now old men, and had no wish to start the whole pioneering process again. It was no use. The island was closed down, the people were uprooted once more and sent to Van Diemen's Land. But they found it hard to start again, and they never forgot their old island farms. John West wrote that 'years later, they spoke of the change with regret and sadness' (Hoare 29-32; Reid 39-41; West 38).

John Thomas 'Toby' Ryan, born on the Nepean River at Castlereagh in 1818, later Member of the Legislative Assembly, published his reminiscences in the 1880s. Ryan was the son and grandson of convicts, though he never actually admitted this in his book. But he argued that those first emancipists on the Hawkesbury-Nepean had been 'good stock' and produced a fine native-born race—the Currency generation. Written in prose 'unmistakably vigorous, rudely eloquent' and largely 'opposed to the rules of the grammarians,' his memoirs also reveal that the bonds of locale were fundamental to making one's way in the world, to a sense of origins and belonging (Ryan 3, 20; Andrews 48, 68). Above all else the colonists of his youth always wanted to know where people came from and who they were related to (in stark

contrast to the later nineteenth century, when nobody wanted to pry too much into family history, for fear of what they might find!). On the run with mates after a stoush with police at Penrith in 1835, young Toby wandered lonely, disoriented and unemployed in the strange and unfriendly Hunter Valley, until he met Hawkesbury/Nepean people already settled there. 'A lot of young men surrounded us to know from whence we came, and we soon found out that three of them were Australians from Richmond and Windsor, born on the same stream as ourselves' (Ryan 48). Toby's joy and relief was unbounded, and their help unstinting: he secured employment, food, company and friendship. Shared origins of family and place transformed strangers into allies and friends, and made strange places familiar too (Ryan 68).

But there was still more to locale than these networks of camaraderie and personal support stretched across the landscape. A man's place of origin and ethnic background also compelled him to defend his own against all others, with a rapid resort to fists. These deeply embedded loyalties extended well into the period of democracy. Historian Peter Cochrane writes vividly of the lively and violent rallies of the Sydney campaigns (chap 10).

These allegiances were if anything even more passionately expressed in the rural hinterland, where, seventy year after white settlement, locale still segued into ethnic origin and long-simmering feuds. William Walker, who arrived in Windsor on the Hawkesbury as a boy migrant in the 1830s, recalled the first elections of 1856, when Mr Bowman, supported by the English and Scots of Richmond, narrowly beat Mr Fitzgerald, the choice of Windsor and its Irish voters. (The towns are 7 km apart). Upon learning their candidate had lost, the Fitzgeraldites went on a rampage, a furious mob

> destroying the windows, doors and shutters of the houses occupied by Mr Bowman's supporters; nor were they satisfied until they had with heavy sticks beaten the window frames to pieces…this continued at intervals during the greater part of the night, some persons being visited by the enraged mob five or six times. (Walker 42-7)

Walker observed mildly: 'The animosities created among the people by the election lasted for many years.' So much for warm and close-knit community togetherness! But these glimpses do suggest that if we want to understand colonial people and their worlds, we need to look to the local and regional, to geographies and ecologies, and to intimate human relationships and networks.

These fierce local bonds were nested within larger colonial identities and allegiances, which emerged in the first three decades. There *was* a pride, especially in the towns, in the places colonists had made, despite the odds, and in natural bounty and bright prospects. But then each new colony thought itself far superior to the last, each declared itself with characteristic hyperbole as the most prosperous and healthy, with the best soils, finest climate, the hardiest men and the fattest cattle.

Governor Macquarie, while doggedly attempting to respectablise the colonists, nevertheless recognised that sense of place and achievement. He drew those feelings together, gave them voice and form through official artists and poets, including John Lewin, Joseph Lycett and Michael Massey Robinson. He fostered a sense of history and moment, too, through grand anniversary celebrations. These traditions and rituals of place were intended to be passed on to later generations (Atkinson, *The Europeans* chap 15; Webby; McDonald; *Sydney Gazette* 13 Jan 1813).

oOo

Before the nations, there were colonies, linked by oceans, rivers and paths, by commerce and trade and shared world views. They were peopled by generations refreshingly difficult to sanitise and embrace as founding fathers and mothers of the nation, but who nevertheless did found economies, populations, cultures and places.

Entangled in our own times and places, we cannot help but consider the past through what historian Kay Daniels called the 'unconscious scaffolding' of our paradigms and assumptions (27). For colonial Australia, there are further complexities: free immigrant claims to legitimate occupancy created a rupture, so that new, persuasive and damning histories were laid thickly over the decades that preceded, and later shaped emergent national histories too. Recovering the early colonial world from below all that 'white noise of history making' (Griffiths 4, 5, 167), making the strange familiar, offers such rich, suggestive vistas over the origins of our nations, and raises intriguing questions about what survived and persisted over later decades. How can we understand the colonies if we do not know about their origins, their natures, how they actually worked? But this history also makes the familiar strange, because it reveals the 'scaffolding' of our own worlds, the construction of our own 'webs of meaning,' stripped bare and in high relief (Geertz 6ff).

Works Cited

Adkin, Lesley. 'A Maori Chief (Mr F. Proctor) & a convict (Mr G. Noble): Armistice Celebrations in Levin Nov. 13, 1918', Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa collection. http://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/objectdetails.aspx?oid=908464

Anderson, C. 'Multiple Border Crossings: Convicts and Other Persons Escaped from Botany Bay and residing in Calcutta.' *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 3 (2001): 1-22.

Andrews, B.G. 'Ryan, James Tobias (Toby) (1818-1899).' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 6, Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 1976.

Aplin, Graeme and George Parsons. 'Maritime Trade: shipping and the early colonial economy.' In *A Difficult Infant: Sydney Before Macquarie.* Ed. Graeme Aplin: UNSW Press, 1988.

Atkinson, Alan. *The Europeans in Australia: A History*, volume 1, Melbourne: Oxford U P, 1997.

---. 'Four Patterns of Convict Protest.' *Labour History* 37 (1979).

Atkinson, James. *An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in New South Wales*. London: J. Cross, 1826.

Aveling, Marian. 'Imagining New South Wales as a Gendered Society, 1783-1821.' *Australian Historical Studies* 25 (1992).

Belich, James. *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World 1783-1939*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 2009.

Rose, Deborah Bird. 'The Year Zero and the North Australian Frontier.' In *Tracking Knowledge in North Australian Landscapes*. Eds. Deborah Rose and Anne Clark. Canberra: North Australia Research Unit, ANU, 1997.19-36.

Bladen, F.M. Ed. 'A Soldier's Letter' (13 December 1794). *Historical Records of New South Wales* 2 (1893): 817.

Bolton, Geoffrey. *Spoil and Spoilers: A history of Australians shaping their environment*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1981.

Boyce, James. *Van Diemen's Land*. Melbourne: Black Inc, 2008.

Broadbent, James. *The Australian Colonial House*. Sydney: Hordern House, 1997.

Carter, Paul. *The Road to Botany Bay: Essays in Spatial History*. London: Faber and Faber, 1987.

Clarke, Marcus. *His Natural Life*. Melbourne: G. Robertson, 1874.

Cochrane, Peter. *Colonial Ambition: Foundations of Australian Democracy*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 2006.

Daniels, Kay. 'Prostitution in Tasmania during the transition from penal settlement to "civilised society".' In *So Much Hard Work: women and prostitution in Australian history*. Ed. Kay Daniels. Sydney: Fontana/Collins, 1984.

Collins, David. *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, vol. 1. Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, (1798) 1971.

Dark, Eleanor. *The Timeless Land*. London: Collins, 1941.

Decker, Frank. *The Emergence of Money in Convict New South Wales*. Marburg: Metropolis-Verlag, 2010.

---. 'Bills, Notes and Money in Early New South Wales, 1788-1822.' *Financial History Review* 18.1 (2011): 74.

Duffield, Ian. 'Haul away the anchor girls: Charlotte Badger, tall stories and the pirates of the bad ship *Venus.*' *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 7 (2005): 35-64.

Egan, Jack. *Buried Alive: Sydney 1788-92 Eyewitness accounts of the making of a nation*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1999.

Elliott, Jane. 'Was there a convict dandy? Convict consumer interests in Sydney, 1788-1815.' *Australian Historical Studies* 26 (1995): 373-392.

Field, Baron. *Geographical Memoirs of New South Wales*. London: John Murray, 1828.

Fletcher, Brian H. 'Agriculture.' In *Economic Growth of Australia 1788-1821*. Eds. G. J. Abbott and N. B. Nairn. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 1978.

---. 'Grose, Paterson and the Settlement of the Hawkesbury 1794-1795.' *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 51.4 (1965): 341-9.

---. *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society: A History of Farming and Grazing in New South Wales before 1821*. Sydney: Sydney U P, 1976.

Ford, Lisa. *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U P, 2010.

Freeland, J.M. *Architecture in Australia: A History*. Melbourne: Penguin, (1968) 1982.

Frost, Alan. *Botany Bay: The Real Story*. Melbourne: Black Inc., 2011.

---. *Botany Bay Mirages: Illusions of Australia's Convict Beginnings*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 1994.

---. *The First Fleet: The Real Story*. Melbourne: Black Inc., 2011.

---. *The Global Reach of Empire: Britain's Maritime Expansion in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, 1764-1815*. Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2003.

Geertz, Clifford. 'Thick description: towards an interpretative theory of culture.' *The Interpretation of Cultures*. London: Hutchinson, 1975.

Gilmore, Mary. 'Old Botany Bay.' 1918

Goodall, Heather and Allison Cadzow. *Rivers and Resilience: Aboriginal People on Sydney's George's River.* Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009.

Griffiths, Tom. *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge U P, 1996.

Hainsworth, D.R. *The Sydney Traders: Simeon Lord and his Contemporaries, 1788*-1821. Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1972.

Harman, Kristyn. *Aboriginal Convicts: Australian, Khoisan and Maori Exiles*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2012.

Harris, Alexander. *Settlers and Convicts, or Recollections of sixteen years' labour in the Australian Backwoods*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, (1847) 1964.

Henzell, Ted. *Australian Agriculture: Its History and Challenges*. Melbourne: CSIRO Press, 2007.

Hill, David. *1788: The brutal truth of the First Fleet*. Sydney: Random House, 2008.

Hirst, John. *Freedom on the Fatal Shore: Australia's First Colony*. Melbourne: Black Inc., 2008.

---. *Convict Society and its Enemies*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983.

Hoare, Merval. *Norfolk Island: A Revised and Enlarged History*. Rockhampton: Central Queensland U P, 1999.

Hughes, Robert. *The Fatal Shore: A History of the Transportation of convicts to Australia 1787-1868*. London: Collins Harvill, 1987.

Irving, Robert, ed. *The History & Design of the Australian House*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1985.
Isaac, Rhys. *The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1982.

Jeans, D.N. *An Historical Geography of New South Wales to 1901*. Sydney: Reed Education, 1972.

Jose, Arthur W. *History of Australasia: from the earliest times to the present day with a chapter on Australian literature*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1914.

Kamira, Jo. 'Maori.' *The Dictionary of Sydney*. http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/maori

Karskens, Grace. *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2009.

---. 'Banished and reclaimed.' *Meanjin (Museums: Art or Mart)* 60.4 (2001): 26-34.

---. *The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 1997.

---. *Inside the Rocks: The Archaeology of a Neighbourhood*. Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1999.

---. 'The Dialogue of Townscape: Sydney and the Rocks 1788-1820.' *Australian Historical Studies* 28.108 : 88-112.

---. 'This Spirit of Emigration: the nature and meaning of escape in early New South Wales.' *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 7 (2005): 1-34.

---. 'Naked Possession: Building and the Politics of Legitimate Occupancy in Early New South Wales, Australia.' In *Investing in the Early Modern Built Environment: Europeans, Asians, Settlers and Indigenous Societies*. Ed. Carole Shammas. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2012.

---. 'Red Coat, Blue Jacket, Black Skin: Aboriginal Men and Clothing in early New South Wales.' *Aboriginal History* 35 (2011): 1-36.

---. *Vanished country: The Penrith Lakes Scheme and the lost world of Castlereagh*. Melbourne: CSIRO Press, (forthcoming).

---. 'The Early Colonial Presence, 1788-1822.' In, *Cambridge History of Australia*. Eds. Alison Bashford and Stuart McIntyre. Melbourne: Cambridge U P, 2013, 189-217.

Kercher, Bruce. *Debt, Seduction, and Other Disasters*. Sydney: Federation Press, 1996.

Kociumbas, Jan. *Oxford History of Australia Volume 2 1770-1860 Possessions*. Melbourne: Oxford U P, 1992.

Lawrence, Susan. *Whalers and Free Men: Life on Tasmania's Colonial Whaling Stations*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Press, 2006.

Levell, David. *Tour to Hell: Convict Australia's Great Escape Myths*. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 2008.

Levi, John S. and George F.J. Bergman. *Australian Genesis: Jewish Convicts and Settlers, 1788-1860*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 2002.

Liston, Carol. *Sarah Wentworth, Mistress of Vaucluse*. Sydney: NSW Historic Houses Trust, 1988.

Lyons, Martyn and Penny Russell, eds. *Australia's History: Themes & Debates*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005.

McAloon, Jim. 'Resource frontiers, environment, and settler capitalism 1760-1860.' In *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*. Eds. Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking. Melbourne: Oxford U P, 2004, 52-66.

McDonald, Patricia R. 'Art, Artists and Patrons.' In *The Age of Macquarie. Eds.* James Broadbent and Joy Hughes. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 1992. 88-116.

Martin, Allan. *Henry Parkes: A Biography*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 1980.

Martin, John Benson. *Reminiscences, Being a Reprint from the Camden Times, 1883*. Camden, NSW: A. J. Doust, 1884.

Maxwell Stewart, Hamish. *Closing Hell's Gates: The Death of a Convict Station*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2008.

Molony, John. *The Native Born: The First White Australians*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 2000.

Morrison, Frederic W. *The Aldine Centennial History of New South Wales, Illustrated*. Sydney: Aldine Publishing Company, 1888.

Nicholas, Stephen and Peter R. Shergold. 'Transportation as Global Migration.' In *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past*. Ed. Stephen Nicholas. Melbourne: Cambridge U P, 1988.

---. 'Convicts as Migrants.' In *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past*. Ed. Stephen Nicholas. Melbourne: Cambridge U P, 1988.

---. 'Convicts as Workers.' In *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past*. Ed. Stephen Nicholas. Melbourne: Cambridge U P, 1988.

O'Farrell, Patrick. *The Irish in Australia: 1788 to the present*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 1993.

O'Malley, Vincent. *The Meeting Place: Māori and Pākehā Encounters, 1642-1840*. Auckland: Auckland U P, 2012.

Parsons, George. 'The Commercialisation of Honour: Early Australian Capitalism 1788-1809.' In *A Difficult Infant: Sydney Before Macquarie.* Ed. Graeme Aplin: UNSW Press, 1988, 102-19.

Pleij, Heman. *Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life*. Trans. Diane Webb. New York: Columbia U P, 2001.

Povey, David. 'Prosperity in New South Wales before 1810.' Grad. Dip. thesis, UNSW, 2010.

Pybus, Cassandra. *Black Founders: the Unknown Story of Australia's First Black Settlers*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2006.

Raby, Geoff. *Making Rural Australia*: *An Economic History of Technical and Institutional Creativity, 1788-1860*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1996.

Rees, Sian. *The Floating Brothel: the extraordinary story of the Lady Julian and its cargo of female convicts bound for Botany Bay*. Sydney: Hodder Headline Australia, 2001.

Reid, Kirsty. *Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia.* Manchester: Manchester U P, 2007.

Roberts, David Andrew. 'Russell Ward and the Convict Legend'. *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 10.2 (2008): 39-40.

Robson, L.L. *The Convict Settlers of Australia: An Enquiry into the Origin and Character of the Convicts Transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, 1787-1852*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 1965.

Rose, Gillian. *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993.

Rusden, George W. *History of Australia*, 3 Vols. London: Chapman and Hall, 1883.

Russell, Penny. 'Unsettling settler society.' In *Australia's History: Themes & Debates*. Eds. Martyn Lyons and Penny Russell. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005, 22-40.

Ryan, James Tobias. *Reminiscences of Australia*. Sydney: George Robertson and Company, 1894.

Scott, Ernest. *A Short History of Australia*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1916.

Shaw, A.G.L. *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and other parts of the British Empire*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, (1966) 1981.

Smith, Babette. *Australia's birthstain: the startling legacy of the convict era*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2008.

Smith, Keith Vincent. *Mari Nawi: Aboriginal Odysseys*. Sydney: Rosenberg Publishing, 2010.

---. *King Bungaree: A Sydney Aborigine Meets the Great South Pacific Explorers, 1799-1830*. Sydney: Kangaroo Press, 1992.

Stokes, Evelyn. 'Contesting Resources: Māori, Pākehā, and a Tenurial Revolution.' In, *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, Eds. Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking. Melbourne: Oxford U P, 2004, 35-51.

Sydney Gazette, 20 January 1827.

Sydney Gazette 13 January 1813, 'Effusions of Gratitude'.

Tucker, James (attrib.), *Ralph Rashleigh*. Introd. & Ed. Colin Roderick. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, (1929) 1953.

Walker, William. *Reminiscences (personal, social and political) of a fifty years' residence at Windsor on the Hawkesbury*. Sydney: Library of Australian History, (1890) 1977.

Ward, Russell. *The Australian Legend*. Melbourne: Oxford U P, 1958.

Waterhouse, Richard. *Private Pleasures, Public Leisure; A History of Australian Popular Culture Since 1788*. Melbourne: Longman, 1995.

Watson, Frederick. Ed. 'Governor Phillip's Instructions, 25 April 1787.' In *Historical Records of Australia*. Sydney, Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1914-1925, series 1, vol. 1, 14-15.

Webby, Elizabeth. 'Pipes and Odes: Literature and Music.' In *The Age of Macquarie*. Eds. James Broadbent and Joy Hughes. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 1992. 88-116.

West, John. *History of Tasmania*. Launceston: Henry Dowling, 1852.

West, Obed. *Memoirs of Obed. West: A Portrait of Early Sydney*. Ed. Edward West Marriot, Bowral, NSW: Barcom Press, (1878) 1988.

Wright, Matthew. *Convicts: New Zealand's Hidden Criminal Past*. Auckland: Penguin, 2012.

---

[1] This essay draws upon my chapter 'The Early Colonial Presence, 1788-1822', in Alison Bashford and Stuart

[2] See John Hirst, *Convict Society and its Enemies*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983. 189-217; Allan Martin, *Henry Parkes: A Biography*. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 1980: 25, 44-5; Carol Liston, *Sarah Wentworth, Mistress of Vaucluse*. Sydney: NSW Historic Houses Trust, 1988; Babette Smith, *Australia's birthstain: the startling legacy of the convict era*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2008.

[3] Sometimes sensationalist titles belie the author's purpose—for example, Sian Rees' popular history *The Floating Brothel*, is actually an attempt to humanise convict women and recreate their experience of transportation, *The Floating Brothel: the extraordinary story of the Lady Julian and its cargo of female convicts bound for Botany Bay*, Sydney, Hodder Headline Australia, 2001. For New Zealand, see Matthew Wright, *Convicts: New Zealand's Hidden Criminal Past*, Auckland, Penguin, 2012.

---

[4] Roberts points out that Ward's thesis had antecedents in George Arnold Wood, Keith Hancock and Max Crawford, see 'Russel Ward and the Convict Legend', pp. 39-40. See also Penny Russell, 'Unsettling settler society', in Martyn Lyons and Penny Russell (eds), *Australia's History: Themes & Debates*, Sydney, UNSW Press, 2005, pp. 24-7.

[5] The long-term role of the colony was less clear, perhaps deliberately so, see Alan Frost, *Botany Bay: The Real Story*, Melbourne, Black Inc., 2011, p. 227 and loc. cit. and for a summary of the decades-long discussion about the motives for settling New South Wales, see pp. 10-14.

[6] Ted Henzell claims the colony was already self-sufficient in grain by 1795 (*Australian Agriculture*, 1). However the supply was threatened in some years by population fluctuations, droughts and devastating floods; in good years there were gluts of grain.

[7] See early issues of the *Sydney Gazette* for the goods dealers advertised.