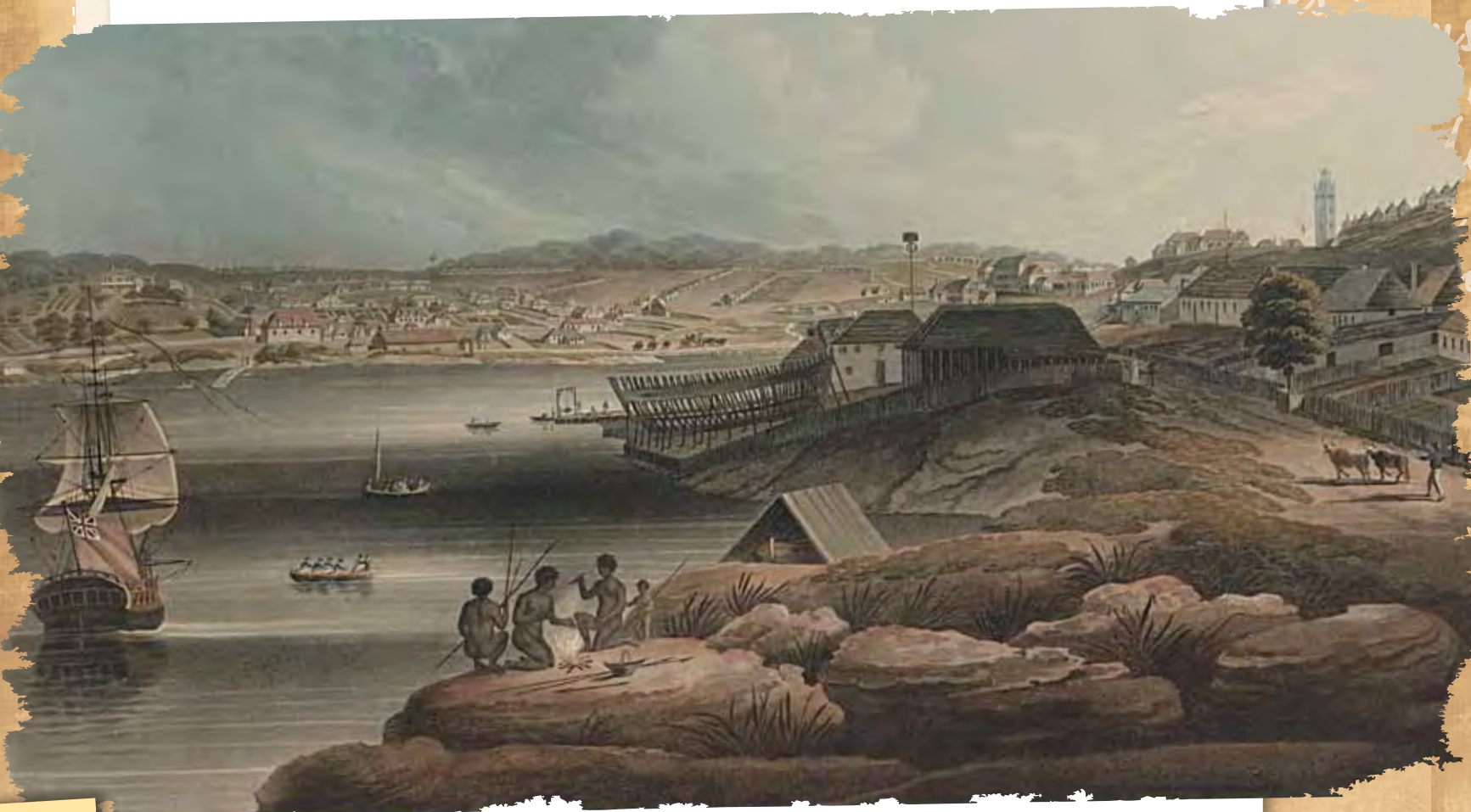


Stories from Australia's history

The story of modern Australia starts on 26 January 1788. On that day, Captain Arthur Phillip arrived at Sydney Cove from England with the **convict** ships of the First Fleet. The new **settlement** brought disaster to Australia's **Indigenous peoples**, because the newcomers took their lands. This event marks the beginning of Australia as we know it today.

After 1788, Indigenous Australians became **outcasts** in their own lands. The European settlers tried to crush Indigenous ways of life, but they did not succeed. Indigenous Australians survived and fought back. There are many stories in this long fight for **justice**. Charles Perkins and the Freedom Ride is one of these great stories in Australia's history.

Indigenous peoples, such as the Eora people of Sydney, suffered the loss of their lands and culture when Europeans arrived in Australia.



Charles Perkins and the Freedom Ride

Around midnight on 12 February 1965, a group of 29 students boarded a bus outside the University of Sydney. They were going on a two-week tour of **outback** New South Wales, but this was no holiday. The students on the Freedom Ride aimed to drive from town to town, exposing shocking **racism** against Indigenous Australians.



The students who took part in the Freedom Ride came from different backgrounds, including Jewish, Christian and Indigenous. They all wanted to fight for an end to racism.

A fiery young Indigenous man, Charles Perkins, was one of the students on the bus. He was determined to stand up to racists and improve the lives of Indigenous Australians. By the end of the Freedom Ride, the students had exposed racism in Australia and Charles Perkins had become a powerful Indigenous leader.

The Freedom Ride was a **turning point** for Indigenous Australians. This is the story of the people, the ideas and the events of the Freedom Ride, and how it changed Australia forever.

What does it mean?

racism: Unfair treatment based on race

Key people

These two people played key roles in the Freedom Ride.

Charles Perkins

Born: 1936 at The Bungalow, a police-run Aboriginal reserve in Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Role: Leader of the Freedom Ride

Age at the time of the Freedom Ride (1965): 29

Died: 2000

Appearance: Tall, slim, well-dressed, dark eyes, dark curly hair, strong jaw

Character: Intelligent, quick-tempered, hard-working, a brilliant sportsman and an excellent public speaker, but a loner

Comments: Charles Perkins was clever and energetic, but as an **Indigenous** man he faced terrible racism. It was through hard work and determination that he achieved success. Perkins became a soccer star in Australia and overseas, then became the first Indigenous man to earn a university degree. Perkins' experiences of unfair treatment made him determined to fight for Indigenous rights. As the leader of the Freedom Ride, he battled racism with great courage. However, his experiences of racism made him angry and difficult to work with in later life.



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Ted Noffs

Born: 1926 in Mudgee, New South Wales

Role: Supporter and organiser of the Freedom Ride

Age at the time of the Freedom Ride: 39

Died: 1995

Appearance: Short, stocky, round face, warm smile

Character: Intelligent, friendly, energetic, good with people, a writer, a poet and a man of action

Comments: Ted Noffs was a church minister at the Wayside Chapel in the Sydney suburb of Kings Cross. He welcomed everyone to his chapel, including drug addicts, alcoholics and homeless people. He also fought for **justice** for Indigenous Australians. Noffs recognised Charles Perkins' talents and encouraged him to study at the University of Sydney. Perkins was so inspired by Noffs that he said 'he set me alight'. Noffs was one of the people who came up with the idea of the Freedom Ride to highlight racism in New South Wales and Queensland.



Shameful treatment

In the early 1960s, Indigenous Australians were treated as second-class citizens, just because of the colour of their skin.

In country towns in New South Wales, they were banned from hotels and cafés ...

HEY, YOU CAN'T SIT DOWN IN HERE! GET OUT!

They lived outside the towns in rough camps.

1962

In Sydney, Charles Perkins and his friend Pastor Ted Noffs were determined to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians.

I WANT TO HELP MY PEOPLE.

YOU COULD BE A GREAT LEADER, CHARLES.

HOTEL

... and picked on by the police.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.

BUT I'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG!

ME? I FAILED HIGH SCHOOL.

WORK HARD AND YOU'LL GET INTO UNIVERSITY.

March 1963

Perkins passed his high school exams and began studying at the University of Sydney.

I WON'T WASTE THIS CHANCE!

Soon, Perkins became involved in student activities. He spoke at meetings ...

MY PEOPLE HAVE NO HOUSES AND NO RUNNING WATER! THEY'RE BANNED FROM HOTELS AND CINEMAS!

20 July 1964

... and formed a group to fight for justice called Student Action For Aborigines.

IN AMERICA, THEY HELD FREEDOM RIDES TO PROTEST AGAINST RACISM.

WE COULD DO THAT, TOO - HIRE A BUS AND DRIVE TO RACIST TOWNS.

At a SAFA meeting ...

DO WE AGREE ON A FREEDOM RIDE?

YES!

LET'S INVITE THE PRESS ALONG.

WE SHOULD DO SURVEYS, TOO, AND ASK ABORIGINES ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT.

A Freedom Ride around New South Wales was planned for the summer.

December

The Wayside Chapel, King's Cross

THESE ARE THE MOST RACIST TOWNS, CHARLES. WHILE YOU'RE AWAY, I'LL STAY HERE AND KEEP THE PRESS INFORMED.

