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Botany Bay to Port Jackson

Captain Arthur Phillip arrived at Botany Bay with the First Fleet on 18 January, 1788, to set up an English **penal colony** in New Holland. He wasn't happy with what he saw.

The First Fleet's Arrival

Captain Watkin Tench was on the First Fleet. He wrote a book that is an important record of the journey and the new colony. He wrote: '… we did not think the water very excellent, nor did it run freely. In the evening we returned on board, not greatly pleased with the later part of our discoveries'.

Phillip decided to move the fleet. He was looking for a better harbour for the ships, fresh water and richer soil.

The French

Phillip and the officers were alarmed when they saw two French ships off the coast of Botany Bay. Phillip was relieved that the English had landed first and that New Holland was claimed for England.

Port Jackson

It took a few days for the whole fleet to arrive at Port Jackson. Phillip was now **governor**, and on 26 January, 1788, he planted an English flag and held a short ceremony, naming the new settlement Sydney Cove, after the English **Home Secretary**, Lord Sydney. Only a small number of officers and **marines** were at the ceremony, as most of the fleet had not yet **disembarked**.

The journey was over for the First Fleet. Life was about to begin for the new settlers – eight months after leaving their home soil.

Sample pages

This painting shows Governor Arthur Phillip raising the English flag at Sydney Cove on 26 January, 1788.

The Naming of a Country

A Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman, named Australia 'New Holland' in 1644, after his home country of Holland.

English explorer Captain James Cook claimed the east coast of Australia in 1770 and named it 'New South Wales'.

In 1805, Matthew Flinders, an English **navigator**, suggested the name 'Australia', which came from the Latin term 'Terra Australis', which means 'southern land'.

Australia Day

The arrival of the First Fleet and the raising of the flag is remembered every year on 26 January as Australia Day.

Disembarking

The first convicts were unloaded from the ship on 27 January, 1788. For many of them, it was the first time they had been on solid ground for more than a year.

Rowed to Shore

The male convicts were sent off the ships first and set straight to work clearing land and pitching tents. It took another ten days for the women convicts to **disembark** and be rowed to shore. Some women had managed to save special clothes from home to wear for their arrival.

The animals that had survived the voyage were in bad condition. They were fed fresh grass that had been cut and rowed out to the ship while the fleet waited at Botany Bay. The animals were rowed to shore as quickly as possible and left to graze in the bush.

The New Country

The new land was strange and unfamiliar. The bush came down almost to the shore. The smells, birds and plant life were very different from what the First Fleeters had known at home.

The fleet arrived in the middle of summer. No one was prepared for the heat and humidity, the sudden summer storms or the hoards of mosquitoes, flies and spiders. The First Fleeters soon discovered that English clothing was not practical for hot Australian summers.

The convicts' clothing was too hot for the Australian summer.

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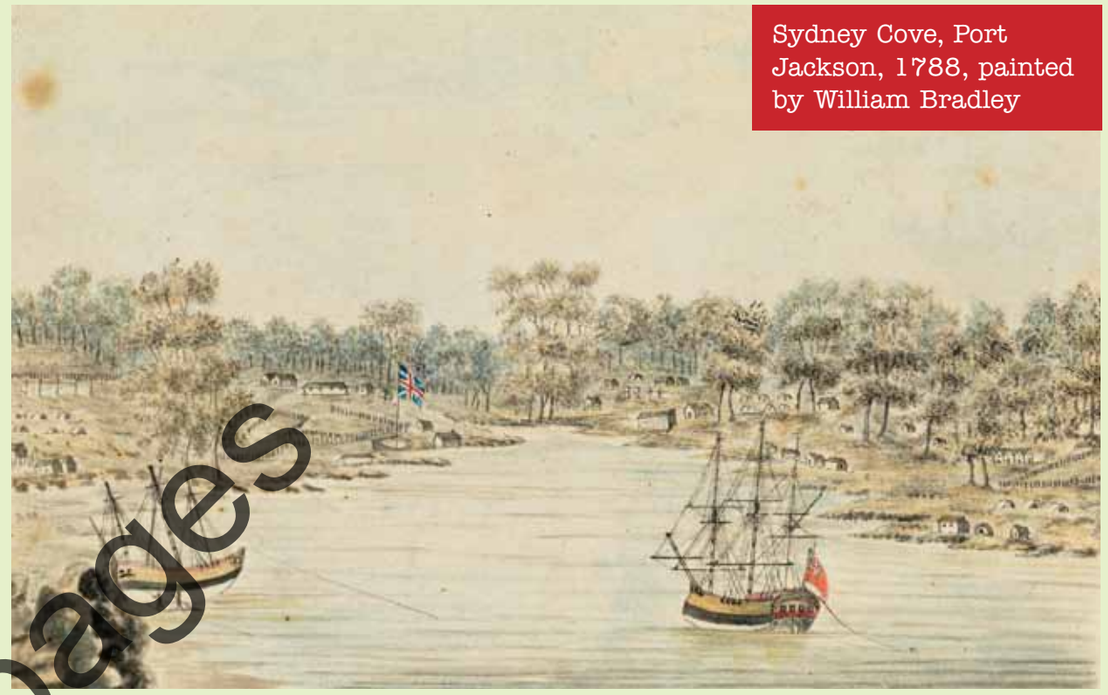


Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, 1788, painted by William Bradley

Chart of Port Jackson drawn by George Raper

George Raper

George Raper was a seaman who painted what he saw on the voyage of the First Fleet and in the new colony. His pictures and maps are an important record.

How Many Convicts?

Some records show that 568 male and 191 female convicts set out from England, and that approximately 543 male and 189 female convicts landed safely at Port Jackson.

Meeting the Eora People

The Indigenous people who lived around Sydney were called the Eora. **Governor** Phillip was completely responsible for the new **colony**. He had been given strict instructions by the English government to get along with the Eora and live in peace with them.

The Eora

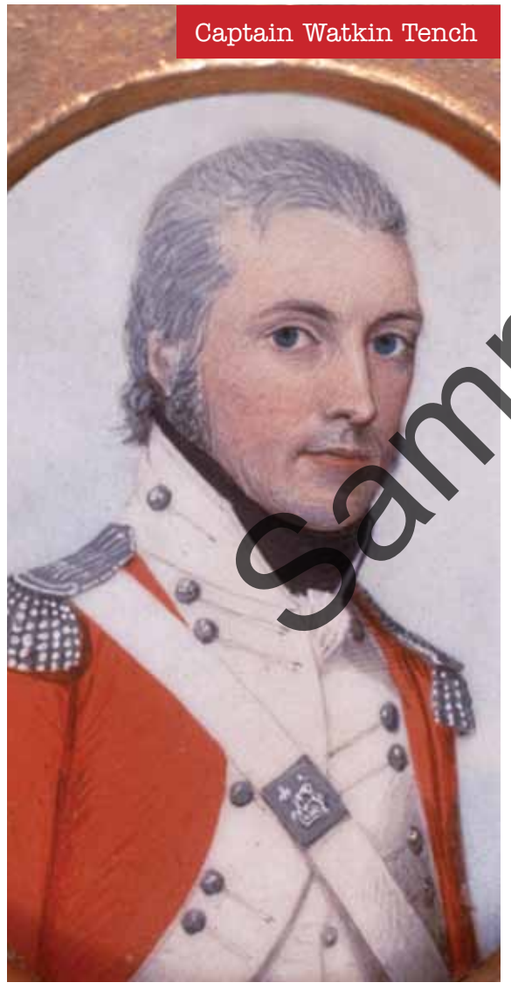
Both the English and the Eora were very curious about each other. Indigenous people had lived in Australia for thousands of years, respecting the land and taking only what they needed from it.

The Eora were shocked at how the English started clearing the land. They were also surprised at the harsh punishments given to the convicts.

The Newcomers

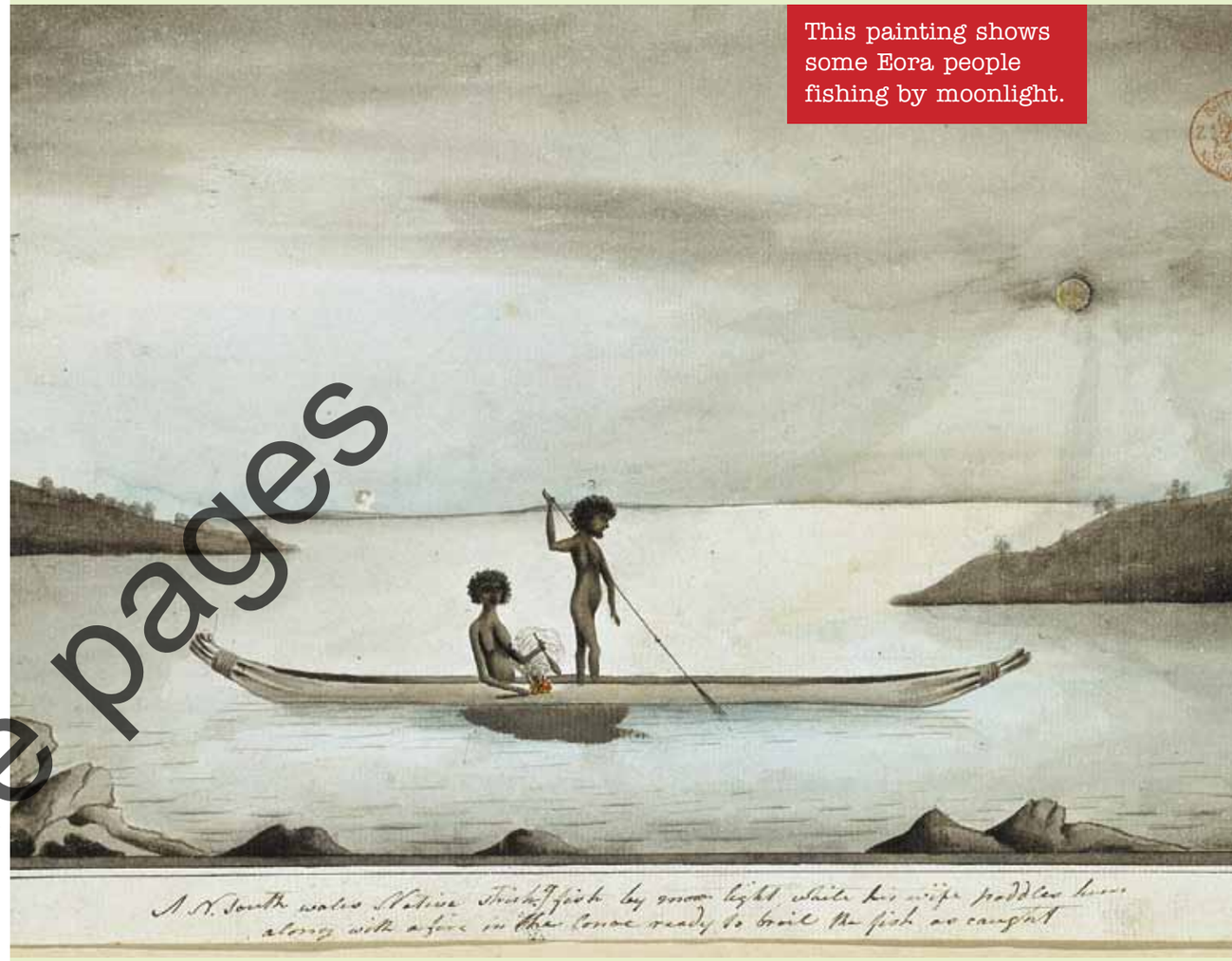
To the Eora, everything about the newcomers was strange and different, from how they looked and dressed to the way they cooked their food in a pot.

At the start, there was no fighting between the English and the Eora. The English, however, felt they were **superior** to the Eora. This attitude would create enormous problems for everyone in the times ahead.



Captain Watkin Tench

Sample pages



This painting shows some Eora people fishing by moonlight.

From Watkin Tench's Journal:

'*We found the natives tolerably numerous as we advanced up the river, and even at the harbour's mouth we had reason to conclude the country more populous than Mr Cook thought it.*'

This shows the First Fleeters were surprised at how many Eora there were. Captain James Cook and Joseph Banks had reported that they had not seen many Aboriginals in New Holland on their expedition in 1770.

Settling In

Life was very busy on arrival in the **colony**. Everyone who was strong enough was set to work immediately.

Governor Phillip's Plans

Unloading the stores from the ships took more than a week. **Governor** Phillip mapped out a plan for the tents. He was careful to separate the officers, **marines**, and male and female convicts.

Phillip was keen to make the new colony work. He encouraged convicts to marry and to work hard. Harsh punishments were given to anyone who broke the law. The **death penalty** was given to anyone caught stealing animals that were needed for food and breeding.

Convict Helpers

The marines refused to be jailers and look after the convicts, so Phillip put well-behaved convicts in charge of other convicts.

A hospital tent was set up to look after those who were unwell. The conditions in the hospital tent were poor. There were very few medical supplies. There were not even sheets or blankets for the patients. John White was the chief surgeon. He and the other surgeons had to work under very difficult conditions.

Shocked

The settlers were shocked by their new environment and the changeable climate. Less than a week after their arrival, a violent storm shook the settlement and terrified everyone. A tree that was struck by lightning fell and killed five sheep.

Sample pages

A map of the new colony, 1790

The bushland surrounding Sydney Cove looked very different from the English countryside.