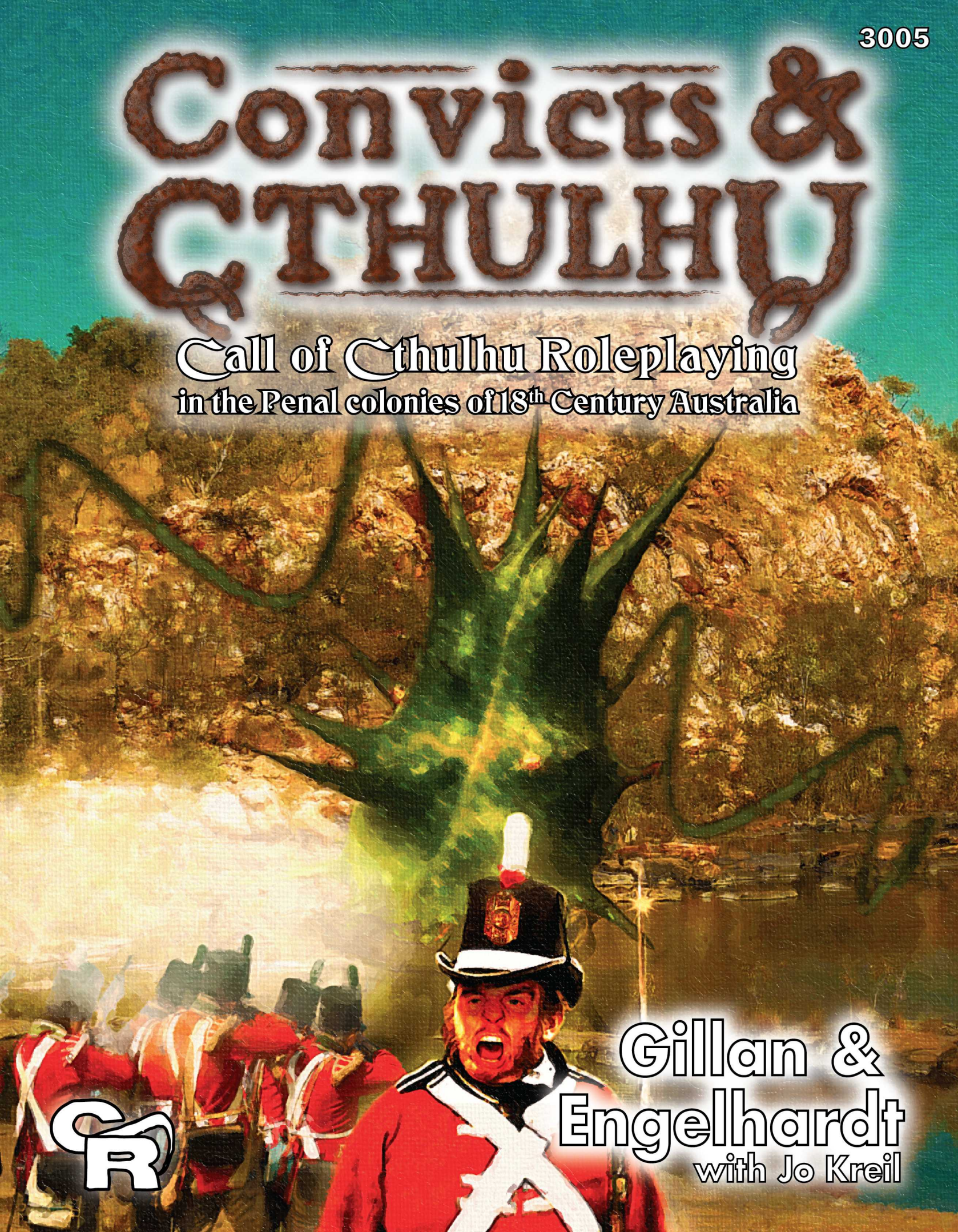


# Convicts & CTHULHU

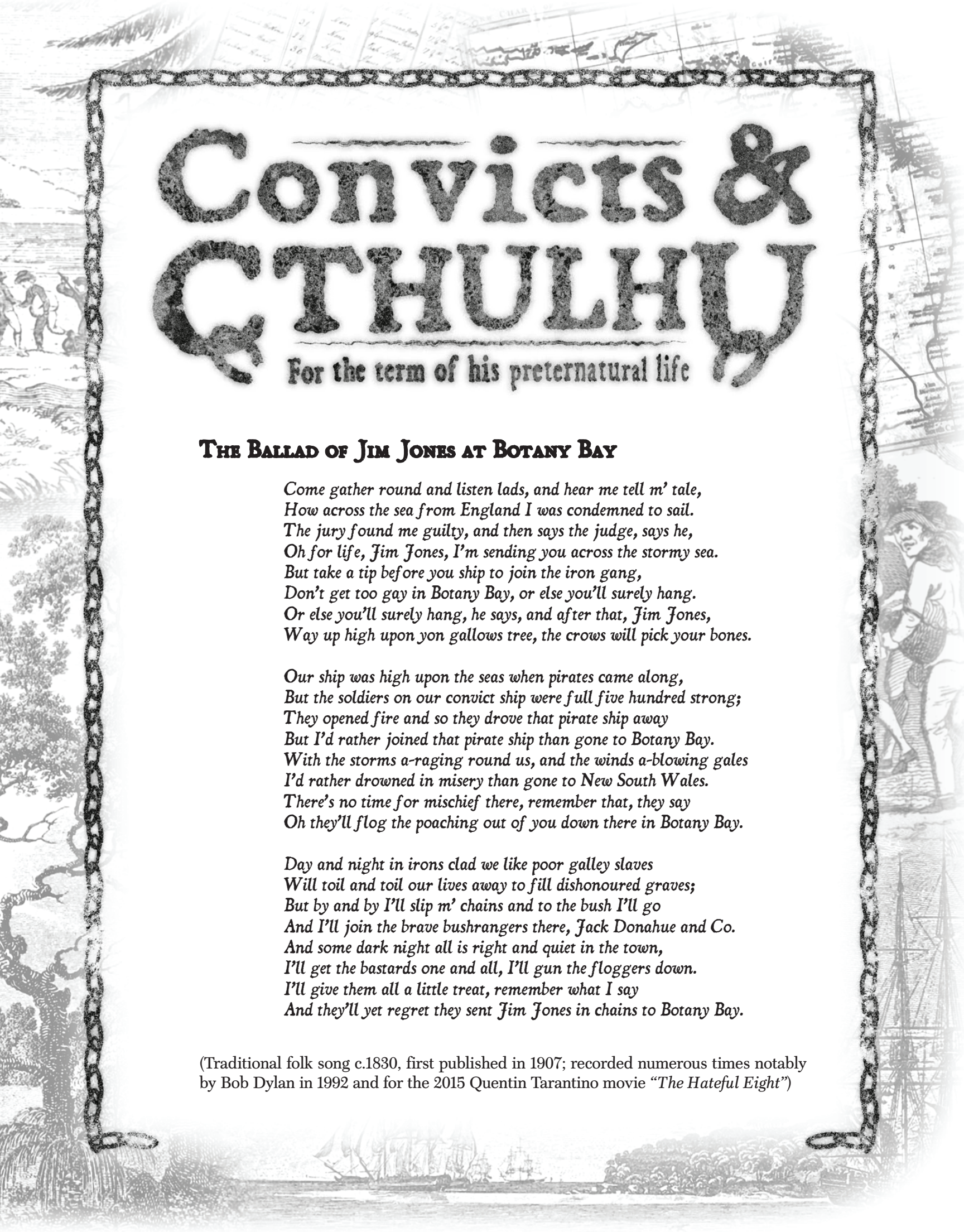
Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying  
in the Penal colonies of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Australia



Gillan &  
Engelhardt  
with Jo Kreil







# Convicts & CYTHULHU

For the term of his preternatural life

## THE BALLAD OF JIM JONES AT BOTANY BAY

*Come gather round and listen lads, and hear me tell m' tale,  
How across the sea from England I was condemned to sail.  
The jury found me guilty, and then says the judge, says he,  
Oh for life, Jim Jones, I'm sending you across the stormy sea.  
But take a tip before you ship to join the iron gang,  
Don't get too gay in Botany Bay, or else you'll surely hang.  
Or else you'll surely hang, he says, and after that, Jim Jones,  
Way up high upon yon gallows tree, the crows will pick your bones.*

*Our ship was high upon the seas when pirates came along,  
But the soldiers on our convict ship were full five hundred strong;  
They opened fire and so they drove that pirate ship away  
But I'd rather joined that pirate ship than gone to Botany Bay.  
With the storms a-raging round us, and the winds a-blowing gales  
I'd rather drowned in misery than gone to New South Wales.  
There's no time for mischief there, remember that, they say  
Oh they'll flog the poaching out of you down there in Botany Bay.*

*Day and night in irons clad we like poor galley slaves  
Will toil and toil our lives away to fill dishonoured graves;  
But by and by I'll slip m' chains and to the bush I'll go  
And I'll join the brave bushrangers there, Jack Donahue and Co.  
And some dark night all is right and quiet in the town,  
I'll get the bastards one and all, I'll gun the floggers down.  
I'll give them all a little treat, remember what I say  
And they'll yet regret they sent Jim Jones in chains to Botany Bay.*

(Traditional folk song c.1830, first published in 1907; recorded numerous times notably by Bob Dylan in 1992 and for the 2015 Quentin Tarantino movie "The Hateful Eight")



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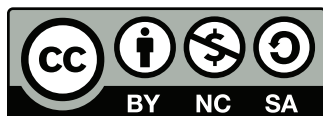
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## Authors' Notes

A while back Dean Engelhardt asked me if I wanted to take part in his *Australian Aeons* scenario book – adventures set in various historical periods of Australia's history – and I was aghast that no-one had stuck up their hand to do the convict era. Since I had been foolish enough to whine about it, Dean demonstrated his editorial cunning by calling my bluff and suggesting I provide some material myself. I riposted by suggesting it be a joint project and we settled on the time of the Rum Rebellion in early 1808. (The Rebellion was the second mutiny suffered by none other than William Bligh, former Captain of the *Bounty* and then Governor of the convict colony of New South Wales). The problem was the convict era background was so unique – and so rich with possibility – that we churned through a massive word count to capture everything needed to do it justice.

Dean is a master of the sandbox gaming environment and in this case we created what amounted to a veritable prosopography of early colonial New South Wales. In the end there was simply too much source material for the scenario book, but it was too cool to do away with entirely, so Dean decided to hive it off into its own beast, hence *Convicts & Cthulhu*. Since we didn't want the buyers of the scenario book to feel they were short-changed of useful historical background, we have made it a free download.

Adding the Cthulhu Mythos to the historical squalor and terror of those times became less of a stretch than it might seem – after all, madness in this period was referred to as “New South Wales Disease” because of the prevalence of the colony's denizens, convict and free citizen alike, to go insane. Even the Australian Aboriginal peoples, living a satisfied and sustainable life until European contact, were afflicted by the disease and brutality the Colonists brought with them. There is a wealth of material in this book, and even more in the references (much of it free online), so you can enjoy early convict shenanigans and mind-bending cosmic horror for many hours of gaming.

Geoff Gillan, Brisbane, 2016

Geoff is really far too modest and self-effacing for his own good. I think it's fairly safe to say that the existence of this book is almost 100% due to two things: Geoff's passion for early Australian history (and in particular the convict era) and his superlative skills as a *Call of Cthulhu* Keeper. During the development of the convict-era scenario that spawned this sourcebook, I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Skype-based playtest sessions that Geoff used to road-test the setting and the scenario. At the outset I wasn't entirely sold on the concept of playing a convicted criminal investigator, locked away in a penal colony in the middle of nowhere at the mercy of cruel and corrupt gaolers. But the playtest sessions turned out to be an amazing success – everyone found the convict world to be a compelling and intriguing backdrop for a tale of cosmic horror, so much so that a modest scenario threatened to morph into a fully-fledged convict campaign. In the end we ran something like six 4-hour playtest sessions, but even then players were sad to say goodbye to their convict investigators and the cruel world they inhabited.

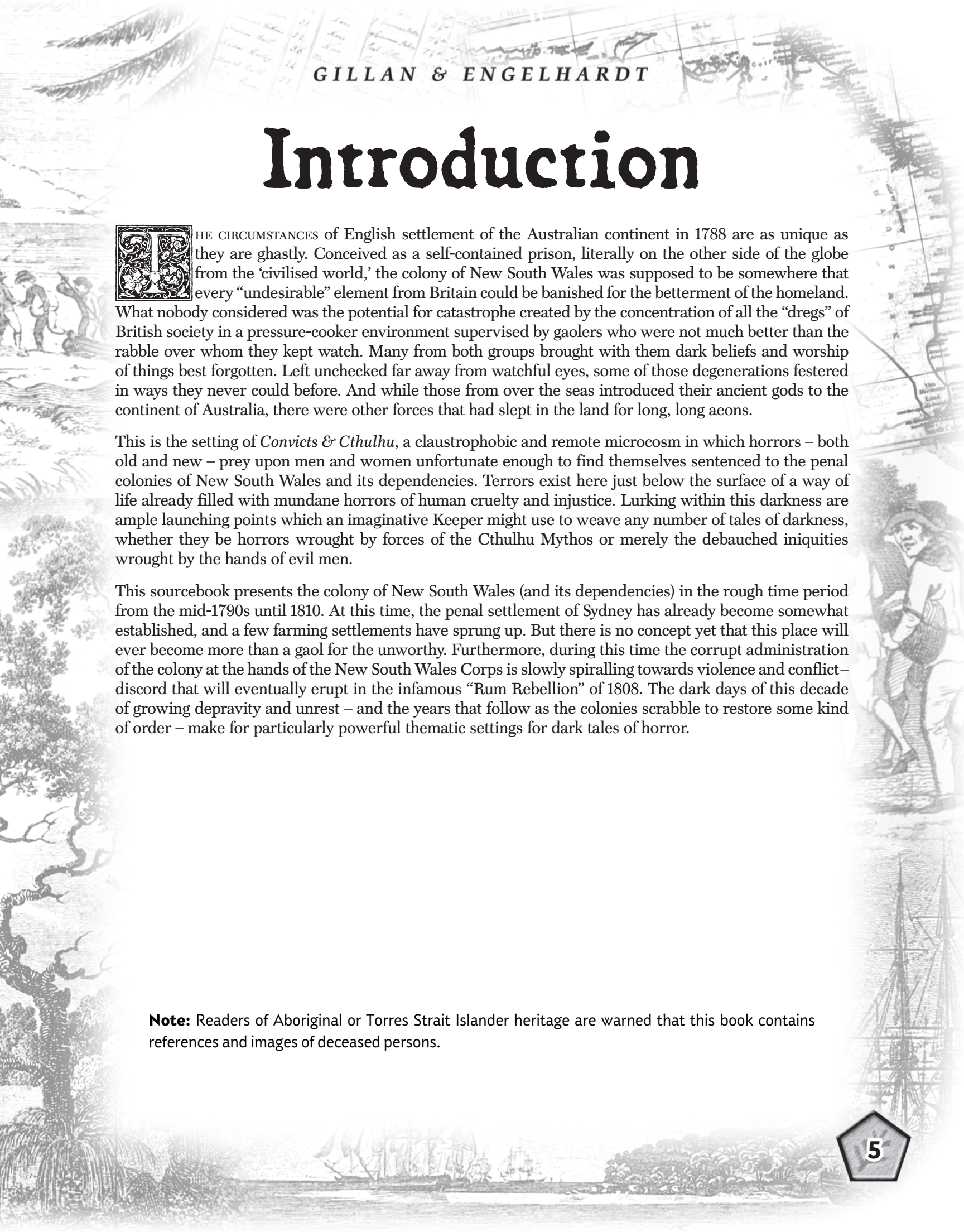
When it came to editing the Rum Rebellion scenario into some kind of publishable form it was obvious to me that we had written far, far more source material for the convict-era setting than could ever be shoe-horned into the structure of a conventional *Call of Cthulhu* scenario. So, Geoff and I made the tough decision to split the manuscript in two – this book began its life as the source-book half of that initial draft. After starting down the road of making *Convicts & Cthulhu* a standalone publication I soon realised that we needed to write some scenario seeds and helpful notes about incorporating Mythos nasties into the setting. To add another voice to the writing I also roped in Jo Kreil (who has written an amazing scenario for the *Australian Aeons* book) to contribute scenario ideas as well. And then, almost at the Eleventh Hour I also came to realise that to properly introduce the convict setting the book also needed an introductory scenario of its own.

As with any game book, its ultimate success will be determined by whether you – the Keeper or player – find its contents helpful in enriching your game experience. I hope that the historical information and story ideas contained in these pages will help your group recreate the compelling game experience that first convinced me that *Convicts & Cthulhu* had enough substance to exist as a setting ... although I sincerely hope that none of your investigators ever need to suffer the sharp tongue of Governor Bligh anywhere near as frequently as our sad bunch.

Dean Engelhardt, Adelaide, 2016



# Introduction



**T**HE CIRCUMSTANCES of English settlement of the Australian continent in 1788 are as unique as they are ghastly. Conceived as a self-contained prison, literally on the other side of the globe from the ‘civilised world,’ the colony of New South Wales was supposed to be somewhere that every “undesirable” element from Britain could be banished for the betterment of the homeland. What nobody considered was the potential for catastrophe created by the concentration of all the “dregs” of British society in a pressure-cooker environment supervised by gaolers who were not much better than the rabble over whom they kept watch. Many from both groups brought with them dark beliefs and worship of things best forgotten. Left unchecked far away from watchful eyes, some of those degenerations festered in ways they never could before. And while those from over the seas introduced their ancient gods to the continent of Australia, there were other forces that had slept in the land for long, long aeons.

This is the setting of *Convicts & Cthulhu*, a claustrophobic and remote microcosm in which horrors – both old and new – prey upon men and women unfortunate enough to find themselves sentenced to the penal colonies of New South Wales and its dependencies. Terrors exist here just below the surface of a way of life already filled with mundane horrors of human cruelty and injustice. Lurking within this darkness are ample launching points which an imaginative Keeper might use to weave any number of tales of darkness, whether they be horrors wrought by forces of the Cthulhu Mythos or merely the debauched iniquities wrought by the hands of evil men.

This sourcebook presents the colony of New South Wales (and its dependencies) in the rough time period from the mid-1790s until 1810. At this time, the penal settlement of Sydney has already become somewhat established, and a few farming settlements have sprung up. But there is no concept yet that this place will ever become more than a gaol for the unworthy. Furthermore, during this time the corrupt administration of the colony at the hands of the New South Wales Corps is slowly spiralling towards violence and conflict – discord that will eventually erupt in the infamous “Rum Rebellion” of 1808. The dark days of this decade of growing depravity and unrest – and the years that follow as the colonies scabble to restore some kind of order – make for particularly powerful thematic settings for dark tales of horror.

**Note:** Readers of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage are warned that this book contains references and images of deceased persons.



# CONVICTS & CTHULHU



A map showing the limits of geographical knowledge about the continent variously named Terra Australias, New Holland, and Australa. Most of this data comes from the exploratory voyages of Capt. Matthew Flinders, R.N., who circumnavigated the continent in 1803. Also shown are the handful of settlement sites, with their date of establishment.



Sydney Cove, 1803



# PART I: The Historical Setting



**A**LTHOUGH ABORIGINAL peoples have lived on the continent we now call Australia for over 60,000 years, its “discovery” by Europeans came relatively late in the great era of colonial expansion. Numerous Dutch and English sailors had encountered its northern and western coastlines in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries (often by accident) but their reports of a desolate and infertile land did not inspire anybody to claim it as territory. All that changed in 1770 with the exploratory voyage of English captain James Cook in the *Endeavour*. Cook had been given the secretive mission to locate and claim any worthwhile territories in the Pacific before the French – England’s arch-enemies of the day – could snatch them. With the discovery of the lushly fertile eastern coastline of “New Holland” (as the continent was named on early maps), Cook’s mission found its greatest success.

While news of Cook’s discovery was welcomed back in England, much debate arose about how to best settle and exploit this newly-found territory at the very furthest corner of the globe. Clearly, any claim to land in such a far-flung place would need to be supported by a permanent settlement of some kind (otherwise another colonial nation was sure to invade it). But who would want to live in such an isolated location? The debate was further complicated by urgent social problems that were blighting England at the time, in particular the massive overcrowding and poverty in London and other industrial cities. Prior to achieving independence in the 1770s, the American colonies served as a popular place for British criminals to be transported as punishment for petty crimes. This was a convenient system that eased pressures on a massively overcrowded British prison system as well as reducing the population in the cities. In the eyes of many, the



newly-discovered territory in the Pacific seemed like an excellent place to continue the practice of transportation of convicts. Thus was the notion of a purpose-built penal colony conceived.

The First Fleet – a convoy of eleven ships carrying convicts, gaolers, volunteer settlers and government officials to found the new colony – left England in 1787 and arrived early in the next year. When they planted the British flag on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1788, the new colony – dubbed New South Wales – was brought into existence.

## Early Days of Settlement

Administratively, the colony of New South Wales was run by the Colonial Office within the British Government. For practical reasons it was important to have a senior military official overseeing the colony as a local Governor. The first Governor was Arthur Phillip, a naval man who was also captain of the First Fleet, and this tradition of naval appointments continued largely through the early history of the colony.

The colony gave Great Britain a strategic toe-hold in the Pacific during a time of conflict with France, as well as potential revenue from sealing and other South Seas trades, and a possible source of flax and timber for its ships. At the same time as settlements were made at Sydney (on the shores of the huge Port Jackson Bay) and Parramatta (at the bay's furthest western extent), a ship was sent to establish a small satellite settlement on Norfolk Island. This location – some 1,600km (1,000 miles) away to the northeast – was another place noted by Cook as ripe for colonisation. In the context of the prison colony, this smaller settlement was imagined as a deliberately harsher and even more remote place which could be used to send those who misbehaved while in the principal convict settlement of New South Wales. In later decades, additional smaller sites were established with a similar goal (Coal River, modern-day Newcastle, and Van Diemen's land were both founded in 1803).

The role of guards of the convicts as well as a rudimentary police force fell to the British army, rather than the navy, in the shape of the **New South Wales**

## Convict Labour

Convicts could be transported to Australia for all kinds of crimes, from forgery and embezzlement to theft or crimes of violence. Their sentences were usually transportation for 7 years, 14 years, or life, although any convict could be freed after serving time in New South Wales.

Convicts were used as forced labour in the colony. Their assignments were as follows:

- **Government service.** This was usually on government farms, road gangs, or public buildings. The Government always had first choice of convicts.
- **Assignment to Military officers** for the needs of the military, but also for their private farms.
- **Assignment to Civil officers.** Some literate convicts could support the work of officers, while others might work on private farms.
- **Assignment to Free Settlers.** Typically farming or building private residences and out-buildings.

**Corps.** The Corps was created for the purpose of policing the colony, and numbered 685 members. The NSW Corps has a notorious reputation in Australian history, many military officers at the time considering its members the dregs of Europe. Some soldiers were themselves military criminals (in particular deserters) given pardon if they were willing to serve as gaolers in New South Wales. Even the British Secretary of War at the time commented that penal duty was “unlikely to attract the best candidates.”

## Darker Days

Although this book can be used to play scenarios set in the very first days of colonial New South Wales, *Convicts & Cthulhu* is primarily designed to give Keepers and players resources for gaming in the decade or two **after** European settlement became entrenched (roughly the era 1795 to 1810). The reasons for this are simple – while the challenges of establishing a new colony from scratch



## Impact on Indigenous Australians

Despite the general good intentions of the early colonial governments of New South Wales, the arrival of Europeans has had a disastrous impact on the Australian Aboriginal population. Prior to 1788 the regions now settled by convicts and colonists supported a large Aboriginal population, divided into 29 clans. In less than two decades, most of those groups have been decimated. The biggest culprit is disease, in particular Smallpox brought on ships from England.

The surviving Aboriginal peoples and European settlers have an uneasy relationship. In general most Aboriginal people simply want to be left alone to continue their traditional lifestyle, but circumstances frequently prevent that from being viable. A handful of Indigenous people have taken more drastic action, fuelled by a combination of resentment and hunger. This has led to instances of theft and in a few cases all-out-attack on homesteads. Such events are always the source of violent retaliatory strikes by soldiers and settlers, some of whom seek out any opportunity to shoot a few "natives." Indiscriminate attacks on Aboriginal populations are, however, considered to be crimes and several gun-happy settlers have been brought before magistrates in Sydney and charged as a result of such murder sprees.

were enormous, those efforts were overseen by a colonial Government that was generally fair (and even moderately benevolent). Although life was hard, the darkness that lurked within the hearts of convicts and their equally-corrupt gaolers was largely buried, kept silent by long hours of back-breaking labour.

All that changed in 1795. Owing to a sudden illness, the humane Governor Arthur Philips found himself forced to return to England at short notice. The haste of his departure meant that the Colonial Office in Britain had sent no replacement; as a stop-gap measure, it was agreed that power to govern the colony would fall temporarily to an officer of the NSW Corps, Francis Grose. This single decision was to prove the start of a long decline into corruption and cruelty, and ultimately into lawlessness.

## THE RUM ECONOMY

By far the biggest problems caused by the military oversight of New South Wales in the days after Phillips' departure stemmed from the establishment of the NSW Corps as a monopoly trader – in particular in the trading of rum as currency. Grose was much less high-minded than Philips and under his rule a system was established which allowed convicts to be paid for their labour in allotments of rum, thereby making rum an equivalent for hard currency in the colony. In part, this system was introduced to alleviate the critical shortage





## Timeline of Early Colonial New South Wales

The early days after the arrival of Europeans at Sydney are typically reckoned according to the Governor who was presiding over the colony at the time, since the personalities and decisions of those individuals largely dictated the colony's policies and the events they inspired.

**Governor Arthur Phillip 1788-1792** – Phillip is a naval officer, a humane man and a product of the Enlightenment. He tries to treat convicts and Aboriginal people fairly. His period of office marks the commencement of the colony, the establishment of the convict system and the rudiments of building Sydney Town around Sydney Harbour and the Tank Stream.

- 1788 Arrival of First Fleet of around 1500 convicts and their gaolers, under Governor Philip. Foundation of Sydney.
- 1789 Establishment of New South Wales Corps; Settlement of Norfolk Island, a place of secondary punishment.
- 1790 Famine strikes the colony. Pemulwuy and his son Tedbury, of the indigenous Eora people, commence a guerrilla war against the white settlers.
- 1792 The Second Fleet arrives with supplies to relieve the famine.
- 1792 Phillip returns to England. He is accompanied by Bennelong, who is the first Aboriginal person to travel to Europe.

**Administration of Grose and Paterson 1792-1795** – Francis Grose was Lieutenant Governor and a major in the NSW Corps. He had been a trusted aide to Philip who left him charge when the Governor returned ill in 1792. Grose's two year tenure was notable for the advantages he gave his fellow officers, granting them land, giving them control over the convicts and the judiciary and increasing their pay. Most critically he allowed officers to trade, especially in Rum He also appointed Lt. John Macarthur as Inspector of Public Works. His encouragement of officer and settler farms ended the threat of famine in the colony. Paterson was second in command of the NSW Corps under Grose and was administrator of the colony between Grose's departure and Governor John Hunter's arrival, a period of nine months. Grose and Paterson's period sees the officers and soldiers of the NSW Corps with unfettered command and making huge profits. Most convict wages in this period are paid in rum.

**Governor John Hunter 1795-1800** – Hunter is a naval officer, a man of 60 and keen to do his duty, but his attempts to curb the profits of the military were doomed by inconsistent support from his masters in London, an incompetent colonial bureaucracy and opposition from John Macarthur and the NSW Corps. He was sympathetic and humane towards the convicts, for a man of his time and career.

- 1797 John Macarthur buys merino sheep, effectively marking the commencement of the Australian wool trade. Discovery of coal. Pemulwuy attacks Parramatta, is wounded and captured, but escapes.
- 1798 White population of settlement around 5,000.

**Governor Philip Gidley King 1800-1806** – King was a naval officer who had served under Philip and been previously stationed at Norfolk Island. His return to the colony saw him keen to enact reforms to curb the Rum trade. However like Hunter he meets with much resistance and little success. He was more successful in encouraging the growth of the Government's flocks and herds. Industries, such a sealing and coal mining, also commenced during his time. The main change during King's time is that fewer people have to draw from Government Stores (32% down from 72%) and there is a 5% duty on alcohol imports. Also the gaol and brewery at Parramatta are constructed and the foundations of the ticket of leave system are set down.

- 1802 Pemulwuy is killed. Tedbury, the rebel leader's son, becomes an ally of John Macarthur.
- 1803 Mathew Flinders circumnavigates Australia. Sydney Gazette founded. Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) established.
- 1804 Foundation of Hobart Town in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania). Irish Rebellion at Castle Hill. Establishment of settlement at Newcastle.

**Bligh Years 1806-1808.** See "Life Under Bligh".

- 1806 Bligh becomes Governor of NSW.
- 1808 Rum Rebellion. Bligh is overthrown and military junta takes command.

**Military Interregnum 1808-1810.** See "The Time of Military Rule". Concludes with Lachlan Macquarie arriving to become Governor of New South Wales. End of the New South Wales Corps.



of coinage in the colony – there was simply not enough money in circulation, hence some form of barter was an inevitable necessity. Rum was the most convenient medium of such exchange. But the introduction of the system was also significantly motivated by the fact that during Grose’s time, the control and monopoly of rum was the province of the NSW Corps. This meant that the guards could effectively set the “price” (or currency equivalent) of incoming rum to whatever they wished. The profits to the senior army officers were enormous, with some historians suggesting 1000% mark up.

This practice made some within the NSW Corps immensely rich and fuelled other forms of corruption such as generous land grants to military officers and the permission to use convicts as free labour on their land. All of these privileges the NSW Corps officers came to see as their right, and none more so than John Macarthur – a man who was the army paymaster at the time this system was created (and who after resigning his military career went on to become one of the colony’s most wealthy private landholders).

When official governors arrived to take control of the colony, the rum economy was initially allowed to continue. The British Colonial Office, however, took a dim view of it not least for the moral degeneration it feared such a system would create. At first it charged the incoming Governor of New South Wales to curb or suppress the trade, but when that met with resistance they chose a new Governor for the colony who they believed would take a more forceful stand. That man was William Bligh (whose earlier naval career had been controversial because of the infamous mutiny under his command of *The Bounty*). Bligh decided with characteristic lack of subtlety to take on the Corps head-on, outlawing the trafficking of rum entirely. This led to a vitriolic confrontation with Macarthur and others of the NSW Corp. At first this drama played out in the courtroom. But the army men wanted more decisive action to restore their lucrative income ... leading ultimately to the uprising known today as the Rum Rebellion.

## THE RUM REBELLION

On January 26, 1808 the military staged an uprising (effectively a *coup d’etat*). Governor Bligh was arrested and a military government was instated – officially governed by Lt. Col. George Johnston, but in practice controlled by the wealthy Macarthur.

This lawless government lasted 2 years before the British Colonial Office brought the upstart colony back into line in 1810 by disbanding the NSW Corps as a unit and sending a powerful army man as replacement governor – Major-General Lachlan Macquarie. Although legal trials and recriminations lasted for years, the appointment of Macquarie effectively brought this dark chapter of Australian history to a close forever, and set the colony of New South Wales on a path towards developing into a proper society.

## Sub-eras of Convicts & Cthulhu

The time period covered by *Convicts & Cthulhu* (mid-1790s to 1810) sees considerable change in the colony of New South Wales. For this reason, it is useful to consider three different phases – life under the rum trade, life under Governor Bligh, and life after the Rum Rebellion.

## LIFE DURING THE RUM TRADE

Keepers may wish to run a *Convicts & Cthulhu* scenario or campaign set during the time of the Rum Trade (which was rampant from 1792 until its official banning by edicts in early 1807). Such a backdrop provides a powerful thematic way to highlight the corruption that can arise when those who are in power are geographically far away from those to whom they are accountable.

Stories set during this era may also highlight the shocking and arbitrary cruelty of the convict system (see “Life as a Convict” on page 23) as well as the barbarism and sense of entitlement displayed by members of the NSW Corps. While this cruel subjugation of the large convict population for the most part generates only antipathy and hatred in return, occasionally things erupt into more violent confrontations. One notable incident during this era is the Castle Hill rebellion of 1804 when Irish convicts in an outlying part of the colony overpowered guards, armed themselves, and marched towards Parramatta burning farmsteads as they went. This uprising was notable in that it was shocked the colony’s administration enough that martial law was (briefly) declared before the hopelessly outnumbered convict rebels were violently



gunned down in a skirmish that came to be called the “Battle of Vinegar Hill.”

One thing that is certain to play an important role in any tales set during this period is the liquid currency, rum. Scenarios set in this time might allow for investigators crossing paths with John Macarthur – perhaps as a wealthy patron, or perhaps as a nefarious nemesis. See the box nearby for a biographical sketch of Macarthur’s life.

## LIFE UNDER BLIGH

The reign of Governor William Bligh only lasted about 17 months (he landed in Sydney in August, 1806 and was violently deposed on January 26, 1808) but it is a fertile and eventful period for the Keeper to exploit. The force with which Bligh tackles the wealthy merchants and officers of the NSW Corps – coupled with his abrasive and repellent character – engenders a society that is highly polarised. Everyone is either a supporter of the Governor or a supporter of the rich elite, and both sides watch each other with a weather eye. Subversive plots and back-room meetings abound, reminiscent of France in the days before the Revolution. Nobody knows for certain where events are heading – the air is electric; there is a sense that eventually something must break.

Stories set in Bligh’s reign might feature thematic elements of subterfuge and deception; things (or people) may not necessarily be what they seem. Character motivations are always potentially clouded, either by deceit or by their own self-interest. High military and government offices have mostly been corrupted by the wealth and influence of the NSW Corps, or simply alienated by Bligh’s obnoxious verbal antics. Another element that could play a role in stories is the fractious relationship between members of the Army and the Navy – ever since the founding of the colony the ruling elite (the governor and some of the judiciary) are Navy appointment while those who do the “grunt work” are all Army men. Predictably this serves as yet another source of contention.

Investigations set during this era may incorporate direct encounters with the acid-tongued Governor Bligh (although any investigators summoned into his presence for a dressing-down are to be pitied).

## John Macarthur

**‘art, cunning, impudence, and a pair of basilisk eyes’**

John Macarthur was the son of a small tradesman in England who joined the NSW Corps at age 22. He arrived in Sydney in 1790. A charismatic and driven man, he used the interregnum between Governors when NSW Corps officer Francis Grose was in charge of the colony to become very wealthy. In some ways Macarthur was a visionary, and was at the forefront of creating the wool industry of NSW, which was to become one of the colony’s staples throughout the 19th century. However was also an irascible, implacable man who brooked no opposition to his profitmaking. Governor King sent Macarthur back to England in 1801 to be court-martialed for duelling his superior officer. Both parties were criticized, and eventually the charges dropped. Macarthur returned to the colony and resigned from the army in 1804 to take up being a merchant and grazier full-time.



The box nearby provides a brief biographical sketch of the man as well as some notes on portraying him.

## THE TIME OF MILITARY RULE

The months following the Rum Rebellion until the arrival of Lachlan Macquarie provide a unique and semi-lawless backdrop which might make for an interesting and flavour-filled story. As with all rebellions, the social standing of any individual in the military-run society is governed by which side they supported during the uprising (or alternatively whether they can make a convincing enough case that they supported the winning side). This provides a wide variety of different character roles, some representing those who once held power but wield it no longer, others being individuals who have had a sudden elevation of status. Distrust and lies abound as people jostle to fill the power vacuums left when the established order unravels.



## William Bligh

**'tyrannical and oppressive and unofficerlike'**



William Bligh was born in 1754. Before he came to govern New South Wales he was most famous as the Captain of the *HMS Bounty*, a ship that suffered mutiny occasioned by the crew's disdain for Bligh's tyrannical and paranoid captaincy. After the mutiny Bligh and a group of loyal supporters were forced into a small boat, making an historic voyage over 3,000 miles to Timor. Bligh was exonerated by the navy for the loss of his ship, and by 1806 had gained powerful patronage in London, and was selected to succeed Governor King in New South Wales. His special instructions were to curb the traffic in spirits in the colony. Bligh was noted for having a raging temper, a short fuse, an encyclopaedic knowledge of foul language and an unwillingness to modify his orders. He was described as having 'an unfortunate capacity for breeding rebellion'. His nickname in the colony is 'the Bounty Bastard'.

## Being Bligh

Playing a larger than life historical figure like the notorious Captain Bligh can be daunting for a Keeper. Some details that might help your portrayal:

- Bligh speaks in a West Country accent. This is the sort of accent famously vulgarized by Robert Newton as Long John Silver. The peerless Anthony Hopkins uses the accent in his version of Bligh in the 1984 movie *The Bounty*.
- Hopkins' performance is useful for demonstrating Bligh's turning on a hair from reasonable to shouting, especially if he thinks he is being disrespected. Don't be afraid to do this.
- Bligh is a straightforward Navy man and takes any stuttering, hesitation, evasion and other verbal manoeuvres on the part of investigators poorly. It will incur his wrath at once, and require a powerful **Fast Talk** to get out of.
- Keepers should not be afraid to have Bligh yell and curse over investigators. He was known to shake his fist in the faces of those he angered. If foul language doesn't offend, lay it on thick, since Bligh always did.

As a general guide for Keepers, the following circumstances are all possibilities:

- **Those who actively supported Bligh before the rebellion:** Generally such characters will find themselves imprisoned. The Rebel administration will trump up some charge against them and either confine them in Government House or their own homes if they are powerful, gaol them for an indeterminate time if they are not, or send them to Coal River if they are already convicts.
- **Those who were generally predisposed towards Bligh's policies before the rebellion:** The rebels work to track down pro-Bligh individuals within the colony, requiring them to sign a petition to denounce the former Governor. If they have done so, their former affiliations will be largely overlooked; if they have refused they may be on the road to being locked up along with Bligh's supporters.

- **Those who were generally supportive of the rebellion but not involved in staging it:** Such individuals will be embraced by the new military regime and any "unfortunate" activities that may have occurred during the tumultuous rebellion will be quietly overlooked.
- **Those who were involved in staging the rebellion:** Generally such characters are the new elite, rewarded with land and a plum government position with little real work expected.

It is worth noting that while the military government remains in place, these reversals of fortune seem as though they will last forever. In reality, for most people they will not. All of these conditions (save the land allotments which may stay) will be reviewed once Lachlan Macquarie arrives and with very few exceptions overturned. Rebel enemies locked up will be freed and Rebel allies in cushy jobs will be dismissed and their land returned to the Crown.



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

Stories set during the time of military rule are likely to be seasoned by the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of the new social structures. While convicts are still at the bottom of the pile, the position of everyone else has been shaken up, sometimes in unexpected ways. As always there are winners and losers, opportunists and hard-luck cases.

### *Principal Settlements*

Despite having been settled for a decade or more, the colony of New South Wales is still relatively modest in terms of its construction and the locations that have been settled.

Sydney Town is the main settlement of the colony, with further settlements established in Parramatta to the west of Sydney and Hawkesbury River to the north. Sydney provides a harbour, seat of government and merchant warehouses; Parramatta is mostly grazing land; the rich soil of the Hawkesbury River basin provides crops.

As the colony grows a handful of additional settlements are created. Coal River (or Newcastle as the settlement later came to be known) on the coast to the north of Sydney is one of the first of these, providing fishing and a source of convict-mined coal.

The section “A Brief Tour Of Hell” (starting on page 33) provides a detailed map of Sydney Town. Gazetteers for Sydney and Parramatta are also provided in that section as are some notes about the pitiful conditions of life at Coal River.

While New South Wales is by far the largest British convict colony in Australia in this era, it is not the only one. There are smaller satellite settlements on the island of Van Diemen’s Land (modern-day Tasmania) and on Norfolk Island. Brief details about these places are provided in the section “Further Afield” on page 54.

### *Communication with the ‘Civilised World’*

Put simply, although the scattered settlements on the Australian continent are in frequent contact with one another, communications back to Britain is extremely slow and unreliable. Ships sailing between Europe and New South Wales can take

up to eight months to complete the journey, and these represent the only ways by which news and personal correspondence can be sent. Even major pieces of news take months to travel the globe (for example, news of the Rum Rebellion which occurred in January 1808 did not become known in England until September of the same year). Ships also occasionally sink, carrying any messages or packages they carry to the bottom of the sea.

Prior to 1809 there is no organised postal service between the colonies and England. Individuals could make private arrangements with the captains of visiting ships, paying for him to convey their letter or parcel aboard his next sailing. When the ship had arrived at the desired destination the captain would surrender the correspondence to whoever approached him and claimed to be the recipient. This scheme was obviously open to impersonation. To circumvent this problem a more organised Government system was instituted in 1809, which also set a standardised price for letters and parcels. For a shilling an individual in New South Wales could send a letter to England (although soldiers’ letters were much cheaper, costing only a penny). Parcels cost 2s/6d if they were under 20 pounds, 5s if they weighed more. When a letter or parcel arrived at its destination it would be placed in a Government store and the fact of its arrival published in the newspaper (in the *Sydney Gazette* for those arriving in the colony). To claim the item an individual would need to apply to the Post Master and satisfy him of their identity. In Sydney, the Post Master role was initially performed by Mr Isaac Nichols, an assistant to the colony’s Naval Officer. Nichols operated the service from his private home.







# PART II: Investigations in the Colony



## Creating Investigators

Investigators in *Convicts & Cthulhu* will come from one of three groups:

- **Indigenous Australians:** trying to survive until the white-skinned strangers decide to leave their lands;
- **Convicts:** sentenced to transportation half-way around the world; and
- **Free Settlers, Guards and Government Officials:** here by their own volition, perhaps seeking a better life, perhaps escaping a worse one in England.

Each of these groups has its own social hierarchies and profession options (as well as different character templates, see page 21).

## Indigenous Investigators

The indigenous peoples of the settled areas of the NSW Colony have had their way of life changed completely. These were the Eora people of the coast, especially the Cadigal and Wandal bands in the city area. Some were pushed to the margins of areas such as the Hawkesbury River; others became urbanized, remaining in the regions of Sydney but continuing their livelihoods of fishing and hunting as best they could. Many were killed by the small-pox epidemic of 1791, as well as by other European



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

diseases. After some early resistance there was relative peace between the Aboriginal peoples and the white colonists, although violence and tension did erupt on both sides throughout the colonial era, as contested ground was fought over.

In general, while there is no systematized violence by white settlers against Aboriginal people, the general perception of the Europeans is that the indigenous peoples of Australia are at best “noble savages.” Their lives, skills and knowledge were not rated particularly – which is a testament more to an ingrained sense of racial superiority than individual malice. Throughout the time period covered by this setting, white settlers began to appreciate some aspects of the bushcraft of Aboriginal people, in particular their abilities to track animals and people. This skill alone might justify the inclusion of one or more Aboriginal investigators in a group otherwise made up of Europeans.

For more information on the clan groupings of NSW and their languages, see Investigator Backgrounds on page 18.

### Convict Classes

While convicts in the penal colony of NSW are generally considered to be the lowest-of-the-lows in the natural hierarchy of inhabitants there are several groups whose status rises marginally above that dismal station.

**Fully Pardoned:** Perhaps the least shunned of the “convict classes” are the rare few who have, for one reason or another, been granted a full unconditional pardon. Generally this only happened if some evidence had come to light which cleared the convicted man or woman of the original offence(s) for which they had been transported to the colonies. Players who want their investigator to be a fully pardoned convict will need to create a suitable back-story and justification for this rare reversal of sentencing. A convict that receives an unconditional pardon is theoretically now a free man or woman and has all the rights and privileges bestowed upon normal citizens (including the ability to leave the NSW colony should they so desire). Of course, in practice the stigma of the original conviction is likely to still linger in the minds of former gaolers and free citizens alike, some of whom may consider the investigator

“shifty.” Other more broad-minded settlers will, however, openly treat a pardoned convict with the same respect as anyone else.

**Conditionally Pardoned:** A less generous reprise from a conviction was the conditional pardon, which overturned the original guilty finding but notably did not provide the freedom to leave the colony. Apart from this one (fairly significant) limitation, conditionally pardoned convicts were otherwise afforded all the rights and privileges of a free person. Of course as noted above, some members of the community are still likely to treat such investigators as criminals who have somehow slithered free of their justly-earned sentence. The Governor and other high officials has the power to grant conditional pardons to those convicts who have provided some form of notable service to the colony.

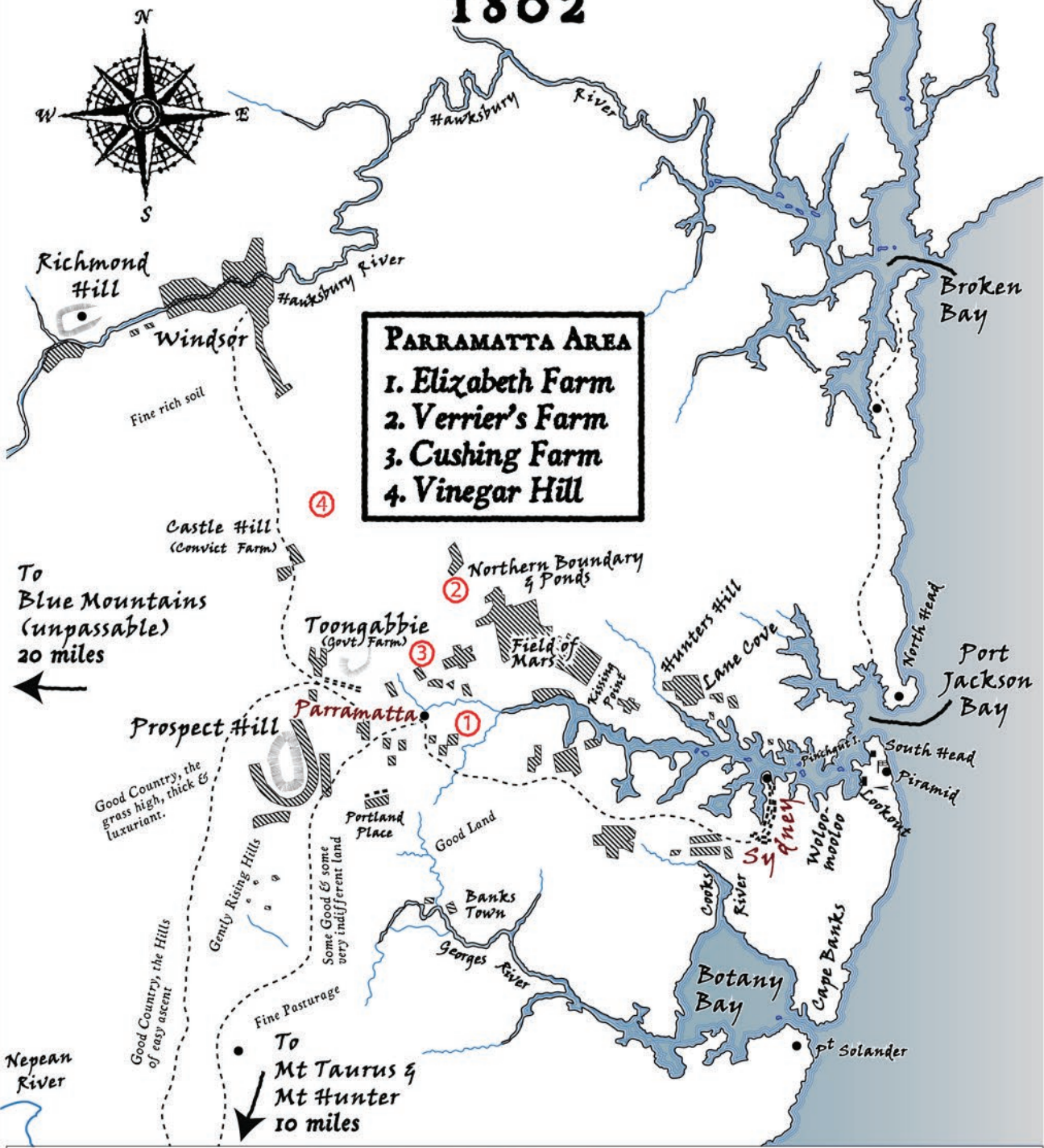
**Ticket-of-Leave:** A still weaker relaxation of the otherwise highly restrictive convict system exists in the form of a “ticket of leave.” While most convicts had little or no say in where they were assigned to work, and no ability to demand payment in return for labours undertaken for private citizens, those who had earned a ticket-of-leave held both those privileges. Such a convict is allowed by the colony to effectively work for him or herself with no obligations to undertake Government service. The down-side of this arrangement is that a ticket-of-leave convict is also not entitled to any support from the Government, including the provision of rations (which normal convicts receive as their only reward for labouring). Instead the convict is expected to earn enough pay from selling his or her services to be able to purchase whatever is needed to survive. Technically a ticket-of-leave convict is still a convict and is theoretically still under surveillance by the NSW Corps. The ticket-of-leave can be cancelled at any time as a punishment for misconduct. Convicts are usually granted a ticket-of-leave as a reward for some kind of personal service to a high ranking official: frequently this involves informing on another convict (“nosing someone out”). For this reason, convicts look upon their brethren who have been granted a ticket-of-leave with suspicion. After all, what have they done for the Governor to earn those privileges?

**Serving Convict:** In the absence of any form of ticket-of-leave or pardon, most convicts are simply serving out their original sentence, day-by-day. For some there is a prospect of a future return to Eng-



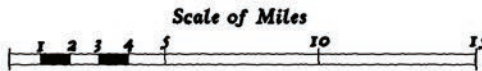
# Plan of the COLONY OF NEW SOUTH WALES 1802

To Coal River 40 miles



Published May 1, 1802,  
by Cadell & Davies, Strand

The dotted lines shew the ground Walked over lately  
● Are places where the Latitude has been Observed  
Those places marked thus □ are the principal part of our Cultivation





land, but for most the best they can hope for is to become free members of the colony when they have served their time.

## Freemen Social Classes & Outlooks

When the colony of New South Wales was first established, its role was clear in the minds of all the free (non-convict) men and women: it existed as an isolated prison. But as time went on and a rudimentary society began to spring up – including a number of free settlers who came to make a new life working this unfamiliar land – things became less clear. By the time period covered by this sourcebook there was an active and growing tension about what future role the colony should serve. Was it simply a gaol, with gaolers and the rudiments of civilization for support, as the Governors and the Colonial Office saw it? Or was it a true colony, with opportunity for expansion and development, as the merchants and settlers of the colony would have it? And if it was to be the latter, then what role would the convicts have? Could they take their place among the free settlers after they had become emancipated? Or would this create a degenerate society and lessen the impact of transportation to New South Wales as a deterrent to crime? These issues helped give rise to some of the main factions in the colony among the Europeans.

Key groups amongst the freemen included:

**Government Officials** – the high officials of the Colony, including the Governor, the Naval Officer, the Judge Advocate, and the Commissary (for a full list, see the box nearby). Under them were such positions as the Chief Constables of Sydney and Parramatta. Their major interest was to oversee to an orderly colony and maintain an effective prison.

**The Military** – the NSW Corps, its officers and men. Military Officers also served as Judges in the military tribunal, since the major law of the colony was military rather than civil. Thanks to the largesse shown the officers when their own leaders were in charge between Governors Philip and King (see *The Rum Economy*, page 9), they have had an opportunity to use their position to make themselves very rich and powerful. They object to anything that would interfere with this.

**The “Exclusives”** – A sizeable proportion of the colony’s free settlers see themselves as a significantly better class or person than the convicts and believe the convicts should “know their place.” Ironically many of them have not come from high birth in England, but from the lower middle or middle classes. John Macarthur is the prime example of this kind, although he was also an ex-NSW Corps quartermaster, so was allied with them closely.

**The “Emancipists”** – Others amongst the free settler population believe that once a convict has served his or her time there should be no barrier to their living a free life in the colony with all the opportunities of the free settler.

**Farmer Settlers** – Some free settlers have no interest in the question of convict rights and simply want to be free to farm the land in their agricultural holdings (mostly in the Hawkesbury River region at the time of this setting).

Members of the last three of these groups (and in particular the Farmers) tend towards the belief that the longer-term future of the NSW colony lays in the establishment of reliable agriculture industries. The Government and military are less interested in that outcome, except to the extent that it allows everyone (including the sizeable convict population) to be fed – something that was not easily achieved in the early years of the colony. Investigators who are not Government administrators or military officers will certainly have an opinion on this important question – players should nominate whether the individual is an “Exclusive”, “Emancipist” or a “Farmer.”

## Investigator Backgrounds

Indigenous investigators will likely come from one of the 29 clan groupings which make up the loose affiliation of the Eora Nation. The names of these clan groups (usually referred to as “tribes” by the Europeans) and the approximate location of their land is shown on the map nearby. In general, Aboriginal investigators in the New South Wales region will speak one or more of the following languages: Dharug, Guringal, and Dharawal. Of these, Dharug is the most widespread, Guringal is spoken mostly by clans in the Manly region and country to the north, and Dharawal is spoken by groups south of Botany Bay.



## Government Officials

Running of the colonial government was performed by military or civilian bureaucrats occupying the following roles:

- **Governor:** The ultimate authority in the colony; to date the position has been filled by an officer of the Royal Navy. The Governor is the Commander-in-Chief as well as the Chief Magistrate.
- **Judge-Advocate:** Responsible for administration of justice and running court cases (which are heard by the colony's Bench of Magistrates).
- **Provost-Marshal:** The most senior individual responsible for "law enforcement"; loosely similar to the English notion of Sheriff.
- **Secretary to the Governor:** Responsible for the administration of the colony and for transcribing all public despatches issued by the Governor.
- **Commissary:** Responsible for all Government provisions and stores, including keeping track of receipts, purchases and expenditure. Has deputies in Parramatta and Hawkesbury to look after stores in those locations.
- **Chaplains:** Responsible for holding Divine services throughout the colony and undertaking missionary work with the native population.
- **Principal Surgeon:** Responsible for operation of the colony's hospitals. Has deputy surgeons, one stationed with him in Sydney, another in Parramatta, another at Coal River (after 1804), and a fourth at Norfolk Island.
- **Surveyor-General of Lands:** Responsible for surveying land, granting leases, and building roads.
- **Boatbuilder and Shipwright:** Responsible for running the dockyards which keep Government vessels in good repair.
- **Nine Superintendents:** These are individuals responsible for particular activities.
  - Superintendent of Government Herds (cattle, sheep, horses, etc. owned by the Government);
  - Superintendent of Public Labour (works undertaken by convict gangs);
  - Superintendent of Public Buildings;
  - Superintendent of Blacksmiths;
  - Head Constable at Parramatta;
  - Superintendent of Manufactories at Parramatta;
  - Superintendent of Government Mills;
  - Superintendent of Agricultural Settlement at Castle Hill;
  - Storekeeper at Coal River (after 1804).
- **Various Magistrates.**
- **Naval Officer:** Responsible for vessels arriving and leaving the port of Sydney; is charged with going aboard all arriving vessels and delivering the Port Orders.

European investigators will almost certainly have been born in either Great Britain or Ireland. The mix of convict backgrounds will vary slightly depending on which part of era the game is set – prior to 1800 most convicts are British (but may come from any part of England, Scotland or Wales); after 1800 about half of all newly-arriving convicts are Irish. Although far less common, there are some in the colony who have more unusual backgrounds – mostly hailing from other European

seafaring nations (Spain, France) or occasionally America. Such exotic individuals usually have come to New South Wales aboard trade ships which have visited in the hope of selling goods.

## Skills

Investigators in late 18<sup>th</sup> Century (or early 19<sup>th</sup> Century) New South Wales have skills derived from a slightly modified list, as shown below. Unless



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

otherwise noted, skills are defined as per the *Call of Cthulhu*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition rules. This collection of skills is reflected on the *Convicts & Cthulhu* character sheet on page 95.

Accounting (5%)  
Alcheringa Dream Lore (00% or 05% for Aboriginal Investigators)\*  
Animal Handling (15%) +  
Appraise (15%) +  
Art/Craft (Farming, other) (5%)  
Charm (15%) +++  
Climb (20%)  
Credit Rating (00%) \*\*  
Cthulhu Mythos (00%)  
Disguise (05%)  
Dodge (half DEX)  
Dream Song (00% or fifth-POW for Aboriginal Investigators)\*  
Drive Horse/Oxen/Cart (20%)  
Fast Talk (5%)  
Fighting (Brawl) (25%)  
Fighting (various)  
Firearms (Flintlock) (20%)  
Firearms (Musket) (25%)  
Firearms (Shotgun) (25%)  
First Aid (30%)  
History (5%)  
Insight (5%) \*\*\*  
Intimidate (15%)  
Jump (20%)  
Language (Other) (1%)  
Language (Own) (1%)\*\*\*\*  
Law (5%)  
Library Use (5%)  
Listen (20%)  
Locksmith (1%)  
Lore (Aboriginal) (1%)\*  
Mechanical Repair (10%)  
Medicine (1%)  
Natural World (10%)  
Navigate (10%)  
Occult (5%)  
Operate Heavy Machinery (1%)  
Persuade (10%)

Pilot (Ship) (1%)  
Religion (20%) ++  
Ride (5%)  
Science (various) (1%)  
Sleight of Hand (10%)  
Spot Hidden (25%)  
Stealth (20%)  
Survival (various) (10%)  
Swim (5%) +  
Throw (20%)  
Track (10%)

### Notes:

- \* See Chaosium's *Secrets of Australia* for information about this skill.
- \*\* See the box nearby regarding the importance of Credit Rating in the colony
- \*\*\* For pre-19<sup>th</sup> Century eras the skill "Insight" performs a similar function to the normal Psychology skill
- \*\*\*\* Not everyone in the NSW colony – whether convict or soldier – is literate. This is reflected by the lower starting value for Own Language. See also the note nearby regarding literacy.
- + Has different base percentage to normal to represent the relative ubiquity of this skill during the era relative to the 1920s. People in the NSW colony are generally more skilled at animal handling and appraising the value of items (a prerequisite of effective barter) but few people know how to swim well.
- ++ The new skill Religion covers knowledge of the forms and practices of traditional European worship including different Christian faiths and recognizances. It does not include knowledge of Aboriginal mythology or religion which is reflected in the Alcheringa Dream Lore and Lore (Aboriginal) skills.
- +++ In *Convicts & Cthulhu*, the skill Charm also covers any character attempts at "bootlicking" someone with power over them. This was an established way of gaining favour, with convicts currying favour with overseers and enlisted soldiers bowing and scraping to officers. This is usually employed to gain some advantage.



## The Importance of Credit Rating

In the absence of sufficient amounts of legal currency, trade is often conducted through barter or the issuing of promissory notes (see page 27). In this environment Credit Rating becomes vital. Keepers can opt to have investigators roll **Credit Rating** anytime a currency-based exchange takes place. Success means a promissory note or other agreement to pay has been accepted. For this reason most officials and military officers have extremely high Credit Rating in the colony. This would not be transferrable if the character was taken out of this setting, in which case halve the skill.

## Literacy

These rules apply to investigators and NPCs alike. Keepers should decide if characters are able to read or write. As a rule of thumb, all officers and officials are literate, farmers and emancipist traders are semi-literate, and convicts illiterate. Obviously, exceptions exist.

- **Literate:** Use character's native Language as normal for reading and writing. No test is needed unless it is a Mythos tome or something equally obscure.
- **Semi-Literate:** Use character's native Language as normal for reading and writing but all reading must be tested by a Hard roll. Double all reading times.
- **Illiterate:** Cannot read or write at all.

## Effects of Drunkenness

Drunkenness is not uncommon in the colony. A few sips of rum does not impede an investigator but drinking an entire bottle would. The table below provides some abstract guidelines.

Consumption	Example	Effect
Low	1-2 glasses	No impairment
Medium	3-4 glasses	Make a CON roll: if failed, all skill and characteristic roll difficulties are increased by one level for 1D4 hours.
High	5-6 glasses	Make a CON roll: if failed, all skill and characteristic roll difficulties are increased by one level for 4 hours.
Excessive	7+ glasses	Make a CON roll: if failed, all skill and characteristic roll difficulties are increased by one level for 4 hours. In addition, all rolls in this period also suffer from one penalty die.



## Character Templates

The following sections provide some possible investigator occupations for indigenous, convict and non-convict European characters in the colony.

### INDIGENOUS OCCUPATIONS

#### HUNTER/GATHERER

Occupational Skills: Alcheringa Lore, Art/Craft (any), Fighting or Throw, Listen, Lore (Aboriginal), Natural World, Stealth, Survival (Bush)

Credit Rating: 0—99 (within Aboriginal community)

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×2 + either DEX×2 or STR×2

#### CLEVER-MAN or WOMAN

Occupational Skills: Alcheringa Lore, Dream Song, First Aid, Lore (Aboriginal), Medicine, Natural World, Occult or Track or Fighting, Survival (Bush)

Credit Rating: 50—99 (within the Aboriginal community)

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×2 + either DEX×2 or POW×2



# CONVICTS & CTHULHU

## INDIGENOUS CONVICT / LABOURER

Aboriginal people who have become convicts or have taken up (poorly) paid positions as labourers in the colony may be created using the appropriate Convict template below, with the following modifications: Credit Rating range is 0-5; replace two Occupational Skills with Lore (Aboriginal) and Survival (Bush).

## CONVICT OCCUPATIONS

The Credit Rating range for convict professions depends on whether the investigator is currently serving his or her sentence, has been granted a ticket-of-leave, or has been granted a pardon. The ranges are as follows:

- Serving sentence: Credit Rating 1-10
- Ticket-of-leave: 10-29
- Conditional Pardon: 20-35
- Full Pardon: 25-45

## CAREER CRIMINAL

Occupational Skills: Appraise, Art/Craft (Acting), Insight, Law, Sleight of Hand, Spot Hidden, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $EDU \times 2$  + either  $DEX \times 2$  or  $APP \times 2$

## DOMESTIC SERVANT

Occupational Skills: Appraise, Art/Craft (any, e.g., Cook, Tailor), Drive Horse/Oxen/Cart, Insight, Listen, Natural World, Spot Hidden, any two other skills as personal or era specialties

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $EDU \times 2$  + either  $APP \times 2$  or  $POW \times 2$

## DOWN-ON-LUCK CRAFTSMAN

Occupational Skills: Appraise, Art/Craft (any two, including specialties like Blacksmith), Fighting (Brawl), Locksmith, Mechanical Repair, Operate Heavy Machinery, one other skill as personal speciality.

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $EDU \times 2$  +  $DEX \times 2$

## FALLEN CLERGYMAN

Occupational Skills: Accounting, History, Insight, Language (Latin), Language (Own), Library Use, Listen, Religion, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $EDU \times 4$

## POLITICAL AGITATOR

Occupational Skills: Disguise, Fighting, Firearms, First Aid, Insight, Spot Hidden, Stealth, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $EDU \times 2$  + either  $APP \times 2$  or  $POW \times 2$

## LABOURER

Occupational Skills: Climb, Drive Horse/Oxen/Cart, Jump, Fighting (Brawl), Natural World, Ride, Throw, any one other skill as a personal speciality.

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $EDU \times 2$  + either  $DEX \times 2$  or  $STR \times 2$

## FREEMAN OCCUPATIONS

### DOCTOR

Occupational Skills: First Aid, Insight, Language (Latin), Medicine, Natural World, Science (Biology), any two other skills as academic or personal specialties.

Credit Rating: 30—80

Occupation Skill Points:  $EDU \times 4$

### FARMER SETTLER

Occupational Skills: Art/Craft (Farming), Drive Horse/Oxen/Cart, Firearms (Musket), Natural World, Ride, Track, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), any one other skill as a personal speciality.

Credit Rating: 30—70

Occupation Skill Points:  $EDU \times 2$  + either  $DEX \times 2$  or  $STR \times 2$



**LAWYER**

Occupational Skills: History, Intimidate, Insight, Language (Own), Law, Library Use, Listen, Persuade

Credit Rating: 50—80

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×4

**MERCHANT**

Occupational Skills: Accounting, Appraise, Insight, Law, Sleight of Hand, Spot Hidden, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: 9—70

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×2 + either APP×2 or POW×2

**NSW CORPS OFFICER**

Occupational Skills: Disguise or Dodge, Fighting, Firearms, First Aid, Intimidate, Listen, Stealth, any one other skill as a personal speciality.

Credit Rating: 20—70

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×2 + either DEX×2 or STR×2

**PUBLICAN (BAR OWNER)**

Occupational Skills: Accounting, Appraise, Fighting (Brawl), Insight, Listen, Stealth, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: 8—45

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×2 + APP×2

*Life As A Convict*

Players who choose to take on convict roles will find that, although life is very hard for such characters they also have access to people and places that other higher-classed character simply cannot reach. In particular, there exists a general “code of silence” among the convict community with respect to answering questions from Government officials or military officers – most would prefer to go to the scaffold rather than inform on their fellows. This means that whenever a scenario or campaign

calls for interacting with a convict (for example as the witness to some horrible supernatural event or murder) it will always be far easier for a convict character to investigate via direct questioning. Everyone else will simply hit a wall of silence.

The following provides some detail about the harsh life of convicts during this era, which players and Keepers might find helpful in filling in the vivid details.

**A DAY IN THE LIFE**

Convicts in government service are clothed and fed by the Government; those in private service are clothed and fed by their Masters. They work a nine hour day (typically sunup to sunset with an hour’s break) five days a week plus a five hour day on Saturdays. Convicts have Sunday as a day of rest, but are (in theory) obliged to attend religious service. Outside of these hours they can sell their private labour as they wished, with wages usually consisting of rum.

On a work gang or in gaol convicts are mustered for a roll call 5 times a day: at 5:00am, 9:00am, 2:00pm, sunset and 8:00pm. Convicts assigned to a private master did not need to attend muster except where their master feels the need to keep track of them.

Convicts sometimes escape but rarely successfully. They usually flee into the bush where often they starve, are killed by natives, or brought back by Aboriginal people for a reward. Some try to escape in small boats which usually founder because of high seas and lack of any sailing skill. When they are brought back to the colony they are usually sent to a place of secondary punishment (a convict settlement with even harsher punishments) or hanged.

**CONVICT PUNISHMENTS**

Punishment for convicts tends to be flogging, ordered by the Governor or a magistrate, the latter of whom are usually military officers and not noted for their fine judgment. Unlike in the early days of the colony, a convict’s Master in this era cannot flog him without his first appearing in court. In this period, women convicts may also be flogged, although this is less frequent. The punishment is usually given within the gaol grounds, rather than public.

The convict is tied to a triangle shaped frame with the apex at the top where his or her hands



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

are bound. The convict is then lashed with a whip with nine tips, called a “cat of nine tails.” The person administering the punishment is usually another convict, who would risk themselves be flogged if they lay on the lash too lightly. Friends are often forced to lash friends, in an effort to break down any bonds that might lead to escapes or other trouble.

The number of lashes can vary, with one thousand being the maximum (remarkably some even survived this). Typically the average sentence is 20-40 lashes. Two Hundred and Fifty lashes was known as a ‘feeler’ because you really felt it. If Keepers are stuck roll a D100 and halve it. If the convict is especially troublesome or insubordinate don’t halve it.

Convicts can also be punished by being sentenced to work gangs breaking rocks, by being forced to wear leg irons, or being sent to a place of secondary punishment such as Norfolk Island or Coal River. The ultimate punishment is death by hanging (“rope, soap and calico for one” as the convicts call it).

**Keeper’s Note:** If investigator convicts are flogged, they should be required to make a **Hard CON** roll. The damage they accrue from the experience depends on the level of success or failure of this roll:

- **Extreme:** 1D10 damage for the whole flogging, no matter how brutal.
- **Hard:** 1D3 damage for every 50 lashes.
- **Regular Success:** 1D6 damage for every 50 lashes.
- **Failure:** 1D4 damage for every 20 lashes, which could mean they are flogged to death if the punishment is high enough.
- **Fumble:** 1D20+5 for the flogging and any sentence over 50 lashes automatically kills them.

This roll can be pushed, although failure of a Pushed roll is likely to result in the convict character literally bleeding out from his or her wounds.

## Gear & Equipment

The Keeper should endeavour to highlight the very primitive nature of life in the New South Wales colony. Even by late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century standards, existence in this remote and isolated part of the world is as basic as can be imagined.



A TRIANGLE AND CAT OF NINE TAILS

There are four main factors that govern this:

- **Inability to exploit local resources:** With the exception of logging trees for lumber and manually quarrying stone for buildings and coal for fuel, the New South Wales colony at this time has no ability to use the (ironically abundant) natural resources that surround them. While significant inroads are made during the period into establishing self-sufficient sources of food (mainly vegetables and meat from imported cows and sheep), even on such basic matters the survival of the population hangs by a thread – if crops fail, or the supply ship from England runs late people need to literally tighten their belts for fear of mass-starvation. Most equipment for the colony must come on a ship from England. This makes everything a finite and expensive resource – for example, while there are skills and tools to allow iron goods to be “recycled” by a blacksmith into other implements, there is no way to smelt new iron. This limitation has a profound impact on the types of items that



## The Flash Language: Convict Slang

Convicts had their own slang or cant known as Flash language. An educated convict compiled a whole dictionary which can be found free online at Australian Gutenberg: <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600111.txt>

Some sample terms are:

- Charley – a watchman.
- Darbie'd – put in chains.
- Knuckler – a pickpocket.
- Lag – a convict under sentence of transportation.
- Lush – beer or rum or other liquor.
- Lushy Cove – a drunken man.
- Nose – someone who informs on his or her accomplices. Also the act of informing.
- Rump'd – flogged.
- Swoddy – a soldier.
- Up in the Stirrups – having lots of money.

are generally available – if it isn't important enough for the Colonial Office to pay to have shipped half-way round the world, chances are it won't be found in New South Wales (unless brought as a small item of personal belongings by a soldier or Government official).

- **Unreliable and expensive trade routes from anywhere 'civilised':** The colony has now been established long enough that trade merchants of several different nationalities occasionally pay it a visit (usually in an attempt to peddle sub-standard goods at ludicrous prices). However, the geographical remoteness of this God-forsaken place makes any such trade voyages irregular and risky. Commonly traded goods such as rum are available by such means, although (as explained in the section on the "Rum Economy", page 9) the social situation in the New South Wales colony during this era means that it is usually only the military elite that benefits. In some places the Government's efforts to discourage contact between convicts and the outside world also prohibits

or severely restricts merchant ships' ability to land and trade with residents of the colony.

- **Unwillingness to expend resources on a far-off penal colony:** New South Wales was not set up to be an enjoyable place to live, but rather a fearsome and harsh prison. To the 18<sup>th</sup> Century mind it was ludicrous to propose that such a place was worth anything but the most meagre and basic of equipment and provisions. Anything better would be wasted on the prisoners, and would only work against the generation of fear back in Britain (which was imagined might deter criminals from their evil ways). Because of these attitudes, the hand-me-down equipment which is shipped to New South Wales is often of the most miserly and primitive variety available to the government of the day – the only exception to this being equipment which ensured the subjugation of the prison population and the impossibility that any convict might ever escape to return home to England.
- **Mechanisation versus Manual Labour:** Most technology of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries is designed to mechanise tasks to remove the need for back-breaking manual labour. However, in the prison colony there is an ever-ready (if not always ever-willing) source of the latter. This means that for most problems that could be solved by mechanical means it is far easier and cheaper to simply employ a crew of convicts to do the job by manual means. This sometimes results in men working in horrifically dangerous or damaging situations, but in the eyes of their gaolers this is a positive: the more taxing and debilitating the task, the less likely the convicts are to have excess energy to cause problems. Plus, particularly hazardous jobs (such as the manual extraction of coal) can be reserved as a punishment, serving as a deterrent to unruly behaviour.

The Keeper should keep these things in mind as he or she describes the kind of "technology" available. Generally, things are basic to the point of pre-industrial Europe. Manual labour or animal labour is the only common power to drive equipment or vehicles. Elaborate items that exist in the colony (for example wind-up clocks) would be extremely rare items that are usually prized possessions of



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

someone important – the fact that they have been brought with them half-way around the world means that they are likely to want to protect them from theft at the hands of ranks of convict pilferers, probably by concealing them somehow.

While books and papers are important to the running of the colony – and in particular the maintaining of each convict's record of time served (and misdemeanours observed) – only certain groups of people within the colony would ever have reason to own such things. For most convicts the only documents they might possess are the handful of letters written to them by loved ones back in England. Because literacy is relatively rare among convicts (and even among some of the soldier classes) it is not uncommon for illiterate people to require others to read documents to them, including personal letters they have received. Such individuals would usually rely on those same colleagues to write any replies as dictated. This of course relies on the translator reliably performing his or her task – something that might not be the case if motivation exists to skew the message to the translator's advantage.

### Pay and Victuals

Investigators who are convicts will typically earn no income, but will also be fed and housed at the expense of the Government. Typical weekly rations for a convict might consist of seven pounds of salted beef or four pounds of salted pork, eight pounds of flour or meal, peas or other similar pulse vegetable, and a little over three pounds of sugar. The convict was expected to prepare his or her own meals from these basic provisions using the primitive facilities available at the gaol.

Ticket-of-Leave convicts and emancipated convicts (i.e., those who had served out their sentence) are provided no support, and expected to find employment for themselves to buy food and other items. Many of these people end up working as servants for free settlers or NSW Corps officers, a job whose pay frequently involved full board (usually the same types of food provided to convicts). The average yearly income for a servant with board is £10.

NSW Corps soldiers and other military personnel are also paid and provisioned by the Government with the level of their pay proportional to their rank. Such individuals are not entitled to free board from

to Commissariat. Soldiers receive their pay from the relevant Paymaster – in Sydney and Parramatta, these are individuals who also run very lucrative private side lines in selling goods via a kind of General Store. For this reason – and also because of general unavailability of coins and banknotes – the Paymasters are always keen to encourage people to accept their pay in goods from the store rather than in hard currency. Doing so gives the paymaster a clear profit (since their ticket prices include a sizeable amount of fat above the true cost of the item). This lucrative perk was an important source of income for John Macarthur during his time as NSW Corps Paymaster and his successor Anthony Fenn Kemp is eager to keep the scam running under his watch (see page 41). A soldier's yearly pay could be anywhere from £60 to £350.

Free settlers are expected to produce their own income, either as profits of their trade (if they run a store or provide a service) or by selling goods grown or on their property. For many this is a fairly variable form of pay, affected by many factors including the seasons – investigator's whose income derives primarily from the land (farmers, etc.) have an annual income of £80+4D20; those who offer professional services in the townships have annual income of £120+4D10. Merchants who profit from the importation of goods can potentially earn as much as £400 in a year, although may need to pay a substantial proportion of that to corrupt officials and NSW Corps officers as a "cost of doing business." Senior officials in the Colonial Government including magistrates might earn up to £600 per annum.

### AN ENGLISH DIET

The table below gives an indication of the types of food commonly grown and sold in New South Wales during this era. Fortunately, agriculture has advanced significantly since the earliest days of the settlement (when the colony relied wholly on food shipped from England and nearly starved on several occasions when such shipments were delayed or lost). With the exception locally-caught fish and Kangaroo meat – used occasionally as a substitute for beef – all types of food eaten by settlers are varieties introduced from Europe.

Beef, Mutton, or Lamb	1s/3d per lb
Pork or Goat-Mutton	1s per lb
Kangaroo meat	8d per lb
Turkey	10s



Goose	8s
Duck	4s
Muscovy Duck	5s
Fowl	2s/6d
Rabbit	4s
Pigeon	1s/3d
Kid (juvenile goat)	5s
Roasting pig	5s
Eggs	1s/6d per doz
Butter	6s per lb
Milk	1s per quart
Cheese	2s/6d per lb
Fish	4d per lb
Oysters	1s per quart
Wheat	12s per bushel
Maize or Barley	5s per bushel
Potatoes	10s per cwt
Turnips	4d per bunch
Carrots	6d per bunch
Cabbage	3d
Lemons	6d per doz
Peaches	2d per doz
Apples or Quinces	2s per doz
Apricots	1s per doz
Cucumber	1d
Artichoke	6d
Mushrooms	8d per quart
Asparagus	2s per hundred
Beans	9d per quart
Pumpkin	6d
Cauliflower	6d
Onions	20s per cwt

The price of rum is notionally set by the Government at 20 shillings per gallon, although in practice the price varied according to the current availability (increasing significantly once the crackdown on importation of spirits began in earnest).

## Owning, Buying and Stealing Gear

Eventually, investigators will find themselves in situations where they need to acquire particular items – or to take advantage of personal possessions they likely already own. The following guidelines provide some suggestions which the Keeper can use as a starting point for determining the relative ease with which equipment can be obtained by characters in different social strata.

## A Variety of Coins

Although the official currency of the colony is the English pound and its divisions, the presence of other currency meant that a kind of “exchange rate” was published to allow for foreign coins to also be accepted as legal tender. The following rate from 1800 gives an indication of the variety of coins in circulation:

Coin	Value
Guinea	£1 and 2 shillings
Johannes (Portuguese)	£4
Half Johannes (Portuguese)	£2
Ducat (Batavian Republic)	9s/6d
Gold Mohur (India)	£1 and 17 shillings
Pagoda (India)	8s
Spanish Dollar	5s
Rupee (India)	2s/6d
Dutch Guilder	2s
English Shilling	1s/1d
Any copper coin weighing 1oz	2d
Any copper coin weighing ¼ oz	½d

## A NOTE ABOUT CURRENCY AND TRADE

While technically the primary form of legal currency in the New South Wales colony is the British Pound (each pound being worth 12 shillings or 240 pence), the fact that hard coinage is in short supply forces many deals and debts to be conducted without actual money changing hands. There are a number of ways this can occur:

- **True Barter** – the simplest form of non-cash exchanges are those where two parties simply agree on an equitable exchange of goods of different types (“two sheep in exchange for a musket, shot and powder horn” or “a gallon of rum in exchange for the musty old tome”).
- **Promissory Notes for Currency** – these are the equivalent of I.O.U.’s; basically the buyer promising to pay some quantity of money to the seller within some agreed time period, on presentation of the note. These are convenient ways to get around not having hard currency right now ... but loss or theft of the



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promissory note is a constant concern for those that hold them (and the official NSW Gazette newsheet contains almost as many private advertisements asking finders to return lost promissory notes as it does advertisements proclaiming a colonist is shortly departing for England and anybody who wants their promises redeemed should do so before that date).

- **Promissory Notes for Non-Currency Commodities** – these are effectively the same, but instead of promising to pay an agreed sum of money at a future date it binds the buyer to providing an agreed amount of some other resource in the future. Until the practice was outlawed in January 1806, promissory notes for gallons of rum were very commonly issued.
- **“Buying” and “Selling” Promissory Notes** – once a promissory note is written, it is not uncommon for it to be traded onwards in exchange for some further goods or services. So, for example, someone who has a promissory note from a merchant for a sum of money and who needs to pay a similar amount to a publican to settle his bar tab might just give the publican the promissory note to settle the debt. The key is that the note is a promise to pay out whoever is the current bearer of the note (who may or may not have been the person to whom it was first issued). In this way, Promissory Notes are a true form of currency which people can readily trade as an alternative form of paper money. Of course, they differ from real currency in one important way – promissory notes come with few guarantees that they will be redeemable.

### COUNTERFEITING

Although the colony has only been established for two decades or less and relies far more on barter than on paper money, there have already been several cases where enterprising convicts have tried their hand at forgery. Counterfeiters might aim to copy the official currency in circulation, but it's usually far easier to simply forge promissory notes from wealthy individuals. Wily investigators who aim to enrich themselves by such schemes will need to be skilful in their deceit – in a colony full of criminals and former criminals, many people are very distrustful and suspicious of documents.

Would-be forgers might also be well advised that the Government of the colony takes a very dim view on forgery: the cases that have been detected and tied back to a perpetrator have all ended with that individual swinging from a scaffold. In the eyes of those in power, counterfeiting as a crime is second only to murder.

### PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

The following lists give some suggestions of the types of items that would be readily available to different investigator groups as items of personal property (i.e., things which could credibly be owned by the investigator at the start of a scenario).

**Convicts** – Handkerchief, gaming aids (dice, marbles, pack of cards), shiv (handmade knife made of a piece of metal with canvas wrapped around one end as a handle), uniform, shoes, hat, empty flask for grog, tattoos and flogging marks.

### Local Industries

Aside from the raising of animals and crops for food, there are a small number of industries that have been successfully established in New South Wales. These include:

- Spinning and weaving of textiles at the Female Factory in Parramatta
- Blacksmithing of many types of iron implements
- Brewing of beer
- Baking of bread (when sufficient grain is available)
- Tanning leather from the skins of cattle, kangaroo and seals
- Potteries manufacturing dishes, plates, teapots and similar items
- Manufacture of tobacco pipes
- Extraction of salt from sea water
- Milling (grinding) of grain in windmills
- Making of bricks
- Illegal distillation of spirits using hidden stills

There are also several shops in Sydney and a few in Parramatta where imported European goods – mostly clothing – may be purchased. Auction houses in Sydney and Parramatta sell a variety of different goods (charging 5% on sale price).



**NSW Corps Officers** – Uniform, weapons, ammunition, jar of grog, promissory note for 2 more jars of grog, a room in the barracks and a small house in town. May own a horse if especially well off.

**Government Officials** – Good clothes and shoes, fob watch, ledger, pen and ink set, silver flask for grog, instruments of trade (e.g., surveying equipment, medical bag); may carry a Bible if religious. Would live in a home perhaps out of the city on farming land if wealthy, a house in town if not.

**Free Settlers (town)** – Town clothes and shoes, bandana, handkerchief, letter from home, a few bolts of muslin cloth for trade, flask for grog; may have a firearm. Would have a shop and house in town, perhaps even combined in one.

**Farmers & Free Settlers (rural)** – Farming tools, firearms, a good knife, rugged clothes, cabbage tree hat, a short length of stout rope, a large bottle for grog. Would probably have a small farm, some livestock and enough feed for a week.

## REQUISITIONING FROM THE COMMISSARIAT

While all investigators will have some amount of personal gear and possessions (although for convicts that may be remarkably meagre), those working for the colony in an administrative or military role will also have limited ability to requisition items from the colony's stores. In Sydney and

Parramatta this means dealing with the town's Commissariat – the officer who acts as a custodian for all government owned assets. In more remote places such as the Coal River settlement it means dealing with the barracks quartermaster. While the stores maintained in each location have a diversity of different types of equipment – including many of the things investigators may want to obtain – it is not always easy to petition for requested goods to be supplied. Most often the officials placed in positions of managing government stockpiles are chosen based on their stinginess and willingness to deny all but the most obviously necessary requests.

Investigators may wish to try requisitioning goods from a commissary or quartermaster – if they need large items such as carts or specialised items such as surveying equipment this will be a necessity. The Keeper should judge all requests based on the three factors noted below and assign a difficulty (**Normal**, **Hard** or **Extreme**) to the request. Success with a **Persuade** roll of the appropriate difficulty results in the item being begrudgingly granted (don't even bother trying to **Fast Talk** or **Intimidate** people in those roles – they have seen it all before – and most are simply too obtuse to be **Charmed**).

The factors that might affect the difficulty of requisitioning an item are:

- The **value or scarcity** of the item: common items are easy to get, but it is much harder to have rare items issued and nigh impossible to be given items which are unique in the colony (such as the colony's only printing press).
- The **rank of the person making the request** (or by whose authority the item is being requested): lowly NSW Corps officers struggle to be given even half-broken items, while a letter from the Governor stating that the individual is mounting an expedition on his behalf will likely unlock every coffer.
- The degree to which the Commissary or Quartermaster **likes the person** making the request: the decision to grant or deny a request is a decision made by one official and their decision is literally the last word on the matter. Like all petty officials, those in charge of issuing equipment are prone to wielding that arbitrary power to favour those they like and disadvantage those they do not.

## Entertainments

Daily life in the colony is largely taken up with work during the daylight hours, but opportunities exist for entertainment on Sundays and in the evenings.

The most popular form of amusement among convicts is drunken gambling, often in the form of card games. Some gamble to excess: cases have been reported to authorities where a convict has continued betting even to the point of losing the clothing he was wearing.

Soldiers and free settlers are more likely to engage in more refined types of entertainment: cricket, water parties, fishing and kangaroo hunting are all popular diversions. Some officers in the colony also make use of a private billiards room in the barracks, available only to men who pay a subscription.



Convicts are also “provided for” from the coffers of the colony, but this generosity does not extend to much more than a minimal amount of food to keep them from starving. Where a convict work gang is issued equipment for their day’s labours (e.g., to cut down lumber) the Commissary would actually sign the items out to the military officer who is supervising the gang, who incidentally also signs for temporary possession of the convicts themselves!

## BETTER LIVING THROUGH STEALING

Of course investigators who need equipment may choose to simply try to purloin it, either by breaking into the Commissariat or stealing the items from a private residence or public barracks. Theft is relatively common within the colony ... but before investigators embark on such thievery, the Keeper should make them aware of the rather draconian penalties that are applied for common larceny. At the very minimum those discovered stealing minor items are likely to receive a generous number of lashes on the triangle (the exact number is at the whim of the sentencing Magistrate – it could be anywhere up to 200 lashes or more, particularly if the judge is offended or appalled by the perpetrator’s deeds). For being convicted of more serious theft – such as a valuable old book from the Governor’s personal library – felons are unlikely to escape a short, fatal trip to the scaffold.

## Common Weapons

For most hand-to-hand and ranged weapons, the Keeper can simply use the weapon statistics found in the *Call of Cthulhu 7<sup>th</sup> Edition Rules* (for example treating the bayonette optionally attached to NSW Corp muskets as a large knife). Statistics may be found nearby for firearms available in the colony as well as common Aboriginal weapons (the latter are reprinted nearby from Chaosium’s *Secrets of Australia*).

## FIREARMS

Despite the fact that the technology required to create more accurate rifled firearms exists in Europe by the time of this setting, it is highly unlikely that any true rifles are to be found in the New South Wales colony until at least the 1820s. For this setting, the Keeper should assume that the only firearms that are commonly available are older black powder weapons – the famous “Brown Bess” musket being the mainstay of the military. The statistics included in the following table are inspired by Kevin Ross’ “*Colonial Lovecraft Country*” setting published by Sixtystone Press.

**Flintlock Pistol:** commonly found in pairs (a “brace of pistols”) these hand-held firearms are carried mostly by non-military types who require protection either in the settled areas or – more commonly – when they venture out into the unknown bushland.

**Musket:** The most common military firearms, common amongst British troops such as the NSW Corps. Normally only used by foot troops.

**Carbine:** Shorter-barrelled versions of the Musket created to make it easier to fire from horseback; otherwise very similar to the Musket.

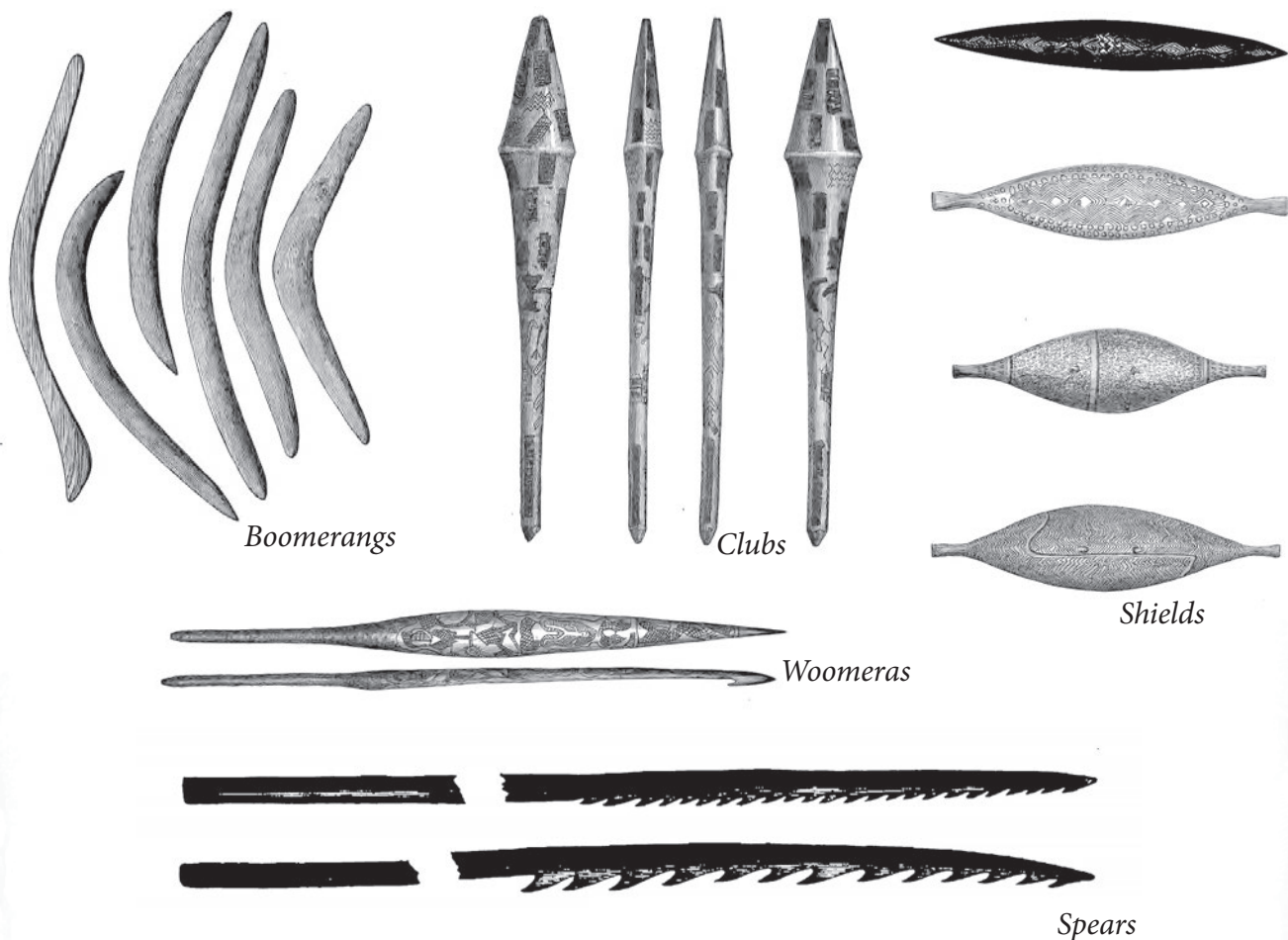
**Fowling Piece:** A type of smoothbore double-barrelled shotgun used almost exclusively for hunting wildlife.

**Black Powder:** All of the firearms described above make use of Black Powder and must be muzzle loaded by filling the barrel with powder (usually from a powder horn carried by the firer), adding the bullet or shot, and tamping down with a metal rod. Such firearms are nearly useless in wet weather or any time that moisture affects the powder. They also require a lot of cleaning and maintenance – a weapon that has not been fired for a long time might have a considerably worse Malfunction score than typical, and may even explode in the firer’s face.

## Colonial Firearms

Weapon	skill	damage	rate of fire	ammo	base range(yds)	malf
Flintlock Pistol	Firearm (Flintlock)	1D6+1	¼	1	10	95
Musket	Firearm (Musket)	1D10+4	¼	1	100	95
Carbine	Firearm (Musket)	1D10+4	¼	1	70	95
Fowling Piece	Firearm (Shotgun)	4D6/2D6/1D6	⅓	2	10/20/50	95





## Aboriginal Weapons

### Melee Weapons

	damage	base chance
Stone Axe	1D6+1+DB	20%
Club	1D8+ DB	25%
Heavy Spear (2H)*	1D8+1+ DB	10%
Light Spear (1H)*	1D6+1+ DB	10%

### Missile Weapons

	damage	rate of fire	base chance	range(yds)
War Boomerang	1D8 + half DB	1/2	Throw%	STR × 3/5
Light Boomerang**	1D3 + half DB	1/2	Throw%	STR × 4/5
Thrown Heavy Spear	1D8+1 + half DB	1/2	Throw%	STR × 1/5
Thrown Light Spear	1D6+1 + half DB	1/2	Throw%	STR × 2/5

\*Capable of impaling.

\*\*This boomerang returns to the thrower if it misses the target, others do not.

An Aboriginal warrior skilled with spears may choose to make use of a Woomera, a wooden device use in conjunction with the spear to enhance its range and deadliness by improving the velocity of the thrown spear. Using a Woomera halves the rate of fire for a spear but doubles its range and adds +1D6 to damage. It requires a successful roll against the thrower's **Fighting (Woomera)** skill, failure of which negates any advantage.



An enterprising character may decide to use black powder on its own as an explosive, for example to blow up a locked door or box. In general a small quantity (such as may be found in a powder horn) delivers 2D6 damage to a 2 yard radius while a large keg might deliver 4D6 damage to a 5 yard radius (at the Keeper's discretion).

## Investigating in the Colony

Traditional *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios rely on investigators having ready access to a variety of different sources of information in order to unearth the clues which propel the story forwards. The primitive nature of the New South Wales colony precludes a few of the traditional sources of clues – for example there are no well-stocked libraries of musty tomes – but provides a range of alternative avenues for tracking down hints of the shadowy influences of the Mythos. The list below provides Keepers with some suggestions.

**The Sydney Gazette** – In order to provide basic government information to members of the military (and any free settlers who have an interest), from March 1802 the colony publishes a weekly single-sheet newsletter called the *Sydney Gazette*. While this doesn't report "news" as much as printing general orders to officers and citizens and the comings and goings of ships, much can be inferred from the details of those daily records of events. The *Gazette* is also the Governor's mouthpiece for issuing edicts to the colony as a whole, and as such most of the major changes to the colony's "laws" (for example the restriction of the rum trade) will be prominently announced in the news sheet. Finally, the *Gazette* also offers space for private advertisements by colonists (although obviously only non-convicts can place an advertisement). Many of the advertisements placed refer to financial transactions or disputes between free settlers and officers, or records of land being granted or sold. Some are simple "lost and found" type advertisements, and conceivably some could be placed by local merchants interested in selling an unusual item that has come into their possession. For Keepers interested in historical detail, scanned copies of most of the original *Sydney Gazettes* from the era covered by this setting may be viewed online for

free at [trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au). Note that there are occasional periods – sometimes months on end – when no *Gazette* is published, usually because the colony has run out of paper and is awaiting supplies from England! A similar publication is commenced in Van Diemen's Land in 1810.

**Convict Records** – Records of convicts are kept at Government House. They include ship rolls of who arrived on what vessel, records of musters, records of punishment, records of tickets of leave, records of exemptions for work, grants of land or other goods.

**Land Grants** – Grants are given to all strata of Colonial society and details of these are kept at Government House. They record the amount of land granted, where it is, and to whom it was allocated; these take the form of verbose legal documents.

**Court Records** – Colonial society is a litigious place with a large proportion of its occupants coming before the law for one reason or another. Written records are kept of all court hearings, often verbatim transcripts, and provide a detailed look at previous events. These are kept at the offices of the colony's magistrates (see page 38).

**Private Correspondence** – many people keep up a prodigious correspondence in this era, especially to those at home; usually this is also returned. Even individuals who are not themselves literate will sometimes ask a fellow convict or soldier to write down a message for loved ones back in England (or to read out aloud the private letters they receive in response). Finding someone's correspondence can be very revealing, although return letters from Britain will not be current, since they take at least six months to get to Australia.

**Government Proclamations** – The Governor makes proclamations from time to time to establish new laws or regulations for the colony; these are mostly published in the *Sydney Gazette* (see above) although proclamations affecting convicts or soldiers might also be stuck up on walls around the Gaol, barracks or other government buildings.





Farms near Parramatta



# PART III: Desperate People, Desolate Places



## A Brief Tour of Hell

The sections which follow describe the historical setting of the convict colony of New South Wales. These descriptions do not include any Mythos details (so don't go looking here to see who is a Mi-go stooze or a servant of Hastur). Consider them the blank canvas on which you will paint your own Mythos masterpiece – in your version of the colony perhaps the eccentric Frenchman at Castle Hill is an agent of the Brothers of the Skin or the eerie waters of the Hawkesbury River are home to a lloigor. Sections later in the sourcebook provide some ideas and suggestions for utilizing the darker aspects of the setting to good effect in a horror story. Also provided later are some detailed story seeds (beginning on page 76), and Keepers seeking inspiration about

using Mythos cults and gods in the penal settlement can consult the introductory scenario “Un-fresh off the Boat” (page 63) for a template.

The map on page 17 shows the majority of the colony of New South Wales. Not shown are the secondary penal settlements at Norfolk Island (in the Pacific Ocean about 1000 miles to the East North East of Sydney) and, from 1804, at Coal River (modern-day Newcastle). Both of these smaller settlements were satellites to the main New South Wales colony, each responsible for producing a specific type of natural resource (flax from Norfolk Island, coal from Coal River) under hard convict labour. Conditions at both were deliberately harsh, making the threat of being sent to one a significant way to keep the main body of convicts in line.



## Scurrilous Events & Curiosities

The following historical events are extracted from the extremely detailed records of early colonial life (see the Bibliography on page 91) and may prove useful springboards for plots of the Keeper's invention.

- 1793 (April 12<sup>th</sup>): "An extraordinary appearance in the sky was observed by several people between five and six o'clock in the evening ... It appeared as though a ray of forked lightning had been stationary in the sky for fifteen minutes. It was not discernable after the sun had set."
- 1793 (October 26<sup>th</sup>): "During a storm of rain and thunder two convicts who were employed in the cutting of wood were struck dead by lightning while they sheltered. One of the dead men was found to be clutching some object to his breast."
- 1794 (April): "An inflammation of the eyes was generally prevalent among all people in the colony; scarcely any person escaped the complaint."
- 1794 (June): "The first highway robbery was committed."
- 1796 (January): "Some of the more decent class of prisoners have been granted permission to build a playhouse at Sydney." This entertainment proved short-lived, since "several of the worst convicts looked on the play-house as a means of stealing goods; not by pick-pocketing but by breaking into the houses of the audience while they were enjoying themselves at the theatre."
- 1796 (July 9<sup>th</sup>): Curiously on this single day two similar violent crimes occurred at opposite ends of the colony. In Sydney a seaman from the *Indispensible* was shot by a convict; far away on the Hawkesbury River a free settler named John Fenlow shot and killed his convict servant, a premeditated murder. Fenlow was tried in August and sentence to execution, his body delivered to the surgeons for dissection.
- 1796 (September): "A most inhuman murder was perpetrated on the body of a settler's wife at a district known as 'The Ponds.' A female neighbour was accused as an accomplice."
- 1796 (November): Francis Morgan, a convict convicted of murder was sentenced to an unusual punishment -- not only was he hung, but his body was placed in a gibbet on one of the islands in Sydney Harbour (a place known as "Pinchgut"). The display of the dead body seems to have been more a source of consternation for local Aborigines than the colonists.
- 1797 (December): During a scorching stretch of weather a large fire broke out among convict houses on the east side of Sydney "the effect of intoxication or carelessness." Several structures were destroyed.
- 1798 (January): Rumour arises among Irish convicts that there is an unknown settlement of civilised men some 300 or 400 miles south-west of Sydney; several escape custody to seek out this paradise but are apprehended after a lengthy pursuit by soldiers. The leaders each receive two hundred lashes.
- 1798 (April): A tale begins circulating amongst labourers that an old Scottish woman had received a prophetic vision that French ships were to sail into Port Jackson Bay, destroy all settlement in the colony and liberate the convicts.
- 1799 (July): Samuel Clode, a missionary who had come to New South Wales to flee an uprising of islanders in Tahiti is found savagely murdered in a brick fields in Sydney. "His brains were beaten out at the back of his head with an axe, and his throat cut so as to nearly sever the head from the body." Two men -- one of them a soldier -- and a woman are convicted of the murder and hanged upon the spot where the crime had been committed.
- 1799 (July 26<sup>th</sup>): A convict transport, the *Hillsborough*, arrives from England bearing a horrible illness. Of the three hundred convicts that embarked some 95 died during the voyage and six more perish shortly after arrival.
- 1801 (January 17<sup>th</sup>): "The settlement was menaced with destruction by the shock of an earthquake, felt severely throughout the colony."
- 1802 (November 5<sup>th</sup>): The *Atlas*, a ship in Sydney Cove commanded by Thomas Musgrove, was struck by lightning in a most peculiar way -- "although the bottom of the ship was immediately perforated by the stroke, not a man on board was injured."
- 1803 (February): Spurred on by the continuing rumour of an "undiscovered country" inland from New South Wales, fifteen convicts abscond from Castle Hill to search it out; some of these are recaptured but others are never found.
- 1803 (August): "A most inhumane murder was committed on the body of Joseph Luken, a constable." After finishing his watch he was set upon by unknown assailants "who buried the hilt of his own cutlass very deeply in his head." So bad was the wound that those discovering the body reported that in attempting to turn the corpse, their fingers became coated in the man's brains. Despite an intense military search no perpetrator was found.
- 1803 (September): A most unusual event occurred at the execution of Joseph Samuels, who had been convicted of burglary. Three times the man was hung, but on each occasion the apparatus failed to kill him: first the rope broke in an unprecedented way, then the knot unravelled, and on the third occasion the rope once again broke. The Provost Marshall then took pity on the condemned, whose life was subsequently spared by the Governor.
- 1804 (September): During a tempestuous storm the *Lady Barlow*, a ship of five hundred tons was overturned while moored in Sydney Cove.
- 1805 (May): In Hawkesbury, a mare gave birth to a foal without any forelegs and with a horn sprouting from its forehead.
- 1806 (June): Word reaches Sydney and the new settlement at Hobart Town of the shocking and violent theft of a ship, the brig *Venus*, from the small settlement at Port Dalrymple (on the northern coast of Van Diemen's Land). The "piratical" act was performed by American named Benjamin Barnet Kelly and a motley crew including convicts; fears run rampant that this scurrilous band will use the *Venus* to raid other ships.
- 1807 (October): Allegations made during a court hearing suggest that convicts employed to assist in Sydney's hospital were accepting bribes to keep patients admitted longer (to avoid being sent back to hard labour) or even admitting them under false pretences.
- 1808 (February): Shortly after Governor Bligh has been overthrown -- and while he is still imprisoned -- he is questioned about earlier plans to construct an elaborate tomb for his recently deceased son-in-law Captain Putnam; contrary to expectations, and with little explanation, the Governor says the tomb will no longer be needed.
- 1809: The newly-constructed road in Van Diemen's Land linking Hobart Town and Port Dalrymple has become a favourite hunting ground for a group of "bushrangers." These are a group of escaped convicts and runaway seamen (perhaps as many as 60) who have turned their back on the colony and live off the bush, shooting and killing kangaroos for food.



The only two settlements of any size in the mainland colony are Sydney township and Parramatta township. Gazetteers of both may be found below. Also included on page 51 is a description of the main sites around the Coal River settlement. A brief description of some of the more outlying farming regions of the colony can be found starting on page 53.

## Places in Sydney

Sydney was the place of first settlement and remains the largest convict township and the major port for the colony.

The map nearby shows some of the key locations in Sydney township. The pages that follow describe the buildings and people that investigators are likely to encounter as they explore this savage place. In any one scenario only a fraction of these people and places will be important; Keepers should pick those elements of the setting which best serve the story at hand and gloss over everything else (to avoid investigators getting lost in minor details).

### I. GOVERNMENT HOUSE

**Where is it:** 41 Bridge Street.

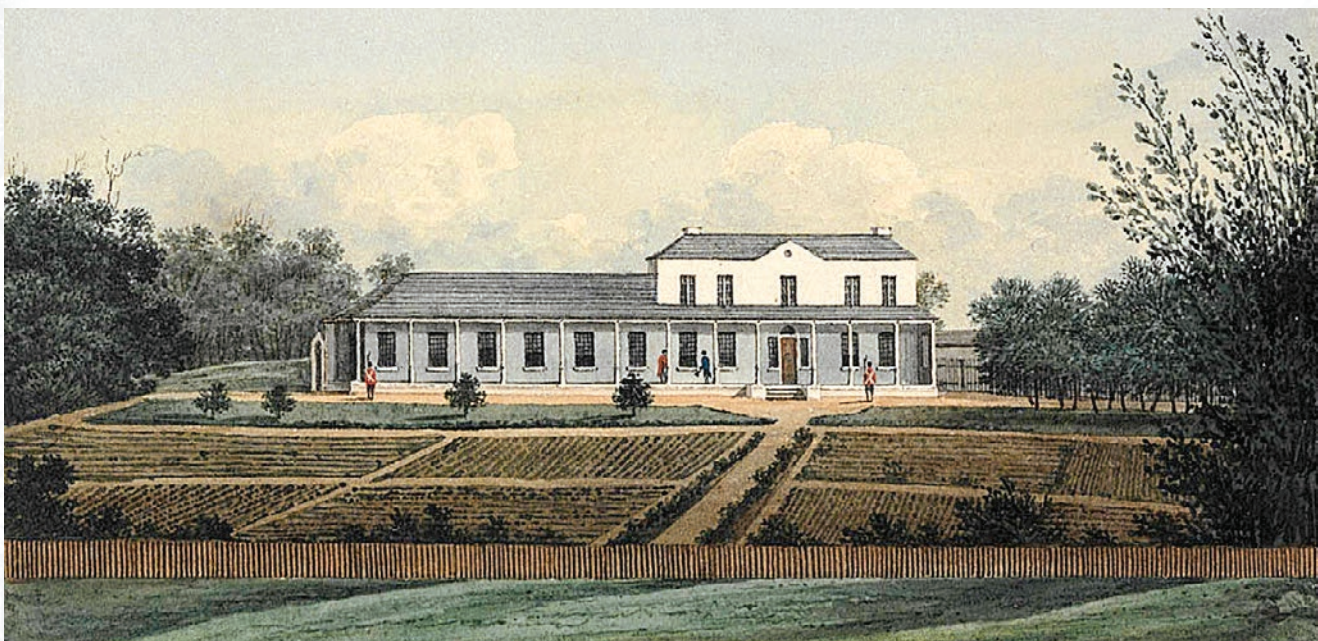
**What is it:** Government House was the first building erected in the Colony and is a two-storey building backing on to the harbour. Accounts from this era describe Government House as being in need of repair; indeed by 1817 it is entirely rebuilt.

## How many people are in the Colony?

The exact population of the colony grows during the time period covered by this setting, mostly because new convicts keep arriving from England (and few are ever allowed to return). Generally there are around 6,000 to 7,000 Europeans living in New South Wales at this time, of which perhaps only a quarter are current convicts. The rest are a combination of soldiers, officials, free settlers (those who have chosen to come to the colony to make a new life) and convicts who have either served out their terms or been pardoned.

One notable aspect of the population is the sharp disproportion of men to women – only about 18% of those living in the colony are women. This creates some obvious social problems and tensions. By the time covered by this setting there are a sizeable number of children living in the colony – some born here, some child convicts transported usually for minor theft. There are about 800 legitimate children in New South Wales and about 1,000 illegitimate ones.

Nobody really knows how many Aboriginal people live in and around the colony – they are not included in any census. Anecdotally their numbers seem to be on the wane, however, thanks to a combination of diseases introduced by Europeans and occasional white efforts to shoot Aboriginals as punishment for perceived crimes.





## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

**What happens there:** Government House is the seat of authority in the Colony, Sydney residence of the Governor and his main staff. The *Sydney Gazette* – the colony’s only “newspaper” (really a weekly government bulletin sheet with paid personal advertisements) – is also printed here in a shed out the back. There is also a Guard House.

Characters associated with the location:

- *Governor of the NSW Colony:* In the early part of the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era this is Philip Gidley King; from late 1806 William Bligh takes the position. Both are Royal Navy officers. Bligh’s biography may be found on page 13; after he is arrested during the Rum Rebellion he is kept under house arrest here.
- *The Colonial Secretary:* the Governor’s right-hand-man and civilian administrator. For much of this era this role is fulfilled by Mr Edmund Griffin, whose name graces most proclamations and notices around the colony.

**George Howe, Publisher of the *Sydney Gazette*:** George Howe is a 39 year old emancipated convict, who had been transported for life for shoplifting. His experience working on the London Times saw him chosen by Governor King to fulfil the role of Government Printer. He is also the editor of the Gazette. His printing press is a small wooden one that was brought out on the First Fleet. He is constantly facing paper and ink shortages and his subscribers not paying their debts, but manages to keep the paper going. Howe is a man of the Enlightenment, preferring reason and common sense to religion and superstition. Howe teaches reading and writing to supplement his income.

- *The Governor’s Personal Guard:* Stationed at Government House is the Governor’s Guard of 26 men, 2 sergeants and an officer of the NSW Corps. The Officer in Charge is Ensign Archibald Bell. During the Rebellion the Governor’s Guard sides with its fellows in the NSW Corps.

## 2. SYDNEY GAOL

**Where is it:** 199 George St.

**What is it:** A large and ugly stone building that is in sore need of repair. The whitewash on the surface

could use a few more coats. Included within the gaol are a separate “debtors’ prison” and six cells for condemned felons. A courtyard surrounds it with a high wall. There is a triangle in the courtyard for flogging. A small hut for the Executioner stands to one side.

**What happens there:** The convicts reside here, living in rough wooden (and usually squalid) communal sleeping sheds. Convicts stationed here work on Government sites around the town from sunup to sundown although are allowed an hour’s break in the middle of the day in the summer. Floggings and executions also take place in the courtyard.

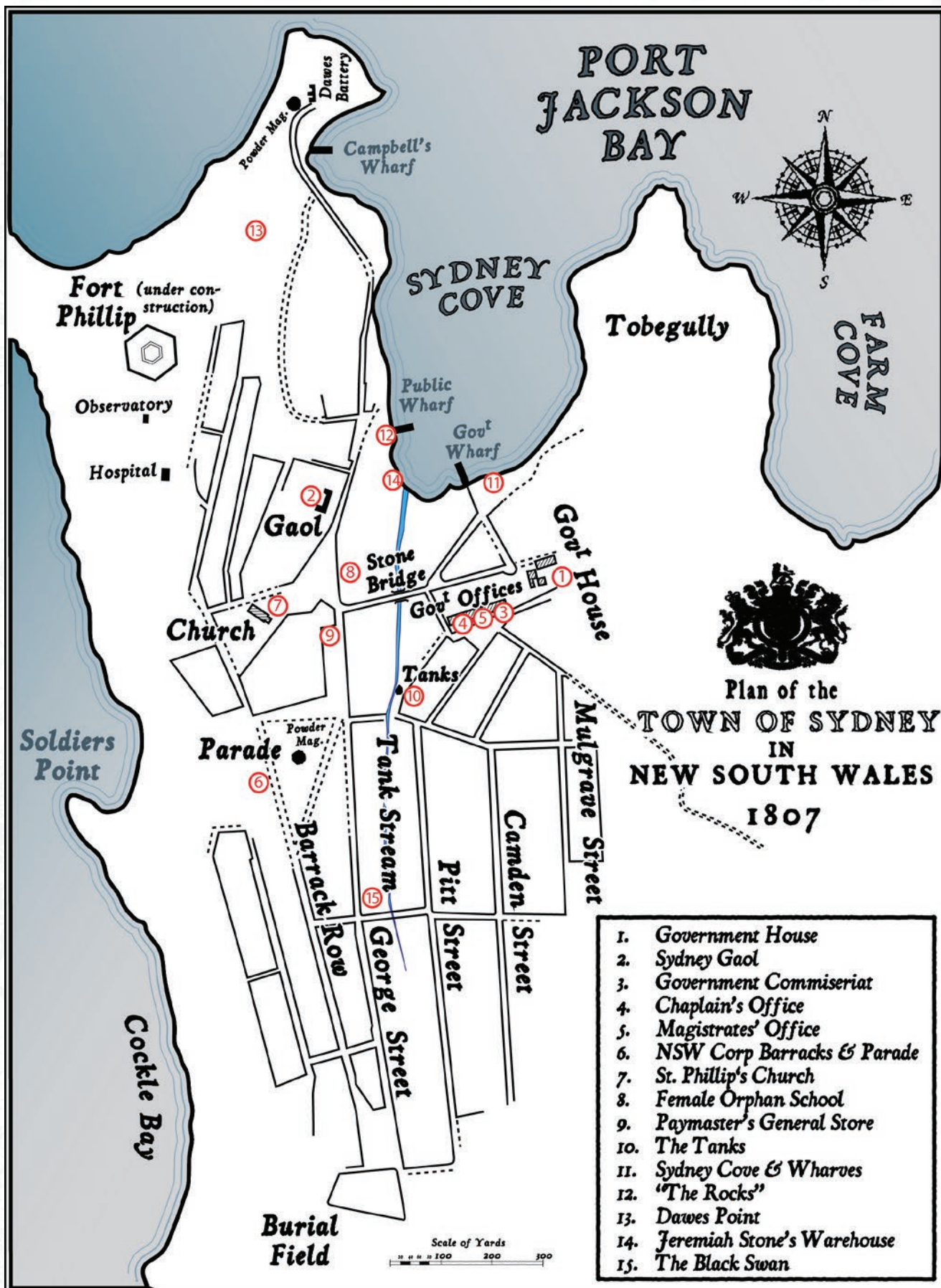
Conceivably, investigators with some degree of influence (NSW Corps officers or senior officials in the government) may visit the Gaol to requisition convict labour for some mission of their own (or perhaps just manual work or menial jobs). For investigators in such positions, a successful **Credit Rating** will get 1D6 assigned men or women. Getting a literate convict requires a **Hard Credit Rating**. Keepers should note convicts will work hard when they are being watched, less so otherwise, and abscond rather than put their lives at risk for their Masters.

Another reason investigators might visit the Gaol is to witness floggings or hangings (hopefully not as the recipient of same). In colonial Sydney, floggings and executions are not public spectacles but rather take place within the enclosed stockade of the Gaol. Investigators who have any credible interest in such a punishment will be allowed to attend. Keepers may elect to impose a Sanity loss of 0/1 for an especially brutal flogging or a hanging, 1/1D4 if it is a friend. See the guidelines on page 23 to determine the damage inflicted by flogging.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Chief Constable, Andrew Thompson:** The 33 year old ex-convict has been a constable since 1793, a year after his arrival. A Scotsman, he was pardoned in 1798 and built a home in the Hawkesbury and soon after was named Chief Constable. He has served with distinction in this role: investigating crimes, capturing convict runaways, acting as an intermediary with the Aboriginal peoples and was especially commended for his role in rescuing settlers during the Hawkesbury floods of 1806. He is also a merchant, with many business interests and owns five ships, including some that run from Sydney to Coal River.





1. Government House
2. Sydney Gaol
3. Government Commiseriat
4. Chaplain's Office
5. Magistrates' Office
6. NSW Corp Barracks & Parade
7. St. Phillip's Church
8. Female Orphan School
9. Paymaster's General Store
10. The Tanks
11. Sydney Cove & Wharves
12. "The Rocks"
13. Dawes Point
14. Jeremiah Stone's Warehouse
15. The Black Swan



# CONVICTS & CTHULHU

- *Other constables, and the colonial executioner:* The Chief Constable has a staff of men in his service, who are effectively overseers with investigative duties and the power of arrest. There is also an executioner who lives on the premises.

## 3. GOVERNMENT COMMISSARIAT

**Where is it:** Phillip St, Sydney.

**What is it:** A wooden warehouse with an attached office, both of which have seen better days. This is its temporary establishment. An official building is not constructed until 1809 then torn down and replaced by Macquarie in 1812.

**What happens there:** Warehouse that holds much of the government's stores, including acting as a granary and keeping impounded goods. It is also the office of the Commissary, a critical role in the Colony where so much depends on the distribution of government stores, combining the roles of public accountant and provisioner of goods.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Commissary, John Palmer:** For the entire period covered by this setting the colony's Commissary (controller of government goods) is John Palmer, whose nickname is "Little Jack." Palmer is very charismatic and well-liked in the colony. He has a 100-acre property at Garden Island Cove where he likes to entertain in style. He has another farm, George Farm, in Surry Hills of 70 acres. Palmer was purser on the *HMS Sirius* under the first Governor Arthur Phillip on the First Fleet.

## 4. CHAPLAINS' OFFICE

**Where is it:** Phillip St, Sydney.

**What is it:** A wooden office which has seen better days, directly adjacent to the Commissariat.

**What happens there:** This small office is set aside for the colony's chaplains – the religious officials who hold Divine services at churches in Sydney and Parramatta and also attempt to convert the Aboriginal population to Christianity. It is notionally overseen by Samuel Marsden, although he is frequently absent from Sydney.

Characters associated with the location:

**Samuel Marsden:** Born in 1765, Marsden has served as full-time chaplain in the colonies since his arrival in 1794. Although a pious man, long years of ministering to convicts disinterested in salvation and NSW Corps soldiers corrupted by vice have made him cynical and hard. As well as overseeing the colony's religious services (both in Sydney and in Parramatta) he also serves as a clerical justice – a magistrate responsible for running court inquiries and trials. It is in the undertaking of this latter duty that Marsden has achieved most notoriety, largely because of the extreme severity of punishment and investigatory techniques he authorised. Most famously in 1800 as part of an inquiry into Irish plans for rebellion, Marsden ordered a suspect flogged mercilessly in the hope that he may reveal evidence about hidden weapons. Marsden has a strained relationship with the Governor of the colony, and is also no friend of John Macarthur.

## 5. MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

**Where is it:** Phillip St, Sydney.

**What is it:** A large wooden office which has seen better days, directly adjacent to the Commissariat.

**What happens there:** This large and busy premises is devoted to the colony's various Magistrates – those who collectively administer the legal system. Because the colony has no Parliament to speak of, the only way in which disputes and conflicts can be resolved is in the courts. This has made New South Wales a highly-litigious society, which in turn creates work for the numerous Magistrates most of whom have very little legal training but have attained the position due to significant land holdings or influence.





Characters associated with the location:

**Judge Advocate Richard Atkins:** Atkins is the senior legal figure in the Colony and is someone who has used his family connections back in England as a way to maintain a reputable place in Sydney society, despite the fact that he has come to New South Wales to flee creditors back home. He maintained his status despite being in debt to many (including Macarthur), alcoholic and addicted to immorality and dissolution. According to the Australian Dictionary of Biography (available online) while sober he could be an impressive figure, but he was also “ignorant and merciless, an inveterate debauchee.” Surgeon John Harris described his living arrangements as “worse than a Dog's in a squalid dwelling described as 'a perfect pigstye.’”

- *Other lawyers:* from 1801 this number includes former convict George Crossley.

**George Crossley:** A London attorney sentenced to transportation for perjury. His wife Anna Maria is the sister of Nicholas Divine, superintendent of convicts and later supporter of Bligh. Crossley gained a conditional pardon from Governor King in 1801. He and his wife have a farm on the Hawkesbury, but he also practises law, although is not allowed to plead in court. Crossley is a legal advisor to Judge Advocate Atkins.

## 6. NSW CORPS BARRACKS & PARADE

**Where is it:** George St.

**What is it:** Standing where modern-day Wynyard Station now stands, the George Street Barracks has a Parade Ground and Officers' Barracks. It occupies 15 acres in the centre of the town. Buildings have developed around it, including pubs and eating houses (one of which is The Black Swan, see page 43). The wives and families of the soldiers live just behind the Barracks in Clarence Street. Like most buildings the Barracks sorely needs some maintenance.

**What happens there:** The main barracks of the NSW Corps. Many soldiers also live here, while some have their own private accommodation around town.

Keepers may decide that under some circumstances it is appropriate for investigators to petition for sol-

## Depicting the Colony

By modern standards, the land occupied by the first colonists in New South Wales would be seen as idyllic, pleasant and lush. However that is not how the settlers and convicts perceive it: instead what they see is a strange place filled with unfamiliar animals and trees, and which might harbour any number of unknown threats. Because this kind of darker view serves the creation of a horrific setting we urge Keepers to take the lead from early accounts and portray the landscape of early New South Wales as dark, primal, eerie and uncertain.

Some atmospheric themes that could help in that depiction:

- The Colony is a nasty place, a giant prison run by military gaolers. Convicts are sent here to be punished for crimes in England and Ireland and are forced to work from sunup to sunset. Floggings and beatings are regular, usually administered by trustee convicts. Weaker convicts, male and female, are exploited by the stronger. The realities of life are harsh. Alcohol is one of the few escapes from the tedium and brutality of everyday life and is widely used.
- The era covered by this setting pre-dates any serious efforts at building the colony into something more substantial. It is striking how little of civilized society is actually in place: there are no banks, no police, no hospitals other than some buildings and tents allocated the role, and no insane asylums. There are magistrates and jailers, criminals and lots of rum.
- The British cleave to their European customs, including dressing in heavy garments, even to go to bed. They eat rich, heavy foods. The Aboriginal peoples know much better than this, but are looked on as savages or wild children, so no-one takes their advice. The bushcraft of indigenous Australians is also ignored, so white settlers or convicts lost in the wilderness often starve to death surrounded by native foods.

diers to be allocated to assist in their endeavours. In general this will require a **Hard Credit Rating** roll unless the investigator making the request is a NSW Corps officer – for such a character all that is required is a successful **Intimidation** roll and a select group of men will dutifully fall into line.



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

Possible characters associated with the location:

- Commander of the NSW Corps: for most of the period covered by this setting this office was held by Major George Johnston whose fate is tied closely with the Rum Rebellion (which will see him installed as the puppet administrator of the illegal military government).

**George Johnston:** Born in 1764, Johnston was an officer in the marines and served in wars against the Americans in 1777-8 and the French in 1781. Johnston sailed to NSW as a marine in the First Fleet, and when the marines were dismissed was selected by Governor Arthur Philip to raise a new body of men, the NSW Corps. He led the action against Irish rebel convicts in 1804, putting down the rebellion before it could turn ugly. Johnston is a handsome and popular officer and very mindful of the reputation of the NSW Corps. His common-law wife Esther Julian was a convict on the First Fleet and they have 3 sons and 4 daughters. Johnston is a strong supporter of Macarthur and resents the way that the Naval officers who have served as Governors (in particular Bligh) have insulted the Corps and interfered in military matters.

- Any other officers of the NSW Corps stationed in Sydney are likely to be found here at least occasionally.

### 7. ST PHILLIP'S CHURCH (AND TEMPORARY REPLACEMENT)

**Where is it:** On Church Street, mid-way between the soldier's parade and the gaol.

**What is it:** Between 1793 and 1798, a wooden building with thatched roof and earthen floor stood on this site; after this was burned down (allegedly by disgruntled convicts). Church services were



relocated to a neighbouring Government bonded storehouse, hastily repurposed. Work on a permanent replacement church, St. Phillips, began in 1800 but its doors did not open until 1809.

**What happens there:** Church services are held every Sunday; notionally these are mandatory for all soldiers and convicts (food rations can be docked for non-attendance) this particular Governor's Order is almost never enforced.

### 8. FEMALE ORPHAN SCHOOL

**Where is it:** On the corner of George Street and Bridge Street

**What is it:** A school set up in 1801 to look after young destitute girls between the ages of 7 and 14 (some orphaned, some abandoned). About 30–40 girls are residents at any time, and their day-to-day welfare and education is overseen by a resident Matron (and her husband, the Master). Education mostly consists of learning to sew or spin, and in some cases learning to read. Some cynically suggest that it is little more than a small-scale clothing factory and training ground for future domestic servants.

**What happens there:** Most of the time this building is used for teaching, but occasionally it is used as a convenient place to hold larger Church services. Whenever large legal trials occur in the colony, it is common for the school to be temporarily used as a *de facto* court house. Notably, this location will be used for the trial of John Macarthur and also the “kangaroo courts” convened following the Rum Rebellion.

**Mrs Elizabeth More Hume:** Daughter of a clergyman, Elizabeth came out from England with her brother in 1795 both intent on becoming free settlers of the colony of New South Wales. Shortly after her arrival she met and married Andrew Hamilton Hume, a superintendent of convicts and farmer. The two moved briefly to Parramatta when Andrew was made government store-keeper there, but after a short time that appointment was reversed and Andrew was in court on charges of “administrative irregularities”. Although acquitted of this charge it was to be the first of several scandals. Elizabeth's decision to take up the Matron position at the newly-founded school was an effort to stabilise the pair's fortunes but it has not succeeded – instead, her husband's “worthless character” has tarnished people's faith in her abilities as a senior school mistress.



## 9. PAYMASTER'S GENERAL STORE

**Where is it:** Corner of Bridge and George Streets

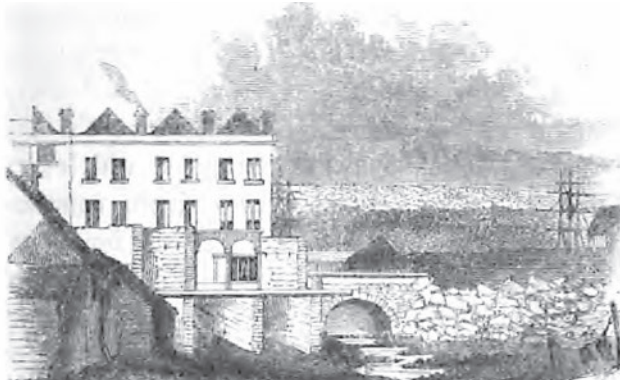
**What is it:** This is the privately-run retail store of the NSW Corps Paymaster. For the second half of the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era Anthony Fenn Kemp held the office of paymaster. Before him, John Macarthur performed the job (and oversaw running of the store in much the same fashion as summarised below).

**What happens there:** Kemp sells all manner of goods but as Paymaster also dispenses the pay to NSW Corps soldiers. Kemp's stated preference is that soldiers take their pay in his goods. He asks "What will you have? Tea at 10 shillings a pound?" If someone holds out for money Kemp damns them as mutinous rogues and threatens to have them flogged for impertinence. The shop enjoys profits of around 100%.

**Captain Anthony Fenn Kemp.** Soldier, magistrate, merchant and grazier: Kemp was born in Aldgate in London. His wife is Elizabeth Riley and they have several children (eventually they will have 18). Kemp's bullying of soldiers under his command for profit is notorious in Sydney. Kemp serves a brief posting in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), effectively administering it from 1806–7. A Freemason, Kemp is a member of Australia's first lodge since 1802. He is a Macarthur stalwart and will take a central part in the Rebellion.

## 10. THE TANKS AND THE TANK STREAM

**Where is it:** The stream runs North-South through central Sydney to flow out into Sydney Cove; the Tanks are midway between the NSW Corps Barracks and Government House



**What is it:** The Tank Stream is a natural waterway which flows with fresh water. The Tanks are large stone cut reservoirs which hold water from the stream. The Tank Stream is crossed by a bridge—the only stone bridge in the colony—that is universally regarded as an appallingly-built structure.

**What happens there:** People come to the Tanks daily to get fresh water. Its water is important to the township and also to replenishing ships in the Harbour. The quality of the water in the stream (and hence the tanks) varies significantly as some industries (in particularly tanneries) upstream have begun to use it to dispose of waste.

- **Simeon Lord's home and warehouse:** Simeon Lord is one of Sydney's most prosperous emancipist merchants. His three storey home and warehouse sits by the Tank Stream Bridge. Ship's officers sometimes stay here when they wish to stay near their merchandise.

## II. SYDNEY COVE WHARFS & WAREHOUSES

**Where is it:** Sydney Cove adjacent to The Rocks.

**What is it:** A sprawl of locations: The harbour itself and the ships on it; the Government wharf; private warehouses; shipyard; some pubs.

**What happens there:** The harbour is the centre of commerce and travel in the colony. Some notable locations within it are:

- **James Underwood's Shipyard:** James Underwood is an emancipist shipbuilder and ship owner. His shipyard is the biggest in Sydney. Underwood is in partnership with Henry Kable, another emancipist merchant and together they own the sloop *Diana*.
- **Ships in the Harbour:** At any time there are usually a handful of larger government ships, perhaps one or two trade vessels and a dozen or so fishing boats. There is also a regular ferry service that runs daily between Sydney and Parramatta utilizing boats and barges—the trip takes about 4 hours. Ships also leave irregularly for more far-flung places (including the secondary convict settlements at Coal River and Norfolk Island, as well as the only other settlement in Australia—the penal colony at Van Diemen's Land, far to the south).



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

For an example of a representative warehouse in this district, see below.

Possible characters associated with the location:

A large and diverse group of people use the area around the wharves and warehouses on a daily basis. The following are some representative examples from which the Keeper can extrapolate as needed:

**Thomas Moore**, sailor, master shipbuilder, landowner: Moore will be one of 833 persons who signed the 'Settlers' Address to Governor William Bligh just before he is deposed by John Macarthur and Major George Johnston in January 1808. He became a captain in the Loyal Sydney Volunteer militia in March 1808.

**James Underwood & Henry Kable**, ex-convicts, businessmen, landholders: This pair of business partners owns several of the ships that make regular voyages to Coal River and the second penal colony at Van Diemen's Land. Like most businessmen they dislike the way the colony has been governed, believing the office of Governor to often behave in a fraudulent way.

**Mary Wade, ex-convict**: Mary was a former street sweeper sentenced to death in England at age 11 for stealing from another child. She was pardoned to celebrate the curing of King George's madness and transported for life. She survived internment on Norfolk Island and has relocated to Sydney with her two children. Her emancipated Irish convict lover Teague Harrigan is away on a whaling expedition. Mary is 30 now and currently lives in a tent near the Tank Stream.

- **Dock patrol**: The docks are a source of potential theft and trouble. Constables and NSW Corpsmen patrol here in pairs by night. There is a 50% chance some fracas will draw their attention.

### 12. THE ROCKS

**Where is it**: Along the western shore line of Sydney Cove.

**What is it**: A disreputable slum area, comprising a jumble of ramshackle buildings constructed from wood, daub and local sandstone (which gives the region its name).

What happens there: Ex-convicts live here (usually in squalor); sailors visit for drunker carousing and availing themselves of prostitutes.

### 13. DAWES POINT

**Where is it**: The hilly land immediately to the west of The Rocks, northwards to Port Jackson Bay.

**What is it**: A headland with sparse settled areas overlooking the Harbour. Notable features are the Hospital, the Gun Battery, a windmill, and Robert Campbell's wharf and warehouse.

What happens there:

- **Sydney Hospital**: This prefabricated wood and copper building replaced the tents that served as the hospital up until 1790. The building can house up to 80 patients and is mainly for the use of the military and to patch up prisoners. Contemporary accounts describe it as being in "a ruinous state". It also has barracks for the use of the Surgeon and assistant surgeons.
- **Sydney Observatory**: a small timber and shingle cottage. In an era before reliable chronometers existed, there is a strong link between astronomy and navigation. The modest collection of telescopes and sextants are important tools for establishing longitude relative to Greenwich; the observatory also collects meteorological data.
- **Dawes Battery & Powder Magazine**: A gun emplacement at the very tip of the headland overlooking Port Jackson Bay. The 26-pound guns from the *HMS Sirius* were placed here by Governor Phillip. There is a guard house and powder magazine here, both in need of repair. For more on this location, see the scenario "Un-fresh Off The Boat" on page 63.
- **Windmill Hill**: prior to 1803, the highest point of the headland housed a large government windmill; this was demolished to make way for a planned hexagonal citadel-style stone fort to be called Fort Phillip. Construction of the fort commenced in 1804 but proceeds slowly (the idea is eventually abandoned in 1807). A large defensive ditch has been dug, some parts of the stone walls constructed, and a few guns placed in the unfinished fort, looking out over the harbour.





- **Robert Campbell's Warehouse and Wharf:** Campbell has a private wharf and a warehouse as part of his business concerns, Campbell & Co.

Possible characters associated with these locations:

**Thomas Jamison, Chief Surgeon:** Middle-aged Irishman Thomas Jamison is the Colony's chief Surgeon. He was surgeon's mate on the *HMS Sirius* under Phillip. Along with John Harris and John Savage he conducted the Colony's first successful vaccination of children against smallpox and published the Colony's first medical paper. He is also a merchant and ally of Macarthur. Not long after Bligh's appointment as Governor, Jamison has a major falling-out with Bligh over the refusal of a request to return to England.

**John Harris, NSW Corps Surgeon:** Irishman John Harris is the official surgeon for the NSW Corps. During the time of the "Rum Economy" under Governor King he is a stalwart supporter of the government. However, soon after coming to power Bligh dismisses him from his official positions as Naval Officer and Magistrate, sharply turning his allegiances to those voicing uprising. Around the time of the Rum Rebellion, John Harris's house in Ultimo is one of the primary meeting places used by rebels to secretly hatch their plot.

**Robert Campbell, Naval Officer:** The colony's Naval Officer looks after imports and exports. Until 1807 that office was held by John Harris (above), but Bligh appoints his own man, Robert Campbell, instead. A free settler, Campbell came from Scotland to the colony in 1797 and has established himself as a merchant with a reputation for fair trading, offering generous credit and low prices. He supports Bligh whom he believes is trying to make for a fairer colony and support the poor. He is also a supporter of the London Missionary Society and through them underwrites various charitable works.

## 14. AN EXAMPLE WAREHOUSE: *Jeremiah Stone's*

An investigation which centres around goods or item shipped to the colony may well include clues pointing to a warehouse location close to the harbour. Jeremiah Stone's warehouse is provided here as a representative example of such a place. The Keeper can either use it as-is or tweak the description to create any number of similar places.

**Where is it:** The Rocks, near the Quay.

**What is it:** This is a two storey wooden warehouse with a small office at the top and a narrow loft.

**What happens there:** Jeremiah Stone lets out warehouse spaces to other merchants who may need it. He asks no questions and his rates offer less monopolistic gouging than many other local traders, so his business is well patronized.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Jeremiah Stone, amoral warehouse owner:** Stone is a thin, withdrawn man of 41 with long, lank preternaturally grey hair. Although he does regular business with a number of shady types (potentially including Mythos cultists, at the Keeper's discretion), he himself has no interest in their causes or beliefs just their money. He is prone to taking part in some of the secret rum-fuelled and ribald partying that takes place from time to time. Conceivably he might be enticed to rent out part of his warehouse for such degenerate events, if the price is right.

## 15. AN EXAMPLE PUBLIC HOUSE: *The Black Swan*

Most scenarios in Sydney will feature character paying some kind of visit to a drinking establishment – Simeon Lord's notorious public bar, "The Black Swan", is provided as an example.

**Where is it:** George Street

**What is it:** The Black Swan is the first business Simeon Lord went into following his emancipation. It is a modest main building with some wooden out-buildings. It stands alongside John Halfpenny's shop.

**What happens there:** Drinking, socializing, gossiping. Late in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era it becomes a central meeting place for those plotting against the Governor.



Possible characters associated with the location:

**Simeon Lord**, Emancipist Trader and owner of the Swan: Born in 1771, Lord was transported for 7 years for stealing cloth. He was emancipated early and become a merchant, auctioneer and agent for captains of vessels wishing to sell their goods. He is very prosperous and a model of what emancipated convicts could achieve. Lord has a wide variety of mercantile interests and many partners. He is a strong supporter of the Rebels and has clashed with Bligh a number of times over merchant matters.

## ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENTS IN AND AROUND SYDNEY TOWN

**Where is it:** It is only a quirk of European-style historical record-keeping that early Sydney is customarily viewed as an exclusively white township. Large groups of aboriginal people live in unsettled areas close to Sydney Town, at all points of the compass, including Kirribilli on the north shore, and west of The Rocks.

**What happens there:** The Aboriginal people live in relative harmony with the white people, although find them incomprehensible at times. There are sporadic outbursts of violence on both sides, but more in the outer lying areas such as Parramatta and the Hawkesbury River than in the Sydney region. Otherwise the Aboriginal people pursue their traditional lifestyles.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Bungaree**, mediator between Aboriginals and colonial government: Bungaree is a noted Sydney character and a famous historical figure. He has been a mediator between the white and Aboriginal peoples of Sydney since 1804. He travelled with explorer Matthew Flinders on the first circumnavigation of the Australian continent in 1802, and was an enormous help dealing with the native peoples encountered on Flinders' voyages. He is good natured and very shrewd. Bungaree dresses in a highly irregular way, wearing a Navy officer's hat and a NSW Corps sergeant's tunic, linen trousers and bare feet. He doesn't seem bothered by the heat (unlike the Europeans who wear this garb). He is friendly and very polite and subtly mocking. If encouraged he can do a very funny impersonation of the walk of any of the Governors of NSW, including Bligh, which is a bandy legged rocking gait.

## Places in Parramatta

Aside from Sydney, Parramatta is the only significant town in the colony of New South Wales. It was founded not long after the first convict ships arrived. While Parramatta plays a small role as a place of punishment its main functions are as a regional barracks for troops at the western-most end of the Port Jackson waterway and as a more pleasant place for free settlers to live and farm.

## GETTING TO PARRAMATTA

Parramatta is around 4 to 5 hours from Sydney. Investigators can ride a horse or go by carriage along the unpaved but well-maintained road or hire transport along the Parramatta River. Merchant river boats and barges are available as is a ferry, crewed by convict labour. All transport must be privately arranged.

## KISSING POINT

Located about half-way along the road between Sydney and Parramatta on the north side of the harbour, this sparsely settled area (modern-day Ryde) is famous for housing the tavern of James Squire, ex-convict and the colony's foremost brewer.

**James Squire**, ex-convict and emancipist brewer: Born in England sometime around 1755, Squire was among the first batch of convicts transported to New South Wales, after having been convicted of highway robbery in Surrey in 1785. His sentence was transportation for seven years; after serving out this term he elected to remain in the colony and became the earliest local brewer, initially using English malt as the basis for his beer. Although his small business began in Sydney (privately brewing for the interim NSW Corps Governors) he was granted land in 1795 at Kissing Point where he began growing hops and raising livestock. There he has set up a larger brewery and tavern, the latter serving as a popular stop on the trip between the two settlements. Squire is known as a fair and community-minded individual who likes to stand up for the interests of the poor; he is also friend to the local Aboriginal population and a personal friend to one of the most famous Aboriginal leaders of the era, Bennelong (see below).





**Bennelong** was originally an indigenous clan leader of the Wangal people on the south side of the Parramatta River. In 1789 the first Governor of the New South Wales colony, Arthur Phillip, ordered that one of the Aboriginal people be captured and brought to Sydney to act as a mediator between the indigenous people and the colonists. Bennelong wasn't the first captured for this purpose, but was the first that survived long enough to learn English and be of use to the Governor. Although taken from his people against his will, Bennelong formed a friendship with the Governor apparently realising the political importance to his people of having some kind of "diplomatic" channels to the leaders of the white settlement. When Governor Phillip was forced to return to England in 1792 due to ill health he asked Bennelong to accompany him.

Bennelong stayed in England for three years, and was paraded around to meet many notable politicians of the day. After falling ill he was returned to Australia in 1795 on the *HMS Reliance*, arriving back in his homeland on September 7<sup>th</sup>. On his return Bennelong acted for a time as an advisor to the new Governor (King) before ultimately choosing his traditional culture over remaining with the Europeans. At sometime around 1797, Bennelong returns to the lands around Parramatta and takes up a leadership role with a different clan. He lives on lands owned by James Squire.

## PARRAMATTA TOWNSHIP

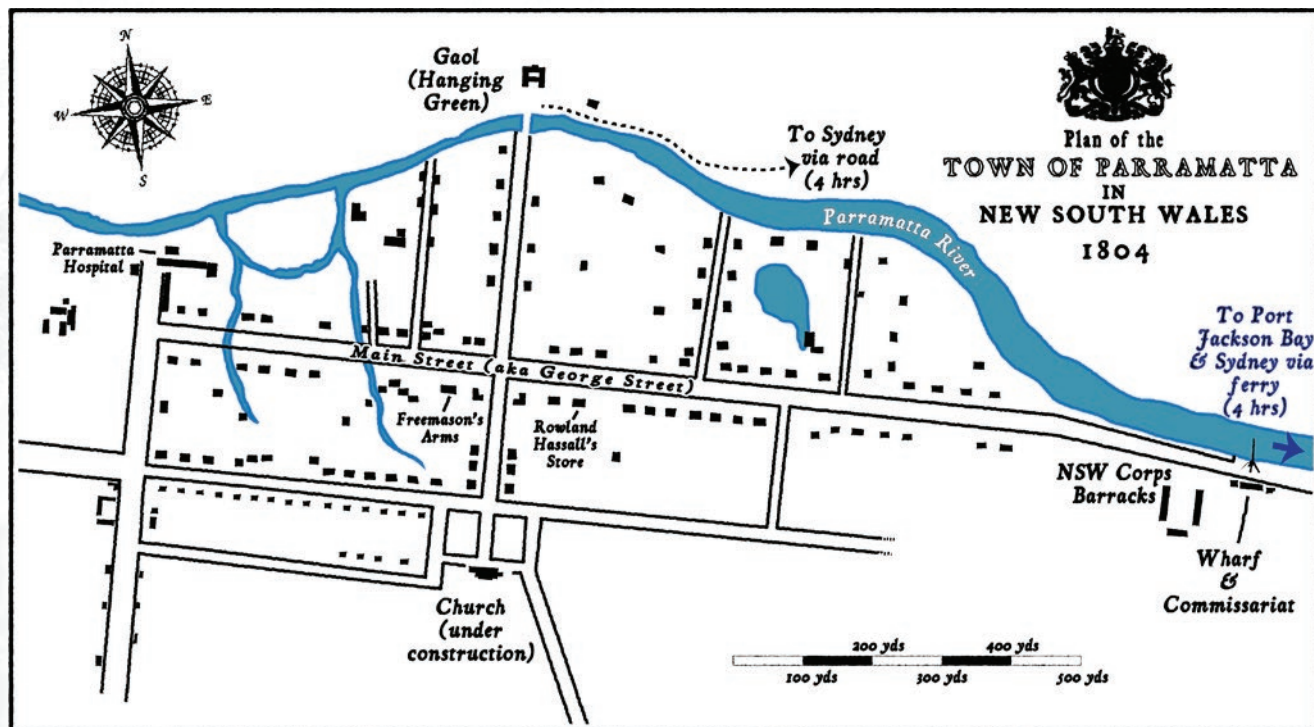
**Where is it:** On the banks of the Parramatta River which flows into the far western end Port Jackson Bay (the enormous inlet which includes Sydney Harbour and numerous other bays).

**What is it:** Parramatta was the first settlement established after Sydney. It is a regional centre for many free settler farms dotted around the nearby countryside, as well as being a base for a garrison of NSW Corps soldiers.

**What happens there:** Parramatta township is right on the river on a wide plain with an intersecting grand main street. It boasts around 180 buildings and a population of 1500. Nearly all are farmers. Some other buildings:

- It has a small hospital where Mr D'arcy Wentworth is in residence; he has an excellent reputation as a doctor.
- A large army barracks (see page 47).
- Its main church is still being built.
- There are several public houses, the most prosperous being the Freemason's Arms (see page 47).





- Ex-missionary Rowland Hassall has a goods store here where he sells, among other things, cloth from the South Seas.
- Parramatta Commissariat. The Government store is the equivalent of the Sydney commissariat.
- On the far side of the river stands the local convict gaol, sometimes called the Hanging Green (see below).

## I. PRISON AT HANGING GREEN

**Where is it:** On the other side of the Parramatta River from the main township

**What is it:** This is the local gaol for the detention of convicts, both male and female. There are a sizeable number of female convicts here. Many of the local farms employ female domestic servants drawn from the prisoner population, and those that do not reside with their free settler masters live here. In 1804 the prison superintendent embarks upon an experiment to create a Female Factory – a workshop on the upper floor of the prison where female convicts are put to work operating weaving machines. This involves installation of machines and the employment of a master weaver; unfortunately despite being a success the first Parramatta Female Factory is ultimately abandoned a few years later when the prison building is badly burned in a fire lit by convicts.

**What happens there:** Convicts sleep here, as well as being flogged and (in some cases) executed by the hangman. Between 1804 and late 1807 the Female Factory produces the colony's first locally-made fabric, some of which is exported back to England.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**George Mealmaker, Master Weaver:** A Scotsman from a humble background but well trained in the operation of a hand-loom from days spent watching his father's weaving works in Dundee. Mealmaker had a radical streak, being part of groups created to uphold the ideals of the French Revolution. These beliefs, and his outspoken attempts to publish them, brought him into conflict with the British Government, and he was ultimately tried for sedition and "administering unlawful oaths". He was transported to New South Wales in 1800 where his skills as a weaver attracted the interests of Governor King who was interested in establishing a convict-run weaving shop. Thus he came to be appointed to oversee the first Female Factory and obtain a conditional pardon. Unfortunately the arrival of Bligh (who had little interest in the weaving shop) and the tragic destruction of the Female Factory by fire in 1807, leave Mealmaker a crushed man. He dies in 1808, destitute and drunk.



**“Prince” Phillip Cunningham**, convict and rebel: A notable figure among the rabble of Irish convicts involved in the Castle Hill uprising in 1804. Phillip Cunningham is an intelligent and charismatic man whose incarceration was more to do with his revolutionary politics than anything else. A stonemason and publican by trade, Cunningham became involved in the United Irish network in the 1790s and helped to organise an insurgency in the Clonmel district in 1798. This led to further revolutionary activities. Eventually he was captured and given a death sentence but this was later commuted to transportation to New South Wales for life. Even while travelling to Australia by ship in 1800, Phillip Cunningham was involved in an abortive uprising attempt and this flair for rebellion continued after his arrival at the colony. Briefly sent to Norfolk Island as punishment for his part in the ship-board mutiny, Cunningham was promptly returned since skilled stonemasons are in short supply in the newly-settled areas. Assigned to the Castle Hill area, Cunningham has been appointed overseer of the local government stonemasons. His scheming and plotting come to a head in 1804 when he incites the mob which went on to become the Castle Hill rebellion. He dies as part of that mutiny.

**Molly Rowson**, convict and part-time Cook for the Macarthurs: Molly is a feisty red-haired Irish girl in her late twenties, convicted of prostitution in England and transported to the colonies for 14 years. Because of her prior experience in domestic service she has been assigned to be one of the cooks at Elizabeth Farm, John Macarthur’s estate (although she still returns to the Gaol every night). For fourteen months leading up to the Castle Hill convict rebellion in 1804 she is the sweetheart of Phillip Cunningham. After the failed uprising, she makes every effort to distance herself from this dubious association, but she still remembers several unusual tales told by Cunningham.

## 2. PARRAMATTA BARRACKS

**Where is it:** Off Main Street near the town wharf.

**What is it:** A single storey barracks made of bricks bound with mud for the Parramatta Headquarters of the NSW Corps.

**What happens there:** Drilling, soldiering.

Possible characters associated with the location:

- There are dozens of soldiers – including numerous officers – stationed here under the command of Captain Slough. The Keeper can improvise as needed, using the example below as a template:

**Sgt Dogwood, Mailman:** Overweight and in his mid-40s, Dogwood is seen by most as being quite useless as a soldier. However he serves one function well – delivering mail between Parramatta and Sydney. Riding a swayback nag of a horse, he makes the trip daily, leaving Parramatta Barracks at dawn (or whenever he wakes) and arriving in Sydney town by lunch time. He delivers the mail bag to the Sydney Barracks and swaps it for the bag bearing messages bound for Parramatta. While this is an extremely tedious and repetitive job, Dogwood has exactly the right personality for it.

## 3. FREEMASON’S ARMS, PUBLIC HOUSE

**Where is it:** Off Main Street in the central township.

**What is it:** The pub premises includes a well-stocked store which sells feed and grain to the Government.

**What happens there:** Drinking, selling, gossiping.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**James Larra**, emancipist publican: A Spanish-Jewish emancipist and merchant in his mid-50s, Larra is the owner of the Freemason’s Arms. Larra was granted a pardon and built the Freemason’s Arms in 1800. In 1797 under conditional pardon he acted as an agent for John Macarthur in the rum trade. Larra is also a Sergeant Major in the Loyal Parramatta Association of Volunteers, a local militia of whom he was a founder member. Larra has a reputation for honesty and square dealing.

**Francis Oakes**, Chief Constable of Parramatta: An unremarkable man in his 30s, Oakes is a shoemaker by trade who came to the colony as a missionary in 1798. He is appointed Chief Constable of Parramatta in 1805. His fellow missionaries have a less than stellar opinion of him, calling him “a bold, rough creature”.



#### 4. ELIZABETH FARM (MACARTHUR'S LANDHOLDING)

**Where is it:** Rose Hill, west of Parramatta, backing onto the river.

**What is it:** A large estate of farm and grazing land with a central single-storey brick building comprising house, servants' apartments and some offices. The house is surrounded by a vineyard and fruit trees.

**What happens there:** Household work, education of children, farming, and grazing. Towards the end of the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era John Macarthur also uses his Parramatta home as the scene of much of his plotting against Bligh.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Elizabeth Macarthur**, John Macarthur's wife: Elizabeth Macarthur arrived in the Colony in 1790, two years after its foundation and her marriage to John Macarthur. She has numerous small children (her eighth and last is born in 1808). In her 40s, she is a woman of education and sensitivity and runs the household with great attention to order and the proprieties of life. She is fond of Parramatta, but regrets the limited educational possibilities for her children. Her kindness to the convicts at Elizabeth Farm is well known. She enjoys social occasions and is charming and witty. In 1809 she takes over the running of this farm and Camden Park in the absence of her husband with considerable success at a crucial time in the family's wool-growing enterprise.

**Tedbury**, Aboriginal warrior and son of the famous former leader Pemulwuy: Tedbury is an ally of John Macarthur's and an occasional visitor to Elizabeth Farm. He is the son of Pemulwuy (see page 50), a famous aboriginal fighter who waged war against the settlers when they first appeared. Tedbury considers Macarthur a good friend, and when the dispute between Macarthur and Bligh is in full swing might be found carrying a bunch of spears with which he says he intends to spear the Governor. In fact, shortly before the Rum Rebellion, Tedbury does indeed travel to Sydney with the intention of doing harm to the Governor, although by the time he arrives Bligh is already imprisoned.

#### 5. VINEGAR HILL (AKA CASTLE HILL)

"Vinegar Hill" is the local nickname of Castle Hill, the site of a battle between the soldiers of the NSW Corps and Irish convicts on March 5, 1804. Castle Hill has been developed as farming land since 1801 under Governor King. For scenarios set early in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* time-period, this place is simply an unremarkable hill – part of the granted landholdings for an eccentric French Baron. The Keeper could conceivably set a scenario in and around the large-scale uprising in 1804 (which was significant enough that the entire colony was placed under martial law for a few days for fear of it spreading). Some brief internet research (perhaps beginning with the Wikipedia page for "Castle Hill convict revolution") will provide enough details to do so. Alternatively, scenarios set later in the era can readily make use of this momentous event as a piece of recent history, or the motivation for a character or Mythos entity's actions. See "The Ghosts of Vinegar Hill" plot seed on page 76 for an example of one such tale.

Note that the appellation "Vinegar Hill" only exists for this place after the convict uprising – in fact it is a reference back to a similar "Battle of Vinegar Hill" that took place in Ireland in 1798. Many of the Irish survivors of that battle were made political prisoners and transported to New South Wales as punishment for fighting for Irish independence. Some of those men also fought in the second (Australian) "Battle of Vinegar Hill."

**Where is it:** Castle Hill is about 19 miles northwest of Sydney and about 7 miles due north of Parramatta

**What is it:** After 1801 Castle Hill is a large hill with a few scattered buildings, including a modest convict barracks, a Government Farm mainly growing wheat. The first free settler in this region was Frenchman Baron Verincourt de Clambe, in 1802. Later in the era more private farms spring up in the region. It is the limits of the settled areas – further out than this is untamed bush land. In 1810 the Government Farm is abandoned and turned into a lunatic asylum.

**What happens there:** Farming and flogging. In 1804 it is the site of the final defeat of the Irish convict uprising.



Possible characters associated with the location:

**Baron Verincourt de Clambe**, eccentric free settler: Coming to the New South Wales colony in 1801, this minor French noble was more properly trying to escape from the unrest following the French Revolution. Being granted 200 acres by Governor King he set up a farm where he tried growing grapes, cotton and coffee plants. His large homestead building – called the Hermitage – was sneeringly referred to be locals as “The Castle” thereby giving Castle Hill its name.



**Jenny Milgrim**, convict servant: Jenny was a prostitute convicted of stealing from a wealthy client in England and sentenced to 14 years transportation. She has arrived only recently but been taken under the wing by Mrs Cushing who believes it is her Christian duty to help the wayward girl. Jenny is a good worker but tends to be a little skittish and is very superstitious. She is afraid of the two convicts Dunkle and Smogg, assigned to the farm as labourers. The Cushings permit Jenny to sleep at the farm, since it allows her to better serve the family.

## 6. A SAMPLE SMALL FARMSTEAD: THE CUSHING FARM

Scenarios in Parramatta may involve investigators looking into the activities of local free settlers – whether they be the perpetrators of Mythos horrors or their victim. While a few estates are truly opulent (like John Macarthur’s Elizabeth Farm described above), most are modest affairs. If the Keeper requires a smallish free settler farm for his or her game, this example – The Cushing Farm – should provide a suitable template from which to tailor an individual creation.

**Where is it:** One mile from the centre of Parramatta township.

**What is it:** A farm house made of wattle and daub, a barn and cultivated areas for crops. Some cattle and sheep are grazing by day or in the barn by night.

**What happens there:** Farming, homemaking, some gardening.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Julius Cushing**, farmer: Cushing is a devoted husband but sufficiently distracted by the demands of running a farm in a colonial society that he has little time for distractions. He is a member of the Parramatta Loyal Association (the local voluntary militia) and has occasionally joined groups trying to track down plundering groups of Aborigines.

**Mrs Caroline Cushing**, farmer’s wife: Mrs Cushing is an attractive if tired-looking woman with black hair worn in a loose bun and grey eyes. She is friendly to investigators unless they are obvious bullies and sympathetic to convicts, especially those she believes to have a kind nature.

**Dunkle and Smogg**, assigned convicts: Filthy and foul-smelling, these two men are assigned convicts sent to provide manual labour on the farm. Dunkle is tall, rangy and filthy, with sparse hair and an imbecile grin. Smogg is small, taciturn and filthy, with a false ingratiating style. The two men are only at the farm during daylight hours – at night they are required back at the Parramatta Gaol.

## 7. A SAMPLE LARGER FARMSTEAD: THE VERRIER FARM

If the Keeper requires a more substantial and prosperous local farmstead for his or her game, this example – The Verrier Farm – provides a good template.

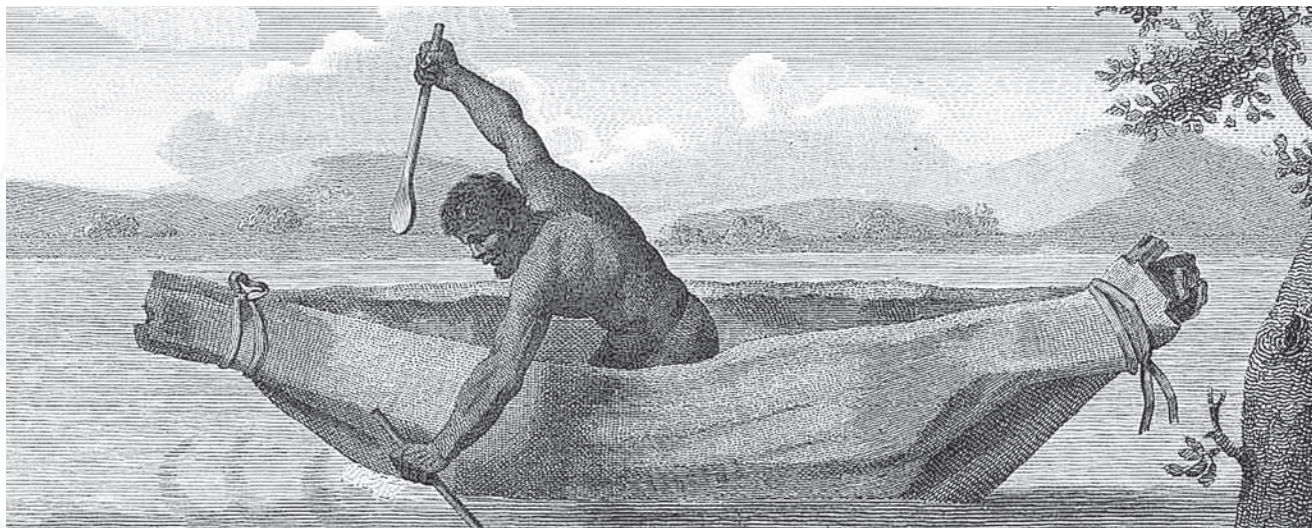
**Where is it:** Beyond Cushing’s farm, around an hour from Parramatta.

**What is it:** A wooden farmhouse and two wooden out-buildings. It sits on 300 acres granted to Verrier as a free settler.

**What happens there:** Farming, homemaking, some gardening. The main crop is maize and other grains. The out-buildings might be used to house other (perhaps illegal) forms of industry such as brewing or distillation of liquor. Alternatively they may just be store houses for bales of hay. Livestock numbers around 100 and includes pigs, goats, poultry and sheep with fewer cattle and horses.



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU



Possible characters associated with the location:

**William Verrier**, farmer: Hearty and friendly, the free settler Verrier is well liked in Parramatta and is a particularly popular figure at the Freemason's Arms where he may be found on many evenings. Born in Cornwall, Verrier came to New South Wales to seek his future, some five years ago. Because he is one of the few unmarried men in the district – and also the owner of a sizeable farm – there is ample speculation Verrier he may soon take a wife and start a family. Certainly there are many daughters of local families that would be suitable candidates, although Verrier is notoriously shy and reticent whenever the subject comes up. Instead of a family he relies on convict labourers to run the household – at least for now.

- *Others:* Verrier lives alone but family members in such farms usually number 2-3 adults and 3-5 children. Verrier's farm has 5 assigned convict labourers, which is the standard amount allotted each settler.

### ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENTS NEAR PARRAMATTA

The Bidjigal are among the 'woods tribes' as the first settlers called them, Aboriginal people who had little friendly contact with the white people. They live by fishing in the river, hunting in the bushland for native animals and finding native foods such as bull-ants eggs. They use spears barbed with small sharp stones. Possums, kangaroos and emus are spirit ancestors to the Bidjigal. Harming them indiscriminately will bring swift retribution.

**Pemulwuy** is the most famous of the Bidjigal, renowned for being one of the few Aboriginal leaders that successfully fought the Europeans and survived long enough to be a nuisance. For scenarios set early in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era, investigators are likely to hear frightened whispers in Parramatta recounting the daring armed raids Pemulwuy leads on settlers around the region. Most of the raids are actually for food, with the Aboriginals particularly stealing corn from farmsteads. A few are "payback" for atrocities that the settlers have inflicted upon local Aboriginals (such as kidnapping their children). Pemulwuy's campaign of plundering started in 1792, and despite considerable efforts by colonists to trap or kill him, the Aboriginal leader seemed to lead a charmed life – eluding soldiers and settlers alike. Eventually his invulnerability (at least in the minds of the local Aboriginal people) takes on a supernatural quality. People come to believe he simply cannot be killed. Eventually this is proven wrong when seaman and explorer Henry Hacking tracks down Pemulwuy in 1802 and shoots him to collect the price the government had placed upon him. As a statement, the Government of the day ordered that Pemulwuy's head should be cut off and returned to England pickled in spirits.

Later in the era, in the days leading up to the Rum Rebellion, Pemulwuy's son Tedbury splits his time between his ancestral lands and Macarthur's farm, waiting to spear the Governor (See Elizabeth Farm on page 48).



## The Coal River Settlement

**Important Note:** This location is only settled in 1801 – for scenarios set in earlier times, this region would be untouched wilderness.

Coal River (modern Newcastle) is a dire place of secondary punishment – a place where Sydney convicts (or those based elsewhere in the colony) could be sent if they broke the rules and needed punishment. It is located about 100 miles (160km) north of Sydney on the coast. After the Castle Hill Rebellion of 1804 this prison settlement is mostly made up of Irish convicts that had participated in that bloody uprising. The convicts at Coal River are sentenced to incredibly hard labour – digging coal in the harshest of conditions and in an environment where they were frequently brutalized by their guards.

The white population is around 40 male convicts, 15 female convicts and a handful of children with around 25 soldiers and overseers. The place is largely a work camp, with the only ships bringing supplies from Sydney and returning coal. There are no free settlers and no farming.

### GETTING TO COAL RIVER

A road to Coal River is not commenced until well after the period covered by this setting – currently the place is only reachable by ship. A supply ship with stores goes monthly, and a merchant ship might be inclined to take the investigators (especially if they ship some rum on the side). Alternately the investigators may be able to persuade a ship owner that they are on the Governor's business.

The voyage from Sydney Harbour to Coal River's heads takes 2 to 3 days depending on wind and weather.

Some ships that ply the Sydney to Coal River run are:

- The *Contest*, 45 tons, 6 crew. Owned by Kable & Co.
- The *Endeavor*, 31 tons, 6 crew. Owned by Kable & Co.
- The *Governor Hunter*, 33 tons, 6 crew. Owned by Isaac Nichols.
- The *Marcia*, 26 tons, 5 crew. Owned by Kable & Co.
- The *Venus*, 25 tons, 5 crew. Owned by John Macarthur.
- The *Resource*, 25 tons, 5 crew. Owned by Redmund & Cullen.
- The *Richmond*, 18 tons, 3 crew. Owned by Morley & Watkins.
- The *William & Mary*, 12 tons, 3 crew. Owned by William Miller.

Entering the harbour at Coal River is rather dangerous in this era due to a number of navigational hazards. The approach is made even more hair-raising during poor weather. Keepers should determine if the weather is mild, in which case the entrance to the Coal River harbour is worrisome for the untrained investigators but not actually dangerous. If they are making the trip during a storm the Keeper might ask one player to make a Luck roll on behalf of the captain: failure means the ship founders and they must wait to be rescued in a long boat and dragged onto the beach.

### WHARVES AND BEACH

**Where is it:** This is where ships from Sydney arrive; the coal mine is also directly adjacent to the beach and wharves.

**What is it:** A number of key locations are clustered close together:

- **Coal Island** – a tall rock outcropping whose height and situation is key to the navigational hazards for ships. (Later it is known as Nobby's island, later still Nobby's Point when it is joined to the mainland).
- **Signal Head** – a coal-burning beacon overlooking the entrance to the river has been set up on Coal Island.
- **The Coal Mine** – The coal seam has been exposed at the sea shore.
- **Stone Wharf** – This is the main wharf of 180 foot length. A guard is placed here to stop sailors from visiting ships fraternizing with convicts. (This hasn't helped, as venereal disease is rampant at Coal River settlement).

**What happens there:** The wharves are busy at times that ships are loading or offloading. The coal mine is always an active place: convicts dig the coal from the cliffs near the harbour, carry it to a dump near the wharves, and load it by wheelbarrow onto waiting ships. Coal mining is sufficiently hard and dangerous work to act as an effective punishment for convicts who misbehave as well as rending up a valuable resource for the colony.



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Owen McDermot:** An English convict who ran afoul of one of the upper echelons of the NSW Corps in Sydney on account of his refusal to allow the officer to share his common-law convict wife, Meg. To make matters worse the insubordination was witnessed by several junior men of the NSW Corps, making retaliation from the slighted officer both swift and severe. In the end the officer was able to trump up such a list of charges that the magistrate found that a sentence in Coal River settlement was “by far the most lenient resolution of the matter.” To make matters worse, McDermot has now received word from other convict arrivals that his soldier foe has recently taken Meg to be his own wife. Owen is incandescent with rage and has vowed to “stick the bastard” the first chance he gets.

### COAL RIVER CONVICT CAMP

**Where is it:** The camp is situated at the mouth of the Coal River (later renamed Hunter River).

**What is it:** The convict camp at Coal River includes a convict lumber yard. The camp itself is enclosed in a log wall. Patrols are frequent and punishments cruel, with many floggings ordered by the Commandant. As a rule of thumb Keepers should use the flogging rules on page 23 and double any punishments.

**What happens there:** This is where convicts sleep at night and eat their meals. It is from here that they are sent out daily on work details. Conditions here are terrible, even compared to convict life in Sydney. The convicts here are frequently at starvation level because of lack of food and rarely have adequate clothes and footwear. Venereal disease amongst their number is very common.

There are only two types of work detail:

- *Mining Coal:* groups of convicts are sent down to the beach with an overseer and forced to hand-cut coal-bearing rocks from the cliff faces. This is gruelling work and many perish either from sheer exhaustion or from the frequent floggings they receive.
- *Timber Cutting:* other convicts are sent in groups of about 10 with an overseer to venture out into the virgin forests in the hinterland around the settlement. The overseer picks a

suitable stand of trees to fell for timber and the convicts must chop it down, cut it up into pieces small enough to carry, and haul the lumber back to camp in the evening.

Because conditions are so dire at Coal River, it is not uncommon for convicts to abscond – literally going bush. However convicts escaping in this way very rarely fare well. Often they are found by groups of local Aboriginal people, who either spear them or take them back to the Coal River camp for a reward. Others simply perish in the wilderness, usually from starvation. It is very uncommon for an escaped convict to survive long enough to make the trek all the way back to the settled regions of the colony.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Edward Nail,** Irish convict and rebel: Nail was one of the convicts who took part in the Castle Hill convict uprising of 1804. At the time he was a close personal friend of Phillip Cunningham, the charismatic man who fomented that uprising (although now he tries to do everything to play down that association). Nail was a confidante of Cunningham and knows things about the man’s longer-term plans that nobody living now knows.

### COAL RIVER BARRACKS

**Where is it:** Adjacent to the convict camp

**What is it:** The barracks is a strong stone and mud building with a stone guardhouse. Normal staff are a Commandant, 1 Officer, 1 marine, 2 NCOs, 12 privates, 1 storekeeper and a surgeon. The NCOs sleep in the guard house.

**What happens there:** soldiering and plotting new ways to mistreat convicts.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Lt Charles Throsby,** commandant of the Coal River settlement: Throsby was previously naval surgeon on the *Coromandel* and transferred to Coal River as assistant surgeon. He became Commandant after his predecessor Ensign Draffen went insane. Throsby is irritable and suffers from a speech impediment but is basically a humane man who also had a strong record of conciliatory conduct towards the Aboriginal peoples



## ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENTS NEAR COAL RIVER

**Where is it:** there are Aboriginal settlements scattered in the woodlands all around Coal River. The “Coal River Tribe” is in fact two distinct Aboriginal peoples, the Awabakal and the Worimi. Awabaki land is to the south of Coal River settlement while Worimi is in the north. Many other peoples live in surrounding areas, but these are the ones whites are most likely to encounter.

**What is it:** These Aboriginal peoples live in an area of abundance of food and water, though there are rules against greed and over-exploitation. Snakes and lizards are considered food only allowed by elders; for others to eat them is taboo. Young women dive for sea food off the seashore. The rivers are fished and the bushland hunted. Complex trade routes by foot and canoe intersect the various language groups of the area.

**What happens there:** Generally, the Aboriginal peoples around Coal River are content to simply go about their normal lives, surviving as their people have for thousands of years. They are unsympathetic to and distrustful of the whites. Aboriginal women are sometimes kidnapped or assaulted by the white men of Coal River. Convicts escaping to the bush are usually killed or brought back. The only successful ones are those escapees patient enough to learn the local taboos and Aboriginal culture and behave with restraint – in many cases, such individuals are permitted by the indigenous people to assimilate into their society.

## Other Settled Places

The regions surrounding Sydney township and Parramatta are dotted with farmsteads, fields and the occasional military outpost. A brief outline of these outlying areas is provided below. Keepers should remember the limits of settlement are not broad, with only a few pockets of European settlement.

### EAST OF SYDNEY

**Woolloomooloo** – this is Cadigal hunting ground and a sacred space. It is a horseshoe shaped valley east of Sydney township containing rolling hills and the remains of bushland, much of which has been cleared. It ends in a high escarpment to the east. The valley is drained by the Yurong Creek.

**South Head** – South Head is the southern headland of Port Jackson Bay. A lookout has stood on the coast since the arrival of white settlers but much of its hinterland is undeveloped. The nearby cove and freshwater pond have made it an ideal place for the indigenous Cadigal people who live there. The early colonists erected a lookout hut and a signal flagpole on the very head itself as well as a small pyramid-shaped obelisk for use as a navigational aid for ships at sea. Apart from these isolated structures the land is entirely undeveloped.

### SOUTH OF SYDNEY

**Botany Bay** is a large shallow bay south of the Sydney settlement that was originally intended (by Cook) to be the primary site of settlement in New South Wales. It is very swampy land and has sandy soil, with only one notable European resident, Edmund Redmond. The Kameygal people have lived in the area for around 9,000 years. They have a village, Barangaroo here, and their chief is Bennelong (see page 45). Prior to being exposed to European diseases, their number was around 1,000. Fishing, shell lime and salt are the main products.

**Point Solander** is the name given to the headland on the southern side of Botany Bay. It was here that James Cook first set foot on Australian soil in 1770; the location is named after Daniel Solander a scientist on Cook’s expedition. The area is entirely unsettled by Europeans at this time.

**Cooks River** is a river that flows through southwest Sydney and into the bay. North of Cooks River is Cadigal land.

**Cape Banks** is a headland of the Botany Bay area, though accessible only after a climb.

**Georges River** runs from swamp lands in the south and drains into the Bay. It is 80 kilometres of broad waterways and is the main tributary of Botany Bay. Sharks are known to inhabit Georges River. The area between this and Cooks River is Bidjigal country, the clan of Pemulwuy and Tedbury.

### NORTH OF THE HARBOUR

**Lane Cove** is a small settlement around 4 miles (7 km) northwest of Sydney. Its original inhabitants are Cammeraiagal people who call it Turrumburra. It sits on the northern banks of the Lane Cove river, a very narrow waterway suggesting a ‘lane’. The



land surrounding the river is sandstone with steep rocky ridges and small swamps. There is a convict stockade here and around 30 farms. The Cammerigal people regularly attack white settlers, and the convict stockade is supposed to also aid in defence.

**Hunters Hill** is a high peninsula bordered by water on two sides and thick with trees. It is unsettled by Europeans. The aboriginal people are the Wallumattagal who live in shelters made from the local sandstone.

**Field of Mars** – undeveloped common land put aside for community use by Governor King in 1804. Nobody really knows how it got such an unusual name.

## BROKEN BAY AND THE HAWKESBURY MOUTH

**Broken Bay** is a large inlet into the mouth of the Hawkesbury River waterways. The Aboriginal people of this area are the Kuringgai. Like many Sydney Aboriginal people, their numbers have been drastically reduced by the smallpox epidemic of 1789.

## WEST OF PARRAMATTA

There is an abundance of fertile land around the Parramatta region, all the way to the foothills of the imposing – and so-far impenetrable – Blue Mountains some 15 miles (25 km) to the west.

**Toongabbie** – a small settlement on the banks of the Toongabbie Creek. The superintendent, military stockade, and stores are on the north side of the creek. Toongabbie is the site of the original Government Farm which has now been replaced by the farm at Castle Hill. The Toongabbie Creek lies in a valley that has tall timbers and humid, rain-forest like pockets. The mouth of the Creek is Burramattagal land while west and north is Bidjigal country (see also Botany Bay).

**Prospect Hill** is a district to the northwest of Parramatta where early government grants of land for farming were made, initially just to emancipated convicts but later also to military officers. Even by this time the early grazing practices of the European farmers has led to the entire hill being cleared of trees.

## SETTLEMENTS ON THE HAWKESBURY RIVER

The **Hawkesbury River** is a major waterway north of Sydney, comprising around 12 miles (20 km) of

waterway. The breadth of the river is very wide and the bushland dense. The area has rich soil; its original inhabitants were the Dharug people who have been in conflict with white settlers since 1794.

**Richmond Hill** was explored by Governor Phillip and the area settled in 1794 under order of Grose. The settlement was named Green Hills. The population of the Hawkesbury area in 1805 was 1,953 (fifty percent of Sydney's then population). Governor Bligh has a model farm here called 'Blighton'.

## Further Afield

New South Wales is by far the largest British convict colony in this part of the world during the time period covered by *Convicts & Cthulhu*. It is, however, not the only one. There are smaller satellite settlements in Van Diemen's Land and on Norfolk Island. These are described briefly below.

## Van Diemen's Land

The island of Van Diemen's Land (modern Tasmania) was settled under order of Governor King in 1804 in Hobart Town (after a false start in Risdon the year before). Prior to 1803 there is no European settlement at all on the island. The convict colony at Hobart Town, on the river Derwent, was created as a place for excess convicts sent to New South Wales. Its location at the southern tip of the east coast of Australia also makes it ideal also as a military outpost to guard against potential French incursions.

Van Diemen's Land is a place synonymous with brutal punishment and exile at the far end of the earth. Many of its convicts find ways to escape their brutal incarceration, taking to the bush where they become bushrangers (highwaymen) and prey on free settlers and the aboriginal people. In 1806 the colony was on the brink of starvation but under Lt Governor Arthur the economy improved with wheat and wool production booming. More land was cleared for settlement and cultivation but at the cost of Aboriginal kangaroo-hunting ground which was fiercely fought over.

In 1806 the European population of Van Diemen's Land was only 747 with most living off Government stores. The aboriginal population of Van Diemen's Land between 1804 and 1830 went through a shocking decline from around 70,000 to just a



handful (in part because of the so-called “Black War” during which white colonists infamously slaughtered many indigenous groups).

It takes around 3 weeks to sail from Sydney to Hobart Town. In addition to the principal convict settlement at Hobart Town there is a smaller settlement at Port Dalrymple on the northern coast of Van Diemen’s Land.

## Norfolk Island

Norfolk Island is a small volcanic island in the Pacific around 1,000 miles (1,600 km) north-east of Sydney. Like Van Diemen’s Land, Norfolk Island was colonised partly to keep it out of French possession. The island was settled by Lt King (later to become Governor of New South Wales) not long after Sydney was first established. It was founded as a place of secondary punishment, where convicts could be sent to receive even more brutal treatment than they received in Sydney.

The trees on Norfolk Island were originally intended to provide masts for ships in the war against Napoleon, but proved unsuitable for anything but building huts.

In 1806 the population of Norfolk Island is just 694. It takes around 20 days to sail from Sydney to Norfolk Island.

## OTHER PLACES EXPLORED

During this period most of the Australian continent remains a blank on the map; while Europeans have charted the general coastline, almost no exploration has taken place. The area around Port Phillip (modern-day Melbourne) was briefly considered in 1803 when sites for additional penal settlements were sought but the location was found to have insufficient fresh water to be worth settlement (instead, the ships continued onwards to settle Van Diemen’s Land, minus a handful of convicts who used the opportunity to abscond into the bush never to be heard from again).

There has also been a small amount of exploration of the coast north of Sydney, with some ships having travelled as far as Moreton Bay (near modern-day Brisbane). Ships from New South Wales have also made several voyages to investigate the islands of New Zealand, which are known to be home to a very different kind of native population to the Australian Aboriginals. There has not yet been any attempt at settlement.

Many of the colony’s explorations grind to a halt in 1803 when the French unexpectedly imprison Matthew Flinders, the foremost sea explorer of the colony, while he is en-route to England. During a stop-over on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean he is captured and detained as a prisoner of war (the Napoleonic wars having recently been declared). He will not be released until 1810.

First Settlement on Van Diemen’s Land





# CONVICTS & CTHULHU



Map of Norfolk Island, 1788