

Colonial people: Domestic servants

Would you like to travel back to colonial times and experience what life was like then? In this book, you will meet Maude. She works as a maid in a grand house in Sydney in the 1870s. Come along and see through her eyes what the life of a domestic servant was like.

What is a domestic servant?

Domestic servants were people who lived and worked in their employer's home in return for wages, food and **lodging**. While domestic servants could be men or women, in colonial times most were women who worked as maids or cooks.

AUSTRALIA'S COLONIAL PERIOD

The colonial period began in 1788, when British settlers established a **colony** in New South Wales. It ended when Australia became a **nation** in 1901.

Colonial words

COLONY a settlement in Australia that was controlled by the British government

DOMESTIC relating to the running of a household

LODGING a room to live in

NATION a country with its own government



There are many servants in the grand house where I work.



Hello, my name is Maude. I am 14 years old and I grew up in the country, but my family does not have a lot of money, so I had to come to Sydney town to work as a maid in a grand house in Potts Point. My duties are keeping the house clean and tidy, helping in the kitchen and doing the laundry, but I am not the only servant here.

The butler is in charge of the male servants. He greets the guests and serves meals. There is a footman to help the butler, a coachman to keep the horses and drive the carriage, and gardeners to tend to the grounds. The housekeeper oversees all the work that is done in the house and is in charge of the female servants. The cook organises the food for the household, and there is another maid, like me. There is also a governess to teach the children.

