Convict to settler: an analysis of the transition of the female convicts of the second fleet vessel Neptune from the status of convict to settler and the role they played in the early colonisation of Australia during the period 1790-1792

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CONVICT TO SETTLER

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Declaration of Authorship

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's rules, requirements, procedures and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University (as they may be from time to time).

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Date     22.04.2019
Abstract

An analysis of the lives of sixty-one women from the convict class reveals the pivotal role women played as agents of colonisation. As homemakers, landholders, farmers, partners and neighbours, they contributed significantly to the spread of white settlement and the corresponding dispossession of First Peoples. The fact that these women arrived in June 1790 and were, therefore, amongst the earliest settlers of Sydney, Norfolk Island and Parramatta, placed them in a social context unique to the period 1788 to 1792. This not only expedited their transition from the status of convict to that of settler, but also greatly enhanced their impact as agents of settler colonisation.
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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my father
Lionel Phelps (1930 – 2018)

His passion for life-long learning, his belief that we, his daughters, can do whatever we desire to do, and his gentle example inspired and strengthened me.
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Introduction

On June 28th 1790, the vessel Neptune anchored in Sydney Cove. Sixty-one women of the convict class — those women sentenced to transportation for having committed a crime or the partners of convicted transportees — survived the hell-ship’s five-month journey to become early settlers of three settlements: Sydney, Norfolk Island and Rose Hill (Parramatta). This thesis examines aspects of the lives of those women who were the ‘human clay’ of the ‘rather strange branch of imperial expansion’ known as settler colonisation.¹ Throughout this thesis, these women will collectively be referred to as Neptunians. The surnames used throughout the thesis are those the women used at the time of their conviction and transportation.

How did the Neptunians contribute to the process of the colonisation of Australia during the earliest years of white settlement? As home-makers, partners, wives and mothers, this thesis argues that the Neptunians were pivotal to the consolidation and increase of settlement. The Neptunians, through their role as landholders, both in their own right and with their partners, contributed significantly to the spread of white settlement and the corresponding dispossession of First Peoples. The earliest years of convictism, 1788-1792, were characterised by a unique social context that ensured both a rapid transition from the status of convict to settler and a correspondingly significant contribution to the settler colonisation process.

Background to the Neptunian’s Arrival

The Second Fleet comprised five vessels carrying supplies, administrative staff and convicts to Sydney Cove.² Approximately 759 convicts landed from a total of 1026

² Those vessels were the Guardian (storeship and convict transport. Wrecked off southern Africa), Justinian (storeship), Surprize (convict transport), Neptune (convict transport) and Scarborough (convict transport). The Lady Juliana, whilst listed in many references as part of the Second Fleet, actually sailed separately as a discreet female transport vessel.
embarked. The *Neptune* carried female as well as male convicts (78 females boarded, 11 died; 433 males boarded, 147 died). Women, therefore, comprised only 9.7% of the convicts who landed. The Second Fleet also carried 25 children (offspring of thirteen convicts and one superintendent); ten soldiers’ wives; five or six convicts’ wives (travelled aboard the *Neptune*); five superintendents; 182 crewmen and 104 officers and men of the New South Wales Corps.

Transportation of convicts was necessitated by the challenging social issues experienced in Britain as a result of the end of the War of Spanish Succession, the Industrial Revolution, the rapid increase in population and the shift of people, particularly the young, from rural to urban (increasingly industrial) areas. This social and economic dislocation resulted in low wages, increased unemployment, overcrowding, inadequate and poor-quality housing and a corresponding increase in crime. Meredith and Oxley highlight the significance of the Transportation Act of 1718, not only in ‘weaning Britain from its gruesome reliance on the death penalty’ but, in the process, ‘creating convict Australia.’ Transportation — the judicial alternative to death, freedom and corporal punishment — transformed both the laws and sentencing, becoming a direct punishment in its own right whilst acting as the ‘principal instrument by which a whole new British nation abroad was crafted.’ With gaols full and hanging restricted to

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4 *The Convict Ships: 1787-1868*, 127. Note that 421 male convicts embarked at Portsmouth, a further 12 at the Cape.

5 Women comprised 25% of the convict population landed in 1788 from the First Fleet.


8 Meredith and Oxley, "The Convict Economy," 97-98.

9 Ibid, 98. England had over 200 crimes punishable by death, whereas France had only six.

Kercher claims that, in trying to shore up the archaic legal model, new laws were created which resulted in fatal clashes between conflicting versions of legal right. For example, plundering wrecked vessels, smuggling and poaching were customary practices that, post 1723
capital offences during the 1700s, lesser crimes were punished through transportation for seven years, fourteen years or life.\textsuperscript{11}

By the second half of the eighteenth-century transportations to America totalled some 5,000 a year.\textsuperscript{12} With the advent of the American War of Independence, transportation ceased (1783), gaols were overflowing, and new solutions were needed. Whether this was the primary motive for the white settlement of Australia or not, it explains why transportation to Australia occurred when it did.\textsuperscript{13} It is fair to conclude that transportation achieved two main outcomes. The first was relieving Britain of surplus numbers of convicts and, in so doing, providing a possible deterrent to others in the hope of reducing future crime. The second was, in the words of Michael Pearson, using convict labour ‘to develop colonies for the economic benefit of the home nation or as strategic tools in global politics.’\textsuperscript{14} The Neptunians who stepped ashore on June 28\textsuperscript{th} 1790, were directly impacted by both — banished to the colony to reduce the strain on British gaols, and transported to serve as agents of British settler colonisation. Numbers of transportees were, until the end of the French War, patchy, with Australia not attaining a population over 10,000 until 1818, twenty years after settlement.\textsuperscript{15}

The broader context of transportation lies in its legacy. Australia was a British settlement, with a British monarch and an economy founded on a convict system and

\begin{itemize}
\item[(the Black Act), became capital offences. Bruce Kercher, \textit{An Unruly Child: A History of Law in Australia} (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin 1995), xiii - xiv.]
\item[Ibid. Discussing AGL Shaw.]
\item[Debate over the motivation for the British settlement of Australia has raged since AGL Shaw proposed it was driven by the need to rid Britain of its convicts. Alan Frost and Geoffrey Blainey, amongst others, challenged this theory, arguing that trade, naval supplies, and a Pacific base, were all factors in colonisation. Alan Atkinson, Mollie Gillen and David Mackay agreed that other motives for transportation to NSW were hard to justify.

Meredith and Oxley wrote: ‘Whatever the merits of naval or other motives in explaining Britain's choice of Botany Bay, there can be no doubt that the settlement in New South Wales was founded for penal purposes.’Meredith and Oxley, "The Convict Economy," 99.


Meredith and Oxley, "The Convict Economy," 99 Meredith and Oxley rightly describe these early years of convict transportation as 'less a Big Bang than a dribbling start.'

\end{itemize}
convict labour.\textsuperscript{16} Although its legal system was inherently English, convict society ensured that it adapted to suit Australian colonial conditions.\textsuperscript{17} By its very nature, the colony was integrated into the global economy from the time of settlement and, having been founded in pre-industrial traditions, its economy was based on primary production rather than industry.\textsuperscript{18}

The arrival of both the \textit{Lady Juliana} and of the Second Fleet in June 1790, dramatically altered the composition of the colony, increasing the white population from 859 in 1788 to 2056 in 1790. By 1795 the population still only totalled 3,466, not surpassing 4,000 until 1796.\textsuperscript{19} In total, approximately 139,000 male convicts and 26,000 female convicts were transported between 1788 and 1868, arriving aboard 681 vessels making 1024 journeys.\textsuperscript{20}

The study is largely confined to the time-frame 1788 to 1792, the first four years of white settlement, but more specifically 1790 to 1792, given that the vessel \textit{Neptune} arrived in June 1790.

The colony was under the governorship of Arthur Phillip, a man of vision who saw the penal colony as a future nation. Whilst this thesis is not a study of Arthur Phillip, it is a study within the context of Phillip’s governorship and, as such, his values impacted considerably on both the convicts and the infant colony itself. Andrew Tink describes Phillip’s Governorship as one of the most important in British history and his achievements as ‘impressive.’\textsuperscript{21} When Phillip left the colony at the end of 1792, the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{16} Meredith and Oxley, "The Convict Economy," 118.
\bibitem{17} Kercher, \textit{An Unruly Child: A History of Law in Australia}, xx - xxi.
\bibitem{18} Meredith and Oxley, "The Convict Economy," 119.
\bibitem{19} Statistics, "Australian Historical Population Statistics".
\bibitem{20} Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, "To Fill Dishonoured Graves": Death and Convict Transportation to Colonial Australia" (paper presented at the Papers and Proceedings: Tasmanian Historical Research Association, 2011), 17.
\bibitem{21} Meredith and Oxley, "The Convict Economy," 102.
\end{thebibliography}
population stood at 4,211 (Sydney, Norfolk Island and Parramatta). 1703 acres had been planted or cleared and 470 acres planted on land grants totalling 3470 acres.\(^{22}\)

Phillip advocated for peaceful relations with First Peoples. His instructions were unequivocal: he was ‘by every possible means to open an Intercourse with the [Savages deleted in original text] Natives and to conciliate their affections’ and to encourage everyone ‘to live in amity and kindness with them.’\(^{23}\) Tink believed that Phillip did attempt to live peacefully among First Peoples, a conclusion validated by Warren Mundine who claims that Phillip was a man who ‘genuinely wanted to reach out to the Aboriginal people, but he was also a man trapped of his times.’\(^{24}\) There are indications that Phillip attempted to treat convicts, including the Neptunians, as settlers rather than slaves and as landowners rather than convicts.\(^{25}\) So, too, did Phillip encourage them to be tolerant in their dealings with First Peoples. This thesis acknowledges that the Neptunians were impacted by their historical context. It also explores how this era contributed to their rapid transition to the status of settler and to their role as agents of the settler colonisation process within the nascent colony.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 45.
\(^{24}\) Tink, "Arthur Phillip (26 January 1788 - 10 December 1792)," 40.

Motivation for the thesis

In her paper on archival research methodologies, Lynnee Lewis Gaillet states that historians write truer narratives if they are open about their personal relationship with the material. 26 Wendy Sharer extends this concept by stating that our research is richer when we ‘seek out and celebrate the role that our emotions play in our selection of research projects.’ 27 This thesis is my third encounter with the Neptune and its women. In 1981, I played a role in a theatre production entitled Catherine, a play based on the voyage of the Neptune. The Catherine in the title was Neptunian Catherine Crowley, convict and concubine to D’Arcy Wentworth. Two years later I began research on a two-volume family history on my fourth great-grandparents, one of whom was Neptunian Kezia Brown. 28 These encounters resulted in an emotional investment in the women of the Neptune as well as a desire to explore the women’s lives more fully.

As a descendant of Kezia Brown, I have long been captivated by the stories of convict women, thirsty for knowledge about their place in, and contribution to, early colonial society. In 1990 I wrote of Kezia that ‘we know enough for her to be an inspiration, and little enough that she remains a mystery.’ 29 So it is for all the Neptunians. In my 1990 biography, I wrote of Kezia:

She must have been a very healthy and strong woman, for we have no evidence to suggest that she lost any of her offspring after birth – no mean feat in those early times … I have the utmost respect for all that this woman represents and what she created. She did, after all, leave behind her the inheritance of ten fine children... She also ran ‘Hobby Farm’ for fourteen years after her husband’s death … During this period, we have every indication that it was run successfully, and the stable control of the property in those early years ensured that it could continue in the hands of the family for over a century afterwards. 30

30 Ibid., XIII.

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This thesis emerged from a fascination with Kezia, my love of both genealogy and colonial history, and my contention that convicts in early Australian society (1788 – 1792) transitioned to the role of settlers in a manner very different from those who followed. This thesis rests firmly on a foundation of Family History Methodology, and as such combines the historiography with the deeply personal stories of the *Neptunians*. Their lives raised the issues addressed within this thesis, illuminating the distinct nature of the early years of colonial society and the significant role played by convict women as agents of colonisation.

There is little doubt that the stories of convict women, and their contribution to the early years of white settlement, retain significance today. In November 2018, the portrait of *Neptunian* Sarah Smith featured amongst the top ten paintings chosen by librarians from the State Library of New South Wales as being representative of ‘the diversity of the Australian experience.’31 Something about this painting of the eighty-five-year-old Sarah captured the attention of the librarians sufficiently for them to regard it above the 161,000 other artworks in the State Library collection, believing it to ‘capture NSW life’ and, in so doing, be ‘worthy of our attention.’

![The 1856 portrait of *Neptunian* Sarah Smith (Cobcroft).](image)

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Sarah’s story is a fascinating one. Following her convict partner, John Cobcroft, to the colony, she worked as a midwife, delivering the babies of convict women free of charge.\textsuperscript{33} She proved herself to be a very capable farm manager, ensuring that the family farms prospered under her direction. The mother of ten children, this ‘indomitable matriarch’ also cared for a son with a significant disability, itself a challenge for a hard-working woman in the young colony.\textsuperscript{34}

The lives of women like Sarah, illuminated through Family History Methodology, help to reveal the role the Neptunians played in colonisation through the embedding of white culture and values. Settler colonisation cannot be successful without the spread of settlement through land ownership and the creation of homes and families. The role of women was very much at the centre of this process.

\textbf{Significance}

This study identifies the women of the Neptune as pioneering settlers during the formative years of convictism and emphasises that convictism was not a homogenous entity. The challenges experienced by the convicts who arrived within the first four years of colonisation (1788 – 1792), were very different from those who came later. This is a distinction rarely made in the body of research on convict women. Grace Karskens, for example, identifies two transformations during the early years of settlement — the transformation ‘from the Aboriginal landscape to an organic preindustrial town’ and the remodelling of the preindustrial town to a ‘more aesthetic … polite and self-conscious city’ largely under Macquarie’s direction.\textsuperscript{35} But there is no identification of the transformation of convictism itself, no analysis of the early years as distinct. Likewise, Alan Atkinson acknowledges that ‘convicts are at the heart of how Australians know themselves’, yet he, like other historians, uses the term convict generically, spanning the years 1788 to 1850, without analysing how convictism

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{33} Sarah Cobcroft, "Memorial Written by Sarah Cobcroft to (Governor) Sir Thomas Brisbane," New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856 (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 1825).
\textsuperscript{34} Flynn, The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790, 542.
\textsuperscript{35} Karskens, The Colony. A History of Early Sydney, 2.
\end{flushleft}
evolved. Histories, such as Joy Damousi’s ‘Depravity and Disorder’ and Patricia Grimshaw et al’s *Creating a Nation* also address convictism across time as one entity.

This study also serves to minimise generalisations through case study. Rather than talking of convict women in general it looks at sixty-one specific stories and, where possible, uses those stories to inform conclusions and give voice to those who were previously unheard. As a result, this thesis achieves what Norma Townsend describes as ‘a painstaking piecing together of the minute detail of lives which would otherwise have been lost in the great sea of humanity.’

Settler colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods and the establishment of new political orders through permanent occupation and exogenous domination. Traditionally, settler colonialism is almost always explored as a male construct. If colonisation relies, as it does, on the establishment of homes, farms, agriculture and family, then women, and their role in the process, cannot be ignored. It is those homes, those farms and those families that comprise the structures vital to the settler colonialization project, the means for the ‘erection of a new colonial society on the expropriated land base.’ The impact of settler colonialism is predominantly analysed in relation to the dispossession of First Peoples, and women

38 Patricia Grimshaw et al., *Creating a Nation* (Ringwood: McPhee Gribble, 1994).
40 Veracini, for example, acknowledges it as 'a gendered concept', the pioneer always a male building a new life for his wife and children, without recognising the wife as a fellow-pioneer.
41 Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 388. Patrick Wolfe provides shades to the simplistic definition of settler colonisation. He examines the positive and negative aspects of settler colonisation. The negative is the dissolution of native societies; the positive, claims Wolfe, is 'the erection of a new colonial society on the expropriated land base.' Settler colonisers come to stay, so invasion is a structure rather than a mere event.
played a role, through the establishment of homes and the owning and farming of land, in that dispossession.42

**Literature Review**

This thesis draws, as a foundation, on two existing publications that feature the women of the Neptune. Ann Needham’s *The Women of the 1790 Neptune* (1988) was comprehensive in analysing the women’s English background, including trial and confinement, whilst also providing biographical details on each woman aboard the Neptune, free and convict.43 Michael Flynn’s definitive historical analysis of *The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790* (1993) and his biographies on each of those aboard, provided background and brief outlines of the convict’s crimes and their colonial lives.44 Flynn’s publication is succinct, comprehensive and accessible. Needham’s work is a little clumsy in dealing separately with the women pre and post transportation, requiring constant reference to the index, a disadvantage in a book of biographies. Needham’s research of the women’s confinement in England is extensive, and I found this to be the strength of her book. My thesis differs from both books in utilising extensive genealogical research into each of the women within their family, social and historical context to analyse the women as agents of colonisation and as early settlers. As such my work employs family history and archival methodologies as a tool of analysis and as a means of adding dimension to the historiography. It takes the Neptunians’ colonial lives beyond biography, integrating them into early colonial history and establishing their place within it.

This thesis analyses the Neptunians as agents of settler colonisation. Patrick Wolfe firmly establishes the links between settler colonialism and the contest for land and life, along with associated dispossession and genocide.45 His work is valuable in fostering an appreciation of settler colonisation destroying to replace and, given that the Neptunians were very much part of the ‘replacement’ society, facilitates discourse on that process.46

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42 This thesis agrees that settler colonies ‘were (are) premised on the elimination of native societies.’ *Settler Colonialism* (A&C Black, 1999), 3.
44 Flynn, *The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790*.
45 Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 387.
46 Ibid., 388.
Wolfe suggests that colonialism is both positive and negative. ‘Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base.’ As such, colonialism is a structure, not an event and colonisers come to stay. Wolfe analyses the destructive elements of colonialism and its impact on native title, native citizenship and biocultural assimilation, before highlighting the irony of Australian colonisation’s initial focus on the ‘erasure of indigeneity’ only to ‘then recuperate indigeneity in order to express its difference.’

Elizabeth Furniss’ article “Challenging the myth of indigenous peoples’ ‘last stand’ in Canada and Australia”, looked at the frontier symbolism that celebrates colonialism, highlighting ‘the heroic acts of the first pioneers and explorers in discovering and settling the region.’ This is relevant, not only to this thesis and its discussion linking settler colonialism to the binary narrative of hostile native versus European settler, but also to Family History Methodology, which often features the achievements of pioneer ancestors.

Lorenzo Veracini’s writings provided me with a deeper understanding of settler colonialism and its value as a framework of analysis. The concept of settlers re-creating a familiar society, whilst serving the purposes of settler colonialism struck a chord with me early in my research, highlighting the unwitting, yet inevitable, agency of convicts, such as the Neptunians, in a process far larger than their daily survival. The link between ‘settler’ and invasion, dispossession and genocide is firmly established in Veracini’s writings, relevant in analysis of the Neptunians as agents of both settler colonisation and dispossession. Veracini also emphasises settler colonialism’s drive to

47 Ibid.  
48 Ibid., 389.  
50 Ibid.  
51 Veracini, "Settler Colonialism: Career of a Concept.”  
‘extinguish indigenous alterities’, erasing Indigenous culture and settlement as the new culture is imposed. As the Neptunians and their families established homes, farms and families on land they occupied or were granted, they contributed to colonialism’s drive — the elimination of the Indigenous state of being that conflicted with the colonial ideal.

Settler colonialism’s focus within the literature centres on its impact on Indigenous populations. With titles such as ‘Settler colonialism and the Elimination of the Native’; Collisions of culture and identities: Settlers and Indigenous Peoples; and ‘Indigeneity, settler colonialism, white supremacy’, the literature heightens our awareness of the impact that colonisation had on First Peoples in Australia and elsewhere. As founding settlers of Sydney, Norfolk Island and Parramatta it was vital to interrogate the role played by convict women in the dispossession of Aboriginal Peoples, questioning what, if anything, the Neptunian’s individual stories tell us about encounters with the Indigenous Peoples and how this reconciles with the literature on dispossession and frontier conflict.

To date analysis of women’s role in settler colonisation, especially in relation to Australia, has been limited. Ann Curthoys discusses the power that white women had over Aboriginal people, an ‘inherited agency and empowerment as part of the triumphant colonial process of historic dispossession.’ Uncommon Ground: White Women in Aboriginal History, compiles a number of articles that show how those power relations were embedded in a ‘structural and personal complex of racial, gender and class inequalities.’ This book’s value to me was highlighting that white women could

It must be noted that Curthoys supports the concept of genocide, though she is hesitant of acknowledging state planning and questions mass killings. "Genocide in Tasmania: The History of an Idea," in Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History (Berghahn Books, 2008), 230.
have their histories rewritten as a result of interactions with First Peoples. However, this book relates to different eras and contexts. The problem with the extant literature on white women and settler colonialism is that it often focusses on the construction of female whiteness (as exemplified by Angela Woollacott) in colonial societies, and always in periods later than the eighteenth century. Vron Ware, for example, draws conclusions about white women as symbols of civilisation and as victims, but her discourse focusses on the nineteenth and twentieth century. Claudia Knapman, Helen Callaway, Scott Morgensen and Arvin, Tuck and Morrill are amongst those highlighting the gendering of settler colonialism and the fact that settler colonialism is inherently a heteropatriarchal construct.

Lyndall Ryan is recognised for her extensive research on dispossession, punitive expeditions and massacres of First Peoples. Her work in exploring the intricacies in planning and executing massacres and the motives behind them, is of interest in gaining a greater understanding of settler colonialism. She considers the British colonisation of Australia and its associated dispossession, not as a static event, but as a dynamic, contested and ongoing process. In analysing incidents that occurred on the Hawkesbury frontier 1794-1810, where white women comprised approximately one quarter of the population, she gives no consideration to the role played by women in the destruction of Indigenous culture. In a later article, written in conjunction with Philip Dwyer, Ryan emphasises that genocide is not just about killing people (the perpetrators usually men) but includes the elimination of culture (where women could be equally

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56 Ibid., xxiii.
57 Angela Woollacott, "Whiteness and “the Imperial Turn”," in Re-Orienting Whiteness (Springer, 2009).
complicit) in their definition of genocide. Given that the destruction of culture, language, territory, family, community and history — all essential to the concept of Indigenous identity — is finally being acknowledged as part of the ‘invasion’ and ‘destruction’ cycle of colonialism, greater acknowledgement of women’s role in that process is warranted.

Whilst much of the literature focusses on the imposition of gendered and moral control over Indigenous Peoples — as exemplified by the writings of Scott Lauria Morgensen, Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill — this too has a different context and relevance. Patricia Grimshaw’s article ‘The Fabrication of White Homemaking’ analyses the writings of one colonial woman, Louisa Meredith, in light of her home replicating English norms in an Aboriginal landscape. The value of Meredith’s story is in highlighting the ‘transformational’ nature of home-making and farming to reflect white values. This has elements of relevance, yet Meredith was writing some sixty years after the Neptunians first established their colonial homes. Meredith was also a free white woman, and a member of the middle class. Grimshaw, in analysing Meredith’s very white, very colonial account of ‘unprovoked’ Aboriginal attacks, draws parallels to Keith Windschuttle’s denial of frontier violence and assertion of white legitimacy. The existing literature, therefore, has limited relevance to a thesis analysing the white, convict women who found themselves as settlers, and agents of colonisation, in the infant colony of New South Wales, including Norfolk Island.

Since the 1970s, convict women have received much attention in Australian historiography, corresponding to the burgeoning scholarship and influence of feminism.

61 Philip Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan, "Reflections on Genocide and Settler-Colonial Violence," History Australia 13, no. 3 (2016): 343-44.
63 Morgensen, "Theorising Gender, Sexuality and Settler Colonialism: An Introduction."
64 Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy."
66 Mrs Louisa Anne Twamley Meredith, My Home in Tasmania, During a Residence of Nine Years, vol. 1 (New York: Bunce and Brother, 1852).
67 Ibid., 138.
The evolution of the imagined convict woman has seen every aspect of her persona investigated through the contemporary spotlight. She has undergone rather dramatic transformation over sixty years of historiography: from what Michael Sturma describes as an ‘incorrigible prostitute, an unmarriageable reprobate, and a corruptive force’ to the victim of the ‘Imperial whoremaster’ in feminist histories such as Anne Summers’ *Damned Whores and God’s Police*.\(^{67}\) The convict woman then emerged in the literature as a reformed character, showing herself as a worker, wife, companion and mother. Robinson’s writings in 1985 and 1988, gave convict women a respectability but also personalised the women and their circumstances.\(^{68}\) Her analysis of convict women’s legal rights in *The First Forty Years* analysed their place in colonial society, their link to the ‘damned whore’ myth and their rates of reoffending, determining that the misplaced emphasis on their criminality has given convict women an ‘undeserved reputation.’\(^{69}\) Stephen Garton concluded that ‘assessments of the morality of the convicts have been more integrally tied to debates about Australian national character than crime’, adding that it led to ‘fruitless exercises’ in distinguishing between the women as ‘incorrigible rogues’, the worker forced into crime, the ‘damned whore’, the ‘good mother’, the petty thief or the political protestor.\(^{70}\) Phillip Tardif’s 1990 analysis of convict women in Van Diemen’s Land, whilst relating to a later era, was of value in highlighting aspects of crimes committed and sentencing. He estimated that, whilst transportation seemed a harsh punishment for the crimes committed, at least half of the women in his study had been in previous trouble with the law. The sentences they received at trial did not, therefore, reflect the extent of their criminality.\(^{71}\) There is evidence that sixteen per cent of *Neptunians* had previous convictions, so Second Fleet women did not conform to Tardif’s statistic. Needham refutes claims that most of the convicts had previous convictions. She states that the *Neptunians* ‘were young and feckless and reckless and


\(^{71}\) Phillip Tardif, *Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls: Convict Women in Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1829* (North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1990), 5-6.
caught red-handed and can be proved to have been charged for theft for the first time.\textsuperscript{72} I therefore question how representative Tardif’s statistic is given the significant discrepancy.

By the close of the twentieth century convict women were portrayed in the literature as symbolic of their class and vulnerable to the challenges of the society in which they lived.\textsuperscript{73} There was recognition of their vulnerability and that officials were ill-equipped to deal with the women in the new colony.\textsuperscript{74} Lyndall Ryan’s analysis of convict women in Tasmania (1803 to 1853) identifies the significance of time and place in shaping ‘the external realities of convict women’s lives.’\textsuperscript{75} Her article is valuable in highlighting differences in the transportation experience. Its fault, however, lies in extending the ‘exile phase’, or initial phase, from 1788 to 1813. The convict experience in 1788, 1790 and 1792 was vastly different to that in 1803 when Tasmania was settled. The differences were even greater by 1813, the Macquarie era.

At every stage the portrayal of the convict woman has morphed and developed, gaining a richness according to the era of the analysis as well as the perception of the historian.\textsuperscript{76} The twenty-first century has seen a greater tendency to personalise the female convict within the historiography, but so too has there been a greater emphasis on the power of women in colonial society. Babette Smith, in her 2009 lecture for example, discusses female convicts and their role in social levelling.\textsuperscript{77} She believes convict women demonstrated scant disregard of power discrepancies and the master/servant relationship. Smith also highlights convict women’s role in the construction of social and physical infrastructure and, therefore, as agents of change. Kirsty Reid in her 2007 study of early Van Diemen’s Land examines the issue of power.

\textsuperscript{72} Needham, \textit{The Women of the 1790 Neptune}, xi.
\textsuperscript{73} Deborah Oxley, \textit{Convict Maids: The Forced Migration of Women to Australia} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
\textsuperscript{74} As exemplified by Kay Daniels, \textit{Convict Women} (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998).
\textsuperscript{76} Curthoys and Docker, ”‘Time, Eternity, Truth, and Death: History as Allegory,’” (2009): 19.
in relation to gender, class and status. In her work she analyses in some depth the power struggles of James Belbin, the husband of Neptunian Ann Meredith, against Colonel David Collins and, in the process, dispels many of the stereotypes and myths that have prevailed over the past sixty years of historiography. This book typifies the tendency of the later literature to individualise and encourage empathy towards convicts in their colonial struggles whilst considering the issue of power and how it was wielded.

This empathy is also evident in Carol Liston’s writing. She shifts the emphasis from the salacious topics of sex and bondage, to the ‘poverty, desperation, motherhood and housework’ experiences of the women. Her work highlights the differences in the convict experience between New South Wales and Tasmania, acknowledging, as others fail to do, the transitions between 1788 and 1856. She also explores the conditions for women before the female factories when the numbers of women were small and the women were absorbed into the colonial population as servants, seamstresses, wives and housekeepers, enjoying a more comfortable life than their male counterparts.

Grace Karskens’ prolific writings on colonial society, including convict women, are based on a mix of archaeology, anthropology and historiography, once again individualising convicts and convict women in the context of their colonial environment. Karskens uses personal stories to reflect the transformation of the infant colony to an infant nation. In so doing she reveals the minutiae of lives, both Indigenous and white. Her strength is in taking you on a journey as she shows how convicts crossed social and class boundaries, creating a unique societal mix. She emphasises the relative

80 Ibid., 31-32.
81 For example:
autonomy of the convict classes in adhering to their own cultural practices, creating a society very much their own. Babette Smith in her review of Karskens’ history *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney* criticised it for featuring the ‘usual suspects – those we already know’ rather than ‘new characters and insights that can be found at the NSW State Records.’ I disagree. Karskens’ does illuminate previously invisible lives. In discussing relationships with Aboriginal People, for example, she discusses Sarah Sykes, well known for sharing bread. Sarah’s son-in-law, William Byrne was ‘partly brought up by an Aboriginal boy, Moudonigi’ and his step-uncle, John Kennedy assisted the Prospect First Peoples ‘during their reconciliation negotiations.’ In her book *The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney*, Karskens provides a rich account of social interaction during the 1820s, detailing how Charlotte Cubitt spent her time with *Neptunian* Elizabeth Smith and her partner Thomas Rushton, ‘the same as one of their own family … and [has] come home loaded with tea and sugar and … some clothes to wear.’

Neither Charlotte nor Elizabeth are the ‘usual suspects’, nor are Sarah Sykes, William Byrne, Moudonigi or William Byrne. Likewise, Karskens focuses on less-familiar places. Her description of the Brickfields, home to *Neptunian* Kezia Brown and her husband William Roberts is one of the few available. Karskens’ weakness is that she can take a fragment of pottery and perhaps read too much into it. Jane Lydon believes Karskens demonstrates a lack of archaeological methodology in believing a sherd of edged ware ‘is evidence for ordinary people buying large sets of tableware.’ This necessitates some caution in supporting conclusions based on small or isolated finds. Despite this, Karskens influenced my own writing style through her ability to transport you into a place, taking the historical and archaeological evidence and inserting the reader into that place or that person’s life. This is the strength of the recent histories of convict women — a richness, an empathy, which moves the reader deeper into the world of the early colony and the lives of those who occupied it. This thesis builds on these traditions, centring convict women, whose stories are often unknown, in the

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84 Karskens’ writing brings places to life. In discussing Brickfield Hill for example, she writes that Brickfield Hill was 'a place on the outskirts ... a rootless sort of place, with fewer family groups and married couples and many shared houses occupied by single men.' Later she writes: 'At Brickfield Hill children amused themselves by igniting and burning out tree stumps in the middle of the road.' Ibid., 40, 120.
historiography through family history and archival methodologies and allowing their stories to inform history.

Numerous resources provide insight into the Second Fleet, its high mortality rates and its impact on the colony. Bryan Gandevia’s early analysis identified the impact that dysentery, scurvy, typhus and typhoid had on convict health. Bateson’s extensive research and data provided information on each convict transport vessel as well as excellent reflection on overall mortality during the history of transportation. He identified the significance of surgeon-superintendents in reducing shipboard-deaths. McDonald and Shlomowitz’s statistical analysis of mortality rates included material not available to Bateson, leading them to question the exclusive influence of surgeon-superintendents in reducing mortality and acknowledging the impact of conditions in the goals and aboard the hulks. Hyman concluded that incentives (terms of contract and enforced safeguards), institutions (the impact of conditions in goals and hulks for example) and individuals (Phillip’s humanitarian influence in the First Fleet and Donald Trail’s barbaric practices aboard the Neptune, for example) mattered. These variables ensured that, in regard to shipboard mortality, ‘no system or policy is bullet-proof, no matter what precautions are taken.’ Sturgess, Rahman and Argyrous warn of the dangers associated with analysis based on the narrow range of variables in comparisons of mortality aboard the First and Second Fleets. Tim Causer links the ‘illness, chaos and misery’ associated with the arrival of the Second Fleet, and the impact this had on the colony and its inhabitants, to the significant societal dislocation that drove some convicts to consider escape.

90 Gary L Sturgess, Sara Rahman, and George Argyrous, "Convict Transportation to New South Wales, 1787–1849: Mortality Rates Reconsidered," Australian Economic History Review 58, no. 1 (2018): 81-82. They also identified a downturn in mortality rates post-1800, examined the causes of this and concluded that reduced mortality relied on an effective system of inspection and supervision and this, along with the appointment of naval surgeons reduced death-rates
A range of literature was consulted in order to become familiar with the earliest era of convictism (1788-1792) under the Governorship of Governor Arthur Phillip. Robin Walker and Dave Roberts’ *From Scarcity to Surfeit* delivered a detailed and valuable analysis of the hungry years in the colony, revealing the significance of this era in the transition 'from starving convict to overindulgence.' Philip McMichael’s analysis of the transition of the penal settlement to a commercial colony, identified the importance of the early farming ventures, undertaken under Governor Phillip’s guidance, to the creation of a domestic market. McMichael believes land to be the most important economic resource, linking its appropriation to the monopolizing of production, the securing of the frontier from Aboriginal resistance and the foundation of liberalized social structure founded on economic survival and reproduction. The *History of New South Wales from the Records*, Volumes 1 and 2, provided a sampling of original documentation with interpretation provided by G.B. Barton and Alexander Britton respectively. Originally published in 1889 (Volume 1) and 1894 (Volume 2), the volumes remain relevant as they draw from primary sources, chronologically and in great detail, building a clear picture of day-to-day life in the early colony. I read these volumes in their entirety and found them of great value in providing the social context for the thesis. Writings by contemporaries of the *Neptunians* provided insight into daily life in the colony as well as the dynamics of power and class in a close-knit society. Captain Watkin Tench’s *Sydney’s First Four Years* was invaluable in its reflections on the famine experienced by the *Neptunians* during their first two years in the colony (1790-1792), the repeated references emphasising the societal impact of the starvation years. Tench, an officer in the Marines, is hailed as author of one of the earliest pieces of writing reflecting early colonial life through personal, first-hand observation. Likewise, *The Journal and Letters of Ralph Clark (1787-1792)*, an officer of the

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94 Ibid., 40-45.


marines, provide rare insight into life on Norfolk Island, albeit insight prejudiced by homesickness, a disdain towards convicts and a ready temper.\(^{97}\) As such, this source is important in highlighting the intolerance and arrogance, exacerbated by class distinctions and societal ‘hot-housing’, existing in a small settlement. It was Clark who famously used the term ‘damned whores’, a stereotype that reflects what has been identified as his inherent and persistent class-bias.\(^{98}\) David Collins’ *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales - Volume 1*, differs greatly to Clark’s in its sophistication, and in being an accessible account presented as a monthly summary of events in the colony.\(^{99}\) Unlike Clark, Collins achieves a greater balance and his work proved a valuable resource to gain an overview of life in the early colony. It must be noted that all three sources — Collins, Tench and *History of New South Wales from the Records* — present the viewpoint of the administrative and military class, rather than those of the convict class. They also reflect the patriarchal nature of early colonial society, providing analysis and reflection through a solely male perspective. The disempowered illiterate, female, convict-class woman left almost no first-hand account to evidence her life. Only through analysis of the extant sources, often linked to the lives of their partners, or contained in the writings of contemporary diarists, in court cases or through painstaking reconstruction of more generalized histories, can the lives of the *Neptunians* themselves be recreated.

Archaeological evidence also informed my writings, especially in relation to the *Neptunians'* homes, lifestyles and possessions during the earliest years of the colony. As well as visiting the Cumberland Street Archaeological Site, where I saw evidence of early homes at The Rocks and discussed the findings with the site’s Education and Interpretation Officer, Alison Frappell, I read widely on the interpretation of findings from that investigation.\(^{100}\) Regarded as a site of outstanding cultural significance, the


\(^{98}\) Ibid., 20/454. Clark’s spelling throughout his journal is poor and it was written ‘damned whores’


\(^{100}\) Grace Karskens, "The Cumberland Street / Gloucester Street Site, the Rocks. An Historical Discourse," (Godden Mackay Pty Ltd and The Sydney Cove Authority., 1994).
Cumberland site provides rare insight into convict and emancipist housing at The Rocks dating from the 1790s.\textsuperscript{101} Karskens’ history \textit{Inside The Rocks}, provided rich detail of the artefacts, converting those artefacts into a domestic still life.\textsuperscript{102} Her interpretation brought convict housing to life, inspiring a greater realization of the importance of housing, not only to the settler colonisation agenda, but to the convicts themselves and their transition to the role of settler.

Insight into the early convict huts at Rose Hill (Parramatta) was gained from a variety of archaeological reports and journal articles.\textsuperscript{103} The archaeology of the huts on High Street, Rose Hill (now George Street, Parramatta) pre-dates The Rocks archaeology and, combined with Tench’s descriptions and contemporary artworks and maps, provides the earliest insight into convict housing from 1790.\textsuperscript{104} Casey and Lowe’s archaeological reports detail the remains of convict huts (1790 – 1820), the Tent

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“Revisiting the Worldview: The Archaeology of Convict Households in Sydney’s Rocks Neighborhood.”

Penny Crook, Laila Ellmoss, and Tim Murray, "Assessment of Historical and Archaeological Resources of the Cumberland and Gloucester Streets Site, the Rocks, Sydney " \textit{Archaeology of the Modern City} 3 (2003).

\textsuperscript{101} This site is widely known as the Big Dig.

\textsuperscript{102} Karskens, \textit{Inside the Rocks. The Archaeology of a Neighbourhood}.


Madeline Parker, "Rethinking the Convict Huts of Parramatta: An Archaeology of Transformation (1790 - 1841)" (University of Sydney, 2006).


\textsuperscript{104} Tench, \textit{Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”}, 195.  

Hospital (1788 – 1792) and the Second Hospital (1792 – c1818), all relating to this early period.105

Multi-disciplinary, wide ranging cultural histories complement the stories of the Neptunians themselves, providing a greater understanding of the women’s social and personal relationships. When I first read Portia Robinson’s The Hatch and the Brood of Time in 1985, it changed my perceptions of convict women, marriage and the colonial family unit.106 In analysing the Rev. Samuel Marsden’s Female Register — a valuable document consulted regularly in my research — Robinson challenged the perceptions of an immoral colonial society. She proposed that relationships in the infant colony were conducted according to the diverse experiences and expectations of women, and that relationships and family life, in marriage or cohabitation, remained important and strong.107 This is a theme that remains current in more recent literature. Karskens, for example, concludes that ‘the consistent derogatory remarks about ‘whoredom’ … centred on … the commonplace fact that women often lived with men without being officially married.’108 She reinforces the nature of convict relationships by stating that they mostly ‘preferred to be married, or to cohabit as if they were.’109 Karskens examines all aspects of colonial relationships, including the response of men-in-authority to convict women and official attitudes towards inter-class relationships. She also analyses the power dynamics within relationships, concluding that ‘if men saw women as sexualised beings, then women, finding themselves in great demand, took opportunities to better their conditions … through relationships with men.’110

105 Casey & Lowe Pty Ltd, "Preliminary Results Archaeological Investigation. Stage 2c. Parramatta Justice Precinct, Former Parramatta Hospital Site, Cnr Marsden & George Streets, Parramatta.,” (Marrickville, NSW: Casey & Lowe Pty Ltd, 2006).
106 "Excavation Permit. Parramatta Hospital Site, Marsden Street, Parramatta.,” (Marrickville, NSW: Department of Commerce, 2005).
108 Ibid., 65-96. Chapter Three: I am not for marrying.
Marian Aveling’s work on the impact of gender, reproduction and sexuality in shaping the new colony was significant when written in the 1990s. Aveling built on the earlier writings (1975) of Summers — who famously characterised Australian women as ‘colonised’ and the State as the ‘coloniser’ — pointing out the contradictions of the ‘refractory prostitute’ and the ‘loyal wife’ and highlighting the complexities of relationships. In analysing the often conflicting writings of Summers, Katrina Alford and Monica Perrott, Aveling focusses on the constraints and opportunities that characterised the society in which female convicts moved, very often advantaging convict women over the convict men and their social peers in Britain. Alford’s writings are of value in analysing the advantages and disadvantages of marriage for convict women. Whilst marriage channelled them into predominantly domestic and reproductive roles, this provided economic, social and demographic advantages. It provided a sphere of influence separate to that in the colonial economy and society. Their procreative role added to the value women held, given that the family was regarded as a foundational social institution. However, women sometimes experienced harsh and violent treatment at the hands of their husbands, with beatings and wife-trading acknowledged in the records. Divorce was virtually impossible, so violent or unhappy marriages were hard to escape. Alford’s work is significant, too, in concluding that the early colony was dominated by a patriarchal and class-based

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111 The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney, 80. Karskens quotes Aveling’s claim that convict women were unlikely to have veered from the usual societal expectations and practices of marriage and family life experienced in England and Ireland.

112 Summers, Damned Whores and God's Police.


114 Monica Perrott, A Tolerable Good Success: Economic Opportunities for Women in New South Wales, 1788-1830 (Sydney, NSW: Hale & Iremonger, 1983).


116 Ibd., 53.

117 Ibid., 56, 59.

118 Ibid., 65.
morality that failed to understand the sexual and relational practices of the convict classes.¹¹⁹

**Methodology**

I was led to this study through my experiences as a family historian of some forty years and, specifically, as a descendant of Kezia Brown, one of the *Neptunians*.¹²⁰ For me, people are integral to history and their stories inform the history of their era. I am approaching this study through two methodological lenses.

The first is Family History Methodology, which sits within historiography, telling its own individual stories and acting as a mirror of societal change. It serves, according to Catherine Nash, to embody nostalgia and identity, culture and place, bridging the gap that extends between generations, time and place.¹²¹ The terms genealogy and family history are used interchangeably yet there are subtle differences in their scope. Genealogy is the finding of facts whilst family history is the telling of the narrative.¹²² In this thesis, however, the term Family History Methodology will be used to incorporate both the finding of evidence — through archival and historical research (genealogy) — and the interpretation and analysis of that evidence into a story (history) that reveals the *Neptunians* as both early settlers of the infant colony and agents of settler colonisation.

Family History Methodology is many things. It is, according to Ann Laura Stoler, a ‘meticulous and patient documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused

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¹¹⁹ Ibid. Chapter Two pages 35-47
Darby & Cough tease this out further by comparing the finding of mere dates and places (genealogy) with the richer detail of family history that includes supplementary information about ancestors’ home, educational, working, social and political lives. Paul Darby and Paul Clough, "Investigating the Information-Seeking Behaviour of Genealogists and Family Historians," *Journal of Information Science* 39, no. 1 (2013): 1.
parchments. Those documents — including the rich colonial archive, church and state records and personal records, including letters, diaries and archaeological objects — serve to both embody and individualise the past, transporting you into the cultures and structures of different times and places.

Through what Nash describes as ‘stories of ordinary survival and struggle’, emerge the reality of the day to day, the archaeology of lives in a different time and place. In analysing these stories, in studying individual slices of the past in tandem with the historiography, conclusions can be drawn. Genealogy is recognised as a rich arena that enables biography and history to merge. So too is it a powerful instrument of providing analysing and investigating the links between knowledge, power and the human subject and understanding how their lives were shaped by their historical context. Genealogies, claim Nash, ‘bring together cultural geography’s attention to (the) sorts of connection to place (that) matters to people…’ and, given that settler colonialism relies on settlers forming new connections to place and establishing new families and family ties, genealogy is well suited to tracking the progress and effectiveness of the process.

Like any good story, immersion in these female convict-settler histories results in a sense of involvement and investment, acting as a bridge between individual histories and social history, between family information and larger statistical studies. The strength of family history is its ability to illuminate the minutia of childhood, courtship, marriage, childrearing, ageing and death, thereby exploring the previously neglected dimensions of both human experience and social history. This multi-layered and rich reality of the lives of real people, examined within the context of their

124 Nash, "They’re Family! Cultural Geographies of Relatedness in Popular Genealogy," 194.
125 Nash, "They’re Family! Cultural Geographies of Relatedness in Popular Genealogy," 194.
127 Nash, "They’re Family! Cultural Geographies of Relatedness in Popular Genealogy," 194.
129 Una Crowley, "Genealogy Method," in International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography (Maynooth University, Maynooth, Ireland), 2.
family and the impacting social, economic and political forces, spans ‘individual time, family time and historical time.’

This ‘relentless erudition' requires patience, a knowledge of details and a vast accumulation of source material including that which normally sits ‘without history’ — sentiments, love and all that it is personal to an individual. To me, Family History Methodology represents the addition of another layer to historical methodology, an individual or family added to the social, local, national or international context in which they live, with all the inconsistencies that individuality brings. Family History, therefore, gives added meaning to social history and reclaims individuals from obscurity.

Attitudes towards Family History were, for many years, tainted by the convict stain. The desire for respectability led to what Rosamund Dalziell describes as the concealing or ‘forgetting’ of convict origins. The historic milestone of the 1988 Bicentenary of white settlement, combined with social changes in morality, moved Australian family historians beyond these restrictions, engendering acceptance of ancestors regardless (and perhaps because) of their class and status. It became important that family historians understood ‘the full and accurate story of one’s family … including the rediscovery of forgotten or concealed participants and the reconstruction of repressed narratives.’ Convicts were seen as ‘collectables’, providing significant narrative potential. Oh the joy when, in the late 1970s, I discovered that I was descended from a First Fleet convict! The increase in the popularity of family history during the 1970s and 1980s coincided with significant interest in the historiography on women convicts. The works of Summers, Miriam Dixon, A.G.L. Shaw, Robinson, Smith, Needham,

130 Ibid.
134 Dalziell, Shameful Autobiographies: Shame in Contemporary Australian Autobiographies and Culture, 111.
Flynn, Mollie Gillan and Daniels, for example, served to bring the profile of convict women to the fore. This surge in avocational genealogical research has created a largely untapped resource for historians and archaeologists, and one which I have drawn on in this thesis.

Family History Research fosters a certain proprietary claim on the country and its European history, in this case a nationalistic pride associated with being part of the formative years of white settlement. As a family historian, one can retain this pride whilst highlighting the complexities of the colonisation experience. The true impact of the formative years of white settlement on First Peoples forms an essential part of the narrative, moving away from raw ‘pioneer’ nostalgia to acknowledge both the positive and negative aspects of settler colonisation.

There is little doubt that the value of family history is in personalising history. I disagree, however, with Martin Saar’s claim that family history only relates to ‘your own culture, your milieu, your family...’. Family History Methodology can be utilised by a person external to that individual, milieu or culture. In no way does this negate the feelings of emotional involvement. Rather, it has the advantage of extending the life narrative dramatically, in that it enables the study of people who left no descendants and would, therefore, slip into oblivion, their voice unheard. There are thirty-five women in this study who left no living descendants and whose stories would not have been told.

136 Summers, Damned Whores and God's Police.
Alan George Lewers Shaw, Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and Other Parts of the British Empire (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1977).
Daniels, Convict Women.

139 As exemplified by this study
had not an outsider undertaken their family histories.\textsuperscript{140} Family history methodology remains relevant for these childless individuals for it is, after all, a means of exploring any life story. Genealogical research extends beyond the domain of a descendant for it can, and is, undertaken by any researcher skilled in extracting information from the archive and from family history sources. Individuals without children contribute equally to their community, often enjoying different experiences and opportunities that are vital to social history.

With its foundation in Archival and Family History Research, this research is grounded in the individual’s story. This serves to:

pluck ‘individuals from the nameless masses that historians paint with a broad brush. We see the actual effect upon human lives of the grand world events that historians write about….We see how one humble person and his or her neighbors can reshape a community, a state, or a country.’\textsuperscript{141}

Family History Research can be a deeply analytical methodology requiring almost scientific precision in that every research step is a vital link in the descriptive chain of an individual’s story.\textsuperscript{142} For example, the linking of the birth of an illegitimate child in 1793 and a land sale in 1818, enabled the identification of Neptunian Elizabeth Smith as an independent landowner, a woman of some means and one of the early settlers of Prospect Hill, a fact previously not acknowledged.\textsuperscript{143} This is plucking a female convict from the ‘nameless masses’ and writing her into the history, illustrating the ‘contextual interpretation of documents and skilled record linkage.’\textsuperscript{144}

The second methodology in this thesis is that of Archival Research. The foundation of all historical investigation, Archival Research facilitates the finding of evidence, essential to the narrative of lives. Gaillet argues that ‘Archival Research is all about storytelling because through all the documents you study, you are figuring out the nature of a life, whether it be public or private for a summer or for fifty years.’\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{140} Namely Michael Flynn, Anne Needham and now this study.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} Prospect lies outside the Parramatta district. Elizabeth settled there as early as 1792 and, given her daughter died as an infant and she had no further children, she remained childless.
\textsuperscript{144} Mills, "Genealogy in the Information Age: History’s New Frontier," 261.
\textsuperscript{145} Gaillet, "Performing Archival Research Methodologies,” 51.
Archival Research can be defined as the study of a broad range of documents and records in order to gain insight into the past. Rather than being constructive, this is a reconstructive process, based on the extraction of a story from the historical sources.\(^\text{146}\)

The comprehensive colonial archive, which forms the foundation of this analysis, includes shipping records, census documents, convict records, muster rolls, land documents, records associated with birth, death and marriage, records associated with tickets of leave, conditional pardons or certificates of freedom, inquest records, Returns of the Colony, probate records and the extensive and valuable collection contained within the Colonial Secretary’s Papers. Non-government archives, which are more personal, include church records, artworks, letters, diaries and archaeological objects.

The colonial administration was built on a foundation of record-keeping and convict-tracking, a ‘state record labyrinth’ unique amongst settler colonies.\(^\text{147}\) It was developed by the Colonial Government and, as such, the documents ‘reconstruct the embedded rules of knowledge production’ according to the rules of the settler colonist.\(^\text{148}\) Whilst serving the purpose of documenting the past for today’s researchers, the colonial records were first and foremost administrative tools.\(^\text{149}\) The process of transformation from administrative paperwork to archive is grounded in historical interpretation: ‘As soon as documents are perceived as historical evidence, records and files transform into an historical archive.’\(^\text{150}\)

This research is founded specifically on the colonial convict records that are remarkable because they are amongst the most detailed, intimate and careful records of ordinary men, women and children — of their bodies, their families,

\(^{147}\) Piggott, \textit{Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian Essays}, 24.
\(^{148}\) Decker, "The Silence of the Archive: Post-Colonialism and the Practice of Historical Reconstruction from Archival Evidence". 3.
their behaviour, their experience and their capacities — for anywhere in the world in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{151}

Bradley et al. refer to this intense documentation as a ‘Paper Panopticon, designed to see all and record it in black or red ink.’\textsuperscript{152} Their significant historical value means they have become part of our cultural heritage, facilitating family history studies and enabling a deeper analysis of the convicts and their role in colonial society.\textsuperscript{153} It must be noted that, given this thesis has as its context the earliest four years of white settlement (1788–1792), administrative procedures were somewhat embryonic, especially in relation to land grants, for example.

Archival resources reinforce the entitlements of privilege and, according to Stoler, ‘selectively... confirm the colonial invention of traditional practice... to underscore cultural claims.’\textsuperscript{154} This leads us to question the validity of knowledge generated by those privileged classes, especially when undertaking a study relating to the societally underprivileged. As historians, we view documents critically through a post-colonial lens and see the documents and archives, not just as ‘knowledge retrieval but as knowledge production.’\textsuperscript{155} This thesis rests on that foundation; knowledge production through analysis of the archive.

Interrogation of the archive is paramount.\textsuperscript{156} Stephanie Decker regards that, whilst reconstruction of history from the sources can never be truly objective, archival research

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\textsuperscript{151} Bradley et al., "Research Note: The Founders and Survivors Project," 468.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 467, 75. The original panopticon was a prison designed by the utilitarian Jeremy Bentham that allowed for the constant surveillance of prisoners.
\textsuperscript{153} Piggott, Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian Essays, 24-25.
\textsuperscript{154} So comprehensive are these convict records that, in 2007, they were inscribed into UNESCO’s Memory of The World Register, recognising them as a rare body of record. See reference:
UNESCO, "The Convict Records of Australia," http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-8/the-convict-records-of-australia/. This states: The convicts’ lives were minutely documented by a dedicated bureaucracy, generating a rare body of records of 19th century working class people, from their British roots to their Australian fates. The forensic details about individual convicts have enabled historians to build a picture of the human capital that shaped the economy, demography and culture of early colonial Australia.
\textsuperscript{155} Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form," 90.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
should not be dismissed as flawed. There is always a conversation between past and present when we create a historical narrative. Critical history, therefore, questions the objectivity of primary source material, aware that it may serve the interests of those in a position of power, those who are in opposition to it or those who are forced to comply and operate within it. Stoler believes that documents must be interrogated according to the ‘rules of reliability and trust, criteria of credence, and what moral projects and political predictabilities are served by these conventions and categories.’ Once interrogated, these colonial archives enable the researcher to inspect what a government has done, becoming in effect a societal memory and ‘interpretive interface to the past.’

As this is a history of convict women operating within a settler colonial society, it is an ‘upside-down analysis’, reading the archives not from the colonial perspective, as originally intended, but from an ‘un-State-d’ perspective. History is full of unequal power, with some sources included at the expense of others. Michel-Rolph Trouillot emphasises the significance of using neglected sources such as diaries, letters and images to counter-balance the inequities in the official record and to unearth the inevitable silences created through omission. These neglected sources give insights to the past and voice to a minority and as such are resources to be respected, especially when they ‘resist or qualify interpretations (we) would like to place on them.’ Sadly, few convict letters, or diaries dating from this early period have survived. The letters of Matthew Everingham, husband of Neptunian Elizabeth Rymes, are a notable exception, and as such a valued archival source, as are drawings and paintings from this period or soon thereafter. What remains, therefore, is the need to interrogate the archive from the

158 Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form," 95.
160 Un-State-d perspective being one not linked to either the Colonial Government nor the State Government. Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form," 99.
162 ibid., 49, 51.
perspective of the convicts, critically aware of the inequities and prejudices of the ‘state-d perspective.’

The archival silences apply to a study of any minority group in history. Women’s lives often became subsumed into the lives of their men.\textsuperscript{164} It fell to them to be the homemakers and the raiser of families, private occupations that left few records behind. The role of the historian, therefore, in reconstructing women’s lives from archival sources is ‘as if having entered a story that was told around, but that still remained to be pieced together.’\textsuperscript{165} This research, in negating the silences, involved unearthing seen and unseen documents within the archives and interpreting them to reveal a new story.\textsuperscript{166}

\textbf{Thesis Outline}

Chapter 1 ‘Hardship and Hunger’ focusses on the period 1788-1792, which forms the timeframe and the context for this study. I argue that the rapid transformation of the Neptunians from the status of convict to settler and their corresponding significance as agents of colonisation occurred because of the unique conditions afforded during that timeframe. The era of Arthur Phillip’s governorship (1788-1792) was distinctive in that all colonial subjects fought a united battle against famine and hardship, resulting in a social climate of relative equity.\textsuperscript{167} This served to give convicts a dignity and validation absent in later eras of convictism. This chapter also explores the symbiotic relationship that evolved between the State and the convict class, based on the importance of convict labour to the creation of both a civilised colony and a more sophisticated penal settlement. It goes further to demonstrate the vital role played by convict women in the establishment of homes and families, exploring the unique niche they occupied in the colonial power dynamic as a result of the colonial gender imbalance. The societal conditions that favoured the Neptunians during the period 1790-1792 are shown in this chapter to reveal that no other period, during the history of convictism, witnessed such a

\textsuperscript{164} Be that man, husband, partner or employer.
\textsuperscript{165} Decker, "The Silence of the Archive: Post-Colonialism and the Practice of Historical Reconstruction from Archival Evidence". 13.
\textsuperscript{166} Trouillot, \textit{Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History}, 58.
\textsuperscript{167} This concept of equity will be explored in Chapter 1. It has been acknowledged by a number of historians (see discussion which follows) that Phillip’s governorship was characterised by relative equity and this thesis supports that summation.
minimal deployment of power over the convict masses. This chapter analyses primary sources including the dispatches of Arthur Phillip, the diary entries of Watkin Tench, as well as early court records relating to Neptunians and their partners, all of which serve to illuminate social conditions during the period 1790-1792.

Chapter 2 ‘The Neptunians as landholders and agents of dispossession’ explores the important role the Neptunians played in the establishment of European agriculture during the famine years of Arthur Phillip’s governorship (1788-1792) and their associated role as agents of colonisation and the dispossession of First Peoples. The Neptunians’ individual stories are explored throughout this chapter to reveal them as amongst the colony’s pioneer landholders and farmers, overcoming challenges in their goal for self-sufficiency and success. The link between land ownership and the Neptunians’ evolution to the status of settler and agents of colonisation during the period 1790-1792 is also investigated. Seventy-four per cent of Neptunians were involved in agriculture and, as settlers, landowners and workers of the land, were very much part of the agrarian-based yeoman model that resulted in the dispossession and alienation of First Peoples from their land and homes. This chapter also analyses the five documented interactions that Neptunians and their partners had with Indigenous Peoples. Despite increasing hostility, misunderstanding and encroachment on Indigenous lands, several Neptunians and their partners attempted acts of kindness, building relationship with, and support for, their Indigenous neighbours. All hint at bafflement and misconception, amidst the confusion of colonial expansion. Documentation accessed for this chapter includes land grants and transactions, Norfolk Island victualling records, the Everingham Letterbook, artworks of early Sydney and Rose Hill and archaeological reports and dig analyses.168 This chapter also relies heavily on the evidence revealed within the archives, newspapers and first-hand accounts of interactions with First Peoples.


*Inside the Rocks. The Archaeology of a Neighbourhood.*
Chapter 3 ‘Home: the harbinger and tool of civilization’ argues that homemaking was integral to the women’s increasing sense of colonial identity. Homemaking also played a vital role in the process of colonisation and dispossession.\textsuperscript{169} In their reproduction of British-style homes and domestic landscapes, the women acted as the agents of colonisation, transplanting British values and culture on an Indigenous landscape. The domestic became the arena of the colonial, acting as the nexus for the consolidation of British values and customs.\textsuperscript{170} Homes nurtured love, children, violence, crime and dissidence but so too were they at the very heart of colonialism’s drive to reproduce and colonise through the family unit. This chapter draws on the archaeology of sites at The Rocks and Parramatta, maps and artworks of the period, the research of descendants and the literature depicting early homes and their construction.

Chapter 4 ‘Brides, housekeepers and neighbours’ interrogates the role relationships played in the \textit{Neptunians’} adapting to their new home and transitioning as settlers. The \textit{Neptunians} are shown in this chapter to have been both agents and victims of colonisation in regard to their intimate and community connections. Through attaining a sense of community and permanence, establishing relationships and families, the women furthered the grounding and extension of white settler colonisation in the three settlements. Relationships are further explored as an antidote to the oppression of the dominant colonial group and as a means of expressing the women’s emerging colonial identity. The \textit{Neptunians}, were women of their era and their class and it was this that defined the nature and expression of their personal interactions. The establishing of new ‘webs of intimate, personal relations’, including relationships with First Peoples, assisted in the process of adjustment, revealing the complexity of early colonial society and the \textit{Neptunians’} place within it.\textsuperscript{171}

Chapter 5 offers conclusions followed by an Appendix containing the brief biographies of the \textit{Neptunians} as a reference point for the reader.

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., ix.
Conclusion

This thesis explores the Neptunians within the context of the earliest years of white settlement and analyses their transformation during their initial two years in the colony (1790-1792). In so doing, it interrogates the extent to which they acted as agents of settler colonisation. In Australia settler colonialism relied on the spread of settlement through land ownership, but so too did it depend on the creation of homes and families. Women, therefore, were at the centre of this process given their integral role in farming of land and in the creation of homes, relationships and families. The domestic sphere was vital to the colonial project. This research examines the women’s contribution to colonisation, particularly regarding land-ownership, interactions with First Peoples, home-making and their web of personal relationships.

This research aims, above all, for a deeply personal analysis of the women’s lives. The historical and archaeological sources provide a greater understanding of these women and the important role they played as settlers and colonists. The Neptunians’ stories reveal them as settlers, farmers, partners, mothers and business women, representing convict women’s endeavours and challenges during the earliest years of the colony. Jane Edwards, for example, remained in Sydney, marrying Thomas Coldwell just four months after arrival in October 1790 and becoming mother to her first-born, Robert, in December 1792. Neptunian Jane Reed married fellow-second-fleeter William Davis just a month after landing at Sydney Cove, and the next day the couple sailed for Norfolk Island. By the end of 1792, Jane had worked with William to establish their home and farm at Charlotte Field (later Queenborough and now Longridge, Norfolk Island), and Jane had given birth to their first child, a daughter Mary (1792). Jane was to have another daughter, Euphemia (1795) before her apparent death about 1802. Susan Carr, who was thirty-eight years old when she arrived in the colony, was transferred to Rose Hill after arrival, marrying Timothy Warren there in 1797. Susan worked as a dairywoman and Timothy was employed in the Government stockyard, enabling the

The couple moved to the new settlement of the Hawkesbury River in November 1794, and it was here that Jane was assaulted in her home by two convicts who attempted to ‘ravish and carnally know’ her. When Thomas came to her assistance, he too was assaulted. The men were captured, found guilty and received 300 lashes and eighteen-months confinement. John Cobley, "Sydney Cove 1795–1800," (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1986), 132.
couple to purchase their own property by 1800. Elizabeth Ireland and her First-Fleet, husband John Limeburner, were settlers of Prospect, farming their fifty-acre grant by 1792. They remained childless but through hard work, attained self-sufficiency before moving to Sydney to operate a shop and bakery.¹⁷³

The *Neptunians’* stories reveal that they comprise many identities — they were criminals; they were women; they were forced evacuees; they were wives, partners, mothers and neighbours; they were pioneers and much more. These factors are all significant to this analysis, revealing the diverse reality of the women establishing new lives in an infant colony. In so doing, they were furthering the expansion and the success of the colonisation project.

Chapter 1
Hardship and Hunger
The Neptunians during the period 1790-1792

Introduction

Elizabeth Wood was luckier than many of her fellow-Neptunians. Both she and her young daughter, Elizabeth, had survived the terrible voyage and, after five weeks of recuperation at Port Jackson, sailed for Norfolk Island. There she forged a relationship with First Fleet convict Edward Westlake and, by 1791, the couple had their own hut, were working their one-acre block in Sydney Town and had their first child, Samuel. This chapter investigates the conditions that enabled Elizabeth, and her fellow-transportees, to move from the status of convict to settler almost immediately after landing and analyses the context in which the Neptunians, as representatives of the colony’s earliest settlers, acted as agents of settler colonialism. It provides background into the Neptunians’ crimes and sentencing and explores the impact that the arrival of the Neptune had on the infant colony.

After arriving, the Neptunians settled in either Sydney, Norfolk Island or Rose Hill (Parramatta). The individual characteristics of each of these settlements are explored, enabling analysis of the peculiarities of each in relation to land-ownership, a process vital to colonial expansion and food production during the famine years. The years 1788 to 1792, the era of Arthur Phillip’s governorship, forms the timeframe for this study. This period is revealed as unique in the history of convictism in two ways. Firstly, all colonists, convict and free, shared extreme hardship and starvation. All within the colony, convict and free, received the same rations and treatment, resulting in ‘complete equity for all regardless of their standing.’ Secondly, a distinctly symbiotic relationship evolved between the State and the convict class, based on a reliance on the convict labour essential to the creation of the infant colony. The vital role played by the Neptunians in the establishment of homes and families is explored, as is the unique

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niche they occupied in the colonial power dynamic as a result of the gender imbalance. The women occupied a position of relative freedom and independence as a result of their operating in a domestic, rather than institutional penal sphere, a position unique to convicts during the period 1788-1792. This period, therefore, is shown to have provided societal conditions that allowed the women to rise above some of the restrictions normally associated with the social disadvantage of the convict women’s status and gender.

The Neptunians’ background, crimes and sentencing

The Neptune, as part of the Second Fleet, represented the very beginnings of transportation to Australia. The sixty-one women in this study comprise fifty-five female convicts and six free female partners of convicted men who survived the voyage. During the period to 1792, these free women’s status within colonial society was largely indistinguishable from that of convicted women. The women were perceived as belonging to the convict class, possessing no advantage through wealth, influence or position. Portia Robinson concludes that the segregation of ‘the criminal class extended over all ranks and levels of convicted society.’ Governor Phillip granted land only to emancipists, seamen and marines. Free women could not, therefore receive land during this period whereas female emancipists could. Rations, up to the end of 1792, were granted equally to every member of the colony, including the Governor, so free wives received no more food than any woman. The trauma of trial and imprisonment may have been less acute, but sharing the impact of their partner’s trial and the dislocation associated with accompanying them to the colony, would have been significant. Nor would their voyage on the Neptune have afforded special

175 Meredith and Oxley, in analysing the gender discrepancy amongst convicts, highlight the power the British courts had in shaping the composition of the colonial population. In 1718, when transportation was first conceptualised, women constituted some 40-50 per cent of defendants (Old Bailey). Numbers quickly reduced, however, so by 1788, indictments were down to 23 per cent and when transportation ended (1868) it was just 16 per cent. Meredith and Oxley, "The Convict Economy."
176 The six surviving free wives of convict men included in this study are Elizabeth Connor, Sarah Fielder, Harriet Hodgetts, Jane Reed, Sarah Smith (there was also a Sarah Smith amongst the convict women) and Elizabeth Wood
177 Robinson, "The First Forty Years," 3.
178 Ibid.
180 Fletcher, "Arthur Phillip (1738-1814)."
treatment. Records show that even crew were mistreated at the hands of the ruthless Donald Trail, so the partners of convicts would have received little favour. The one area of possible advantage for these free ‘wives’ was in the legal arena. Convicts in England had no legal existence themselves but the free wives of convicts potentially became self-sufficient in law. In Australia, however, the law took a distinctly new form characterised by enhanced legal rights for convicts which saw equality for all before the law. Robinson, in her analysis of the legal status of women during the first forty years of white settlement, identified that:

They [free females] received no special treatment in that no provision was made for them in colonial laws and regulations. Thus they were bound, on pain of punishment, to abide by orders issued specifically for the control of convicted women.

Given that this era featured a significant and unique degree of social equity, it is appropriate to include the six free wives of convicts in the cohort of Neptunians.

The convicted Neptunians were all tried in England, with a little under half (43%) of the sixty-one surviving Neptunians tried in London at the Old Bailey Court. The vast majority (85%) received sentences of transportation for seven years with an equally large percentage (87%) convicted for theft. Two received fourteen-year sentences —

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181 Liston cites the case of the voyage of the Janus in 1820 where the free wife of a Corporal in the 48th Regiment was housed with the convicts. It is very likely that the free wives of the Neptunians were also housed with the female convicts or in likewise substandard conditions. Liston, "Convict Women in the Female Factories of New South Wales," 30.

182 Emma Christopher, "'Ten Thousand Times Worse Than the Convicts': Rebellious Sailors, Convict Transportation and the Struggle for Freedom, 1787-1800," Journal of Australian Colonial History 5, no. 2004 (2004): 39. The wives of convict women would not have been treated better than crew, yet crew were brutally flogged for minor infractions and were poorly fed.


184 Convicts were entitled to hold property and to enforce their rights in the courts despite English common law holding that they were dead to the law, unable to give evidence in court, unable to sue and forfeiting all property rights. The case of Kable vs Sinclair in July 1788 reversed this premise, setting new foundations for the law as applied to convicts. Kercher, An Unruly Child: A History of Law in Australia, 22-23.

185 Robinson, "The First Forty Years," 12.

186 London was the area most impacted by economic change, thus contributing the greatest numbers of transportees. Over the history of transportation, convicts also came from Ireland and, to a lesser extent, Scotland. Tardif states that for Van Diemens Land, for example, three-quarters of female transportees were convicted in England, 16% from Ireland and 8% from Scotland. It was also the large urban centres of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin and Cork that had the highest transportation rates. Tardif, Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls: Convict Women in Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1829, 3-4.
Mary (Molly) Morgan — [theft of 38 ‘slippons’ (reels) of hempen yarn valued at £4]; and Eleanor Sandwich [receiving a stolen gown]. At the expiration of their sentences convicts were, in theory, permitted to return home, although the cost of the voyage often precluded this option. Only four Neptunians are thought to have returned to Britain.

Of the convicted Neptunians only four were, in theory, expirees by the end of 1792 — Rachel Watkins (March 1792); Ellen Gott (August 1792) and Elizabeth Jones (August 1792); Ann Baker (October 1792). However, the formal records of conviction were not received with the fleet, so Phillip could not issue Certificates of Freedom. Thirty-one percent of the Neptunians were eligible for their freedom by the end of 1795, a further 62% by the end of 1796 and 7% after 1799.

There are several issues associated with the women’s background and sentencing, which warrant comment. Eighteen percent of all female convicts aboard the Neptune were listed as married when tried. Thirteen per cent left children behind when they were transported. Frances Hadley’s case is a sad one. She was described as a

188 Ibid., 88-89.
189 Tardif, Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls: Convict Women in Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1829, 4.
190 The five women were Elizabeth Baker, Jane Elley, Amelia Gill, Mary Stultz, Ann Wheeler. This figure excludes Mary (Molly) Morgan who escaped to England but was re-convicted and returned.
191 Both Ellen Gott and Elizabeth Jones received unusual three-year sentences at Liverpool Assizes.
192 "Sentenced Beyond the Seas: Australia’s Early Convict Records," NSW Government, https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/sentenced-beyond-the-seas-australias-early. Copies of the Orders in Council for the First and Second Fleets were transmitted to Governor Phillip in Letter No.10 of the 19 February 1791. These were received by the Mary Ann transport which arrived 9 July 1791. (Historical Records of Australia (HRA) I, i, 214, 217, 224). Phillip had written on 9 July 1788, ‘The masters of the transports having left with the agents the bonds and whatever papers they received that related to the convicts, I have no account of the time for which the convicts are sentenced, or the dates of their convictions’ (HRA I, i, 57). Later indents were usually sent on the ships in the care of their masters but the Governors frequently requested to be supplied with the lists as they were not always received with the convicts.
193 This statistic relates to the convict women embarked, including those who died en route and excluding the free wives of convict men.
194 It is likely that this figure was higher as children were not always mentioned in court proceedings.
widow at her trial, convicted of shoplifting two-and-a-half yards of muslin valued at eight shillings. Frances had seven children who were aged between twenty-one and four years old when she was tried on March 12th 1788. The sheer social cost of her transportation, which effectively left her children as orphans, seems counter-productive today. The fact that she died during the voyage is hardly surprising. Aged about forty, having spent eighteen months in prison prior to transportation, having the misfortune to be transported aboard the ‘hell ship’ Neptune, and experiencing the distress of leaving behind seven children, would have contributed to the likelihood of Frances’ death during the voyage.

Margaret Neve’s case was also ‘pathetic.’ Like Hadley she was a widow with young children, pregnant and destitute. Her husband, John Neve, had died circa 1785. She had lost her firstborn daughter, Ann, as an infant in 1780. When tried she had a five-year-old, a two-year-old and was expecting her fourth child. Margaret Neve also died aboard the Neptune. Individuals experienced great sacrifice at the hands of the Government and for them, the reality of imperial authority, as expressed through transportation, was a grim one.

One of the most noticeable features of early colonial demographics was the pronounced gender inequity. There is strong evidence that a manipulation of sentencing occurred in order to ensure more women were sent to the colony, with harsher sentences imposed on the Neptunians than their male counterparts. Summers states:

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195 Frances Hadley died during transportation and, as such, is not included in the sample of this study.
197 Ibid., 90.
198 Needham’s considerable research has revealed that Margaret Neve’s children were kept in jail with her for over four years. As such, several of her children would have known no life outside jail. Needham states that Margaret, with the assistance of the jail’s doctor, did an excellent job in keeping the children alive under appalling conditions. The children were kept at the jail for some weeks after Margaret was taken for transportation, and then would have been sent to the workhouse or to family. That parting, mother from her children, must have been one of immeasurable sadness. Ibid., 91.
199 Noel George Butlin, Forming a Colonial Economy: Australia 1810-1850 (Cambridge, UK: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge 1994), 38. Butlin states that in 1788 women comprised 19.6% of the total colonial population. By 1795 this had decreased to 18.4%, reflecting the significantly skewed population. Given also that the population contained almost solely convicts, officials and military personnel, with very few free migrants (only 148 by 1795), the population was highly abnormal in its composition.
Whereas only the more hardened male offenders under sentence of transportation were actually transported to the Colonies, all women under sentence, provided they were healthy and under forty-five were transported.¹⁰⁰

There were seven cases where Neptunians were tried jointly with males for the same crime and in six of those the man was acquitted and the woman transported.¹⁰¹ Margaret Callahan and John White, for example, were tried together for the theft of eight guineas, sixteen half guineas and a crown coin. They were both in the lodgings where the money was taken and both were found drinking together after the theft.¹⁰² John White was acquitted but Margaret Callahan was sentenced to seven years’ transportation. Elizabeth Rymes stole a linen sheet and a woollen blanket in the company of her de facto husband, John Moore. Moore was acquitted of the crime whilst Rymes was convicted and sentenced to seven years’ transportation. Sarah Willis was convicted of stealing a card of black lace to the value of £15 (reduced to 4/10d at the trial). William Dawson, her accomplice was acquitted of the crime but Sarah was sentenced to seven years’ transportation.¹⁰³ This somewhat perverse discrimination within the sentencing process disadvantaged female convicts, making them victims of a system striving to ensure greater colonial gender balance.

Three of the Neptunians were not only sentenced whilst their husbands were not but were sentenced in defiance of the law of ‘coverture.’ In the eyes of the law husband and wife were one entity and the legal existence of the woman was consolidated into that of the husband, effectively indemnifying the wife from conviction if she was with her husband when the crime was committed.¹⁰⁴ Mary Bather was tried with her husband John for the theft of a brass pot, an oak chair and a stool. John was tried alone and acquitted of the crime, whereas Mary, tried later that same day, was found guilty and sentenced to seven years’ transportation. Mary spent more than two and a half years in gaol before transportation and died during the voyage.¹⁰⁵ Mary and James Cragg were

¹⁰¹ Needham, The Women of the 1790 Neptune, 16.
¹⁰² "Trial of John White and Margaret Callahan, Theft from a Specified Place, 8 June 1789," ed. The Old Bailey (Old Bailey Proceedings Online 1789).
¹⁰³ Flynn, The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790, 615.
both charged with the same crime of theft yet, in the trial on October 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1787, James was acquitted whilst Mary was convicted and sentenced to seven years transportation.\textsuperscript{206} Molly Morgan was apprehended with her husband, William Morgan, for theft of hempen yarn.\textsuperscript{207} He escaped, whilst she was tried and sentenced to death, commuted to fourteen years’ transportation.\textsuperscript{208} The law of coverture was not applied, as it should have been, to any of these married women and few women could afford legal representation to defend their rights. To whatever degree these women were aware of the injustices they faced, they were unable to complain about them, thereby normalising the discrimination process.

In examining the criteria for transportation, Meredith states that, of those convicts whose sentence was seven years, selection was from those who had committed the most serious crimes.\textsuperscript{209} This appears incorrect in terms of the crimes committed by the Neptunians, which included the theft of a shawl valued at three shillings (Mary Donovan), stealing two pairs of stockings (Elizabeth Wood), the theft of two handkerchiefs (Ann Carey), stealing one pair of men’s shoes (Mary Jones) and the theft of a basket of beans (Mary Desmond and Mary Butler). Needham more correctly concluded that the Neptunians ‘sinned in a petty way and paid in a grand [way].’\textsuperscript{210} The sentence of transportation, it seemed, was applied to a wide range of offences, many genuinely trivial. Deborah Oxley concluded that the sins of convict women were ‘consistent with the needs that must have been generated in an economy … in which

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{207} The value of the hempen yarn was a considerable £4 at the time when a farmer's wage was 7s per week. Mitchell questions the sentence received by Molly. The usual sentence had been 7 years (in trials in and around this time). Only one, John Yates, received a 14 year sentence and that for good valued at £10 along with 1 1/2 guineas of stolen money. F Mitchell, Molly Morgan: Convict to Queen (Leominster, Herefordshire, UK: Orphans Press, 1980), 7.
  \item \textsuperscript{208} Joining the NSW Corps and travelling to NSW aboard the vessel ‘Neptune’ as a free military man.
  \item \textsuperscript{209} This refers to all convicts, not just women convicts. David Meredith, "Full Circle? Contemporary Views on Transportation,” in Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past, ed. Stephen Nicholas (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 14.
  \item \textsuperscript{210} Needham, The Women of the 1790 Neptune, xi.
\end{itemize}
women were discriminated against in terms of pay, where the sexual division of labour was being intensified, and welfare increasingly stigmatised and inaccessible.  

Government culpability extended beyond questionable sentencing practices to allowing those in poor health to be placed on the transport vessels, thereby increasing their likelihood of death. Arthur Phillip recognised that, in sending the ‘disordered and helpless’, the gaols were cleared, yet he decried the fact that this poor selectivity contributed to high.  

Both mother and child died on the Neptune. Margaret Callahan’s case was also a heart-breaking one. She lodged a petition for mitigation of sentence given that she was a widow with four children and in poor health. The reply, stating that the ‘unfortunate woman’ might be released on a good behaviour bond, did not reach Newgate Prison in time to prevent her embarkation. She died en route to Australia. Mary Bather, Hannah Prince, Betty Bradley and Rebecca Heathcote appear to have all died on the Neptune. Needham describes the gaol in which these four women were kept as like the ‘Black Hole of Calcutta’, so it is likely that all four women died in transit, their health impacted by poor gaol conditions. Elizabeth Rice pleaded ‘illness and distress’ during her trial and died either before or shortly after arrival in the colony.

References:
214 Needham, The Women of the 1790 Neptune, 30. The baby was aged nine months in October 1789 and was, therefore, conceived in gaol.
217 "Trial of Elizabeth Rice, Theft (Grand Larceny), 9 September 1789.," ed. The Old Bailey (Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 1789).
The Neptunians had already experienced significant trauma prior to embarkation aboard the Neptune as a result of their trial, incarceration and separation from family and community. The voyage itself, on a vessel renowned in history as ‘the hell ship’, only added to that trauma. Of the 502 convicts (male and female) who embarked the Neptune, 158, eleven of them female, died.218

The significance of the mortality rates aboard the Second Fleet vessels cannot be understated. In the history of transportation only five vessels achieved a mortality rate of 20% or more — Second Fleet vessels Neptune 31% and Scarborough 27%; the Active in 1791 21%; Hillsborough 1798 32%;219 and the Atlas 1802 39%.220 The research of McDonald and Shlomowitz reveals that monthly death rates averaged 11.3 per 1000 prior to 1815, dropping to 2.4 per thousand after that date.221 More specifically


The Neptunians who died during the voyage were Mary Anthony, Mary Bather, Elizabeth Beilby, Betty Bradley, Margaret Callahan, Frances Handley, Garter Jenkins, Margaret Jones Elizabeth Mayo, Hannah Prince and Elizabeth South.

219 Hyman states that the Hillsborough, like the Neptune, had high mortality rates due to the cruelty of its captain. William Hingston straved prisoners and kept them in double irons, resulting in many deaths. However, Bateson attributed the high death rate to typhoid fever, carried on board from the fever-ridden hulks. This, combined with the convicts being kept in close confines, their lack of food and water and the fact that were kept in irons, guaranteed the high mortality rate. David A Hyman, "Convicts and Convictions: Some Lessons from Transportation for Health Reform," University of Pennsylvania Law Review 159, no. 6 (2011): 2020.


221 Sturges, Rahman, and Argyrous, "Convict Transportation to New South Wales, 1787–1849: Mortality Rates Reconsidered."

The Atlas, like the Neptune, suffered at the hands of a negligent master but had the added misfortune of having its Irish transportees ‘embarked in a deplorable state of health.’ Bateson, The Convict Ships: 1787-1868, 182.

222 McDonald and Shlomowitz, "Mortality on Convict Voyages to Australia, 1788–1868," 291. McDonald and Shlomowitz's research examined the reasons for this statistical decline, noting that it coincided with the introduction of naval-trained surgeon superintendents. Hamish Maxwell-Stewart concluded that it was plausible that the decline of deaths on both hulks and transports after 1815, resulted from the benefits to convict health from the improved sanitation and medical care on hulks. Fewer infected and sickly convicts, therefore, boarded transports. Certainly the long incarceration in gaols and hulks experienced by some Neptunians (and others aboard the Second Fleet) would have contributed to the death rates of the Second Fleet.

Maxwell-Stewart, "To Fill Dishonoured Graves?: Death and Convict Transportation to Colonial Australia," 21.

Staniforth's analysis, whilst relating to a different era, also highlighted the impact of the poor conditions on board the hulks with innutricious diet and malnutrictian increasing the risk of scurvy. Mark Staniforth, "Diet, Disease and Death at Sea on the Voyage to Australia, 1837–1839," International Journal of Maritime History 8, no. 2 (1996): 142.
the period 1788-1799 saw a death rate of between 15.7 and 16.2 deaths per 1000.\textsuperscript{222} The Second Fleet’s mortality rate of 26\% (translating to 51 to 70 deaths per 1000) and, in particular, the \textit{Neptune}’s of 31\%, stand in stark contrast to these figures, understandably shocking British authorities.\textsuperscript{223} Ian Brand and Mark Staniforth conclude that female convicts received better treatment than males, and with a female mortality rate of 14.1\% aboard the \textit{Neptune} this is substantiated.\textsuperscript{224}

The reasons for the \textit{Neptune}’s high mortality were many. We have seen the impact of existing ill-health on the transportees, and analysis reveals that the gaols and hulks were ‘notoriously unhealthy.’\textsuperscript{225} The use of private contractors, motivated by the desire for profit and having a background in slave-trading, undoubtedly contributed to mistreatment, cruelty and mortality.\textsuperscript{226} The lack of space in these small, crowded transports exacerbated the effects of poor sanitation and disease.\textsuperscript{227} Gandevia and Cobley propose that scurvy and dysentery appear to have contributed to deaths both at sea and post-arrival.\textsuperscript{228} The effects of poverty and the socio-cultural impact of gender must also be considered.\textsuperscript{229} Above all, the nature of the captain aboard the \textit{Neptune}, Donald Trail, ensured a degree of unsurpassed cruelty and neglect. Emma Christopher describes the suffering of convicts aboard the \textit{Neptune} as ‘unspeakable’, they being so.

\textsuperscript{222} Hyman, "Convicts and Convictions: Some Lessons from Transportation for Health Reform," 2012.
\textsuperscript{224} Hyman, "Convicts and Convictions: Some Lessons from Transportation for Health Reform," 2012. The low death rate of the First Fleet, which lost only 23 souls in total (or 3\%) made the Second Fleet losses seem even more shocking.
\textsuperscript{225} Ian Brand and Mark Staniforth, "Care and Control: Female Convict Transportation Voyages to Van Diemen’s Land, 1818-1853," \textit{The Great Circle} 16, no. 1 (1994): 36.
\textsuperscript{226} A Roger Ekirch, \textit{Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718-1775} (USA: Oxford University Press, 1987), 82.
\textsuperscript{227} McDonald and Shlomowitz, "Mortality on Convict Voyages to Australia, 1788–1868," 303-5. See Table 4 analysing the high death rates aboard hulks.
\textsuperscript{228} Bateson, \textit{The Convict Ships: 1787-1868}.
\textsuperscript{229} Staniforth, "Diet, Disease and Death at Sea on the Voyage to Australia, 1837–1839."
hungry that they sold their shoes for a few ship’s biscuits and ate the ship’s five cats.230 Trail’s brutality was excessive, ensuring the captain’s and the voyage ‘s infamy.231

The impact of the Second Fleet on the infant colony

The arrival of the Neptune, and the other vessels of the Second Fleet, had an immediate and detrimental effect on a colony already beset by adversity. The first two years of settlement were dominated by the ‘fear of impending famine’ caused by drought, failure of the arrival of supply vessels and the struggles experienced with adapting European farming techniques colonial conditions.232 All goods — including tools, implements and clothing — were in chronic shortage and the convicts, whose rations had been reduced by half, ‘were too weak to do much work.’233 By June 1790 the cuts and the quality of rations provided a quarter of the planned intake and was severely deficient in protein, vitamins, riboflavin, calcium and iron.234

The arrival of 269 ailing Second Fleet convicts could only add to the woes of the colony. Even those who did not require medical intervention were described as ‘lean

230 Christopher, “‘Ten Thousand Times Worse Than the Convicts': Rebellious Sailors, Convict Transportation and the Struggle for Freedom, 1787-1800,” 39. It was not only the convicts who experienced Trail's cruelty. John Beale, a quartermaster aboard the Neptune, complained that the crew were flogged for minor infractions and that they, too, were fed 'very bad provisions.' Trail was unsuccessfully charged with the death of the ship's cook, John Joseph, after his brutal flogging.

231 Memorandoms by James Martin: An Astonishing Escape from Early New South Wales, 16.


233 Whilst the British government promised a full enquiry and criminal prosecution as a result of the Second Fleet's disastrous mortality rate, the need to continue to handle the ever-growing number of convicts, placed constraints on the government’s response. Hyman, "Convicts and Convictions: Some Lessons from Transportation for Health Reform,” 2017.

234 Britton, History of New South Wales from the Records, 2, 16-17.

235 Ibid., 27.

Cauzer states that this was a 'subsistence ration', quoting David Collins in that the dire state of the colony’s food stores meant that ‘it was determined to reduce still lower what was already too low.’ In Cauzer's Introduction to Memorandams by James Martin, he states that it was known in London that the colonists feared starving to death, and that escape seemed a better alternative than 'dragging out a miserable existence on an inhospitable shore.’ Memorandoms by James Martin: An Astonishing Escape from Early New South Wales, 11,14.

Waker and Roberts’ thorough analysis of rations determined that there was to be adequate enough to sustain good health for labour whilst costing the Government as little as possible and, interestingly, ‘not make eating a pleasure.’ Walker and Roberts, From Scarcity to Surfeit: A History of Food and Nutrition in New South Wales, 4.
and emaciated’, ‘unfit for anything but occupying a space in the dirt in the corner of a hospital tent.’ 235 ‘Naked, filthy, dirty, lousy wretches, many of them unable to stand, to creep, or even to stir hand or foot, were moved from the ships to the improvised hospital.’ 236 They were ‘so near dead as they could not stand, and it was necessary to sling them like goods and hoist them out of the ships, and when they first landed they died at the rate of ten or twelve a day.’ 237 Nearly forty percent of Second Fleet convicts were dead within eight months of arrival in the colony, the majority, according to Gandevia and Cobl ey, in the first two months following the arrival of the Second Fleet. 238 Six Neptunians left no colonial records and are assumed, therefore, to have died immediately upon arrival. 239

The horror of the ‘death fleet’s’ arrival continued. The deceased, thrown overboard, floated in the harbour, and people afterwards remembered ‘the dingoes howling and fighting over the bodies in a sandy pit over the hills above the Tank Stream.’ 240 A further four Neptunians died in the weeks and months after landing, spending their final weeks in the hospital tents hastily erected in front of the existing small hospital, all of which were quickly filled with people suffering from scurvy, dysentery, or an infectious fever. 241 Gandevia highlights the inability of the already struggling colony to ‘succour’
the ill and dying due to famine and the strains placed on the tiny hospital, concluding that ‘the sudden influx of 500 patients was a calamity to the settlement.’ Nevertheless, the Governor and colonists did all they could to ease the suffering of the dying. Tim Ailwood describes how every man in possession of a gun and every person with fishing tackle were instructed to find fresh meat and fish to feed the ailing newcomers. Convicts scoured the countryside for medicinal herbs and collected grass to make beds for the ill and dying. It was often to no avail.

Elizabeth Linsley’s story makes tragic reading. In January 1787, the night after being sentenced to seven years transportation for the theft of a purse, she attempted to hang herself with her apron. In a debilitated state, after nearly three years in gaol and surviving the harsh conditions aboard the Neptune, she died in September 1790, ten weeks after landing. Catherine Williams survived for a little over a year before succumbing to illness, dying on October 14th 1791. Sadly, these women leave little record of their colonial experiences, but they were undoubtedly amongst the many victims of colonialism and the forced transportation that supported it.

Statistics indicate that a month after the Second Fleet’s arrival, only 470 out of the 1,715 population of Sydney and Rose Hill, were at work. A total of 438 were sick. There were 358 females in the colony, but they were deemed unable to carry out ‘pioneering labour.’ Already scant resources were stretched to their limit. In Phillip’s words, the convicts were ‘so worn away by long confinement, or want of food, or from both these causes, that it will be long before they recover their strength, and which

Bedding was in such short supply that there was only one blanket for four people and, given this was winter and the occupants were often very ill, hardly a morning passed without numerous deaths.

244 Flynn, The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790, 404.
245 Including thirty-eight employed by officers on their farms
many of them never will recover." To reduce the strain on resources at Sydney Cove the *Neptunians* were divided, soon after arrival, between the three settlements that were to be their first real colonial home.

### The three settlements: their individual characteristics and impact on land ownership

The *Neptunians* made their first real homes in one of the three settlements — Sydney, Norfolk Island and Rose Hill (Parramatta). Their colonial experiences differed greatly according to their location, as all three settlements had distinct characteristics.

On July 25th 1790, just a month after the arrival of the Second Fleet, Sydney had a population of 1,455, Norfolk Island 524 and Rose Hill 260. The arrival of the Second Fleet resulted in a significant population explosion. This exacerbated Captain Phillip’s dilemma of feeding the colony during the on-going famine which resulted from poor provisioning, the unsuitability of convicts who lacked the skills necessary for establishing the colony, drought, and the failure of supply ships to support the struggling infant colony. Dispatch of convicts to Norfolk Island, therefore, became an imperative, with 194 convicts, 157 of them women — including twenty from the *Neptune* — sent there on August 1st 1790.

At this time, Sydney was a simple township of huts. The settlement demonstrated little formal planning, with necessity and immediacy defying Phillip’s desire for good urban design. Its soils were poor, unable to sustain the agriculture so vital to the

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249 Ibid., 152. There had only been 70 female convicts on Norfolk Island prior to the influx of convicts from the Second Fleet.

250 Ibid., 144. It was only after June 1790, and the arrival of the Second Fleet, that progress in the construction of public buildings was achieved.

251 Clark, *A History of Australia*, 1, 115. Phillip worked with Surveyor-General Augustus Alt on a plan for Sydney. However, the realities of a focus on food and shelter meant that the grander plans were never realised. The town, therefore, grew in a rather more slap-dash way until Macquarie's arrival.
By December 1792, when Phillip left the colony, Helen Proudfoot claims that Sydney Cove had changed very little from 1788, limited in its growth by the topography and lack of skilled tradesmen. Cultivation of the ground was abandoned, and all our strength transferred to Rose Hill. Those convicts who remained, built their homes on the land of the Eora Peoples that they occupied without legal tenure. Harriett Hodgetts and her convict husband Thomas made their home in Sydney. Here Harriett ran the home, mothered her son John (born 1791) and supported her husband in the running of their blacksmithing and gun-barrel forging trade. Theirs was a distinctly colonial urban existence, characterised by the contrasting mix of forges, bread ovens, butchers’ slaughter yards, gardens, shops and pubs.

On Norfolk Island, society was far more rural, with land allocated to convicts at a much earlier date than elsewhere. This resulted in the Norfolk convicts, including the

252 Casey, for example, states that the first impressions of Sydney Cove were deceitful in that the area contained trees, shrubs and grass, promising rich soil, good for growing crops. In effect the soils were poor and easily exhausted, the trees and scrub difficult to clear. The soils at Sydney Cove, she concluded, were not suited to the growing of crops so essential for survival in these early years. Mary Casey, "Remaking Britain: Establishing British Identity and Power at Sydney Cove, 17881821," Australasian Historical Archaeology 24 (2006).
254 Tench, Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 258.
257 See full discussion of Naked Possession in Chapter 2
258 Grace Karskens, "The Rocks," Dictionary of Sydney, https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/the_rocks. We do not know which part of Sydney the Hodgetts family lived in. Either of the three main convict housing sections, The Rocks, the South Street area or the High Street area, would have contained a mix of residential and trade, this being the nature of urban settlements at this time.
259 See Chapter 2, which details that on Norfolk Island, land holdings were probably settled as early as 1790 and formally recorded from 1791.
Neptunians and their partners, experiencing independent land possession before those in the other settlements. The Island was unique in the colonisation experience, due to its isolation, the fact that there were no existing First Peoples on the Island at the time of white colonisation and because the Norfolk settlers suffered forcible removal when the Island was evacuated from 1803. Its settlers did, however, experience the same issues associated with famine and hardship as those on the mainland. Mary Stultz married Martin Sales just five weeks after arrival at Sydney Cove (July 30th 1790) and the following day embarked for Norfolk Island. Within six months, Mary and Martin were allocated a plot of land at Charlotte Field and by June 1791, through dedication and hard work, had cleared one acre. By 1796, they owned twenty-two acres. No convict on the mainland had agricultural land allocated to them by the end of 1790 or the opening months of 1791, whereas many in Norfolk did, striving for self-sufficiency and building the size of their holdings and their assets.

Like Norfolk Island, Rose Hill had its foundation in agriculture due to it having richer soils than Sydney. When twenty-two Neptunians arrived on Darug country in June 1790, they became pioneers of a settlement described by Jervis as ‘merely a clearing in the vast Australian bush with a handful of the crudest buildings.’ Amongst those sent to Rose Hill was Mary Leary. Here, on December 19th 1790, she married John Ramsay, a First Fleet convict. The couple were amongst the early grantees of an area known as The Ponds, on the outskirts of the town. These early grants were significant, according to Michael Pembroke, in representing the first steps away from public farming and towards the ‘intended new society — an idealistic rural society where ex-convicts became settlers, … cultivating their lots and improving their lives’, transitioning from ‘villains to villagers’. Mary Leary and John Ramsay, described by Tench in December 1791 as ‘industrious’, laboured together on their fifty-acre grant,

262 “Baptisms, 1790-1825; Marriages, 1789-1823; Burials, 1790-1825; Parish: St. John’s Anglican Church Parramatta,” (St. John’s Parramatta, Marriages, 1790-1966 [database on-line]: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.). Reference Number: REG/COMP/1:
Colonial Secretary’s Department, "Colonial Secretary’s Papers, 1788-1856," ed. 6070; Fiche 3260-3312 Series: NRS 898; Reel or Fiche Numbers: Reels 6020-6040 (Kingswood, New South Wales: Ancestry.com ). NRS 898; Reel or Fiche Numbers: Reels 6020-6040, 6070; Fiche 3260-3312
growing corn and vegetables and extending their land-holding to sixty-acres by 1800. Rose Hill’s distinctly agricultural nature set it aside from the more urban and industrial Sydney, with five Neptunians and their partners taking up land grants of between thirty and fifty acres before the end of Phillip’s governorship (1792).

Phillip decreed that Second Fleet convicts who were fit enough to leave the hospital, ‘both male and female, were (to be) sent to Rose Hill, to be employed in agriculture and other labours.’ It is fair to assume, therefore, that Mary Leary, and the other Neptunians who were sent to Rose Hill (36%) soon after arrival in the colony, were in reasonable health. Those sent to Norfolk Island five weeks after arrival (33%) would also have been in sufficiently good health to make the sea voyage. Those who remained in Sydney (31%) were likely to have been those requiring prolonged hospitalisation due to illness; those males (and their partners) with the skills necessary in the construction of public buildings (Thomas Hodgetts, the blacksmith, for example and his partner Harriett); and a sufficient number of female convicts to act as housekeepers to those who remained.

Phillip was cognisant of the problems associated with dispersing the small population over three settlements, but the impetus came, not only from a desire to assume land as

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264 Tench, *Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”*, 253.
266 Those whose first colonial records are in Rose Hill (Parramatta) total 22, or 36% of the Neptunians. They were: Elizabeth Connor, Sarah Smith (free convict wife), Maria Wood, Martha Bates, Mary Butler, Ann Calcut, Susan Carr, Elizabeth Carter, Rebecca Chippenham, Margaret Clarke, Mary Cooksey, Mary Donovan, Rose Flood, Ann Griffiths, Elizabeth Ireland, Mary Leary, Sarah Manlove, Mary Martin, Elizabeth Rymes, Ann Toy, Ann Wheeler (some question but most likely Parramatta with her friend Elizabeth Barnsley) and Sarah Willis.
267 Those who went to Norfolk Island five weeks after arrival total 20 or 33% and include: Elizabeth Baker, Ann Carey, Mary Cragg, Catherine Crowley, Jane Elley, Mary Frost, Amelia Gill, Sarah Griggs, Ann Hannaway, Hannah Hawkins, Elizabeth Jones, Mary McDonald, Ann Meredith, Jane Molloy, Sarah Smith (convict), Mary Stultz, Jane Thompson, Rachel Watkins, Elizabeth Wood and Sarah Woolley.
268 A total of 19 women remained in Sydney (31%). They include Sarah Fielder (who was the free wife of William Fielder. He may have been in ill health upon arrival given that his horticultural skills would most likely have been more appropriately utilised in Parramatta), Harriett Hodgetts (once again the free wife of convict Thomas Hodgetts a blacksmith. His skills would have been needed in Sydney), Jane Reed, Ann Baker, Kezia Brown, Elizabeth Davis, Mary Desmond, Jane Edwards, Elizabeth Goodwin, Ellen Gott, Alice Lynch, Mary Mitchell, Mary Morgan (Mary / Molly’s husband was a private in the NSW Corps and also arrived on the Second Fleet. Her location on arrival might have depended on his posting), Elizabeth Risam, Eleanor Sandwick, Elizabeth Smith, Ann White, Mary White and Catherine Williams.
part of the colonisation project, but also from his desire to provide each convict with their own gardens, which he regarded as ‘a spur to industry’ and an antidote to hunger.\textsuperscript{269} Gardens and larger agricultural plots were regarded as vital during these early years of white settlement due to the particular challenges of drought and famine that characterised this era.

**The unique nature of the period 1788 – 1792**

This thesis is largely confined to the period 1788 – 1792, and more specifically to the two years after the arrival of the *Neptune* in 1790. It was the unique nature of this period that facilitated the rapid transformation of the *Neptunians* to the role of settler. The colony relied on the convicts during these nascent years of settlement, to facilitate the act of settler settlement, to build and expand the colony, thus serving as agents of colonisation itself.

What sets the period 1788-1792 apart is that firstly, all subjects fought against on-going famine and hardship, a battle of adversity and struggle unique to this period. Secondly, that battle was fought on a relatively equal playing field. All colonial settlers — governor, military and convict alike — received the same gender-dependent rations and the same consequences for law-breaking and food theft.\textsuperscript{270} Governor Phillip took pride

\textsuperscript{269} Britton, *History of New South Wales from the Records*, 2, 139.

\textsuperscript{270} Tench, *Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”*, 72. Tench details the rations received by all males in the colony, marine and convict, each week: 7lb beef OR 4 lb pork; 3 pints dried peas; 7lb flour; 6oz butter; rice 1/2 lb. He added that women — female convicts and marine wives — received 2/3 of the male ration.

John Cobley, *Sydney Cove, 1789-1790* (Angus and Robertson, 1963), 172-73. Cobley states that the equity in rationing in 1790 was ‘without distinction’ of rank but added: ‘Because of energy needed to fish and shoot, a small amount of extra rations were reserved for gamekeepers and fishermen.’

Walker and Roberts detail that Phillip did not reduce the female ration as much as he did the male ration in times of famine. This took into account the women breast-feeding infants, who had no access to fresh cows milk and therefore relied on breast milk to thrive. Walker and Roberts, *From Scarcity to Surfeit: A History of Food and Nutrition in New South Wales*, 69.

Jonathan King, *The First Settlement. The Convict Village That Founded Australia 1788-1790* (Crows Nest, NSW: The Maacmillan Company of Australia, 1984), 116. Tench reported, for example, that in March 1789 ‘An awful and terrible example of justice took place towards the close of this month as ... six marines, the flower of our battalion [sic], were hanged by the public executioner, on the sentence of a criminal court ... for having at various times robbed the public stores....’ John Easty, a Private in the Marines, wrote ‘there was hardly a marine Present but what Shed tears ofacers and men.’
in the fact that ‘at all times, even in extreme shortage, officers (himself included), free people, soldiers and convicts had the same ration.’ This gave the convicts of Phillip’s era a degree of dignity and validation and, despite the privations, it reduced the disadvantage associated with their status (convictism) and class (working-class).

Smith argues that Phillip’s policy of equity ‘overturned every expectation of a class-ridden society’ and had the long-lasting effect of ‘giving everyone equal worth.’ Phillip — described by Geoffrey Robertson as an ‘astonishing egalitarian’ — demonstrated policy that was indicative, according to Jacqui Newling, of ‘enlightened’ political views, moral pragmatism and a paternal style of governance. Sev Ozdowski ventured further, stating that ‘Considering Phillip’s focus on equal access to food for all, his focus on emancipation of convicts and his little attention to class barriers, it is not without some cause that we can describe Governor Arthur Phillip as the founder of the “fair go” ethos in Australia.’ Perhaps the best indicator of Phillip’s determination to effect equality was his surrendering of three hundred-weight of flour, ‘his Excellency’s

\[\text{Reference: }\]


private property, declaring that he wished not to see anything more at his table than the [common] ration.\footnote{G.B. Barton, \textit{History of New South Wales from the Records}, Facsimile Edition ed., vol. 1 (Sydney, NSW: Hale & Iremonger, 1889), 106.}

During the years 1788 – 1792, ‘the hateful equaliser was hunger.’\footnote{Hughes, \textit{The Fatal Shore: A History of Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1797-1868}, 96.} This applied to all three settlements — Sydney, Norfolk Island and Rose Hill. Drought and starvation, a constant burden experienced by the First Fleet settlers, continued to impact the colony after the arrival of the Second Fleet.\footnote{Grove's research indicates the years 1788-1795 experienced an El Niño weather event that was remarkable in its intensity and prolonged global impact. He explores its impact on the newly established colony, concluding that it created conditions 'contrary to supporting the imperial agricultural vision for the newly annexed land.' Richard H Grove, "The Climatic and Economic Crisis of 1788–1795 and the Discovery of El Niño," in \textit{Sustainability or Collapse?: An Integrated History and Future of People on Earth}, ed. Robert Costanza, Lisa J Graumlich, and Will Steffen (Berlin: Freie Universitat Berlin, 2007), 151-2.} No rain fell between June and November 1790, resulting in the failure of the wheat crop. In early 1791 the heat was so excessive that flying foxes and birds fell from the trees and 'almost every green thing was burnt up.'\footnote{Samuel Bennett, \textit{The History of Australian Discovery and Colonisation} (Pitt Street, Sydney: Hanson and Bennett. Reproduced by Google Books., 1867), 165.} The letters and journals of Phillip, Clark, Collins and Tench indicate the daily battle with starvation. Collins indicates that convict deaths were caused, not by hard labour but rather ‘an entire want of strength in the constitution which nothing but proper nourishment could repair… their universal plea was hunger.’\footnote{Collins, \textit{An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales}. Chapter XVII. Digital page 194 / 489.} A dispatch, written by Phillip on March 19th 1792, reiterates the difficulties under which the colony has long laboured. Phillip bemoans the sickness of convicts, the want of implements and clothing, the fact that there was ‘practically no livestock and the colony was still threatened with starvation.’\footnote{Britton, \textit{History of New South Wales from the Records}, 2, 209.}

Given low supplies due to drought and inadequate provisioning, Phillip recognised the very real threat that ‘if despondency and discontent once take place, they spread, and are not easily removed.’\footnote{A. Phillip to W.W. Grenville, March 4 1791, HRA, series 1, vol 1, pp 247-9. Crowley, \textit{A Documentary History of Australia. Colonial Australia 1788 - 1840}, 1.} Ever-vigilant of societal unrest in the convict-colony, his
policy of ensuring equity in the dispensing of rations undoubtedly prevented ‘any expression of discontent.’

Food theft became a significant problem. Despite protests, Governor Phillip ensured that harsh punishments were applied to all who stole food, free and convict. To protect the food stores and reduce crime, he created a night-watch, in each of the three settlements, using ‘the convicts… of the fairest character’ as night watchmen. In 1791, Neptunian Mary Frost’s convict husband, Joshua Peck for example, was a member of the Norfolk Island Grenville Vale Night Watch. Allocating convicts a job associated with the colony’s security served to blur the roles and class boundaries. Further problems arose when the marines refused to supervise convict employment, forcing Phillip to, in Proudfoot’s words, ‘rely upon convict labour under convict supervision to clear the ground, cut the wood, split the shingles, hew the stone, make the bricks, and construct the buildings.’

Phillip’s acceptance of convicts, and their potential, was based on his belief in the spirit of redemption and improvement. He, therefore, established a pathway by which convicts could rise above the status of convict. This also applied to skilled workers who were highly valued and treated ‘not according to their crimes, but to their usefulness for

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283 Bennett, The History of Australian Discovery and Colonisation, 164.
284 Hughes uses the term ‘The Starvation Years’ for this period. Hughes, The Fatal Shore: A History of Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1797-1868, 84.
285 James Scott, Remarks on a Passage to Botany Bay, 1787-1792 (Sydney, NSW: Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales in assoc. with Angus & Robertson, 1963), 45 - 6. In March 1789, for example, six privates in the marines were convicted of ‘Robbing the store’ and hanged.
286 Tench, Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of ‘A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson’, 156. The marines sent out on the First Fleet would only agree to duties of a strictly military nature. As such Phillip was compelled to find overseers and superintendents from amongst the body of convicts. Twelve convicts were chosen and divided into four parties that patrolled throughout the night, commencing in 1789.
287 Proudfoot, "Fixing the Settlement Upon a Savage Shore: Planning and Building,” 60.
288 Pembroke, Arthur Phillip: Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy, 157. Pembroke states: 'It was hoped that the convicts would be improved and reformed; that the men would become peasant farmers and the women would raise children; and that the land would be settled and cultivated. These goals were infused by a utopian idea of a simple rural society, without money or slaves, where convict men and women would become reborn through hard physical labour and subsistence farming. The central pillars of this scheme of ‘improvement’ were the cultivation of the land and the issuing of land grants to deserving convicts.'
private gain and comfort or public works and services.' Neptunian Ann Calcut’s First Fleet husband, James Beckett, for example, was a brickmaker. Sentenced to death, then to transportation for life, just two years after arrival James was renowned within the colony, supervising 52 men and producing 25,000 bricks a week. Beckett effectively lived and worked in the colony as a free man.

The policy of equity also extended to the treatment of convicts and the concessions made when food was short, with working hours reduced to preserve energy. Tench journaled: ‘Both soldiers and convicts pleaded such loss of strength, as to find themselves unable to perform their accustomed tasks. The hours of public work were accordingly shortened.’ Tench also observed that ‘severity was rarely exercised on them [convicts]; and justice was administered without partiality or discrimination.’ This is one of the greatest indicators of Phillip’s policy of objectivity. Neptunian Molly (Mary) Morgan was tried for the theft of a black tin cooking dish from Lieut. John Macarthur on May 14th 1791. Molly refuted the claim, arguing that the dish was her property. Given Macarthur’s status as an officer and Molly’s as a convict, the hearing appears to have been conducted with remarkable fairness, the case being dismissed due to lack of evidence.

If Molly’s trial exemplifies impartiality towards convicts, then the case of Neptunians Ann Meredith and Hannah Hawkins illustrates the contrasting situation whereby colonial governments, and individuals representing the government, wielded power in order to maintain control. On Tuesday 5th April 1791, Ralph Clark recorded in his journal that both Ann and Hannah were administered twenty-five lashes for ‘Refusing to doe what ther overseer ordered them.’ There can be little doubt that, in a penal colony, control and discipline were at the very foundation of administration, and this was particularly the case in Norfolk Island. The issue at play here was Ralph Clark’s

290 Tench, Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 196-7.
291 Ibid., 166.
292 Ibid., 134, 37.
293 "Mary Morgan. Theft.," (NSW State Archives and Records: Bench of Magistrates cases, 1788-1820, 1791). The evidence tends to suggest that Molly had been given the dish in replacement for one that had been borrowed from her and broken.
widely acknowledged intolerance towards the convict class, and convict women in particular. In return, convict women demonstrated ‘sullen compliance and thinly disguised contempt’ towards Ralph Clark himself who, when faced with ‘the constant flow of insubordination and minor insurrection’, responded by trying to assert control over the women, who he regarded as ‘troubelsem Whores.’ This was the only case of Neptunians being flogged, thereby supporting Tench’s claim that ‘severity was rarely exercised.’

Whilst this case of flogging represents the patriarchal brutality of the penal system, so too does it highlight that the women were not easily cowered into insubordination. Hannah and Ann refused to be intimidated by the commanding masculinity of the overseer, baulked against dominant male rule, staging their own form of protest through refusing to follow orders and exercising power in the only way they could. Nigel Triffitt, in his analysis of these Norfolk Island floggings, states that those who had been flogged ‘were famous … catapulted up a rung, they had tasted the lash, they were amazons and the ‘real heroes.’

296 Clark, The Journal and Letters of Lt. Ralph Clark 1787-1792. Volume 1, 34. As per the comments in the Literature Review, Clark struggled in his relationship with the convicts, demonstrating open hostility and conflict with them.
297 Tench, Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 134, 37.
299 Triffitt, "Norfolk Island 1792".
This graph reflects the perception of the ‘Unshackled’ convict era, where punishment was perceived less important than productivity. It also reflects the differences in convictism over time.299

One of the defining features of this period was the symbiotic relationship between convict and State. This grew from an awareness that the key to the creation of both a civilised colony and a more sophisticated penal settlement lay in convict labour.300 When the Neptunians arrived on June 28th 1790, there existed none of the characteristic indicators that we have grown to associate with convictism. There were no penal uniforms, no chain gangs, no Female Factory, no Hyde Park Barracks, no institutions of secondary confinement and only limited convict assignment. In 1790 the colony was not only a prison without walls but, significantly, it was a settlement lacking any Non-Indigenous social and economic infrastructure. It was the convicts who were to build that infrastructure. It was this that created an interdependence between convict and the State.301 Not only did convicts have to construct their own penal and administrative infrastructure during these early years but, without any ability to confine, convicts (both male and female) had a uniquely significant level of both social and domestic freedom

300 Hughes, The Fatal Shore: A History of Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1797-1868, 128. Hughes states that ‘Wherever new settlements were made, whatever fields were broken, English settlement in Australia rested on its convicts.’
301 But so too was there a deep dependence on convict compliance. Given that there was a complete absence of ‘infrastructure for the accommodation of convicts, for their physical restraint or for control of their socialisation’, had they been non-compliant, social unrest could have resulted. W.M. Robbins, "Spatial Escape and the Hyde Park Convict Barracks," Journal of Australian Colonial History 7 (2005): 85.
within the colony.\textsuperscript{302} The colony, therefore, walked a tightrope, balancing security with survival and expansion.

Phillip regarded convicts as ‘the bone and sinew upon which the progress of the settlement depended’, vital in the establishment of both official and social infrastructure and in supporting officials in establishing their basic necessities of accommodation and gardens.\textsuperscript{303} As a result, convicts had a measure of control over their destinies, based around the commercial asset that was the supply of their labour.\textsuperscript{304} Neptunian Kezia Brown was from a Yeoman background and, at the time of her arrest, was working as a gardener in a nursery in Gloucester. Her horticultural knowledge would have been an asset in a colony desperate for fruit and vegetables. Sarah Smith, the free partner of convict John Cobcroft, was a midwife, and throughout her sixty-seven years in the colony her services were vital to women, convict and free. Ellen Gott, a shoemaker who had a degree of literacy, had two invaluable skills in a colony where shoes were both a necessity and a luxury and literacy amongst convicts rare. In a colony reliant on convict labour, the Neptunians’ skills, as well as their gender, proved valuable assets.

Whilst the construction of infrastructure relied more on male than female convicts, the creation of families and domestic comforts relied on women. The significance of the domestic sphere to the colonial project cannot be understated. The creation of partnerships, homes and families lay at the very foundation of settler colonialism and women were integral to all three. Phillip’s conviction in the importance of women to the colonisation project was so strong that, soon after the foundation of the colony, and despite the hardships of famine and Phillip’s belief that women could not be used for

\textsuperscript{303} Britton, History of New South Wales from the Records, 2, 145.
\textsuperscript{304} Grace Karshens, "Defiance, Deference and Diligence: Three Views of Convicts in New South Wales Road Gangs..," Australian Historical Archaeology 4 (1986): 19.
pioneering labour, he requested more women to be sent to the colony.\textsuperscript{305} Colonialism was not extraneous to the involvement of women, but rather inextricably linked to the gendered sphere of home and family that served, not so much as the ‘anchor’ to colonial conquest, but a facilitator of expansion.\textsuperscript{306} Through home-making, women were agents of colonial establishment and growth. Women’s gender was, therefore, a source of empowerment given their pivotal colonial role.

Homemaking was valued, not just as the foundation of colonialism but for the sense of comfort that homes could provide:

> What a contrast we ever found between the dwellings of bachelors and those settlers who had wives and families about them. In the one case we found a comfortless naked hut, devoid of almost the necessities of life, in the other, abundance and cheerfulness prevailed.\textsuperscript{307}

In encouraging partnering, marriage and homemaking amongst the convict women, Phillip could be accused of sexism. Aveling, however, believes Phillip valued the women’s work as homemakers and reproducers.\textsuperscript{308} Freed from penal labour, they were able to expand into domestic and even commercial labour.\textsuperscript{309} Karskens emphasises that, in a colony where homes were ‘the basic unit of the convict system’, women’s role as homemaker was pivotal in ‘providing shelter and food for the town’s convicts and ex-convicts.’\textsuperscript{310}

The \textit{Neptunians} were employed almost solely in the maintaining of their own homes, the homes of others, in gardening and farming or in clothing manufacture.\textsuperscript{311} Kezia Brown, Molly Morgan, Elizabeth Smith, Mary Mitchell and Mary White all worked as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{305} Reid, \textit{Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia}, 94.
\item \textsuperscript{306} Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," \textit{American Literature} 70, no. 3 (1998): 583-4.
\item \textsuperscript{308} Marian Aveling, "Imagining New South Wales as a Gendered Society, 1783 - 1821," \textit{Australian Historical Studies} 25 (1992): 6-7.
\item \textsuperscript{309} Ibid., 11.
\item \textsuperscript{310} Karskens, \textit{The Colony. A History of Early Sydney}, 312.
\item \textsuperscript{311} Tench states that, in November 1790 at Rose Hill, fifty women were occupied in ‘making clothes.’ Twenty-two \textit{Neptunians} had been sent there soon after arrival in June 1790 so all, according to Tench, must have been involved in clothing manufacture. Tench, \textit{Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of "a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson"}, 199.
\end{itemize}
housekeepers and laundresses for Lieutenant Shairp, Assistant Surgeon John Harris and other officers of the Corps. Twenty-five *Neptunians* were in significant relationships by the end of 1791 and running their own homes.

The fact that the women operated in the domestic rather than the stereotypical penal sphere, gave them a freedom and independence from Government control that belied their convict status. *Neptunian* Elizabeth Ireland, for example, had married First Fleet convict John Limeburner on September 26th 1790, just three months after arriving in the colony. By 1792 they had their own hut on their fifty-acre grant at Prospect and Elizabeth, a country girl from Yalding, in Kent, was engaged in farming maize and wheat as well as housekeeping. With more than four years yet to serve of her seven-year sentence, Elizabeth was, to all intents and purposes, a free woman. David Collins hints at convict women receiving favourable and advantageous treatment, stating: ‘on account of their sex [they] were not harassed with hard labour, and … in general shared largely of such little comforts as were to be procured in the settlement.’ Phillip’s vision of the colony as a free society, with ex-convicts being, by necessity, the very foundation of that society, ensured women a unique niche in the power dynamic.

The concept of the relative freedom and independence experienced by convicts warrants deeper analysis. During the years 1788-1792, when there was an absence of infrastructure, convicts had to construct their own accommodation. To achieve this,

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312 "Mary White. Theft. Trial.," ed. 1788-1820 Bench of Magistrates cases (NSW State Archives and Records, 1791).
313 Those twenty-five women were: Jane Reed, Martha Bates, Mary Butler, Ann Calcut, Elizabeth Carter, Margaret Clarke, Catherine Crowley, Elizabeth Davis, Mary Desmond, Jane Edwards, Rose Flood, Mary Frost, Ellen Gott, Hannah Hawkins, Elizabeth Ireland, Mary Leary, Ann Meredith, Molly Morgan, Elizabeth Rymes, Eleanor Sandwick, Mary Stultz, Ann White, Sarah Willis, Elizabeth Wood and Sarah Woolley.
314 Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, 1, 204.
315 Cobley, *Sydney Cove, 1789-1790*, 238. Phillip held women in a somewhat confused esteem, unsure how to balance their status as convicts and their importance to the colony as women. On Saturday 17th July 1790, just nineteen days after the *Neptunians* arrived in Sydney, Arthur Phillip wrote a dispatch to Home Secretary, William Grenville, which reflects his confusion as to how best to employ the women. ‘I do not reckon on the little labour which may be got from the women, tho’ some are employed in the fields, and their numbers will be increased, as the greatest part will always find employment in making their own and the men’s cloathing, and in the necessary attention to their children.’
316 Tench, *Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”*, 134. This included the
and to develop their vegetable gardens, convicts (male and female) were given ‘time-off’ from their government labours. This significantly changed the dynamic of punishment during these early years. Punishment became ‘part-time’, and convictism became characterised by two spheres of labour — public (for the government) and private (for themselves). This triggered, not only increased independence but also an enhanced sense of ‘civic pride’ and even ‘a small level of esteem’. Time was allotted to improve gardens and living spaces and this act of ‘homemaking’ grounded the convicts as settlers. This in turn created ‘a private convict sphere of social relations that belied the coercive and punitive nature of the penal colony’.

The case of Charles Cross, husband of Neptunian Rose Flood, exemplifies the freedom convicts enjoyed. In 1791, Cross was arrested whilst walking along the road to Parramatta at 4am. Cross was released, but the court case is of interest in revealing that there were no restraints or curfews placed on the movement of convicts within the colony, nor were there any issues of free association, even when that association was all-important vegetable garden, deemed essential to supplement the colonist’s meagre diet during this period of starvation. Male convicts worked, individually and together, to build their shelter as well as shelters for the women convicts and the officials. Female convicts worked within their home if they were partnered, or as domestics and washerwomen in the homes of others. Convicts did not work alone. Soldiers, out of necessity, worked beside them to carve out the new settlement. Watkin Tench, officer of the marines and early colonial author, paints the picture of troops ‘felling the ponderous gum-tree, or breaking the stubborn clod.’ Hard labour was not merely the domain of the convict, although ‘on convicts the burden fell heavier’. Tench goes on to add: … the possession of a spade, a wheelbarrow, or a dunghill, was more coveted than the most refulgent arms in which heroism ever dazzled.’ This they did instead of being on parade duty for ‘those hours, which in other countries are devoted to martial acquirements, were here consumed in the labours of the sawpit, the forge and the quarry.’

Robbins, "Spatial Escape and the Hyde Park Convict Barracks," 85. Robbins does not specify what the hours of work were, however, Tench states that convicts were freed for their own labours after 10am on a Saturday morning and Britton states that in 1790 the hours of labour were reduced, with convicts stopping work at 1pm each day.

Tench, Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 196.

Britton, History of New South Wales from the Records, 2, 28.

Robbins, “Spatial Escape and the Hyde Park Convict Barracks,” 85 - 86. Robbins identifies a cycle, based around this unique labour dynamic. Convicts arrived in the colony; there is no accommodation for them; time is required to build their own hut; time is needed to develop their own garden; money (or its bartering equivalent) is needed to enhance home and lifestyle; convicts need time to earn their own money (or bartering equivalent); there develops a distinction between public and private labour; convict initiative and independence fostered.


All this, however, was to be crushed by the NSW Corps post 1793.

linked to a crime. Convicts who were not institutionalised, but instead regarded as integral to the building of a colony, enjoyed different social freedoms and fulfilled different social roles from those who came in successive eras. The case of *Neptunian* Ann White illustrates this. In Sydney, Ann formed a relationship with seaman, John Scott. When Scott wished to become a settler on Norfolk Island Ann accompanied him, sailing from Sydney aboard the *Atlantic* on October 26th 1791. Whilst Ann’s ‘freedom’ of movement may have been linked to her association with Scott, this nevertheless shows that the practicalities of colonisation and home-making took priority over autocratic control.

![Sydney as it would have been at the time of the arrival of the *Neptune*. West view of Sydney-Cove taken from The Rocks, at the rear of the General Hospital, [1789]](image)

321 In July 1791 Rose (Flood) and Charles Cross were living in a hut at Parramatta. Charles Cross and James Chapman were arrested as they were walking along Parramatta Road at 4 am. Chapman confessed to the burglary, naming Joseph Hatton as the man who had received the stolen clothes, hiding them in the bush. The court accepted that Charles did not know that the property was stolen. Chapman also gave evidence stating that Charles Cross was innocent. He was acquitted. Hatton was ordered 800 lashes and James Chapman was hanged for his crime. Note that clothing was also in short supply and women especially suffered from the inadequate and inappropriate official supply of clothing.

322 Scott was a seaman aboard the Second Fleet vessel *Sirius*. The couple had their first daughter Elizabeth Ann in July 1791 but she was buried on September 6th, 1791. Scott deserted Ann in 1795.
Conclusion

This chapter outlines the context in which the Neptunians transitioned quickly from the status of convict to that of settler. Governor Phillip’s policy of fighting deprivation with equity in the administration of both rations and punishment, created a society that allowed convicts to rise above their social disadvantage of status and gender. The era was characterised by a uniquely minimal deployment of power over the convict masses. Convicts were perceived as vital to the building, expansion and development of the colony and, during these early years, were often given positions of responsibility. Despite the burden of being in the significant minority of the population, being women in a man’s world, and belonging to the convict class, convict women played a fundamentally vital role in the domestic sphere which was essential to the spread of settler colonial society.

The Neptunians were, in many cases, pioneer landholders and farmers in their own right. The next chapter will explore the women’s attainment of independence and self-sufficiency in agricultural pursuits, which placed them at the very forefront of the colonisation process but also positioned them as complicit in the dispossession of First Peoples.

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323 Tim Causer states that 'skilled convicts were of necessity appointed to positions of responsibility. Judge-Advocate Collins complained of having to place ‘a confidence in these people’, but ‘unfortunately, to fill many of those offices to which free people alone should have been appointed in the colony, there were none but convicts.’ Memorandoms by James Martin: An Astonishing Escape from Early New South Wales, 11.

324 Butlin, Forming a Colonial Economy: Australia 1810-1850, 38. By 1795 women comprised just 18.4% of the population, reflecting the significantly skewed population.
Chapter 2

The Neptunians as landholders and agents of dispossession

Introduction

This chapter establishes agriculture as vital, not only in sustaining colonists during the starvation years, but as the vehicle for the spread of settlement and, therefore, colonisation. It goes further by revealing the Neptunians and their families as amongst the colony’s pioneer landholders and farmers, overcoming diverse challenges in their goal for self-sufficiency and success. The link between land ownership and the Neptunians’ evolution to the status of settler and agents of colonisation during the years 1790-1792, is investigated.

Having established the Neptunians as occupiers of land, this chapter then examines their role in the dispossession of First Peoples. Territory is, according to Wolfe, ‘settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element.’ Land occupation by white settlers was integral to the process of settler colonialism in that it resulted in the dispossession of First Peoples. This chapter considers the Neptunians as agents of dispossession and colonisation through their occupation of lands belonging to First Peoples. Given that seventy-four percent of Neptunians were involved in agriculture and as settlers, landowners and workers of the land, their role in the dispossession of First Peoples cannot be ignored.

There are only five documented encounters of Neptunians and their families, with Aboriginal Peoples. Analysis of these encounters highlights the dichotomy of race relations and the ramifications of cultural misunderstanding within the societal context.

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325 Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 388.
326 I regard this number (8%) as sufficient to warrant analysis but would hesitate to regard the number sufficient to draw conclusions. In reality, however, there may have been more encounters of First peoples with the Neptunians and their families, as Indigenous people remained on their lands throughout this period, despite European invasion.
of increasing hostility and encroachment on Indigenous lands, providing insight into inter-cultural relationships during the early years of the colony.

Mary Leary: an industrious woman

In December 1791 Watkin Tench made a survey of cultivated land in the Rose Hill area, including The Ponds and Prospect Hill. In his observations of the farm of Neptunian Mary Leary and her husband John Ramsay Tench wrote:

Proceeded to the settlement called The Ponds...Here reside fourteen settlers...some spots which I passed over I thought desirable, particularly Ramsay’s farm; and he deserves a good spot, for he is a civil, sober, industrious man. Besides his corn land, he has a well laid out little garden, in which I found him and his wife busily at work. He praised her industry to me; and said he did not doubt of succeeding.327

This description paints a clear picture of husband and wife labouring together to attain self-sufficiency and highlights, not only the possibilities of advancement through hard work, but the importance of Neptunian women to the agrarian project.328

By 1791 Mary and John had cultivated three-and-a-half acres of the fifty-acre grant that laid the foundation for the future expansion of their landholding. To appreciate the advantage the Neptunians gained through early land ownership, one must briefly look at the larger picture beyond 1792. In 1794, Mary and John received an additional twenty-acres of land and by 1796 the Ramsays had sixty-acres at Field of Mars, probably land by purchase, facilitated through the sale of their original grant at The Ponds.329 The family and their three free employees were ‘off stores’ (self-sufficient) with thirty bushels of maize stockpiled.330 Importantly, Mary had her own farm of thirty acres of standing timber that realised a sale price of twenty-three guineas when sold in April 1804.331 Mary had, therefore, attained the situation of an independent land-holder within

327 Tench, Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 253.  
328 John Ramsay, a First Fleet convict, married Mary Leary on December 19th 1790, at St John’s Parramatta. Tench’s focus in describing only Ramsay’s attributes — a civil, sober, industrious man — fails to afford Mary a similar character summation other than quoting her husband’s praise, attesting to the male-centric stereotype of the colonial settler.  
329 In that year they had eighteen acres under wheat, seventeen ready for maize, four goats and fifteen pigs.  
330 That the couple employed free workers is significant, as they were not only victualling them fully (free of Government support) but paying wages. This indicates a degree of prosperity.  
331 Gillen, The Founders of Australia, 297.
a decade of her arrival. The couple continued to develop their Field of Mars property, which they sold in 1809, so there is little doubt that the couple fulfilled Tench’s prediction of success.\textsuperscript{332} In receiving land early in the colony’s history, and in demonstrating industry and determination to succeed, the Ramsays were well placed to prosper and expand along with the colony. They acted as agents of the colonisation process through the development and expansion of their agricultural holdings, whilst contributing to what Babette Smith describes as ‘the social as well as the physical infrastructure’ of the colony.\textsuperscript{333}

\textbf{Agriculture’s vital role and significance}

The Phillip era offered unprecedented opportunity for convicts to settle the land, in many cases soon after their arrival. Land grants were regarded as a means of settling emancipists and encouraging self-sufficiency.\textsuperscript{334} According to Phillip’s General Instructions of 1787, only emancipated convicts of ‘good conduct and disposition to industry’ could receive land grants, with the first formal registration of grants made in 1792.\textsuperscript{335} It must be stressed, however, that convicts were working land prior to their emancipation and that the formalisation of land grants often took place long after actual settlement.\textsuperscript{336} The lack of detailed and timely land record-keeping, therefore, makes historical and genealogical research difficult. Women, too, were entitled to land grants

\textsuperscript{332} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{334} McMichael, \textit{Settlers and the Agrarian Question: Capitalism in Colonial Australia}, 43.

\textsuperscript{335} At this time, there were only convicts serving their sentences and emancipated convicts. Tickets of Leave were not introduced until 1801. Legal freedom was attained through completion of sentence or through a pardon, the first of which was granted 1 March 1788. Kercher, \textit{An Unruly Child: A History of Law in Australia}, 29.

\textsuperscript{336} We know, for example, that James Ruse settled his land in November 1789 but it was formally registered as a grant on 22 February 1792. Sharon Christensen et al., "Early Land Grants and Reservations: Any Lessons from the Queensland Experience for the Sustainability Challenge to Land Ownership," \textit{James Cook University Law Review} 15 (2008).
under the same rules, although it was not until 1794 that there is a formal land grant to a woman in New South Wales.\footnote{The first official land grant in NSW to a woman is thought to have been in February 1794, to Ellenor Frazer. This thesis, however, examines the cases of Neptunians who settled land well before this date, especially in Norfolk Island.} It is fair to conclude that male and female access to land was not proportionally equal. With the arrival of the Second Fleet, Phillip received amended instructions aimed to induce the non-commissioned officers and men of the marine corps to settle in the country. As such, during the period 1790-1792 convicts, retired marines and non-commissioned officers were entitled to grants, whilst free settlers were, effectively, shut out.\footnote{Britton, History of New South Wales from the Records, 2, 112-14. Note that when free settlers did arrive in the colony in 1793 (five single men and two families) they were grated land and convict labour but had to be entirely self-sufficient, obtaining no support from the colonial government or the stores.} Land granted to emancipists included the provision of rations for twelve months, tools, seed and stock from the public store.\footnote{Ibid., 112-13. It must be noted that emancipists could, and did, apply for rationing on an extended basis.} Post-1790, soldiers were allowed rations, clothing, seed-grain, tools and implements for one year and were entitled to be assigned convict labour.\footnote{Ibid., 113-14.}

The aim of these grants was to ensure the sustenance, growth and security of the colony.\footnote{Christensen et al., “Early Land Grants and Reservations: Any Lessons from the Queensland Experience for the Sustainability Challenge to Land Ownership,” 11-12. The conditions of Ruse’s grant, and others at this time stated it was: ‘free from all fees, taxes, quit-rents, and other acknowledgements, for the space of ten years from the date of these presents ... shall reside within the same and proceed to the improvement and cultivation thereof, such timber as may be growing or to grow hereafter upon the said land which may be deemed fit for naval purposes to be reserved for the use of the Crown, and paying an annual quit-rent ... after the expiration of the term or time of ten years before mentioned. ’ The reservation of timber envisioned the need for supply for a naval fleet. The condition specifying that land as to be improved and cultivated aimed at ensuring the emancipist remained in the colony and could work towards self-sufficiency. All grants by their very nature, aimed at growing the area of settlement and the colony.} However, even during these early years, the land grant system was, according to Philip McMichael, also instrumental in the creation of a domestic market.\footnote{McMichael, Settlers and the Agrarian Question: Capitalism in Colonial Australia, 44.} With food in short supply and an unreliable arrival of supply ships, Phillip was left with no alternative than to substitute private production incentives by promising a guaranteed market in the commissariat store.\footnote{Ibid.} In exchange for farm produce, farmers received a store receipt, thus representing ‘an early form of trading capital … and establishing
farmers as petty commodity producers.³⁴⁴ Sarah Woolley, Elizabeth Wood and Hannah Hawkins were amongst the Neptunians able to sell back to the stores in these nascent years of agricultural development, thereby contributing to the colony's early economic development.

By the end of 1792 twenty-three Neptunians (38%) were on their own land-holdings (or with their partner on land), and a further sixteen (26%) are likely to have assumed ownership of urban land independently or with their partners. In their lifetimes forty-five, or 74% of Neptunians, farmed the land. During the period 1788-1792, convicts were provided with land-ownership opportunities not enjoyed by later convicts nor available to their peers in Britain. This resulted from the urgent need for food production, but so too was agricultural labour perceived as part of the redemptive process for convicts, all the while serving the larger demands of colonialism to occupy the land.

Land settlement provided women with an independence and agency that belied the economic and legal constraints associated with their status, gender and class. This occurred in an infant colony lacking a formal legal structure to regulate and restrict land ownership. It was driven by the need for as many colonists as possible to be producing as much food as possible, regardless of status and gender. The result was an informality that worked in the favour of these early convict women, making them beneficiaries of settler colonisation’s drive for both land ownership and increased agricultural production.

In the ‘big picture’ of colonisation, it was the role of settlers to transform the ‘wilderness’ through agricultural ‘improvement’, which in turn would lead, in the words of John Gascoigne, to increased self-sufficiency and eventual contribution to the export market.³⁴⁵ Phillip, according to archaeologist Mary Casey, regarded this transformation

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 44-45.
as the ‘progress of empire.’

Farming was idealised, representing the medium and the reward for ‘civic virtue and moral progress’, transforming the ‘disordered, dependent, licentious convict body… to independent, self-disciplined and … morally virtuous’ colonists.

Contrasting these noble visions of the transformative power of agriculture, was the reality of the constant battle with famine that resulted in an obsession-like focus on agriculture for mere survival. The population was relatively small, but the need for food was critical and finding good agricultural land to farm was, in the absence of supply ships and with limited knowledge of native foods, the only remedy to starvation.

We know that native foods were used to complement the convict diet. ‘Looking for greens’ and ‘a few herbs’ to make tea was a regular activity carried out by convicts.

The journal of First Fleet surgeon, George Worgan indicates both a curiosity about, and appreciation of, native foods:

As to the Shrubs and Plants and Herbs of this Country … Among the useful we have discovered, Balm, Parsley, Samphire, Sorrel, & a kind of Spinage, but, all indifferent in kind a Shrub bearing a Fruitlike a Sloe, and here is a Fruit which tastes exactly like the Currant when green, but these Fruits are scarce.

He describes hunting expeditions where ‘Emew [sic], Quails, Pidgeons, Doves, Plover, Cockatoos, Beautiful Parrots, Loriquets, Crows, Hawks, and a variety of other hunting birds were shot by our shooting Parties’, all, it must be noted, taken without the permission of First Peoples.

Tench reflects a more disdainful attitude, stating that,
with the exception of ‘sweet tea … and the common orchis root’, the ‘esculent vegetables, and wild fruits (are) too contemptable to deserve notice.’

Settlers did experiment with native foods, making use of natural resources, including kangaroo and the native currant, a gooseberry substitute with antiscorbutic qualities high in vitamin C. Despite this, the use of native foods failed to alleviate the impact of famine or replace European agriculture as the chief source of food. Convicts often found native foods unpalatable and, given that illness and even death resulted from experimentation, felt a degree of trepidation in the harvesting and use of indigenous plants. Cherry Ripe claims that it was arrogance and blatant disregard of Indigenous food sources that brought the colony to the brink of starvation during these early years. Jacqui Newling argues that settlers were successful in supplementing rations with native foods. However, she challenges suggestions that the use of native foods during these early years reduced the effect of famine, pointing out that the Eora themselves suffered food shortages during the drought. Charmaine O’Brien claims that colonial officials restricted experimentation with native foods, preferring convicts to retain a dependence on rations in order to reduce the risk of absconding.

Overall, it seems that native foods weren’t suited to the administrative system that formed the colonising model for New South Wales — a model based on a European-

352 Tench, Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 263, 145, 305.

Sweet tea was a creeper found growing on rocks, which, on infusion in hot water, produced a tea with a sweet, astringent taste. It was universally consumed and was beneficial to health, proving effective against scurvy. Due to its popularity it was over-harvested, becoming scarce in the area around the Sydney settlement.

Charmaine O’Brien, The Colonial Kitchen: Australia 1788-1901 (Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 30 - 31. O’Brien states that the Eora Peoples chewed the root of the native orchid to relieve diarrhea and suggests that Tench may have observed this and copied the custom. A drink made by dried, pulverised orchid root may also have been used in the hospital as it was considered to have beneficial properties.

353 Alan Frost, Botany Bay Mirages: Illusions of Australia’s Convict Beginnings (Melbourne University Press, 1994), 223. Frost believes access to this berry contributed to Sydney convicts keeping better health than others.

354 O’Brien, The Colonial Kitchen: Australia 1788-1901, 31. O’Brien states that a root vegetable, similar to horseradish, was palatable but resulted in intestinal cramps and nausea, whilst a convict was reported to have died from eating a native nut.

355 Cherry Ripe, Goodbye Culinary Cringe (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1996).


357 ibid., 43.

style agricultural settlement. Colonialism tended to favour a diet based on the familiar — foods that were integral to colonial world trade and agricultural economic expansion. As such, there may never have been an intention for native foods to be any more than a supplement to the accepted British diet. The settlement, therefore, retained a dependence upon the store-ships from England, on the meagre and decreasing stores of grain and on the vegetables grown in the colony.

The years 1788-1792 pre-dated the arrival of free settlers so it was convicts who became the first landholders. So important was their role that, ‘wherever new settlements were made, whatever fields were broken, English settlement in Australia rested on its convicts.’ Neptunians Rachel Watkins, Elizabeth Smith, Sarah Fielder, Ann Carey, Sarah Woolley, Hannah Hawkins, Mary (Molly) Morgan, Elizabeth Rymes, and Ellen Gott all worked grants of land in their own names during their lifetimes. This equates to fifteen percent of the Neptunians being grantees, a figure significantly higher than Sharon Morgan’s cited figure of four percent of grantees being women.

**Self-sufficiency and its importance to the Neptunians**

Self-sufficiency was the farmer’s mark of agricultural success. Neptunian Elizabeth Rymes and her husband Matthew Everingham were, for example, by October 1792, able to predict that in three months they could maintain themselves and their family ‘Independent of the public store.’ Their pride in that achievement and their anticipation of its attainment, was tangible, as it would have been for the majority of settlers. The Everinghams’ farm was located at The Ponds, on the land of the Darug Peoples, occupied as part of the first wave of expansion that occurred before the end of 1792. Despite the spread of settlement, the situation in the colony remained dire.

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361 Sharon Morgan, *Land Settlement in Early Tasmania: Creating an Antipodean England* (Melbourne, Vict.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 25. The cited average is relevant to this comparison, as this statistic relates to land ownership throughout the lives of the Neptunians, the last of whom died in 1857. The comparison of 4% is contemporary to this period.
363 The Ponds was named after its location that featured a natural chain of ponds.
Having farming land was no guarantee of success. Settlers struggled as a result of their inexperience and farmers were defeated by flood, fire, isolation and lack of farming equipment. Frontier conflict also contributed to some settlers abandoning the land they had appropriated.365

Given the challenges these early farmers faced, Governor Phillip understood the importance of self-improvement and motivation in the pursuit of agricultural success, acknowledging that, only with convicts working their own ground could agricultural output increase. The letters of Matthew Everingham reveal that, in the first six months on their grant at The Ponds, everything seemed to ‘run against’ their success.366 Their ‘crop failed’, their ‘Daughter died’ and his wife, Neptunian Elizabeth Rymes’ health

Kass, Liston and McClymont state that the 50 acre Everingham farm was ‘roughly bounded by today’s Delaware and Bartlett Streets, Spurway and Bennett's Roads.’ They emphasise that ‘it was always a struggle for the couple to endure the poor soil and succession of poor harvests caused by indifferent weather.’ Kass, Liston, and McClymont, Parramatta: A Past Revealed, 32.

Governors’ Despatches to and from England, "A Return of Land in Cultivation at the Different Settlements 16th October 1792,” ed. Series 1 Historical Records of Australia (1792). The 1792 Return of Land Cultivation shows this expansion to have included The Ponds, Parramatta, Prospect Hill, the Northern Boundary farms, The Field of Mars and The Eastern Farms.

Britton, History of New South Wales from the Records, 2, 31. There remained a chronic shortage of food and agricultural implements, a severe lack of clothing, especially for the women, and almost no livestock.Britton claims that the convicts, male and female, were half-naked as well as half-starved, and ‘with difficulty pieced together rags to cover their nakedness.’

Jane E Elliott, "The Colonies Clothed: A Survey of Consumer Interests in New South Wales and Victoria, 1787-1887" (University of Adelaide, Department of History, 1988). Elliott's work comprehensively analyses the reasons why early convict women were so poorly resourced in regard to clothing.

Tench, Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 251. Observations made by Watkin Tench in December 1791, regarding the early settlers at Prospect Hill, perhaps provide the greatest insight into the challenges early farmers faced: 'Some I found tranquil and determined to persevere, provided encouragement should be given. Others were in a state of despondency, and predicted that they should starve unless the period of eighteen months during which they are to be clothed and fed, should be extended to three years…They have at present little in the ground besides maize, and that looks not very promising. Some small patches of wheat which I saw are miserable indeed. The greatest part of the land I think but indifferent, being light and stoney. Of the thirteen farms ten are unprovided with water; and at some of them they are obliged to fetch this necessary article from the distance of a mile and a half. All the settlers complain sadly of being frequently robbed by the runaway convicts, who plunder them incessantly.'

Our knowledge of the Everinghams is rich due to the fact that there exist three letters, written by Everingham during the period 1792 to 1796.

Ross, The Everingham Letterbook. Letters of a First Fleet Convict.
failed, with Everingham writing: ‘my wife hung on my hands very ill.’ Here is rare first-hand evidence of the struggles of early white settlers — not merely challenges associated with drought, crop failure and starvation, but the personal challenges of death and distress. Matthew and Elizabeth’s story ‘humanises’ the colonising experience. The couple were also affected by ‘not having any supply in time from England’ resulting in ‘the whole Colony almost starving.’ Matthew and Elizabeth were Londoners, and neither had rural skills. Tench, during his 1791 visit to The Ponds, predicted that the couple would have little prospect of success in farming.

Despite this, Elizabeth and her husband thrived in their pursuit of agriculture. Matthew acknowledged his success was ‘due to having an agreeable partner’ but also to the fact that they had ‘Youth on [our] side’ and were ‘pretty well inured to hard work.’ Matthew wrote that he and Elizabeth soon had:

5 acres of Indian Corn one of English wheat about half an Acre of Barley Pumkins Melons callavans [?] are in abundance, all seem to thrive well. I have two Sows big with Piggs some poultry and a hive of this Country’s bees they are exceedingly small.

The issue of self-sufficiency warrants greater emphasis in the convict historiography. Being able to support yourself and your family represented tangible evidence that the investment of time and effort in farming had paid off.

367 Ibid., 35 - 36.
368 Ibid.
369 Everingham had been born in London and convicted aged 16 years, so he had not lived in rural areas prior to transportation. His Neptunian partner, Elizabeth, was also a Londoner and arrested aged just 15 or 16. Whilst 43% of Neptunians, were Londoners, Meredith and Oxley stress that it is wrong to dismiss convicts sentenced in urban centres as having few rural skills. They may have moved to London, for example, from elsewhere. Their data reveals that farm labourers, farm servants, ploughmen, grooms and country servants made up 18.6% of transportees. Meredith and Oxley, "The Convict Economy," 107-8.
370 Tench, Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 253-4. Tench wrote of Everingham: ‘The attorney’s clerk I thought out of his province: I dare believe that he finds cultivating his own land, not half so easy a task, as he formerly found … stringing together volumes of tautology….’
372 Ibid., 36-37.
Colonisation relied on convicts, like Elizabeth Rymes, remaining in the colony.\textsuperscript{373} Given that the Neptunians were reluctant settlers, banished unwillingly to the colony, the transition to an acceptance of permanent settlement was absolutely essential to the process of settler colonisation.\textsuperscript{374} Land ownership was pivotal, therefore, both to ensuring that there was initiative for emancipists to remain and to realising the Antipodean ideal of an agrarian-based settler society.\textsuperscript{375} Bonding with the land and gaining a sense of belonging was achieved through the process of creating homes, gardens and farms, spaces where settlers, and very often women settlers, could express a very intimate sense of attachment to place as part of the settlement process.\textsuperscript{376}

A woman’s sense of belonging to her created space can be deep. This almost-philosophical concept taps into research, including that on property and personhood, which sits on the periphery of this thesis. Margaret Radin’s research, for example, indicates that, to achieve proper self-development — to be a person — and to flourish, an individual needs control over resources in the external environment, namely property rights.\textsuperscript{377} In this settler colonial society, property ownership represented stability and

\begin{itemize}
\item The concept of settlement assumes that white settlers were the first settlers and that only Europeans ‘settle’, thereby ignoring the settlement of the First Peoples. For the purposes of this thesis, the term settler is used in relation to the process of settlement of white settlers, and in particular the Neptunians, whilst in no way ignoring the fact that the land had been settled by Aboriginal Peoples.
\item Banishment is a concept with interesting connotations and ramifications to this study. There is little doubt that the majority of convicts were the unwilling victims of the settler colonisation process, brought to the colony by force. As part of this process of conviction and transportation the convict ‘forfeits all his property as well as his liberty — that he has no legal rights.’ Transportation equated to a total loss of any property and possessions, adding complete dispossession to exile. Michael Powell, "The Clanking of Medieval Chains: Extra-Judicial Banishment in the British Empire," \textit{The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History} (2016): 352, 55.
\item "Australasian Politics," \textit{Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser}, 22 November 1826.
\item Reid, \textit{Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia}, 18.
\end{itemize}
civilization.\textsuperscript{378} For the settlers, land ownership represented livelihood and permanence, and their labours indicated a commitment to stay.\textsuperscript{379}

\textsuperscript{378} Waterhouse claims that 'civilisation' was settled and agricultural, whilst 'uncivilised' culture was associated with the hunter gather nomadic societies. Waterhouse, "The Yeoman Ideal and Australian Experience, 1860-1960," 443.

\textsuperscript{379} Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 394.
The Neptunians as sturdy yeoman farmers. Elizabeth Smith, a pioneer settler of Prospect  

At the very heart of settler colonialism lay the ideal of the sturdy yeoman farmer. Extension of the frontier was the embodiment of the patriarchal colonial system, regarded as a largely male domain. The Neptunians, whose stories reveal them to have been settlers, either in their own right or with their partners, disproved the perception that women were, quite simply, ‘incapable of cultivating land.’

Despite the limitations, it is possible to discover Neptunians as landed settlers using Family History methodology. In doing so we also acknowledge the multiple roles women filled — as agricultural worker, homemaker, partner, mother, neighbour, midwife and business-woman.

Elizabeth Smith’s story is one of a previously unacknowledged land-holder and pioneer settler of the Prospect District, a woman who was hard-working, adaptive and clever. In the 1800-1802 Muster, Elizabeth Smith is listed as having a grant by purchase in Prospect, settled on February 22nd 1792. Elizabeth is recorded as living alone on the grant and as being off stores (self-supporting), with fifteen acres of maize planted and owning three pigs. It remains to establish how Elizabeth could have afforded a land purchase, given that her sentence did not expire until 1796. A viable explanation is that the land was bought on her behalf. The key to this mystery lies in a baptismal entry for Harriot Davey, born June 13th 1793 and baptised August 19th 1793 at St Phillip’s.

Landholding and agriculture in the Sydney area will be addressed separately as it involves a variant land-ownership system.

Lawrence and Davies, for example, discuss the fact that the early land grants to convicts and the issuing to them of supplies — including tools, seeds and rations — were early expressions of the yeoman ideal based on the notion of the sturdy, independent farmer. Susan Lawrence and Peter Davies, An Archaeology of Australia since 1788 (New York, NY: Springer Science & Business Media, 2010).

Lachlan Macquarie to Eliza Walsh, 19 January 1821, "Memorials Received from Individuals Relating to Land," ed. Colonial Secretary’s Department (1810-1826), Reel 1070.


This means that her grant was made at the same time as the Everingham’s and the Ramsay’s and therefore was amongst the colony’s earliest grants. Elizabeth is referred to as Mrs Elizabeth Smith in several colonial documents and in this case the prefix Mrs might have been to enhance her respectability.
Her parents are listed as Thomas Davey and Elizabeth Smith. Thomas Davey was First Lieutenant in the Royal Marines, a man from a respectable background who arrived with the First Fleet and left Port Jackson at the end of 1792. Elizabeth, a *Neptunian*, appears to have lost her daughter in infancy, as there are no further records for Harriot in the colonial archive.

The early histories of Prospect make no mention of Elizabeth Smith as an early white settler of the region; however, a series of land transactions validate this. The era 1788-1792 was characterised by haphazard land records, especially when land was sold by failed original grantees, as was the case here. Often the only way land ownership can be established is through its later sale. The first mention of Elizabeth’s land, dated January 4th 1818, formalises her ownership of a property called Silverthorn’s Farm, for which she paid twenty pounds sterling.

![Image of land document]

Elizabeth Smith’s formalisation of her ownership of ‘Silverthorn’s Farm’, January 4th 1818.  

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384 This is a transcribed entry on Ancestry.com. Its original source is listed as the transcriptions of the Mormons *Australia, Births and Baptisms, 1792-1981*, FHL Film number 993949 but the birth entry is NSW Government, "New South Wales Registry of Births, Death & Marriages." V1793288 1A

385 Davey, therefore, left the colony whilst Elizabeth was pregnant. Davey later became Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen’s Land (1813 – 1817).

386 We know from evidence given by Elizabeth Smith in a court hearing in 1791, that she acted as a washerwoman to Assistant Surgeon John Harris, and it is possible she may also have acted in this same capacity for Davey. "Mary White. Theft. Trial."
It is indisputable that this was *Neptunian* Elizabeth Smith, as one of the witnesses to this transaction was her then partner, Thomas Rushton. On February 5th 1818, Elizabeth sold Silverthorn’s Farm along with a thirty-acre property known as O’Crofts Farm, which neighboured Silverthorn’s, for £60 sterling. O’Croft’s would have been the land purchased by Thomas Davey from the original grantee, John O’Croft, in recognition of his relationship with Elizabeth. Silverthorn’s Farm must have been purchased by Elizabeth after 1793, from its second owners, William Butler and George Lisk, thereby revealing Elizabeth as an active farmer engaged in property expansion. This firmly establishes Elizabeth Smith as the first woman to run her own property in the Prospect District. Elizabeth continued to prove herself a capable business woman, partnering with colonial brewer, Thomas Rushton and, in later years, working with him on his landholdings and in his breweries.

**The Neptunians as landholders on Norfolk Island**

In order to escalate farming and food production, land holdings on Norfolk Island were made available to a greater number of the convicts at an earlier date than on the mainland, with town lots and larger rural holdings probably settled as early as 1790 and formally recorded from 1791.

Rachel Watkins was one of the twenty-one *Neptunians* (or 34%) sent to Norfolk Island five weeks after arriving at Sydney Cove. By 1792, there were fifty landholders on Norfolk Island, eleven of them *Neptunians* and their partners. Described by Flynn as ‘an energetic and independent woman’, Rachael was granted land in Charlotte Field,

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John Silverthorn, a weaver, was one of the first group of thirteen ex-convicts granted land at Prospect Hill in 1791. Silverthorn sold his grant on January 7th 1793 to William Butler and George Lisk. It would then have been sold by them to Elizabeth, in her own right. I can find no record of O’Croft as an early settler of Prospect or of him as a convict, yet an early map of the district clearly shows the two neighbouring properties belonging to Silverthorn and O’Croft. Other women settled in the district with their husbands who received land grants in 1791. Mike Spathaky, "Prospect Hill Settlers." http://www.spathaky.name/prospecthill/history/settlers.htm.

389 On April 5th 1791, formalisation of these holdings began, with grants of sixty-acres registered to thirty-nine settlers. It must be noted that, during their lifetimes at least forty-four out of the sixty-one *Neptunians* spent time working the land (throughout the colony).

390 This is a significant proportion given that, according to Roberts, there were, at that time, eighty-seven landholders in total in all three settlements. Sir Stephen H. Roberts, *History of Australian Land Settlement 1788-1920* (Melbourne, Vict.: MacMillan Co., 1969), 6.
Hannah Hawkins, and her partner Henry Taylor, exemplify that Neptunians not only attained self-sufficiency but were successful enough to be able to sell surplus produce to the public store, thereby earning income from their labours. Hannah, who left three children in England but had no colonial children, undoubtedly assisted in the farming of their one-acre lot at Sydney Town (now known as Kingston, Norfolk Island), settled by July 1791. By December of that same year they had expanded to farming twelve-acres at Queenborough, selling two sows to the public store for £5 in that year and, by 1793, selling maize to the Government. On an island beset by famine and even greater isolation than the mainland, agricultural successes, such as that demonstrated by Hannah and Henry, were both vital and significant.

Success was also evidenced through increasing agricultural holdings. Neptunian Mary Frost and Joshua Peck were co-habiting in 1791 and residing in July of that year on a Sydney Town (Norfolk Island) lot, with 106 rods cleared and ten rods of timber felled. As a result of Joshua Peck’s service as a member of the night watch for Grenville Vale, the couple received possession of twelve acres and two sows. Elizabeth Wood and her partner Edward Westlake, in a story echoing that of Mary and Joshua Peck, upsized from a one-acre Sydney Town holding granted by July 1791, to a twenty-four-acre grant (1793) as a result of Edward’s valued work in the night patrol at Arthur’s Vale. Through hard work and enterprise, this family of three had two sows, a cock and six hens, were off stores for grain and by May 1793 off stores for meat and selling grain to the stores. By October 1793 they had cultivated four of their twenty-four acres and continued to expand and thrive in their farming venture.

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393 Flynn, *The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790*, 596. The sow was shared with First Fleet convicts Jeremiah Leary and Joseph Paget, who also had plots at Queenborough.

It is important to note the emphasis on recording self-sufficiency as well as sales of produce to the public store in the official records, both regarded as significant achievements in early colonial society. These records are contained in The State Archives & Records, New South
Elizabeth and Richard Slaney’s sixty-acre land grant was number 23 on this map.  

Elizabeth Baker and Richard Slaney’s story highlights aspects of the history of early convict land grants on Norfolk Island. Both Elizabeth and Richard were transported aboard the *Neptune* and both arrived on Norfolk Island in August 1790. From early 1791, the couple were cultivating a small land-holding near Sydney Town. This holding of roughly an acre, was part of Major Ross’ initiative to encourage self-sufficiency through the granting of land on condition of a reduction in provisions from the government stores. In a move that reveals much about the power held by convict
settlers during these early years, Ross’ plan was aborted after a petition containing 158 convict signatures was presented to Philip Gidley King in November 1791, decrying the plan as ‘a compulsory rather than a voluntary incentive scheme.’ Convicts further claimed that it would be impossible to attain self-sufficiency in the time allotted in the grant conditions.  

By February 1792, Elizabeth and Richard Slaney had a holding of six-acres-thirty-rods that they worked together. This land grant corresponded to a flourishing and an extension of agriculture on the Island, with ‘start up’ allowances of food rations for twelve to eighteen months, assistance with house construction and an allocation of pigs from the government stock. The couple remained childless and through their combined labour extended their holding to sixty-acres by 1796. Their success as settlers and farmers was achieved through a strong working partnership. Elizabeth and Richard Slaney’s story of success is replicated for fellow Norfolk Island settlers Sarah Woolley and husband John Ryan; Jane Reid and her husband William Davis; Mary Cragg and Thomas Murphy; and Mary Shultz and Martin Searl. 

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Studies, The Australian National University, 1988). This initiative aimed at encouraging convicts on the path to self-sufficiency. In 1791 Major Ross promulgated a scheme, known as the ‘acre plan.’ He excused convicts from two-day’s labour a week to enable them to ‘clear and cultivate land (at the rate of one acre per convict) and raise pigs and poultry for their own benefit.’ There would be a gradual reduction in allocated stores with the aim being to eliminate flour rations entirely by March 1792. Despite Ross’ plan appearing to be a practical solution to the issue of famine and the need for agriculture to supplement rations, it was deeply unpopular. A petition, presented to Philip Gidley King in November 1791, decried the plan and it was aborted.

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By July 1791 the couple were on a ten-acre farm at Queenborough, with 50 rods cleared and 3 rods of timber felled. Both Sarah and John received a pig under Major Ross’ scheme to enhance self-sufficiency. By December 1791 on 10 acres at Mt Pitt Path Queenborough and were selling grain to the public stores within a year. Both left the Island to settle in the Hawkesbury, with Sarah later receiving a land grant in her own name. 

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Neptunian Jane Reid and her husband William Davis were married a month after landing. From early 1791 they cultivated land at Charlotte Field (Queenborough) and by July 1st of that year had cleared 112 rods. They were issued with a sow in February 1792. The couple had two
Urban Landholdings and ‘Naked Possession’

Land settlement was not, of course, confined to rural areas. Neptunian Sarah Fielder and her convict husband, William, like the majority (85%) of residents in Sydney and Parramatta, had no official lease for their land. Theirs was occupancy by Naked Possession. Naked Possession was integral to both colonisation and dispossession, in that it was a common means of white settlers taking possession of Indigenous lands. It was associated with the very early years of colonial settlement, pre-dating any kind of legal ‘title’ and occurring prior to an effective systematisation of land grants.


Mary and Thomas were married on July 31st 1790 before departing for Norfolk Island. They settled firstly at Charlotte Field (Queenborough), being issued with a sow in February 1791. By July 1791 Mary and Thomas had their own hut at Queenborough and had cleared 100 rods of land. They were partly self-supporting by March 1792. Mary and Thomas remained on the Island, increasing their holding to 16 acres by 1807 when they were forcibly transferred to Van Diemen’s Land. Ibid., 452.

Both were transported aboard the Neptune and married five weeks after landing and just prior to departing for Norfolk Island. The couple settled on small plot of land at Charlotte Field (Queenborough) and in February 1791 were issued with a sow that they shared with First Fleet Afro-American convict, John Coffin. Searl worked on Government tasks with time off to work his own land. He received 100 lashes for disrespect towards Thomas Doidge in June 1791. In that same month, the couple were recorded as having one acre of land cleared. They remained on the land until after1796 when it is likely that they returned to England. Ibid., 517, 28.

Neptunian Ann White and her partner, John Scott, also went to Norfolk Island but left no records of land possession so their situtaion whilst on the Island remains undocumented. Ibid., 605.

It was Lachlan Macquarie who, in an attempt to formalise land ownership and guarantee the rights of land-holders, ratified the town leases, effectively making the early settlers private land-owners.


It is not to be confused with Native Title.

It was not until 1802 that a register was provided by the Judge Advocate and parties encouraged, but not mandated, to place their land dealings on record.
Naked Possession occurred, in Sir William Blackstone’s words: when ‘one man invades the possession of another, and by force or surprise turns him out of the occupation of his lands (disseisin).’ Despite Blackstone’s definition applying to a different context, it remains relevant in that colonial naked possession was a consequence of invasion, the taking and occupying of land by white settlers, as part of the settler colonisation process. Despite the Crown assuming ‘ownership’ of all land through colonial possession, Naked Possession, ‘the lowest and most imperfect degree of title’, did result in ownership rights.

It was the ordinary settlers, according to Proudfoot, who ‘squatted, establishing their claims by custom and precedence, their tenure illegal until a rudimentary leasehold

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410 William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England, vol. 2 (Collins & Hannay, 1830), 86. Sir William Blackstone published his influential treatise on English common law in 1765. It was regarded as the leading work on the development of English law and played a role in the development of the American legal system.

Kercher writes: 'Blackstone's multi-volume Commentaries were the most important law books carried on the First Fleet in 1788... They were the most convenient summary of the scattered sources of English law. More than that, they soon acquired such authority that they were treated as reverently as any superior court judgement. In the frontier period at Sydney Cove when the only lawyers were convicts, the possession of the latest edition of Blackstone was almost as good as a qualification in law.' Kercher, An Unruly Child: A History of Law in Australia, xii.

411 Unfortunately, in the case of the assumption of lands from First Peoples, the standard recourse against deprivation of seisin, namely through legal remedies, was not available so lands were permanently devested into white ownership.


Lieutenant James Cook took possession of what is now Australia, describing the continent as follows: ‘We are to Consider that we see this Country in the pure State of Nature, the Industry of Man has had nothing to do with any part of it and yet we find all such things as nature has bestowed upon it in a flourishing state.’ The concept of terra nullius did not deny the existence of First Peoples, but justified colonisation by denying ownership. [Buchan and Heath] Possession, according to Kercher, was deemed to have been ‘peaceful’ settlement (as opposed to by conquest or cession by the original occupants). This was not merely theoretical ‘ownership’ of the continent. All land was deemed to be in possession of the Crown until it was disposed of and the only legitimate land title was an estate held with permission of the Crown. In the words of Kercher, ‘the notion that the land as empty implied that any people who had previously wandered on it had done so without rights or laws.’ [Kercher] So First People were not deemed to have right by occupation. The land could be occupied in whatever way was deemed appropriate by the English. That including forming settlements and, by extension, settling convicts. In this early era — when land law and land title were effectively non-existent — convicts built dwellings on Crown land and, after time, assumed its ownership. This audacious policy did, in effect, contradict imperial land policy (in the same way as squatting). The difference seems to have that land occupied by white settlers (and squatters) was acceptable but land occupied by First Peoples was not.


system evolved. \textsuperscript{413} Blackstone concludes that ‘actual possession is, prima facie, evidence of a legal title in the possessor and it may … by degrees ripen into a perfect and indefeasible title.’ \textsuperscript{414}

The early settlers benefitted greatly from assuming ownership of land by Naked Possession. Convicts, who had never dreamed of land ownership, found themselves, not in a gaol, but in a hut on land that they considered theirs. They became urban land owners. Naked Possession was advantageous for convict women, as there was no formal legal application process, no disadvantage based on gender, lack of empowerment or illiteracy. ‘Ownership’ was not reliant on patriarchal approval. Having their own land and hut necessitated convicts being dismissed from government work at 3pm to tend their homes and vegetable gardens. They had autonomy over their domestic routines including what meals they ate and their meal and sleep times. Their lives lacked the regimentation and institutionalisation that was later enforced through the Female Factory and, for male convicts, Hyde Park Barracks. \textsuperscript{415} This vital characteristic is lost in those studies that present a homogenous picture of penal life, yet are vital to our perceptions of this early era as unique in the history of convictism.

Colonialism benefitted from Naked Possession too. In 1806, eighty-six percent of the population still occupied their properties by Naked Possession. \textsuperscript{416} With homes equating to settlement and settlement representing the success of colonisation, this initial land-grab was highly successful in entrenching the process of white land procurement. \textsuperscript{417}

Naked Possession facilitated convict ‘ownership’ of urban landholdings and embedding a sense of belonging. It is both significant and ironic that First Peoples were not

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\textsuperscript{413} Proudfoot, "Fixing the Settlement Upon a Savage Shore: Planning and Building," 65.
\textsuperscript{416} Karskens, "Naked Possession: Building and the Politics of Legitimate Occupancy in Early New South Wales, Australia," 346.
\textsuperscript{417} Stephen H. Roberts, \textit{History of Australian Land Settlement 1788-1920}, (Abington, Oxfordshire, UK: Frank Cass & Co Ltd., 1924). 38. This statistic represents the total number of acres held by Naked Possession in 1821 when Governor Brisbane began the task of rectifying the issues caused by Naked Possession.
recognised as holding the land through possession, the process serving the needs of the coloniser, not the colonised.\textsuperscript{418}

**Sarah and William Fielder’s urban holding at The Rocks**

Vegetable gardens were an important feature of urban holdings, vital in supplementing the colonists’ diet during these famine years. *Neptunian* Sarah Fielder and husband William Fielder’s holding at The Rocks contained a garden that, by 1810, was described as ‘second-to-none.’\textsuperscript{419} The large blocks of land surrounding each hut, provided opportunities few had experienced in Britain.\textsuperscript{420} Settlers now had enough space to grow their own vegetables as well as more decorative plants as their gardens became more established.\textsuperscript{421} These gardens offered an important arena for convict autonomy and a focus for their colonial aspirations.\textsuperscript{422}

Given the rocky sandstone and sandy soils, Sarah and William’s garden represented a triumph over the harsh landscape of The Rocks. They had spent much time since 1790 composting and tending the soil, the improved loam perfect for growing the vegetables they became renowned for.\textsuperscript{423} William was known far and wide for an expertise in gardening that earned him the nickname ‘Jack the gardener.’ He grew an extensive

\textsuperscript{418} Karen L Whitney, "Dually Disadvantaged: The Impact of Anglo-European Law on Indigenous Australian Women," *James Cook UL Rev.* 4 (1997): 22. This situation arose through the fact that common law recognises only that title held by the Crown and the Crown assumed title through settling what was inaccurately deemed a previously unoccupied land.

\textsuperscript{419} "To Be Sold by Private Contract," *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 26 May 1810.

\textsuperscript{420} Information on block-sizes in the early colony vary. Mention is made by Lloyd of quarter-acre blocks, which may be correct given that house-sizes were small, allowing more room for crop growing.


\textsuperscript{422} Lloyd, "Joys of the Cottage: Labourers’ Houses, Hovels and Huts in Britain and the British Colonies, 1770–1830," 12.

range of vegetables — including radish, turnip, watercress, cabbage, peas and beans — as well as more than 100 orange, lemon and other fruit trees.\textsuperscript{424} The couple earned a good living from the sale of their surplus produce, but they also ran a licensed premises from their property, selling ale and rum to The Rocks locals. Theirs had been one of the first public houses opened in the area.\textsuperscript{425} They were proud of their home, garden and business and the wonderful site it commanded.\textsuperscript{426}

Rare insight into the Fielder’s landholding is provided in an early colonial painting that Karskens is confident shows the Fielder property.\textsuperscript{427} Walter Preston’s artwork (below), whilst painted several years after 1792, is valuable in showing the context of urban gardens. Sarah and William’s property, (left foreground) is laid out with defined garden beds and surrounded by a picket fence that acted, according to Paul Carter, as a symbolic boundary associated with ownership and settler colonialism.\textsuperscript{428} This painting highlights the rural feel of The Rocks, with homes having large grounds, gardens and orchards. During these years of famine, urban homes relied on these large blocks and gardens to provide vegetables and fruit for everyday food.

\textsuperscript{424} Karskens, "Revisiting the Worldview: The Archaeology of Convict Households in Sydney’s Rocks Neighborhood," 42.

"To Be Sold by Private Contract."


"To Be Sold by Private Contract."


The town of Sydney remained small, containing about 260 households distributed between the South Street area (about 70 households – now O’Connell Street), the upper High Street area (about 110 households – now George Street) and The Rocks (about 80 households). Other Neptunians who I believe assumed urban land ownership in Sydney were Ann Baker and John Boxley; Kezia Brown and William Roberts; Margaret Clarke and William Mashman; Elizabeth Connor, the free wife of convict Walter Preston, View of Part of the River of Sydney, in New South Wales. State Library of NSW. Album: G.H. Hammersley - Australia Illustrated.

Alan Atkinson, "Taking Possession: Sydney’s First Householders," in A Difficult Infant, Sydney before Macquarie, ed. Graeme Aplin (Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1988), 78. Atkinson is analysing the number of households in the Sydney district 1792 - 1795 and, whilst he claims that his figures are an estimation, he concludes that there were a large number of households 'in which convicts and others lived in relatively independent fashion, sheltered by timber, mud and thatch. I believe Ann and John Boxley assumed Naked Possession of land because, in 1799, they were able to purchase land at The Brickfields, possibly financed in part by the sale of a Sydney property.

In 1788 William Roberts was employed in caring for the stock of Lieutenant George Johnston at Long Cove, Port Jackson. He had a hut in the vicinity in July 1788, when there are records of his pork being stolen by Charles Gray. William and Kezia formed a partnership soon after Kezia’s arrival in 1790, and resided, as a couple, on land assumed by Naked Possession.
Michael Connor,\textsuperscript{433} Elizabeth Davis and James Sticke;\textsuperscript{434} Jane Edwards and Thomas Coldwell; Ellen Gott and Joseph Wright;\textsuperscript{435} Harriet Hodgetts, the free wife of convict Thomas Hodgetts;\textsuperscript{436} Mary (Molly) Morgan and William Morgan;\textsuperscript{437} Elizabeth Goodwin;\textsuperscript{438} Elizabeth Risam;\textsuperscript{439} and Eleanor Sandwick and George Fry.\textsuperscript{440}

**Land ownership and its links to the ‘Pioneer Legend’**

The concept of the *Neptunians* as early land-owners, working their land, establishing their families and becoming agents of settler colonisation, taps into the ‘pioneer legend.’\textsuperscript{441} This settler colonial narrative portrays, as Furniss outlines, the heroic struggle of man versus nature; civilisation versus savagery; European settler versus hostile native and even heroic pioneer versus tyrannical government.\textsuperscript{442}

The pioneer story is a paternalistic one, and legendary for what it omits, namely that women and children were also pioneers.\textsuperscript{443} Family historians, of which I am one, tend to ‘romanticise’ their colonial ancestors. My romanticising was focussed on *Neptunian*

\textsuperscript{433} As a convict, Michael Connor would have laboured for the Government. Elizabeth, as a free woman, would have been a homemaker and caregiver.
\textsuperscript{434} Sticke was a cordwainer (shoemaker) by trade so did have valued skills. Flynn, *The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790*, 553.
\textsuperscript{435} Ellen and Joseph married in Sydney 30\textsuperscript{th} December 1790. They remained in Sydney for three years before moving to the Parramatta then Hawkesbury district.
\textsuperscript{436} Thomas Hodgetts, like George Fry, worked as a blacksmith, a vital occupation in the colony. The couple lived in Sydney for at least ten years, owning their property by Naked Possession seeing no land grants exist.
\textsuperscript{437} William arrived aboard the *Neptune* as a private of the NSW Corps. As such Molly would have lived with William in Sydney, most likely in a home on land assumed by Naked Possession.
\textsuperscript{438} Little is known of Elizabeth prior to 1811 when she was described as a widow living in Sydney.
\textsuperscript{439} Elizabeth appears to have remained childless and unmarried. She is recorded as self-employed in 1806 and I believe remained in Sydney throughout her time in the colony. Given her status she may have been one of the single women to have benefited from Naked Possession.
\textsuperscript{440} George Fry was a blacksmith and as such had very valuable skills in the colony. The 1801 Settlers Muster Book lists the couple as still living in Sydney. The couple most likely had their home on land assumed by Naked Possession as there are no land grants registered to the couple.
\textsuperscript{442} Furniss, "Challenging the Myth of Indigenous Peoples’ ‘Last Stand’ in Canada and Australia: Public Discourse and the Conditions of Silence," 173.
\textsuperscript{443} Hirst claims that the pioneer legend omits mention of the social, legal or economic determinants of land settlement — their enemies being drought, fire, flood and sometimes Aborigines, and never low prices, middle-men, lack of capital or other pioneers. I believe what is omitted includes the fact that women too were pioneer settlers, and that in the pioneer legend being 'largely conservative' it is also largely sexist. Hirst, "The Pioneer Legend," 316.
Kezia Brown, my fourth-great-grandmother. Her large family of ten children, the realities of childbirth, child-rearing and home-making, firstly at The Brickfields in Sydney then later in the newly settled Hawkesbury district, instilled in me a sense of awe. There was, in my mind, the element of Kezia nobly representing the transplanting of ‘Anglo-Saxon’ characteristics to an Australian bush setting. My stereotyping of the pioneer was always associated with the land, the carving of home, sustenance and family from the bush. ‘My’ Neptunian represented the strength, hardiness and tenacity of pioneers who simultaneously, through home-making and the creation of family, softened the harshness of the bush, civilizing through the domestic of their colonial whiteness.

This civilising stereotype of the pioneer woman is too comfortable. Women’s role in the pioneer legend is, in many cases, subsumed into their domestic role that encompasses the maternal and the domestic, what Claudia Knapman describes as the ‘white angel’ in the home. Whilst the domain of the domestic warrants elevation in regards its importance to the colonial project, the legend of the pioneer, in its genderisation of roles, ignores women’s agricultural contribution and fails to consider the pioneer woman who was sole landowner and farmer.

This thesis, in exposing the female convict as landholder and agricultural worker, challenges the patriarchal pioneer concept. So too does it challenge the myth of the ‘pioneer woman’, which encompasses a female who, in the words of Mowbray, is a mother to the Australian nation, and ‘quite explicitly, mother of an Australian (white) race.’ This fails to take into account the thirty-five Neptunian pioneer women who had no surviving children. Molly Morgan, renowned pioneer and landholder in the

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445 Knapman, *White Women in Fiji, 1835–1930: The Ruin of Empire?*, Ch 7. Implying that the women's principal domestic role was to provide comfort, refinement and good food.
446 For analysis on the genderising of farm work see for example: Margaret Alston, "Farm Women and Their Work: Why Is It Not Recognised?," *Journal of Sociology* 34, no. 1 (1998).
447 Jemima Mowbray, "Examining the Myth of the Pioneer Woman," *Eras* 8 (2006): 3. It also fails to account for Mary Butler, wife of John Randall, and her four children born into a mixed-race family. Also the eight children of Jane Molloy, whose father was Jewish.
Maitland district for example, is no less the ‘pioneer women’ for the fact that she had no colonial children.  

![Image](https://example.com/image.png)


Yet the images that descendants create of their early settler female ancestors, often centre around home and children. The endpaper image (above) that appeared in my 1990 book on my fourth-great-grandparents, *Neptunian* Kezia Brown and her husband William Roberts, features a nurturing and maternal Kezia with her children surrounding her. She represents a version of colonial history that involves civilising maternalism, but almost never frontier violence.

In the pioneer myths, it is the white settler who is the battler, it is the white settler who is the victim. This establishes the context for the ‘last stand’ concept, whereby settlers struggle against Indigenous Peoples to establish ‘a tenuous hold in a new land.’ Nowhere in the myth of the ‘pioneer woman’ is there recognition of her role in frontier conflict with First Peoples, nor of her role in dispossession. Family History

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448 Tench, *Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”*, 253.
450 Mowbray, "Examining the Myth of the Pioneer Woman," 3.
451 Ibid., 6.
Methodology could be influential in deconstructing the pioneer women myth, adding reality to the conventional, somewhat less critical and more romantic portrayals, and providing insights into the white female settler’s interactions with First Peoples.

**The Neptunians as invaders and their contribution to dispossession**

It has been established that the Neptunians settled on land, either urban or rural, soon after arrival in the colony. For over 60,000 years the Gadigal Peoples of the Eora Nation have been custodians of the place now called Sydney while the Darug have occupied the inland areas from Parramatta to the Blue Mountains.453

Land occupation by white settlers was the means of assuming territory to further the goals of settler colonialism. Dispossession is defined as the forced removal of people from their land, their economic base, their way of life and their culture.454 In the case of Australia, it was facilitated through the concept of *terra nullius*, the erroneous assumption of the land belonging to nobody. *Terra nullius* implies that the land has no sovereign law or social order nor recognisable tenure in land. It also implies there to be neither existing political system nor code of law.455 David Mercer describes *terra nullius* as a ‘cruel and deliberate fiction’, one that, according to Justice Brennan, dispossessed Aborigines of their land ‘parcel by parcel, to make way for expanding colonial settlement’.456 Cliff Ogleby, states that colonisers regarded occupation of such territory as ‘a wholesome Christian thing to do’, bringing Indigenous Peoples under the wing of British paternalism.457 Dispossession was also justified through the belief that

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457 Ogleby, "Terra Nullius, the High Court and Surveyors". The High Court decision of 1992 overturned assumptions of *terra nullius*, based on the premise that the Aboriginal People demonstrated possession of the land on which they hunted, roamed, nurtured and gained sustenance.
'we’ could use the land better than ‘they’ could.⁴⁵⁸ Land appropriation remains the primary motive during this early period, as the ‘colonisers’, including the convicts, both male and female, ‘moved to establish their ascendancy.’⁴⁵⁹

The Neptunians acted as agents of that white ascendancy and of dispossession through their ownership, through grant or through occupation, of lands previously used by First Peoples. Neptunian Elizabeth Smith who, it has been shown, became an early settler of the Prospect District in 1792, occupied land belonging to the Warmuli People of the Darug nation. They were people of the woods, who shaped the landscape with fire and crafted acres of low grass on which to hunt.⁴⁶⁰ This concept of Indigenous land care is now more widely understood thanks to the research of Bill Gammage and Bruce Pascoe.⁴⁶¹ We know that in 1788, Sydney and the Rocks were 'broadly shaped', the undergrowth cleared by First Peoples, resulting in ‘tolerably free’ areas more attractive to white settlement.⁴⁶² Phillip himself noted ‘the natives so frequently setting fire to the country’ and the area was described as characterised by the ‘finest terras’s [terraces], lawns, and grottos, with distinct plantations of the tallest and most stately trees I ever saw in any nobleman’s grounds in England.'⁴⁶³ The skill and labours of First Peoples had indeed created ‘the biggest estate on earth.’

Molly Morgan, pioneer landholder and settler of the Maitland District, had what Thomas Melville Perry described as good relations with the local Aborigines, forging largely peaceful interactions with the Wonnarua Peoples.⁴⁶⁴ The Wonnarua, fisher-

⁴⁵⁸ Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 389.
⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 241-2.

It must be noted that, just as convictism requires periodisation to reflect systemic change so too does agriculture. The ‘peaceful interactions’ forged by Molly Morgan in the early years of her land occupation were symptomatic of a period of limited white settlement, where First Peoples still had access to land and resources beyond the small area of white settlement at Wallis Plains. This changed here, and in every district, once white settlement invaded whole tracts of Indigenous land. The shift from small-scale agriculture to larger-scale pastoralism changed the nature of inter-race relations dramatically.
hunter-gathers whose creation spirit Baiami is the Keeper of the [Hunter] Valley and the maker of all things, were nevertheless dispossessed of their traditional lands and their numbers decimated.\footnote{W.P. Howey, "About the Wonnarua," http://sconevetdynasty.com.au/about-the-wonnarua/.

Once free settlers moved into the Hunter region, the size of holdings increased and this necessitated increased numbers of convict labourers. This was exemplified by Molly Morgan herself. Whilst her initial land allocation at Horseshoe Bend was thirty-five acres, by 1823 she held 159 acres, and this further increased as Molly continued to purchase additional land. The decimation of the Wonnarua did not just result from battle but also from disease and starvation due to disruption of traditional Aboriginal life-style. James Wilson-Miller, "Conflict in the Valley: The Triumph of the Wonnarua" (paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education 2005 conference papers, 2005), 8.}^\footnote{Knapman, White Women in Fiji, 1835–1930: The Ruin of Empire?, Ch 7.}^\footnote{Larissa Behrendt, Finding Eliza: Power and Colonial Storytelling. (Queensland: Univ. of Queensland Press, 2016), 37.}

It has been established that across the Empire, European women were perceived as the symbol of civilisation — ‘angels in the home’ — softening the hardship of the bush.\footnote{I argue that even emancipist women were included in the ‘chaste versus savage’ narrative stereotype as evidenced in the newspaper account of the attack on Neptunian Elizabeth Rymes and her husband Matthew Everingham. The emotive, charged language used in that story contributes to the stereotyping. It must be remembered, however, that convict women historically did not command the same sentiment or appear to have the same vulnerability, nor were they symbols of domesticity, British morality or gentility. This has changed in recent times, as descendants of convicts do regard them in a different light. Reference for article on the Everinghams: "Sydney," Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (NSW : 1803 - 1842), 28.10.1804 1804.}^\footnote{Behrendt, Finding Eliza: Power and Colonial Storytelling., 38.}^\footnote{Ibid., 55.}^\footnote{Cecily Jones, “White Women in British Caribbean Plantation Societies ” The history of Slavery (2016), https://networks.h-net.org/node/11465/pages/127503/white-women-british-caribbean-plantation-societies-topical-guide.} Aboriginal legal academic and writer Larissa Behrendt, emphasises that white women were perceived as representations of Britannia, the embodiment of all that is good and right in the struggle against the savage.\footnote{\footnote{\footnote{In Finding Eliza, Behrendt contrasts the pure and chaste Eliza Fraser, the ‘white angel’, with the menacing, savage, cannibalistic natives who abuse and threaten her safety.\footnote{This valorisation of whiteness focusses on ‘them’ being the barbarians not ‘us.’\footnote{Dispossession and extermination relied on the perceived ‘natural’ right of European authority over ‘inferior’ others.\footnote{Juxtaposing Aboriginal People as ‘savages’ serves to justify both their elimination and the taking of their lands.}}}\\}}}}
Indigenous Peoples are obscured in the genealogies of our white ancestors, appearing only in narratives of Indigenous incursions onto land claimed by white settlers. This represents an enigma — the land is regarded as belonging to the white settler and First Peoples threaten that ownership. This became the settler narrativisation of colonialism.\textsuperscript{471} The forty-four Neptunians who lived on and ran farms during their lifetimes, exemplify this conundrum. Their grants, as novelist Peter Carey described it, ‘lay like a lethal patchwork on top of the true tribal lands.’\textsuperscript{472} They cleared and worked the land to achieve self-sufficiency, provide shelter and prosperity. In so doing, not only did they restrict access to land by fencing, thereby removing access by Indigenous Peoples to their food and medicinal plants, but they epitomised the ideal of settler colonialism, contributing to the cycle of settler dominance and Indigenous dispossession.

Despite the potential for Family History Methodology to deconstruct the pioneer woman myth, I would suggest, given my many years of involvement with family historians, their research and their publications, that most Australians undertaking genealogical research, fail to consider the hard truths of our past. They struggle to perceive their ancestors as invaders or acknowledging the role they played in what Kevin Rudd described as the ‘glory’ and ‘shame’ of genocide and frontier conflict.\textsuperscript{473} Genocide is, to put it mildly, a controversial concept, deterring descendants from acknowledging the role their ancestors played as aggressors and agents of change.\textsuperscript{474} Mark McKenna goes so far as to suggest that descendants are beset by a deep-seated fear of confronting the past, of acknowledging the wrongs of that past and being called to account.\textsuperscript{475} I suggest that descendants find it even harder to acknowledge the role women played in these struggles. Because battle and conflict have largely been perceived as the male domain, little attention has been given to the role of women in

\textsuperscript{472} Peter Carey, \textit{A Long Way from Home} (Clayton, Victoria: Hamish Hamilton for Penguin Books 2017), 101. This quote relates to maps of pastoral holdings, what Carey describes as maps of murder. This book makes regular reference to the horrors committed against First Peoples in a manner which is both powerful and confronting.
\textsuperscript{473} On August 27 2009, Kevin Rudd, at the launch of Thomas Keneally’s history of Australia, used the words ‘glory’ and ‘shame’ in delivering his own reflections on the History Wars, stating that there were elements of both in our complicated history.
\textsuperscript{474} Curthoys, "Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology," 3.
\textsuperscript{475} Mark McKenna, \textit{Moment of Truth. History and Australia’s Future}, vol. 69, Quarterly Essay (Carlton, Vict: Black Inc. Schwartz Publishing Pty Ltd, 2018), 15.
dispossession and conflict.

The *Neptunians’* contribution to dispossession must also be considered within the context of the tiers of colonial power. In a society of class, gender, status and race, white convict women occupied a position of power in relation to their race.\(^{476}\) Female convict settlers were not subject to the genocide and cultural decimation experienced by Indigenous Peoples.\(^{477}\) White settlers, even convicts, held a position of relative privilege and dominance, whilst First Peoples experienced oppression and loss of identity.\(^{478}\)

Dispossession must also be considered within the context of what is referred to as ‘the History Wars’, the on-going debate relating to the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples and the acceptance of, and struggle over, Indigenous dispossession and its place in Australian history.\(^{479}\) This debate witnessed controversy between the ‘positive’ view of settler colonialism and the ‘negative’, or ‘Black armband’, view of history. Keith Windschuttle’s stance — that the colonial authorities wanted to ‘civilise and modernise the Aborigines, not exterminate them’ and that their motivation was to prevent violence — does not speak for the behaviour or intent of individuals.\(^{480}\) Nor does it take into account different attitudes during different eras.


\(^{477}\) Loomba, *Colonialism-Postcolonialism*, 10.


This thesis examines five Neptunian-linked stories of interaction in light of individual intent. We cannot trivialise what Rowland describes as the ‘enormous and wide-ranging suffering’ of the real people behind the disputed statistics. The five interactions analysed in this study reveal the complexity of inter-racial interaction as well as a degree of inter-cultural bafflement and a desire, amongst some, for conciliation.481

Interactions with First Peoples

Interactions are defined as reciprocal actions whereby people react to, and communicate with, others. Interactions reveal more about individual attitudes and behaviours than societal ones, although there can be societal determinants on individual interactions. This is different to dispossession or the forced removal of people from their land and their way of life.482 As agents of colonisation, the Neptunians’ interactions shed light on their relationships with Indigenous neighbours within the context of cultural divide and dispossession.

The five encounters detailed below are explored using Family History Methodology, whereby individuals are examined within the context of their family. The Neptunians were not islands but rather operated within the shared experience of their immediate family and community. Given that women in this early period left few records, we construct their stories through the experiences they shared with others.

Alon Confino expresses the concept of sharing a memory, to minimise selective voice and recognise the ‘commingled’ experience that I believe occurred in these encounters.483 As such, three of these encounters with First Peoples are recorded through male perspective, yet in all three cases the experience would have been shared by that male’s partner. In a society where males had dominant voice, their voice can act for the woman who shared that experience, directly or indirectly. If all we have, as family historians, is a male version of events, then it is appropriate to construct

482 Arwarbukari Cultural Resource Association (ACRA), "Aboriginal Terminology".
women’s experiences from that voice rather than ignore them. This acknowledges both the privilege of male voice, a feature of colonial history, and the experiences of women. Provided the construction is acknowledged and the limitations of interpretation, bias and authenticity highlighted, restoring women to a male-centric history validates their participation and adds layers to what would otherwise be a singular, rather encompassing view of race relations.

The first example of interaction highlights issues the complex issues associated with retribution. Neptunian Mary Butler married John Randall on September 5th 1790 at Rose Hill, just three months after Mary’s arrival in the colony. Randall, a man of Afro-descent and a First Fleet convict, had attained a position of some status, attracting the patronage of the colony’s elite. He worked for Governor Phillip, Lieutenant Colonel Grose and John Hunter as game-keeper, holding this position until 1801.484

Randall’s action, in leading an unsuccessful punitive expedition in December 1790 against the Darug warrior Pemulwuy, highlights the dichotomy of race relations in the early colony. Phillip, normally driven to strive for harmony, reacted in anger to the spearing of Randall’s fellow-gamekeeper John McIntyre in December 1790. In a display of cultural misunderstanding, Phillip failed to recognise that payback was Aboriginal Law, expecting First Peoples to follow British Law.485 He also failed to accept that McIntyre had previously wounded a warrior and, as a game-keeper, encroached on Indigenous hunting-grounds. Despite McIntyre being unarmed and conciliatory when the spearing occurred, he was regarded with fear, suspicion and hatred by the Eora Peoples.486

Leaving his bride of two months at Rose Hill, Randall led a party of fifty men ‘carrying

486 Tench, for example, cites Bennelong’s response to ‘McEntire: ‘he positively forbade (him) to approach, eying him ferociously, and with every mark of horror and resentment.’ Also ‘McEntire, he continued to hold in abhorrence, and would not suffer his approach.’ Tench, *Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”*, 177, 89.
muskets, hatchets for decapitation and bags for the heads’ to the peninsula at the head of Botany Bay where Pemulwuy was suspected of being.\textsuperscript{487} The raid was unsuccessful. There were no Aboriginal deaths nor apprehensions. Despite his leading this significant reprisal, ‘Pemulwuy made no attempt to harm John Randall, who continued to openly hunt in Darug territory.’\textsuperscript{488}

This event represents an encounter rooted in retribution and violence. It also reflects the significant impact that cultural misunderstanding had on inter-racial relationships. Mary Butler may not have been directly involved in this punitive expedition but she did benefit from it. As a result of Randall’s demonstration of loyalty to the Governor in leading the expedition, Pybus suggests that Mary and John afterwards lived ‘in almost absolute independence’ within the colony and ‘enjoyed the pleasures of family life in Parramatta’ in their own separate hut.\textsuperscript{489} She regards Randall’s service to have been instrumental in establishing the couple in a life of relative advantage. As well as benefitting from Randall’s involvement in this expedition, Mary would have been aware of its intricacies and of her husband’s role in it. It would have been discussed within their household, becoming part of Mary Butler’s colonial perspective.

The second encounter highlights that the deep cultural divide and the resulting gaps in understanding between settlers and First Peoples could lead to a sense of genuine bafflement. This is exemplified in the encounter of Neptunian Rose Flood and her husband Charles Cross. The couple had married at St John’s Church Parramatta just five months after Rose’s arrival and, by 1791, were residing in the woods between Sydney and Parramatta.\textsuperscript{490} On June 12\textsuperscript{th} 1792, Cross gave evidence following the murder, by Aborigines, of a man digging wells at Prospect Hill.\textsuperscript{491} The event appears to have been in response to a shooting several days earlier when an Aborigine, who raised a spear, 

\textsuperscript{488} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{491} Collins makes a correction in his recording of the convict’s death writing ‘(the convict) was met midway and murdered, or rather butchered by some of the natives.’
was fired at with a gun.\textsuperscript{492} When the white man’s body was found, it ‘was not quite cold, and had at least thirty spear wounds in it. The head was cut in several places, and most of the teeth were knocked out.’\textsuperscript{493}

Charles Cross’ evidence stated that he was carrying a bag of corn to Parramatta when five or six Aborigines, including one woman, approached him, taking corn cobs from the bag. A girl in the group tried to persuade an elderly Aboriginal man to throw a spear at Cross. This he found ‘extraordinary’ because, only the week before he had given this same girl food at his house.\textsuperscript{494}

Rose would not have been isolated from this event. It is reasonable to assume that she, too, had given food to First People neighbours at her home. She would have shared discussions with her husband regarding encounters that would have become part of their shared colonial history, part of the lived experiences that built colonial inter-racial interactions.\textsuperscript{495}

This incident can be interpreted as demonstrating what Haskins describes as inter-racial ‘maternalism’, the giving of food acting as an act of benevolence.\textsuperscript{496} Whilst benevolence can be linked to colonial superiority, so too can it be linked to the ‘amity

\textsuperscript{492} Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales. With Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners Etc of the Native Inhabitants of That Country, 2, 178.

Lisa Ford, Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836, vol. 166 (Harvard University, USA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 79-80. Of this murder, Richard Atkins, the Deputy Judge Advocate wrote: ‘I mentioned about that on the 18th (May 1792) a (Native) man was fired at and supposed to have been wounded, it is probable the Man is since dead, and it is an invariable rule with them to Kill the first white man they can in revenge. Blood for Blood is justifiable...But to shed the Blood of an innocent man for the crimes of another shews (sic) a savageness of disposition not compatible with civilized state.’ Atkins accepted the validity of retaliation but believed only the guilty could be punished.

\textsuperscript{493} Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales. With Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners Etc of the Native Inhabitants of That Country, 2, 178.

\textsuperscript{494} Flynn, The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790, 227.

\textsuperscript{495} Uncommon Ground: White Women in Aboriginal History, xxii.

and kindness’ advocated by Phillip. Rose and Charles, in offering food, were sharing their harvest, albeit a harvest gleaned from stolen land.

It is impossible to know for certain what food sharing meant for First Peoples in these earliest days of contact. Fred Myers’ research indicates that the exchange of food was associated with satisfactory relationships. One who has something would share with those less fortunate. Carolyn Schwarz’s research validates Myers’ findings, concluding that sharing food served as a basis of expressing compassion linked to caring. The giving of food took place in everyday situations in traditional communities, prompted by asking or through presence at eating times. Not sharing was seen to be indicative of a ‘life gone wrong’, of selfishness and greed. If food was not available or food was scarce due to drought then that was accepted. Food sharing was associated with the preservation of balance gained through what Eleanor Bourke and Colin Bourke describe as ‘the primary virtues of generosity and fair dealing.’ All social occasions had their foundations in reciprocity ‘as a moral obligation’ associated with egalitarianism and equivalence. Compassion, linked to the sharing of food, was demonstrated in the few Neptunian encounters we have evidenced yet, in general, cultural differences associated with reciprocity were strained.

Charles Cross’ testimony gives no impression of fear or anger, violence or retribution, just confusion as to why cordiality had turned to hostility. The dispossession of Indigenous Peoples and their inability to access traditional food sources resulted in

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497 Watson, Governor Phillip’s Second Commission Series 1 Vol 1. Instructions of King George 111, to Arthur Phillip, dated 25th April 1787.
499 Ibid., 356.
501 Ibid., 26-27.
502 Ibid., 29. This can be indicated by hiding food or ignoring requests as if not noticed.
503 Ibid., 29-30.
505 Ibid.
confusion on many levels. Conflict and resentment ensued. This interaction highlights the bafflement that formed an integral part of inter-racial misunderstanding, with white settlers unsure how best to address the emerging conflict, and First Peoples unsure how to respond to incursions onto their land.

Three later encounters between Neptunians and First Peoples occurred outside the Phillip era. Despite this, they are valuable in re-enforcing that cross-cultural encounters could be associated with astonishment, curiosity and bewilderment, but also an attempt at understanding and alliance.

The first of these incidents was the most violent. Neptunian Elizabeth Rymes and her husband, Matthew Everingham were speared by local Aborigines in 1804. We are concerned to state that a few of the Natives have again manifested an inclination to hostility, and already proceeded to acts of abominable outrage. Report at the present juncture confines their ravages and barbarity to Portland Head, where Mr. Matthew Everingham, settler, his wife, and a servant, are said to have been speared… The house and out-houses…were plundered and afterwards set on fire, but the spear wounds received are not accompanied with any mortal appearance… On Thursday evening…His Excellency dispatched a file of Troopers to the Magistrate at Hawkesbury…it is hoped the exertions that are making to keep them in that state, will have the desired effect, without proceeding to further extremities.

506 The Indigenous perspective was that: ‘They stole our ground where we used to get food, and when we got hungry and took a bit of flour or killed a bullock to eat, they shot us or poisoned us. All they give us now for our land is a blanket once a year.’ Tony Barta, "Relations of Genocide: Land and Lives in the Colonization of Australia," Genocide and the modern age: etiology and case studies of mass death (1987): 249. quoting Rowley, The Destruction of Aboriginal Society, p. 158.


The Sydney Gazette was founded the year before this incident and was regarded at this time as ‘a weekly official medium for the publication of official notices.’ Its masthead bore the words ‘Published by Authority’ and any news it contained came under ‘close official supervision and censorship.’ This supervision meant that the paper was under more direct control by officials and, whilst on one hand this may have ensured accuracy, it also skewed the independence of the paper, ensuring it presented only the point of view of authorities. Goff (quoting Henry Mayer) states that the Gazette was ‘a mixture of fulsome flattery of Government officials and inane twaddle on other matters.’ George Howe the founding editor, had strong evangelical religious beliefs which also coloured his reporting of events. This particular extract reflects an autocratic colonial perspective indicative of censorship and control. Victor Isaacs and Rod Kirkpatrick, Two Hundred Years of Sydney Newspapers: A Short History (North Richmond, NSW: Rural Press Ltd for the Printing Industries Association of Australia, 2003), 3.
Emotive words such as *ravages, abominable* and *plundered* tap into the fear of ‘savagery’, the stereotype of good versus evil, civilised versus barbarian. The justification of authoritarian action is evident through the ‘last stand’ stereotype of righteous settlers holding out against Indigenous Peoples. Here we have evidence of the stereotypical embodiment of all that is good and right in the struggle against the savage.

Given that there were no fatalities in this potentially deadly encounter, it is probable that this was a ritual spearing, symbolising a formal punishment for British misdeeds, a penance for white peoples’ offences. This incident formed part of the ‘Frontier Wars’ and specifically the ‘1804-1805 Conflict’, that culminated in the massacre of seven Aboriginal people in May 1805. This raid did not, however, have a negative or long-term impact on the Everingham family’s relationship with First Peoples. Their daughter Elizabeth formed close bonds with the local Aboriginal Peoples and spoke their

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Clendinnen claims that soon after settlement in 1788, the British realised the accuracy and incredible velocity of spears over long distances. Given that there were three spears thrown and no deaths, it is, therefore, likely that this incident was to serve as a reminder to the Everingham household of the killing power at the disposal of the Aboriginal Peoples. Inga Clendinnen, "Spear the Governor," *Australian Historical Studies* 33, no. 118 (2002): 157, 66.

Maria Nugent, *Captain Cook Was Here* (Melbourne, Victoria: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 80.

The Frontier Wars were a series of conflicts between Indigenous Australians and British convicts and settlers. The first fighting took place in 1788, lasting 146 years until the last conflict occurred in 1934.

There were three massacres recorded in the Hawkesbury area. Two pre-dated this period. The first on September 1st 1794 resulted in seven Aboriginal People being killed by settlers in a reprisal attack. The second, on June 7th 1795, also resulted in seven deaths, this time in a military operation. The 1805 massacre, which took place between May 1st and May 10th, involved settlers undertaking night raids, resulting in seven Aboriginal deaths. L Ryan, J Debenham, and W Pascoe, "Colonial Frontier Massacres in Eastern Australia 1788-1872," (University of Newcastle Centre for the history of Violence and the Center for 21st century humanities., 2017), https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map.php

Following the raids, Governor King spoke to three of the Darug men involved, who told him that the cause of the raids on Portland Head was that they had: ‘been driven from the river upstream and were simply attempting to retain some land with river access.’ King’s response to this was to acknowledge that the Darug’s ‘request appear(ed) to be so just and so equitable’ that he promised there would be a restriction placed on the Hawkesbury settlement. John Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars, 1788-1838* (Sydney, NSW: UNSW Press, 2002), 43.
language.\textsuperscript{512} Their son, John Everingham, married Mildred ‘Butha’ Saunders, a woman of the Darkinjung or Darug Tribe, by Aboriginal Rule at Sackville Reach.\textsuperscript{513} It is highly unlikely that these close links to Aboriginal Peoples would have developed had there not been an attitude of conciliation and respect within the Everingham family itself.\textsuperscript{514}

\textsuperscript{512} Elizabeth, known as Betsy (1805 - 1879) is mentioned in a letter written on May 12th 1929 by Matthew Woodbury to George Reeve. It states: ‘Her descendants reported that she spoke an Aboriginal language and used to go and spend three or four days with the tribe.’ I searched for this letter within the Reeve Collection relating to the Everingham Family (Ref: 07/000179) at the Society of Australian Genealogists. The letter is consistent with those collected by Reeve to gain evidence pertaining to the Everingham family, but appears to have been removed from the collection. There are other letters referring to information from Matthew Woodbury dated at the time referred to, leading me to believe that the letter did, in fact, exist but is there no longer. As such, I have been unable to cite the original letter, and rely on Ross' discussions relating to it. Valerie Ross, \textit{Matthew Everingham: A First Fleeter and His Times} (Sydney, NSW: Library of Australian History, 1980), 146-54.

\textsuperscript{513} James L Kohen, \textit{The Darug and Their Neighbours: The Traditional Aboriginal Owners of the Sydney Region} (Blacktown, NSW: Bankstown and District Historical Society, 1993), 137. Marriage by Aboriginal Rule meant that the couple followed traditional Aboriginal marriage protocol. The union was considered strengthened by the birth of the first child. Dr B Bell, "Aboriginal Marriages and Family Structures. Traditional Marriage Arrangements.," ed. Australian Law reform Commission (Australian Government).


\textsuperscript{514} Lyndall Ryan, "Untangling Aboriginal Resistance and the Settler Punitive Expedition: The Hawkesbury River Frontier in New South Wales, 1794–1810," \textit{Journal of Genocide Research} 15, no. 2 (2013): 228. The Everingham farm, located at Portland Head, was isolated and surrounded by steep cliffs, possibly creating conditions conducive to forming closer links with the First Peoples.

Whilst the narrative of Elizabeth Rymes and her family evidences the building of cordial relations and collaboration between white settlers and Indigenous Peoples, the literature on collaboration focusses on inter-racial sexual relationships rather than societal harmony and tolerance. There is little doubt that in some situations, settlers relied on the Aborigines to support their survival, or that there was interaction on issues relating to survival. First Peoples, for example, warned their white neighbours of an impending flood of the Hawkesbury River in 1799. Descendants of Rose Flood and Charles Cross made note of this in research on the Cross' farming in the Hawkesbury district. Those settlers who disregarded the warnings were engulfed in a raging torrent as the river ‘swell’d to the height of fifty feet above its common level, and with such rapidity and power as to carry every thing [sic] before it.’ This supports Jan Barkley-Jack’s belief that close living and exchange did occur between white settlers and First Peoples, with violence the result of the actions of individual settlers and clan groups rather than a state of constant warfare. Barkley-Jack prefers the use of the term ‘feud-like violence’ to that of ‘war’


The second post-1792 encounter relates to *Neptunian* Sarah Smith, and her husband Henry Sells, who worked for William and George Cox on their pastoral holdings in the Mulgoa and Windsor districts. On March 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1814, Henry Sells gave evidence at an inquest into the death of William Reardon, a timber-feller who had been speared by Aboriginal Peoples visiting from the Cowpastures district.

![Image of the 1814 Muster list](image)

Sarah Smith listed in the 1814 Muster as in the employ of William Cox Esq.\textsuperscript{515}

After the spearing, Sells took Reardon into his home, sitting with him all night.\textsuperscript{516} There is little doubt that, despite Sarah having no voice in this incident, she would have been impacted by it. The speared man spent his dying hours in the Sells’ home and Sarah would have shared the encounter itself and the inquest that followed on March 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1814.\textsuperscript{517} Sells stated that:

Reardon was always very friendly with the natives and told [him] that they had mistaken him for McDonald who had threatened to have them punished for stealing his corn and potatoes.\textsuperscript{518}

\textsuperscript{515} State Records Authority of New South Wales, "Population Muster of 1814," (1814). Reel 1252. William Cox was a military officer, road maker, builder and settler.

\textsuperscript{516} The Mulgoa were plains people of the Darug Nation and shared the Mulgoa Valley with the Gundungarra, hill people. The name Mulgoa is believed to mean black swan.


\textsuperscript{518} Ibid., 242-50. Reels 6020-6040, 6070; Fiche 3260-3312. Ralph Pearson, a yard cleaner, stressed that ‘they [the Indigenous] could have speared any of [us] if they chose, but is convinced they intended spearing McDonald and no one else.’ Pearson finished his account by stating that ‘he has seen no natives since and they have never injured a Person or stock before.’ Joseph Duffy, another witness told how he ‘shook hands with [an elderly Indigenous man] and talked a little with him.’ Three younger natives joined them and finally the old man ‘threw down his spears, meaning peace, and the Young ones did the same.’
The inquest transcript provides evidence of an underlying desire for cordial relations on both sides, undermined by a multiplicity of challenges, including individual aggression such as McDonald’s, and the Indigenous Peoples’ need and desire for food. With the exception of McDonald, inter-racial relationships were described as ‘friendly’ and characterised by the fact that no person had otherwise been injured, that hands were shaken and conversations had between white and Indigenous Peoples, that spears were thrown down in an indication of peace, and that bread was shared.

In this encounter there is mention of conversation, using language that contains a mix of Indigenous and white words, indicating regular interaction aimed at mutual understanding as well as a desire to reconcile difference. This is achieved, with the old and young men throwing down their spears. The Aboriginal People’s need for food challenges this cordiality. Sells describes speared cattle and stolen potatoes, pumpkins and peaches. Two important aspects are highlighted in the evidence. Firstly, the challenges posed by individuals like McDonald, and the potential they had to derail conciliation. Secondly, a variation of the ‘good versus evil’ narrative, whereby it is McDonald who is portrayed as ‘evil’, with Sells and the other settlers overtly blaming him for the antagonism existing between First Peoples and settlers.

Henry Sells’ evidence demonstrates that attempts were made, by emancipists and settlers, to achieve harmonious relationships and that there was empathy regarding the unfair treatment of First Peoples. He stood with the Aborigines against McDonald, who was perceived as a threat and bully. Lacking in this evidence was open hostility or the tone of white superiority that we often associate with frontier conflict. Once again, this encounter reveals the complexity that existed in every-day inter-racial encounters. At times, relationships demonstrated a degree of amity and kindness, of compassion and attempts at genuine conciliation. Encounters also bore witness to hostility, open or

519 Peter Turbet, The First Frontier. The Occupation of the Sydney Region 1788-1816 (Dural, NSW: Rosenberg Publishing, 2011), 195. The stockman Duffy gave evidence that he told the Aborigines to go over to Cox's house to get some bread. The Aborigine replied 'Black man jerrun' to which Duffy declared 'Beal black man jerrun. You go.' In Darug language 'jerrun' means afraid and 'beal' means no.
covert, which were the result of settler colonisation, the spread of white settlement and the dispossession of First Peoples from their lands and food sources.

The third post-1792 encounter involves *Neptunian* Molly (Mary) Morgan, one of the twelve original grantees in the Maitland District. This encounter is important in that Molly was the landholder, and the documentation, therefore, applies directly to a *Neptunian*, albeit in a later period. A contemporary document, mentioning Molly but not written by her, illustrates the sense of cultural superiority exhibited towards the Wonnarua Peoples:

Witness, Mrs Hunt, formerly Molly Morgan ... When they were clearing these farms, wherever they turned, an enemy was in ambush to rob or kill ... and whilst breaking up the soil, or burning off the trees, they were obliged to carry muskets on their backs, to be allowed even to labor (sic). By conciliation, and a proper severity when required, they have become civilized; and it is to these emancipated settlers we are indebted for the obliging disposition of the aborigines in that part of the country. These farms, cleared as I have described, became in a few years, ornamented with neat cottages, barns, paddocks, stockyards, orchards, lawns. A perfect scene of English mirth.\(^{521}\)

This quote positions Molly firmly as an agent of settler colonisation and dispossession. The description of clearing, felling and the burning, represent all that was abhorrent to the First Peoples.

Within this context, we must assess Molly Morgan’s relationship with the First Peoples. In January 1820, Wallis Plains’ constable, John Allen, stated that the settlers were ‘much annoyed’ by the Aborigines at harvest time but that, in general, the settlers were on good terms with them and employed them as labourers on their farms.\(^{522}\)

\(^{521}\) Gooyorah, "To the Editor of “the Australian”", *Australian*, 14 February 1827.

\(^{522}\) Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay : An Essay in Spatial History*, 155-56. This quote links to Paul Carter’s ‘multiplication of symbolic boundaries’, whereby enclosure becomes associated with settling the land and ‘permeates the entire structure of settler society.’

\(^{522}\) Maitland City Council, Early Settlers of Wallis Plains. School Education Kit, (Maitland City Council, 2015), https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/UserFiles/File/Heritage/School%20Zones/Branded%20Teachers%20manual%20early-settlers-wallis-plains.pdf. 8. John Allen was one of the thirteen settlers granted land with Molly Morgan. He is quoted in evidence given to the Bigge Commissioners. He was a neighbor of Molly’s and would have known her well, along with her initiatives and struggles.

Christine M Bramble, "Relations between Aborigines & White Settlers in Newcastle & the Hunter District, 1804-1841 with Special Reference to the Influence of the Penal Establishment" (Dissertation, University of New England, 1981), 47.
agrees with this summation stating that ‘on the whole relations with the aborigines appear to have been good.’ Christine Bramble attributes this to the relatively small quantities of land acquired for farming, the degree of government control over the twelve settlers and their corresponding good behaviour.

An interdependence developed between these early Maitland landholders and First Peoples, who assisted in the harvest of corn in return for part of the crop. This was significant on two levels. Firstly, it illustrates what Richard White calls the ‘middle ground’ in early colonial cross-cultural relations, whereby both sides ‘accommodated and benefited’ from one another, living harmoniously and in a conciliatory manner to allow all parties mutual benefit. Secondly, it represents the beginning of the cycle of colonial exploitation of Aboriginal Peoples, reimbursing labour with food produced on lands that had been their traditional hunting and fishing grounds.

As in the previous two pre-1792 encounters, the documentation indicates that Molly Morgan attempted peaceful relations with the Wonnarua, a harmony she saw disintegrate as white settlement at Wallis Plains expanded and First Peoples suffered dispossession by ascendant colonists.

Conclusion

This chapter reveals the important role the Neptunians played in the establishment of European agriculture during the famine years of Arthur Phillip’s governorship. Defying the norm — where white, landowning, female settlers are largely invisible within the

524 Bramble, "Relations between Aborigines & White Settlers in Newcastle & the Hunter District, 1804-1841 with Special Reference to the Influence of the Penal Establishment," 47.
526 Once free settlers moved into the Hunter region, the size of holdings increased and this necessitated increased numbers of convict labourers. This was exemplified by Molly Morgan herself. Whilst her initial land allocation at Horseshoe Bend was thirty-five acres, by 1823 she held 159 acres, and this further increased as Molly continued to purchase additional land. The decimation of the Wonnarua did not just result from battle but also from disease and starvation due to disruption of traditional Aboriginal life-style. Wilson-Miller, "Conflict in the Valley: The Triumph of the Wonnarua,” 8.
historiography — the *Neptunians’* stories reveal them as amongst the colony’s pioneer landholders and farmers. Analysis of the women’s agricultural ventures, in both rural and urban contexts, reveals the link between land ownership and their evolution to the status of settler and agents of colonisation during the period 1790-1792.

This chapter acknowledges that, as settlers, landowners and workers of the land, the *Neptunians* were very much part of the agrarian-based model that resulted in the dispossession and alienation of First Peoples from their land and homes. As such, this chapter supports the proposal that the *Neptunians* acted as agents of the settler colonisation process. An analysis of the five interactions that the women and their partners had with Indigenous Peoples, reveal the complexity of early colonial inter-racial relationships, demonstrating empathy and support, bafflement, hostility and gaps of understanding resulting from cultural differences. This study adds to the body of research that aims to ‘go beyond resistance, frontier violence and cultural annihilation’, revealing, through case study, the diverse response of individuals to cross-cultural exchanges.\(^{527}\)

Just as the *Neptunians* were landowners and, therefore, agents of colonisation and dispossession, so too were they homemakers. The next chapter analyses how the process of homemaking contributed to the *Neptunian’s* transition from the status of convict to settler and the creation of their colonial identity.

Chapter 3
Home: the harbinger and tool of civilisation

Introduction
This chapter will analyse the early homes of the Neptunians, not just as vital shelters but as manifestations of British society and symbols of colonisation — as representations, in fact, of colonial whiteness. In their creation of homes and in their reproduction of British culture and values, the Neptunians acted as agents of settler colonisation. This chapter interrogates the role that homemaking played in the construct of the women’s new colonial identity and an emerging sense of agency and influence. The Neptunians, in cloning the gendered and domesticated vision of home and nation and imbuing the colony with the domesticity of home, provided the civilising aspect integral to the colonial enterprise. This resulted in their attaining a position of relative influence. Homemaking firmly established the women in the colony, cementing their transition to the role of settler. As settlers, the Neptunians, like other female convicts, have become associated with the pioneer stereotype, as idealised frontierswomen whose homes symbolise the contact zone myth. This chapter reveals homes as being at the very heart of colonialism’s drive to reproduce and colonise through the family unit.

The significance of homes to colonisation and the construct of colonial identity
When Neptunian Martha Bates stepped ashore in June 1790, she would have been struck by the complete absence of familiar, British, societal infrastructure. Aged about thirty-eight, Martha had been sentenced (October 1789) to seven years transportation in London for stealing a child’s linen shift. The fact that she also took the eight-year-old girl wearing the shift, would perhaps be of greater concern to us today. Martha would have been surprised at Sydney’s lack of a church, always the centre of every village, town and city in Britain; there was no public house, the focus of a Londoner’s social

528 Because the term home applies to so many disciplines and has so many nuances, this thesis requires the term home to be contextualised within the 18th and 19th century British worldview, as it is within this field that we are operating. At this same time and in the same place there also operated the concept of First People’s home. This would have a completely different meaning and nuance, one acknowledged but not explored in detail within the confines of this thesis. 529 Flynn, The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790.
interaction; there were no established homes, only a rabble of huts and tents.\footnote{Lloyd, "Joys of the Cottage: Labourers’ Houses, Hovels and Huts in Britain and the British Colonies, 1770–1830." Lloyd adds that the majority of the tents were made of second-hand canvas from the Portsmouth dockyards.} For convicts during these early years, stepping off the boat and finding accommodation was both an immediate challenge and a powerful reminder that life in the infant colony was vastly different from life in Britain.

During the period 1788-1792, the process of homemaking was integral to colonisation and to Indigenous dispossession.\footnote{Alison Blunt, “Cultural Geography: Cultural Geographies of Home,” \textit{Progress in human geography} 29, no. 4 (2005): 510.} According to Wolfe, settler colonialism ‘destroys to replace.’\footnote{Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 388.} The replacement of the shelters of First Peoples with those of white settlers symbolised the ascendency of the coloniser. Homes, according to Karskens, were the hard evidence of their owners’ right to occupy the country.\footnote{Karskens, "Naked Possession: Building and the Politics of Legitimate Occupancy in Early New South Wales, Australia " 356.} British overseas expansion was, after all, achieved through the planting of colonies, founded on homes and towns constructed on Indigenous lands appropriated for the materialistic purposes of European settlers.\footnote{Robert Home, "Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities," (Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2013), 2. The word planting was originally defined as the settling of people. McMichael, \textit{Settlers and the Agrarian Question: Capitalism in Colonial Australia}, 41.} Homemaking played a significant role in the construct of the Neptunian’s, and the wider society’s, colonial identity. On a personal level, home represented escape from Government control and authority, providing a domain of greater self-realisation and individuality, of privacy and self-determination. In this sense, early homes were invested with a political significance.\footnote{Karskens, "Naked Possession: Building and the Politics of Legitimate Occupancy in Early New South Wales, Australia " 345.}

Homes were (and are) more than mere buildings. They encompass multiple experiences and multiple meanings to different people. A home comprises a physical structure that provides shelter, a familiar space where personal and group activities take place and relationships are lived.\footnote{Shelley Mallett, "Understanding Home: A Critical Review of the Literature," \textit{The Sociological Review} 52, no. 1 (2004): 63.} Homes can be shaped by the past but also allow for the
future. For settler colonisation, homes were, according to Haskins and Jacobs, the ‘harbinger and tool of civilisation, serving as physical representations of British society and culture.’ Home is a personal space, an expression of an individual’s personal identity, but on a deeper level, homemaking served to transplant a British identity to the new colony, stamping whiteness on the previously Indigenous landscape.

In this foreign land, establishing your presence, through the construction of a home served as an antidote to the dislocation associated with leaving Britain. Transportation led to a severing of ties with home and family, resulting in a homeless state of being and an overwhelming sense of displacement, difference and estrangement. Homes acted as a vital bridge between place and identity, a means of cementing connection to a new country.

*Neptunian* Eleanor Sandwick, for example, left an adult son in England when transported. Nelli, the daughter who had been with her during her five years in gaol, either remained in England, or died aboard the *Neptune*. Arriving in the colony as an older woman of about fifty-six, Eleanor would have experienced a deep sense of loss at leaving her family and an established way-of-life. After the trauma of arrest, trial, incarceration for five years, and transportation, a home equated to arrival and survival, providing Eleanor with longed-for privacy and a degree of independence. Aboard the *Neptune* there had been no solitude, no humanity, no self-advocacy. The sense of alienation the new colony evoked would have been balanced with overwhelming emotions of freedom and release. Survival was a personal feat and a home in the new colony, even a tent or the simplest of huts, would have symbolised freedom.

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539 Laura Jane Mitchell, "‘This Is the Mark of the Widow’: Domesticity and Frontier Conquest in Colonial South Africa," ibid., no. 1: 68.  
Early homes as a source of stability and influence

During the period 1788-1792, only the most basic of accommodation was available in the colony. This provided a very different arrival experience from that experienced by later convicts. For the one-third of Neptunians who landed in poor health, their first colonial shelter comprised one of the thirty tents hastily ‘pitched in front of the hospital’. The remainder received whatever care and shelter the struggling colony could offer. They either remained at ‘The Camp’ [Sydney] or were sent to Norfolk Island or Rose Hill (Parramatta).

There was disorientation and a period of profound sensory challenge as they confronted a new, unfamiliar environment. They found whatever shelter they could — in hastily erected tents, in a quickly constructed hovel of their own or, in the case of Sarah Willis and others like her, in the hut of a male convict willing to offer shelter in return for companionship. In a colony where each hut, and indeed the very foundations of the settlement were, in the words of Clark ‘hacked out in that rude and barbarous land’, Sarah’s partnering with Thomas Smith soon after arrival, and their consequent marriage on September 5th 1790, provided her with both shelter and security. As the months passed the Neptunians began to improve their homes and there evolved a greater sense of stability and acceptance. Home-making was as instrumental to this stability as it was to colonisation. It represented the personal face of land-ownership, integral to settler colonisation.

It was the role of women to imbue the colony with the domesticity of home, regarded as the civilising aspect fundamental to the colonial enterprise. Whilst this may be viewed

543 Ailwood, for example, details how Governor Phillip, realising he had a logistics nightmare in providing housing for so many new arrivals, immediately travelled to Rose Hill to prepare the small settlement for the influx it was about to experience. He organised for two huge tents to be erected, each thirty meters long with grass-thatched roofs. Ailwood, The Quiet Invasion. A History of Early Sydney, 323.
544 Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales. 129.
Shaw provides additional information, stating that, in June 1790, when many Neptunians had need of medical support, the hospital was woefully inadequate and unable to meet the demand. The hospital tents hastily erected were noisy, crowded, insanitary and the last resort of the ill. Shaw, "Labour," 112.
546 Clark, A History of Australia, 1, 113.
as sexist, it did, in fact, invest women with a certain power. The success of colonisation was represented through the realm of the domestic and women were responsible for this success. Through restoring a sense of familiarity and order, British identity was reinforced.547 This process applied to every aspect of the fabric of daily life including food, home design, furnishings, and clothing.548

Almost every dwelling the Neptunians occupied had to be constructed by or for them. The familiar contexts had to be created, the land cleared, the ground worked. Home-making demanded an investment of time, effort, creativity and resources. Embracing the physical home was, in fact, embracing one’s future in the colony. Feeling at home, and by extension becoming a settler, was contingent on creating familiar contexts, including the physical and social constructs of a domestic life.549 We have evidence, both archival and archaeological, which provides indications of the physical spaces that were ‘home’ for the Neptunians during the period 1790-1792. Using this evidence, we can evaluate the extent that the homes mirrored British society, acting as microcosms of colonisation.

Homes as symbols of self-reliance and a developing colonial identity

Soon after the twenty-year-old Kezia Brown stepped ashore in June 1790, she met First Fleet convict William Roberts. According to Cobley, William had his own hut by July 1788.550 Two years later, when he met Kezia, this wattle and daub dwelling, on the fringes of Sydney in a little village called The Brickfields, would have been well established, although no doubt lacking the ‘feminine touch.’

548 The traditional was often adjusted to fit the colonial reality. Wessell cites examples of recipes including kangaroo tail soup (ox tail soup), parrot pie rather than pigeon pie and roast wallaby for the Sunday baked dinner. Wessell, "There's No Taste Like Home: The Food of Empire," 812.
This area was home to the Gadigal Peoples of the Eora nation for more than 60,000 years prior to white settlement. It was to their land that Kezia Brown came soon after landing at Sydney Cove and it was here she was to remain until a move to the Hawkesbury region towards the end of the 1790s.

Kezia and William’s Brickfield Village home was likely a small, flimsy hut, more a ‘hovel’ than a house. For now, the simple building afforded Kezia a degree of security after her traumatic conviction and voyage and enabled her to begin a stable life with William. The hut, like others in the colony, would have been constructed from the available materials of hardwood and cabbage tree. Nails and basic building supplies had been provided by the government. The tools William had used were poor and, despite

553 J L Guy, "Building Construction Practice in the Colony of New South Wales from the Arrival of the First Fleet to the End of the Primitive Era and Its Influence in Later Time,"
having some carpentry expertise, William’s building experience would have been challenged by colonial conditions.

Homes remained simple, built from ‘any material they could find or scrounge.’ Kezia and William’s little hut probably had a frame of rough-hewn poles lashed together with vines, which were then infilled with short lengths of cabbage tree palm. The whole structure was then coated with white pipeclay, which often washed away in heavy rains. The roof most likely was topped with rush thatching and the floors were of dirt. William probably used woven wattles as windows and affixed the doors with

(Website for the University of Cambridge Department of Agriculture: University of Cambridge, Department of Agriculture), 1487.

Karskens, "Naked Possession: Building and the Politics of Legitimate Occupancy in Early New South Wales, Australia " 338.

Guy, "Building Construction Practice in the Colony of New South Wales from the Arrival of the First Fleet to the End of the Primitive Era and Its Influence in Later Time," 1488.

Proudfoot, "Fixing the Settlement Upon a Savage Shore: Planning and Building," 63.

Collins, An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales, 1, 19, 71. Collins stated that ‘every shower of rain washed a portion of the clay from between the interstices of the cabbage-tree.’

Guy, "Building Construction Practice in the Colony of New South Wales from the Arrival of the First Fleet to the End of the Primitive Era and Its Influence in Later Time," 1487.
leather straps. Kezia’s move into William’s home, and her discovery by the end of 1790 that she was expecting their first child, might have triggered plans for a grander cottage, achieved through gradual extension and renovation.

Wherever the convicts settled, these ‘little edifices’ sprang up. Their importance as immediate shelter was vital, for to be without shelter was an experience associated with poverty. Constructing and improving a shelter was associated with motivation, ‘prudence and self-reliance.’ As a home evolved, so too did feelings of investment in the new environment. Kezia would have been surrounded by the sights, sounds and smells of the bustling settlement — the quarrels and laughter, the sound of people working and chatting, the stink of refuse and garbage, the activity of brick and tile

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559 Bridges, Foundations of Identity: Building Early Sydney 1788-1822, 27.

The construction of these earliest huts was most probably initiated by rural convicts as these houses were based on ancient British building techniques dating back to Roman times.
making and the traffic passing between Sydney and Rose Hill. Archaeological evidence suggests that, in the gradually extended and enhanced cottages in and around Sydney, the convicts eventually achieved a far better lifestyle than they would have in Britain.\footnote{Orwell & Peter Phillips and Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, "Conservation Management Plan: Former Coroner’s Court 102-104 George Street, the Rocks," (Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, 2010), 12.}

The very act of building, extending and personalising these simple huts fostered engagement with their new environment. The settlers had to adjust to their new context, melding the old with the new, and they had to do so quickly. Their adaptation was associated with reconceptualization, a transformation from the ‘old’ status quo to a new set of practices and contexts.

Homes represented private spaces and private lives whilst acting as symbols of reform, honest work and family life.\footnote{Karskens, "Naked Possession: Building and the Politics of Legitimate Occupancy in Early New South Wales, Australia " 345. Karskens also reminds us that homes provided private spaces where illegal activities could be planned and liquor illegally distilled.} They were also significant in creating what Karskens describes as an ‘unofficial, unplanned town upending the idea of a tightly controlled agricultural penal colony.’\footnote{Ibid., 346.} There was little order in the planning of these early townships. Kezia and William, like the majority (85%) of Sydney and Parramatta’s residents, occupied their land by Naked Possession. Brickfield Hill, described by Karskens as ‘the ragged fringes of no-man’s land… the skirts of the town, used and visited by outcasts and outlaws’, was a place with a reputation as being far less settled than other settlements, a ‘more rootless sort of place, with fewer family groups and married couples and many shared houses occupied by single men.’\footnote{Karskens, The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney, 10, 40.}

Kezia, the only Neptunian to come from a rural yeoman family, must have been challenged by the harshness of the people, as well as the unfamiliar landscape. It was the colony’s first brick manufacturing area and the arterial track, leading from Sydney through to Rose Hill and the interior, made the area a hive of movement and activity.

The early homes at Brickfield Hill, as elsewhere in the colony, had their origins in the traditional, ancient building techniques of rural Britain. Their whitewashed walls and

\footnote{Karskens, The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney, 10, 40.}
lack of eaves harked back to the medieval vernacular building styles of ‘home.’\textsuperscript{565} The ‘little huts and cots’, wrote Karskens, gave the area a ‘villactick appearance’, quite romantic with their whitewashed walls and orange-brown bricks and tiles ‘especially along the tree-lined road to the Brickfields.\textsuperscript{566} Transplanting ancient yet familiar English cottage design provided a lifeline to the past, but so too did it firmly stamp the gendered and domesticated vision of the British home on the newly invaded colony.

**Gender practices within the home**

It is unclear how the Roberts’ home operated in terms of its gendered practices. The early colony was a place of blurred gender boundaries. Separate spheres developed in a middle-class context but the gender boundaries were not as clearly defined for convict women making homes in the infant colony. Certainly, the Neptunians were not constrained by the bourgeois European ideology that women were suited only to domestic life.\textsuperscript{567} Then, as now, individuals and circumstances defined the gendered script. During the period 1790-1792, Kezia fulfilled the role of partner, home-maker and mother.\textsuperscript{568} She also had significant agricultural expertise. She was the daughter of generational yeoman farmers and, at the time of her arrest, was employed by James Wheeler, a nurseryman of some fame.\textsuperscript{569} The valuable agricultural skills Kezia possessed are likely to have impacted on her status in both the home and the colony. It can be assumed that, during years 1790-1792, Kezia took charge of growing the family’s fruit and vegetables, possibly having enough left over for sale and extra

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{565} The Colony: A History of Early Sydney, 74-75.
\item \textsuperscript{566} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{567} Barbara Caine and Glenda Sluga, *Gendering European History: 1780-1920* (London, UK: Leicester University Press, 2000), 34.
\item \textsuperscript{568} Kezia had her first child, a son, William Roberts Brown baptised on September 4\textsuperscript{th} 1791 in Sydney.
\item \textsuperscript{569} A Rich Inheritance, 1, 2-8.
\item A Rich Inheritance, 2, XI-XIII.
\end{itemize}

The Yeoman class placed Kezia’s family between the gentry and labouring classes. William, it appears, had a working-class background, however, he was at least partially literate (able to sign his name), and in the colony that was a significant asset.

In 1763, Wheeler had published 'The Botanist's and Gardener's New Dictionary', thus establishing him as a horticulturist of some expertise. James Wheeler, *The Botanist's and Gardener's New Dictionary: Containing the Names, Classes, Orders, Generic Characters, and Specific Distinctions of the Several Plants Cultivated in England, According To... Linnaeus... In Which Is Also Comprised, a Gardener's Calendar... And to Which Is Prefixed, an Introduction to the Linnaean System of Botany* (W. Strahan, 1763).
Kezia later proved herself a capable farm manager so it is probable that, during the period 1790-1792, she was involved in more than house-keeping.

A number of the Neptunians were women of strength. Sarah Fielder, Sarah Smith, Elizabeth Smith and Molly Morgan became colonial business-women and they, along with other Neptunians, defied the middle-class expectation of women as wives, mothers and home-makers. Sarah Smith, a free Neptunian who accompanied her partner John Cobcroft to the colony, clearly illustrates the blurring of boundaries that occurred in gendered partnerships in the colony. Sarah was a midwife by profession and John was known to be ‘of a retiring nature, leaving the running of the farms to his wife.’ The descendants of John and Sarah openly acknowledge her as possessing the energy, decisiveness and managerial skills of the partnership. Sarah ran her business whilst running her home — engaged in what Aveling describes as ‘productive’ as well as ‘reproductive’ work.

Women, even those still serving their sentences, could profit through work conducted in their homes. During these early years there was no monetary system in the colony, so payment for work was made through barter, store receipts, coins or through private promissory notes. Ellen Gott, a shoemaker, probably secured income from her trade.

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570 The map entitled ‘Plan de la Ville de Sydney’, clearly shows blocks of quite large dimension at The Brickfields Village on which Kezia would have grown produce.
571 Narissa Phelps Morrissey, "The Founding of a Family," in A Rich Inheritance: The Family Trees, ed. Narissa Phelps Morrissey (Kiama, NSW: Weston & Co, 1990), XXIX - XXX. The evidence of Kezia's agricultural skill and her capability in farm management lies in the fact that, after her husband's death in 1820, Kezia successfully ran the family property at Mulgrave Place for fourteen years until her youngest son, Edward, assumed control.
572 Eleanor M. Hinder and Phyllis Hinder Davidson, A Record of the Hinder Family in Australia (Sydney, NSW: Hinder & Davidson (self-published family history), 1961), 2.
573 Aveling, "Bending the Bars. Convict Women and the State," 149. This relates to the sexual division of labour. Reproductive work was that undertaken in the home, productive work that undertaken in the market place.
574 Newling, "Dining with Strangeness: European Foodways on the Eora Frontier," 39. Newling claims that food, in particular, became a significant form of currency.

Robert H Parker, "Bookkeeping Barter and Current Cash Equivalents in Early New South Wales," ABACUS 18, no. 2 (1982): 141. Parker states that there was no government treasury issuing money in the early colony, nor was there a bank with note issue until 1817. He concluded that almost anything served as a means of payment, quoting Hainsworth in saying that early New South Wales had 'a currency system more appropriate to bedlam.'
As a literate woman it is also possible that she received payment from fellow convicts for reading and writing letters, a skill very few possessed. Sarah Fielder and her husband William sold vegetables grown in their home garden, and Kezia Brown may well have done the same. Ann Hannaway would have earned income from her reputed skill in the use of medicinal herbs. In a colony with few doctors and little access to medicines, one imagines Ann’s expertise to have been highly sought on Norfolk Island.

Homes, therefore, were bases for more than domesticity in this pre-industrial community. Gendered practices may well have challenged the assumed patriarchal model promoted by Arthur Phillip, whereby homes came under the overriding authority of a male head of the household. I find it hard to believe that Sarah Smith or Molly Morgan easily succumbed to male-controlled households when their post-1792 colonial histories showed them to be successful business-women and domestic and property managers in their own right.

Homes as a reflection of the changing status of convicts

Soon after her arrival in the colony, Elizabeth Carter, a single-woman from Yorkshire convicted of grand larceny, was sent to Parramatta. Here she would have lived in one of the nine two-roomed convict women’s huts in Quakers Row, which she shared with nine other women. The huts were well spaced to reduce the risk of fire, were constructed of wattles, plastered with clay and had a thatched roof. They had gardens at both front and rear, planted with tobacco, vines, apples, celery as well as the more common vegetables. Parramatta was expanding. By November 1791 there were 1628 people there, 369 more than in Sydney. By March 1792 the population grew to 1900.

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576 Aveling, "Imagining New South Wales as a Gendered Society, 1783 - 1821," 5.
578 Liston, "Convict Women in the Female Factories of New South Wales'," 31. Quaker's Row is now known as Church Street.
579 Tench, Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 195.
Elizabeth would have moved from the women’s huts when she married Thomas Peacock at Parramatta on September 5th 1790.

Married on the same day as Elizabeth, Mary Butler — an Irish girl arrested with fellow-*Neptunian* Mary Desmond for stealing a basket of beans in Covent Garden, London — also moved from the women’s huts into a hut allocated to ‘families of good character.’ She had married John Randall, one of eleven First Fleet convicts of Afro-descent who was described as ‘about six feet high, well-made and straight.’ Their first marital home was of a design that would have been familiar to Mary from the workers’ cottages in Irish towns, reassuringly representing what Casey describes as the British concept of utility and domesticity within the unfamiliar Australian landscape.

The archaeological and artistic evidence of homes, like the ones Mary and John would have occupied, enables us to stand with Mary in her two-room house, her front door opening into the living room. The external chimney is likely to have been made of brick, the external walls daubed in grey clay and the roof thatched. The windows most certainly lacked the glass that was such a luxury in the colony and the floor would have been of stamped earth. One can imagine Mary’s delight in having a small oven, which made cooking so easy. As her family increased, an extension could be added to the rear of the home and the thatched roof replaced with shingles.

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582 Tench, *Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”*, 195.


584 Parker, "Rethinking the Convict Huts of Parramatta: An Archaeology of Transformation (1790 - 1841)," 38.

585 Governor King wrote that these houses were: ‘comfortable little dwellings…. many have the convenience of small ovens, or iron pots they bake under; and …their wives and their families of children, whom they maintain by their labour when their government work is finished, with the help of small pieces of ground around their dwellings.’ *Historical Records of Australia, vol. 4* (1803-1804), 468. King to Hobart

586 Guy, "Building Construction Practice in the Colony of New South Wales from the Arrival of the First Fleet to the End of the Primitive Era and Its Influence in Later Time," 1484.
Archaeology indicates that homes like Mary’s had a large block of land with a garden to the rear. Mike Macphail’s archaeological analysis reveals that female convicts filled vases with the native flowers that flourished in the scrub around the township.\(^{587}\) The use of native flowers such as waratahs to decorate homes, indicates an appreciation of colonial beauty. The evidence suggests that convicts, like Mary, personalised and decorated their homes.\(^{588}\) There was pride in their appearance and this translated to an enhanced sense of belonging and a desire to continue to improve status.\(^{589}\)

It would be easy to dismiss the significance of personalising home interiors, for there is little archaeology relating to these earliest homes. For me, dislocation, distress or disenchantment is countered through ‘nesting’ or emplacement — healing within the home and replacing disorder with domestic order. The research supports this as a process significant for forced migrants, such as the Neptunians. Maja Korac links emplacement with taking control of one’s life and reconstructing it.\(^{590}\) Brun and Fábos indicate that, in order ‘to settle’, forced migrants reconstruct their past ‘home’ to come to terms with their new life, that creating a familiar ‘home’ is linked to ‘becoming of place.’\(^{591}\) Nabil, Talhouk et al reveal that personalisation of a home is a way of escaping the bitter reality of displacement. It assists in overcoming the loss of past ‘better’ homes, and provides a sense of dignity and pride.\(^{592}\) Interior, or material

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\(^{587}\) Macphail, “A Hidden Cultural Landscape: Colonial Sydney’s Plant Microfossil Record,” 99. Waratah pollen has been found in the soil packed around the timber supports of a convict hut in Parramatta.

\(^{588}\) For detailed analysis and discussion of the archaeological evidence and what it reflects about the decoration and personalisation of homes see, for example: Karskens, *Inside the Rocks. The Archaeology of a Neighbourhood.*


"Revisiting the Worldview: The Archaeology of Convict Households in Sydney’s Rocks Neighborhood."

\(^{589}\) By the eighteenth century we know that the lower societal orders, the working class who came to Sydney as convicts, sought comfort and a degree of luxury in their homes. *Inside the Rocks. The Archaeology of a Neighbourhood.*, 49.


personalisation, is therefore vital in the process of forced migrants embedding themselves in a new society. Karskens’ interpretation of the archaeology at the Rocks links the more contemporary research to early convict society. She believes that houses (as well as food and clothing) were very important … and fundamental to their cultural identity. They strove to achieve material security and regarded ‘outward’ signs like houses and clothes as signatures of social worth.

Given that the era to 1792 was one of material shortage, the Neptunians’ re-imaging and material personalisation of their homes would have involved adaptation and creativity in fashioning new items for daily use and enhancing their domestic environment in unsophisticated ways.

These early dwellings were undoubtedly simple. Sarah Lloyd claims that, far from being representations of the advanced coloniser, they were not so different from the shelters of First Peoples. They undoubtedly had links to Indigenous culture. The land on which the huts were built was likely to have contained trees, scarred by the removal of its bark to make food containers. Below the soil that comprised the Randall’s vegetable patch might have been found stone tools. The archaeology, however, conflicts with Lloyd’s summation, revealing that the huts, whilst simple, were framed, roofed and contained chimneys, providing a degree of permanence and familiarity — adapted and re-imaged versions of British cottages, containing cisterns, hearths, gardens and fences.


594 Karskens, *Inside the Rocks. The Archaeology of a Neighbourhood.*, 58. This area was a unique in being characterised by shortages of materials and goods, therefore personalisation would have been at its simplest.


598 For descriptions of early homes, based on archaeological information, see for example:

Casey & Lowe Pty Ltd, "Archaeological Investigation Parramatta Children’s Court Cnr George & O’connell Streets, Parramatta."

Higginbotham, "The Excavation of Buildings in the Early Township of Parramatta, New South Wales, 1790-1820s."
Fernando Brambila’s view of convict huts aligned along George Street (middle ground) with Government House (left), 1793. The original drawing given by the Spanish visitors to Lieutenant-Governor Grose who then sent it to George III. The four figures in the middle ground are likely to be Spanish naval officers.599

As convicts changed their status, so too did their homes change. The Randalls were amongst the earliest settlers to receive a land grant, possibly due to John being held in some favour as a result of his working for Governor Phillip, Lieutenant Colonel Grose and John Hunter as game-keeper. Theirs was a sixty-acre grant at the Northern Boundaries (Pennant Hills), issued on November 29th 1792. Mary’s home would have been constructed in 1792, towards the end of Phillip’s governorship.

Guy, "Building Construction Practice in the Colony of New South Wales from the Arrival of the First Fleet to the End of the Primitive Era and Its Influence in Later Time."
Inside the Rocks. The Archaeology of a Neighbourhood.
599 Brambila, Sketch of Parramatta.
Archaeology suggests that homes like the Randall’s at the Northern Boundaries would have been sturdier than the original Parramatta huts. They were often constructed using bricks made in Parramatta. The mortar was made from mud collected from the river bank mixed with ground shells collected from a nearby Aboriginal midden. The living room and bedroom both would have had the luxury of a window allowing airflow in the hot summers, and this window probably contained glass. These properties had internal ceilings, made from eucalyptus lath and plaster. Instead of dirt, the floors were made from eucalyptus, pit-sawn, laid and butted. Whilst simple, a house like this reflected the changing fortunes of its occupants. Mary’s sentence did not expire until

601 To compile this description I chose to use the archaeological evidence obtained from a study of emancipist George Salter’s property built on the Parramatta River. This is the earliest surviving rural cottage, reflecting what would have been a dwelling typical to the era and location. The grant was in close proximity and the cottage was built not long after the Randall’s home. Salter also arrived on the vessel *Neptune*. Stockburn and Goodman, "The Dairy Cottage - Parramatta."
1796, yet by 1792 she lived in her own home on the couple’s own land and had two daughters, Lydia (born circa 1791) and Mary (born circa 1792). Mary and John had, therefore, transcended their convict status and, by 1792, were early settlers of the Parramatta district.

**Imagined experiences and real achievements: Homes and the pioneer legend**

Modern representations of *Neptunians*, published in conventional family histories by descendants, often align to the concept of the pioneer legend and the idealised frontierswomen. They reflect a stereotyped version of history, ‘imagined’ histories that form part of what Furniss labels society’s ‘selective tradition’—the official, colonialism-compatible version of the past.

In the images of Harriet and Thomas Hodgetts (below), and Kezia Brown Roberts and her children (see image Chapter 2 page 93), the home and family appear interconnected. Both images portray the women as having achieved a level of civilisation through the domestic. Both women are portrayed as wives and mothers, consistent with the traditional, gendered role. This stereotypical version of pioneer women in homes at the ‘frontier’ is, however, flawed. Whilst Haskins and Jacobs regard the home as a symbol of the end of the frontier and the arrival of modernity and the comforts of civilisation, this concept of the frontier as a dividing line between civilisation and savagery has been recognised as both erroneous and paternalistic. The first ‘frontierswomen’ were, after all, Indigenous.

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603 Mary was also stepmother to John’s daughter, Frances, born circa 1789 from his first marriage. Sadly, Mary lost both her daughters, Lydia and Mary, in 1793. Prybus gives details regarding the death of Lydia in February 1793: ‘It was a summer of disaster. On 13 February 1793, in a week when the temperature gauge registered between 112 and 116 degrees, John Randall and his wife Mary buried their infant daughter Lydia.’ A month later they buried their second daughter, Mary. One can only imagine the grief experienced by Mary at the loss of her two daughters, but by year’s end she gave birth to her third daughter, also called Mary, born on December 4th of that year. Pybus, *Black Founders: The Unknown Story of Australia's First Black Settlers*, 125.


605 ibid., 10.

606 Haskins and Jacobs, ”Special Issue: Domestic Frontiers: The Home and Colonization-Introduction,” IX.
Even the term ‘frontier’ is inappropriate. Given the connotations of European expansionism in the term ‘frontier’, Mary Louise Pratt suggests the term ‘contact zone’ to be more appropriate.\(^{607}\) The Neptunians also had a diversity of roles and experiences. Their role as settlers and pioneers was not confined to homes on the ‘frontier’, nor was it defined by maternity. Those women with no children and those in urban contexts also fulfilled roles that contributed to the expansion of the colony, and they too could equally be described as ‘pioneers’ and ‘frontierswomen.’

For family historians, the frontier myth, as depicted in images of ancestors carving out their destinies and their homes from the Australian bush, serve as powerful metaphors for a sentimental association with ancestors — family that researchers never knew, but nevertheless form strong association with. These images, on the covers and end-covers of family histories, symbolise pride — not just in an ancestors’ personal survival but in the fact that, as descendants, we are linked to the beginnings of Australia’s white

Thomas and Harriet Hodgetts. An illustration drawn by descendants.\(^{608}\)


\(^{607}\) Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 8. Pratt defines ‘contact zone’ as: ‘The space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.’

settlement.

The home provides a touchstone to this history. Simple homes represent the challenges ancestors faced, and we, as descendants, marvel at their imagined experiences and in their real achievements. As a family historian, I associate with the concept of home and draw comparisons with our modern dwellings. This results in greater empathy for the Neptunians. This empathy, if recognised, can lead me to consider aspects of homemaking not evident in the archaeology or historic record. I recognise the loneliness the women felt when making their homes in rural areas; the lack of materials and consumables they experienced for home-building and home-making; the challenges isolation presented to women when rearing families; the adaptability demanded of women in their domestic routines of feeding their families and running their homes and, finally, the sense of achievement the Neptunians may have felt in creating a home in the early colony.

Conclusion

This chapter reveals the integral role played by homemaking and homes in the process of colonisation and dispossession. It argues that homes were imbued with values associated with the Neptunian’s gender, convict status and heritage and, therefore, were integral to the women’s increasing sense of colonial identity. Whilst the home was an undoubtedly gendered sphere, it served to root the Neptunians firmly in the soil of their new country, representing their transition from the status of convict to settler.

Home was perceived to be the harbinger and tool of civilisation, carving domesticity from the colony’s scrub. In their reproduction of British-style homes and domestic landscapes, the women were acting as the agents of colonisation. Their simple actions in improving their original huts, in transforming them over time to comfortable whitewashed cottages with gardens and orchards, represented the transplanting of British values and culture. The information we have of Kezia Brown’s home at the Brickfields village, Elizabeth Carter’s first home at Rose Hill and Mary Butler’s home at the Northern Boundaries, illustrate the very beginning of homemaking in the colony.

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The domestic became the arena of the colonial, acting as the nexus for the consolidation of British values and customs and a source for the pioneer legend. Homes nurtured security, love, children, and industry but so too were they at the very heart of colonialism’s drive to reproduce and colonise through the family unit.

Whilst the home was the centre of the Neptunians’ private life, analysis of their personal and community relationships provides further insight into the women’s transition from convict to settler. Their status as brides, housekeepers, concubines and neighbours reveal the complexity of early colonial society and the Neptunian’s place within it.
Chapter 4

Brides, housekeepers and neighbours. Personal and community relationships

Introduction

Relationships anchor a person to their community, grounding them in the very fabric of a place. This chapter interrogates the Neptunians as both agents and victims of colonisation through their intimate and community relationships. The Neptunians’ colonial lives — as lovers, partners, wives and neighbours — were interlaced with personal associations that supported them in adapting to their new home and transitioning as settlers. In forming partnerships, they were also embedding settler colonialism through the establishment of the ties essential to associations of place as ‘home’, through having families and through attaining a sense of permanence.

In this chapter, relationships are explored as an antidote to the oppression of the dominant colonial group and as a means of expressing identity. They are also explored in terms of the colony’s gender imbalance, which, in the words of Reid, invested female convicts with importance as the colony’s wives and mothers, assuring them a degree of bargaining power, both with individual men and with the state.610 The demographic imbalance, resulting from the restricted, intermittent and unreliable transportation of convict women. Female free settlers did not arrive until 1793 — and then in only small numbers — so convict women were ‘absolutely vital to colonial family formation.’611 Through the establishment of intimate relationships, the rapid transition of female convicts to the role of settler was ensured.

The Neptunians brought with them vestiges of their era and their class that helped define the nature and expression of their personal interactions, often in opposition to government policy and expectation. Having lost most meaningful connections through

610 Reid, Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia, 99.
611 Ibid.
transportation, the establishing of what Karskens describes as new ‘webs of intimate, personal relations’ assisted in the process of adjustment, revealing the complexity of early colonial society and the Neptunians’ place within it.\textsuperscript{612}

The Neptunians as concubines

The majority of colonial convict relationships were conducted between partners from the same social class. In these relationships, working-class values and practices applied, albeit with some adaptations to a colonial context, differentiating them from inter-class relationships where very different social rules applied.

Relationships amidst the convict classes had the potential of providing a sense of escape from outside control.\textsuperscript{613} There is little doubt that oppression, such as that experienced by the Neptunians both before and during transportation, would have had negative psychological and personal impact. Intimate relationships — personal avenues of escape, pleasure and tenderness — were a way of strengthening the women’s sense of self, of redefining themselves and re-establishing their independence. The Neptunians brought with them their working-class sexual and behavioural practices. These sometimes stood in stark opposition to the Government’s middle-class idealization, whereby marriage was regarded as the foundation for both sexual relations and families. In failing, at times, to conform with the official stance on marriage, convict women compromised the ideal, setting their own agenda for how relationships and family life would be conducted in the colony.

One third of the Neptunians identified as being in a significant relationship during their first two years in the colony, were unmarried.\textsuperscript{614} Ruth Teale believed that it was the active choice of many women \textit{not} to marry.\textsuperscript{615} Being in a relationship released the

\textsuperscript{613} Reid, \textit{Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia}, 4.
\textsuperscript{614} Forty-seven of the women appear to have been in significant relationships during the years 1790 -1792. Of those sixteen remained unmarried.

Neptunians from government domestic labour into domestic life in their own home, but formal marriage was not a prerequisite for this. Nor was formal marriage a requirement of parenthood. As was the case in working-class England, women saw living in a de facto relationship (or ‘tally’) as an expression of their independence. At a time when divorce was impossible, women retained greater control if unmarried. Should their partner be abusive, they were able to leave and importantly, they retained rights over their own property. Rather than a covenant for life, the women could move through a series of monogamous and convenient relationships that mirrored the pre-industrial British relationship model, placing less emphasis on respectability and more on pragmatism.

Given that, through their convict status, women were in the care and protection of the State, material security itself was not a requirement of a relationship. If they were unable to support themselves as single women or as mothers, they, and their dependents, could apply to the Government to go ‘on stores’, thereby being provided with food and clothing. This gave Australian women considerable advantage over their sisters in Britain, significantly reducing their vulnerability and empowering them in many ways, including in their intimate relationships. Colonial relationships were about long-term benefit rather than daily survival. In this respect the colonial Government empowered convict women, effectively removing them from the cycle of dependence and male domination.

Other factors impacted significantly on the women’s willingness to marry. The colony in these early years had only an Anglican minister, Richard Johnson. For Catholics, an Anglican marriage was not desirable. Scottish and Irish convicts found marriage

616 Kercher states that even the British aristocracy accepted co-habitation, yet officials, like Macquarie, found it shocking and perceived women who co-habited as prostitutes. Bruce Kercher, Debt, Seduction and Other Disasters: The Birth of Civil Law in Convict New South Wales (Annandale, NSW: Federation Press, 1996), 68.
618 The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney, 102.
620 Catholics were obliged to attend Anglican church services each week and their children were raised by the authorities as Protestants. Henry Cleary, "Australia: The Convict System," in The Catholic Encyclopedia (From New Advent: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02113b.htm1907).
according to the rites of English marriage law offensive, and for many, church weddings held little appeal. 621

Some convicts adhered to the official regulations in regard to the dissolution of pretransportation marriages, which ruled them ineligible to marry for seven years. Neptunian Kezia Brown lived with First Fleeter William Roberts until their marriage, exactly seven years to the day after his conviction. 622 Unlike William, others ignored this regulation and married ‘bigamously’ in the colony. 623

Couples, working hard to establish their landholding, build a home and begin a family, often had limited time to conform with societal formalities. Access to religious services was limited in the remote areas where the Neptunians settled. It was not until 1801, for example, that Norfolk Island had a permanent minister. 624 As such, Neptunians there could not formalise their unions or baptise their children even had they wished to.


We have no actual records of what a colonial wedding was like for the Neptune women. However, there is an account of the 1788 wedding breakfast for Elizabeth Pulley and Anthony Rope, Their party was held in their newly built hut and they served “a very hearty Supper” that consisted of a sea pie made of salt beef, salt pork, and some highly prized fresh meat, topped with a steamed piecrust. One of Rope’s workmates was later brought to trial, and released, in relation to the meat. Instead of being kangaroo, as the guests thought, it was in fact goat taken from the carcass of an animal belonging to an officer! Grimshaw et al., Creating a Nation, 37-38.

622 William had married Mary Russell in 1778 in Cornwall and had three English children. After meeting soon after Kezia’s arrival, the couple had two children, William (1791) and Mary (1793). August 14th 1793 was a significant one for the couple — William’s seven-year sentence expired and, as well as marrying, the couple baptised their second child, Mary.


623 For example, Mary Cragg married just weeks after arriving in Sydney, despite having married in England. Elizabeth Wood was the wife of John Wood when she was caught stealing two pairs of stockings at Shoreditch in 1789. Elizabeth is thought to have married First Fleeter Edward Westlake on Norfolk Island in 1791. Molly Morgan remarried bigamously after her escape to England (1794). Her marriage to Thomas Mears of Plymouth on November 8th 1797 ended with her second transportation to the colony following conviction for theft in October 1803. Hannah Hawkins was married to William Hawkins in Staffordshire but appears to have married Henry Taylor on Norfolk Island in 1791.

624 The Rev. Richard Johnson travelled to Norfolk Island in November 1791, marrying upwards of 100 couples. No official records remain of those marriages.
Authorities, however, continued to attribute de-facto relationships to the ‘remiss attitudes’ of the convict class.\(^{625}\) There was also a presumption that licentiousness and promiscuity were an entirely female characteristic. The colonial ideal was measured in terms of ‘wives and mothers’ founding the ‘bourgeois nuclear family’ and women were censured if this ideal was not achieved.\(^{626}\) This once again illustrates the desire of the state, and the male patriarchy, to force convict women to conform to their norm of genteel middle-class values. The women were to be ‘honest and industrious wives’ and ‘affectionate mothers.’\(^{627}\) The adjectives reflect the hegemonic battle, not only of the classes but of the sexes. Male convicts appear exempt from the expectations demanded of women.

The gendered expectations and condescending assessments made of convict-class morality ignored the reality that marriage, as a custom amongst the lower classes in Britain, remained non-universal until the mid-nineteenth century.\(^{628}\) In continuing to adhere to British working-class norms and practices, the sixteen de-facto Neptunians drove their own social agenda, in defiance of the government’s official stance. This represented, not only a strategy for shaping their own lives, but, more broadly, an expression of escape from social control.\(^{629}\)

The fact that convict women lived in relationships outside marriage fuelled the myth of the ‘imaginary prostitute’ and contributed to the stereotyping that has tainted convict women.\(^{630}\) The convict system — characterised by a lack of physical confinement and an under-regulation of personal, familial and household relationships — appears to have

\(^{626}\) Damousi, "Depravity and Disorder: The Sexuality of Convict Women,“ 30.
\(^{627}\) Alford, *Production or Reproduction? An Economic History of Women in Australia, 1788-1850*, 38. quoting from Macarthur papers, vol 1, A2897, p74

Liston and Reynolds state that the qualities that were beneficial for both a life of crime and life in the colonies included quick thinking, versatility, organisation skills, teamwork, courage, numeracy and familiarity with trade. These differ greatly to the qualities respected in middle-class women. Carol Liston and Kathrine M Reynolds, "Crime Pays: Women Transported for Forged Bank Notes," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 104, no. 1 (2018): 83.


contributed to this perceived debauchery.\textsuperscript{631} Despite this, there appears to be evidence that the \textit{Neptunians’} de-facto relationships were stable, long-lasting ones, formalized, should they desire it, in the couple’s own time. Mary Mitchell formed an early relationship with Edward Pugh, a private in the NSW Corps, going with him to Norfolk Island in 1791. Almost two decades later, on March 3\textsuperscript{rd} 1810, the couple married. Rebecca Chippenham lived with John Best from the late 1790s, the couple marrying after two decades together on June 16\textsuperscript{th} 1817. These de-facto relationships were far from ‘brutish, nasty and short’, with ‘strong evidence of affection, consideration, loyalty and companionship’ between the couples.\textsuperscript{632} Both relationships were mutually consensual and beneficial, offering the \textit{Neptunians} a degree of protection and minimising the risk of predatory male advances.\textsuperscript{633}

The \textit{Neptunians} were of many natures. Amongst their number existed the sexually free and the faithful, the loyal wife, the lover, the concubine and the mistress. Given this diversity, we must consider why women married and the advantages, if any, marriage offered the \textit{Neptunians}.

\section*{Colonial Marriage}

Of the forty-seven \textit{Neptunians} identified as being in relationships during their first two years in the colony, 66\% (thirty-one) were married by the end of 1792. This represents a healthy majority of women, and interestingly defies the available data. Statistics relating to the period 1788-1792 are scant however, in 1806, only fourteen per cent of women were recorded as being married. Fifty-one per cent of women were co-habiting, eleven per cent were ‘housekeepers’ and fourteen per cent were ‘employed’ by a man. The remaining ten per cent were independent.\textsuperscript{634} From a population of 6,980, there were

\textsuperscript{631} Quoting Historical Records of Australia Series 1, Vol 7, pp 204-10. Reid, \textit{Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia}, 114.
\textsuperscript{632} Alford, \textit{Production or Reproduction? An Economic History of Women in Australia, 1788-1850}, 44.
\textsuperscript{633} Karskens, \textit{The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney}, 102.
\textsuperscript{634} This figure is sometimes quoted as being higher. Governor King stated it to be 28\% but I regard the muster data as being more convincing. Perrott, \textit{A Tolerable Good Success: Economic Opportunities for Women in New South Wales, 1788-1830}, 49.
only 360 married couples in New South Wales and half the colony’s children under the
age of nineteen were illegitimate. Yet the statistics for the *Neptunians* stand in
contrast to these figures. It is possible that during the years 1788-1792, when the colony
was in its infancy, marriage was regarded as offering greater security than in later
years. It is also possible that Governor Phillip’s direct encouragement of marriage,
whereby he ‘promised every kind of countenance and assistance to those who … should
manifest their willingness to conform to the laws of morality and religion’ may also
have swayed individuals.

The societal bedrock of Australia was to be the family, created within the confines of
respectable, orderly marriage. Marriage was attributed enormous significance to the
success of the colony — the key to creating a civilized nation and the ‘proper’ function
of women within the colony. Governor Phillip believed marriage to be key in
reforming convict women through domestication. Marriage was regarded as a means of
making men and women into a more willing workforce and the ideal framework to
facilitate the spread of colonial society through the nuclear family. These somewhat
unrealistic expectations of the societal and moral value of marriage, suggest an
idealisation of the married state consistent with genteel, male, middle-class beliefs. The
colonial concept of marriage was founded on the patriarchal family, including idealized
notions of husbands, fatherhood and masculinity invoked in both colonial governance
and the colonial social order. Within that social order, the married couple were

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636 Research indicates that nine of the thirty-one marriages (29%) may have broken down,
albeit this figure is unreliable as the partner’s disappearance may have been as a result of an
unrecorded death.
637 Reid, *Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial
Australia*, 92. Quoting firstly Arthur Phillip then David Collins. Whilst promised, the
advantages of marriage were in effect few. David Collins believed that early First Fleet
marriages may have been influenced by the belief that married couples would receive ‘various
little comforts and privileges that were denied to those in a single state.’ Additional land was
granted to those who were married, but this was also the case for those who co-habited, so there
was little effective realisation of the promised ‘countenance and assistance.’
638 Ann McGrath, *Illicit Love: Interracial Sex and Marriage in the United States and Australia*
(Nebraska, USA: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 3.
639 Reid, *Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial
Australia*, 93-94.
33.
640 Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self-Government and Imperial
regarded as ‘a miniature panopticon’, and settler families as ‘vehicles of proper fatherhood and moral masculinity’, vital to furthering the Empire.641

Between the years 1788 to 1831, the government incentivised marriage through the colony’s land grant policy, granting a married man an additional twenty acres of land for his wife and ten-acres for each child.642 In practice, however, from the earliest days of land grants, this ‘advantage’ was also extended to co-habiting families. The inducements, therefore, failed to encourage marriage over co-habitation. In granting additional land if a couple had children, regardless of marriage, there was unintended encouragement for unmarried couples to begin a family, in spite of the Government’s intent. Working-class social norms triumphed over state control and ensured that women married, and had children, by choice rather than societal imperative or state manipulation.

Marriages were contracted by mutual agreement and, with women in the numerical minority, they held the empowering advantage of choice.643 This did not, of course, ensure a happy marriage. Mary Butler’s husband was a violent and unfaithful man.644

641 ibid., 124.

644 The court case original documents have been viewed at: State Records NSW: The Court of Criminal Jurisdiction and Miscellaneous Criminal Papers 1788-1828. R 2651 X905. p. 424. Barbara Hall, A Desperate Set of Villains: The Convicts of the "Marquis Cornwallis", Ireland to Botany Bay, 1796 (2006), 193. In 1800 John and Mary Randall were living in Parramatta township. In the April of that year [1800] there was a court case involving John Randall and Catherine Murphy. Catherine Murphy "late of Parramatta" stood charged with stealing a pound of tea and a pinafore from John Randall's house at Parramatta in February 1800. In his evidence Randall stated that Murphy had come to his house asking for liquour, he gave her a "a gill of spiritous liquour", she drank that and asked for more, which he gave her. He then left his house to visit a neighbour, and about two hours later, Randall's wife left the house to look for him.
She remained in the marriage, despite the evidence suggesting it would have been a challenging one. Other *Neptunians* had their marriages end in separation.\footnote{645} The fact that divorce was not an option for these women did not preclude them leaving a marriage, from moving onto other relationships nor from re-marrying. Molly Morgan married three times, twice bigamously. Mary Cragg and Elizabeth Wood both married in the colony despite having left husbands in England. It is impossible to know how many were happy in their colonial marriages, although we do have indications that some, Susan Carr and Sarah Woolley for example, were in relationships based on love.\footnote{646} Marriages were, after all, as different as the individuals in them.

According to their son, who was still in the house, "Kit Murphy" broke into his box and stole his rum and the tea and pinafore. Catherine Murphy said in her defence that the tea was given to her by Randall, and that he had "... ill used her and had attempted to be carnally connected with her against her will". She called John Jennings, a constable at Parramatta, as a witness. He testified that he often saw the prisoner in the habits of intercourse with Randall and she was frequently at his house. Another witness gave evidence that about the time of her arrest, he was passing her house and heard her "... singing out, he went in and saw the Prisoner, with her hair hanging disorderly about her, her clothes torn. She said black Randall had been beating her and offering her tea to sleep with him". He saw a man running away, who may have been Randall, and stated that Murphy had been very ill used, as did Darcy Wentworth the surgeon, who found marks of violence on her thighs and knees. She was found not guilty of the charge.\footnote{645}

Elizabeth Davis’ marriage (1791) to James Sticke, appears to have broken down by 1806. Hannah Hawkins separated from her husband (married Norfolk Island 1791), Henry Taylor. She left the island and moved to Sydney, partnering with Archibald Kane. Mary Martin married Thomas Smith (1792) but by 1802 was living with James Wilbow. Molly Morgan had three marriages, two of them bigamous. Ann White’s husband, John Scott, left her on Norfolk Island when he left for China. Her second partner, Kennedy Murray, to whom she had two children, also abandoned her when he left for Van Diemen’s Land. Her third relationship lasted until her death in 1853.\footnote{646}

Susan Carr’s marriage to Timothy Warren on April 17th 1797, for example, was one that Needham interpreted as having ‘an air of romance about it.’ The couple had met whilst awaiting transportation in the gaol at Bedford and re-established their relationship again in the colony. Needham, *The Women of the 1790 Neptune*, 133.

Who Do You Think You Are, the SBS family history series, aired a program on May 1st 2018 featuring First Fleeter, John Ryan and his wife, *Neptunian* Sarah Woolley. Descendant, Natalie Imbruglia, was presented with the fact that John Ryan had sailed from Norfolk Island, leaving Sarah and their child, Elizabeth, behind him. Imbruglia’s response was one of sadness, stating ‘He chose to abandon his wife and family, leaving them behind to struggle on their own… Sarah had become a mother with a ten acre property; she had a husband and things were looking up and then John leaves. I can’t for the life of me think why he would have left without them.’ Imbruglia’s empathy served to build tension in the narrative, resolved when Professor Grace Karskens revealed that John Ryan received a land grant in the Hawkesbury District and the family were reunited. There are overtones in the stories of both Susan Carr and Sarah Woolley of relationships based on love, for separation did not divide them."Who Do You Think You Are? Natalie Imbruglia,” in *Who Do You Think You Are* (SBS Australia, 2018).
Within marriage, a woman’s role was perceived to be one of reproduction — of children but also of British values.\textsuperscript{647} Whilst this could be perceived as degrading and disempowering, being ‘breeders’ of the British race invested women with certain power.\textsuperscript{648} As mothers, it was their values that were passed on to the currency lads and lasses.\textsuperscript{649} It was their partnering, their child-rearing and their domestic labours that enabled the colony to grow.\textsuperscript{650} The British government, in deciding to found the colony with convict settlers, relied on convict women as the mothers of the settlement.

Marriages were then, as now, deeply personal events, not just names and dates in a register. Triffitt’s comments regarding the marriage of Neptunian Mary Cragg and Thomas Murphy (July 31st 1790), whilst those of a family historian interpreting the primary records, reflect the value of descendants personalising a significant event in order to bring it to life.\textsuperscript{651}

There was no way Tom and Mary could have known each other before they met in Sydney Cove and there was certainly no hesitation when they did. They must have met around July 1st, 1790 in the midst of all the confusion and chaos of that landing. The Scarborough, the Neptune and the Surprize were all disgorging passengers amidst scenes of terrible suffering... Somehow, swirling in amongst all this Tommy Murphy found Mary Craig. They must have taken all of ten days to decide on marriage because, as Cobley makes a point of noting, their bans had only been published twice, instead of the usual three times when they were hurriedly married and placed on board the Surprize, all on the same day, Saturday 31st July. In a month both had changed the course of their lives. If it was a connection of convenience, a pragmatic meeting of the ways, it was a remarkably successful one. The two of them stayed together till they died. Tommy was recorded in the marriage register as Thomas Morphy. I like this. One can just hear his voice as the clerk asks his name. ‘Thomas Morphy,’ he must have said, his thick Irish accent rounding out the word. ‘Morphy.’

\textsuperscript{648} Ibid., 168.
\textsuperscript{649} Ibid., 165.
\textsuperscript{651} References to support Triffitt’s interpretation are:

Cobley, \textit{Sydney Cove, 1789-1790}, 262. Cobley writes: 'Saturday, 31st July. There were two weddings, in both of which the banns had only been published twice. Thomas Morphy was married to Mary Craig, and Henry Palamore to Elenor Kirvin. The witnesses to both weddings were Hannah Peat and Elizabeth Jones.' Note that Elizabeth Jones was a fellow-Neptunian.

clerk wrote down exactly what he heard and in that one letter is the sound of Tommy’s voice.\footnote{652}

It is easy to believe that Mary Cragg’s marriage to Thomas provided her with comfort and security. Surviving the voyage to Sydney, and about to embark for the unknowns of Norfolk Island, marriage would have promised safety and refuge. It was possibly the reality of mutual advantage, of security, companionship and support in the context of the nascent colony that drove the higher than anticipated marriage rate amongst Neptunians.\footnote{653}

Perrott argues that married women achieved a certain respectability that single or cohabiting women could not attain.\footnote{654} That, of course, depended very much on the marriage. It is unlikely that Mary Butler was regarded as being in a respectable marriage when her husband, John Randall, was revealed in court to have had affairs and perpetrated violence on women.\footnote{655} However, some obviously desired the respectability of marriage. Neptunian Sarah Smith arrived in the colony as a free woman with her convict partner, John Cobcroft. The couple lived as husband and wife and reared a large family of ten children. They secretly married on Christmas Eve in 1842, when he was


\footnote{653}For those Neptunians who appear not to have had a significant intimate relationship, support had to be sought elsewhere. Elizabeth Risam, for example was unmarried and childless. She is listed as self-employed in the 1806 Muster but from 1820 she was a regular resident of the Sydney Benevolent Asylum, an institution established in 1818 to support Sydney’s needy. Of it is written: In a colony where so many had been separated from their families through transportation or emigration, it served a vital role throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries caring for the poor, abandoned, destitute and sick. Heather Garnsey and Martyn Killion, "What Was the Benevolent Asylum," http://www.sydneybenevolentasylum.com/index.php?page=what-was-the-sydney-benevolent-asylum.

\footnote{654}Perrott, A Tolerable Good Success: Economic Opportunities for Women in New South Wales, 1788-1830, 62.

\footnote{655}The court case original documents have been viewed at: State Records NSW: The Court of Criminal Jurisdiction and Miscellaneous Criminal Papers 1788-1828. R 2651 X905. p. 424.

In April 1800, Mary and her husband John Randall were living in the township of Parramatta. The evidence provided in a court case paints a rare insight into colonial domestic violence. Randall was accused of ‘ill-using’ and attempting to be carnally connected to Catherine Murphy, against her will. Witnesses attested to her having torn clothes, that she had been beaten and had been offered tea to sleep with Randall. Surgeon D'Arcy Wentworth gave evidence that Murphy displayed marks of violence on her thighs and knees.

Hall, A Desperate Set of Villains: The Convicts of the "Marquis Cornwallis", Ireland to Botany Bay, 1796, 193.
aged seventy-nine and she seventy. This suggests that Sarah, despite being a woman of great strength and independence, felt a certain discomfort regarding her unmarried status, choosing to marry despite her advanced age and the widely-held community and familial perception that they were already wed.

Sarah, who ran the family property, raised her large family, and worked as a midwife, held rather modern views in regard to relationships and a woman’s role within them. When her granddaughter, Sophia Ford, married, Sarah told her ‘you have married Edward to be his companion, not his slave.’ Sarah’s attitude hints at the concept of ‘companionate marriages,’ espoused during the first wave of feminism in the mid-1800s. Sarah, and other Neptunians including Molly Morgan, put into practice the notion of being equal working partners within a relationship. In so doing they preceded the values of First Wave Feminism, regarding marriage as what Mary Wollstonecraft described as ‘a fellowship of mutually reliant individuals.’

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657 Like Sarah Smith, over one-fifth of the Neptunians were in an established and significant romantic relationship when they arrived in the colony. Six of those were free women who accompanied convict men. The six free wives of convict men were Elizabeth Connor, Sarah Fielder, Harriet Hodgetts, Jane Reed, Sarah Smith and Maria Wood. Five Neptunians arrived in the colony having established on-board relationships with fellow-convicts. Mary Shultz married fellow-Neptunian Martin Saerle (Sales) five weeks after landing in Sydney, both embarking the next day for Norfolk Island. Elizabeth Carter married Neptunian Thomas Peacock on September 5th 1790, and Rose Flood married Chares Cross five months after arrival on November 21st 1790. Sarah Manlove lived with Neptunian John Hughes after disembarkation and the couple had the first of their eight children in 1792. Mary Donavan partnered with Edward Perkins of the Neptune, the two marrying three years after arrival in August 1793.

658 Hinder and Davidson, A Record of the Hinder Family in Australia, 3.

659 Kate Bolick, “Riding the Waves,” The Sydney Morning Herald, March 3-4 2018, 4. Companonate marriages emphasise both parties sharing child-rearing responsibilities and housework, whilst also redefining the institution’s legal parameters.

660 Quoting Mary Wollstonecraft (1759 – 1797), whose writings were contemporary with the Neptunians, and who is regarded as the forerunner of the first wave of feminism. Barbara Taylor, Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 229.
Couples married for diverse reasons. Some of them, according to Karskens, seem to have been ‘marrying old friends’, others had the more pragmatic foundation of companionship, comfort and emotional security. Elizabeth Ireland’s marriage to John Limeburner on September 26th 1790, just three months after arrival, was one which offered security, given that John, a First Fleeter, was already well-established in the colony. Mary Shultz, the first Neptunian to marry in the colony on 30th July 1790, met her husband, Martin Searle, aboard the Neptune. This marriage formalized an attraction forged, possibly through affection, aboard the hell ship.

The concept of marriage based on romantic love is recognized as being a relatively modern construct. According to Aveling, working-classes, in the main, married for very practical reasons, hoping that affection would follow. It is impossible to assess how much a woman loved her husband, or indeed why she chose to marry. Written records hinting at affection between convicts are rare. The convict class generally had little access to the written word and even less command of the language associated with their emotional lives. The case of Neptunian Elizabeth Rymes and her husband, Matthew Everingham is an exception. Matthew wrote of his wife ‘really good one she is’ and also:

I married a young woman with whom I had contracted an intimacy as soon as She came into the Country and really consider it one of the most fortunate circumstances that ever befell me, She has prov [sic] to me a most excellent woman.

These somewhat understated, parochial expressions of affection hint at romantic love. The stilted, somewhat generalised language transmits what Vincent describes as only ‘a limited sense of the personalities involved or the relationship that existed between

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661 Grimshaw et al., Creating a Nation, 37.
662 Elizabeth Ireland was not alone in achieving the advantage of marrying a man already well-acquainted with colonial life, as nine Neptunians married convicts who arrived in 1788.
John Limeburner remained proud of his First Fleet origins, the facts of which were celebrated at the time of his death, supposedly aged 104, in 1847. "Longevity," South Australian Register, November 3 1847.
663 Karskens, The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney, 90.
664 Aveling, "Bending the Bars. Convict Women and the State," 152.
666 Ross, The Everingham Letterbook. Letters of a First Fleet Convict, 36, 41.
them.\textsuperscript{667} It was regarded as improper to discourse on private lives and private matters within those lives.\textsuperscript{668} Everingham, writing to his previous legal employer in England, would certainly have exercised restraint for the sake of respectability, yet he nevertheless makes his affection, and gratitude, clear.

Colonial relationships were driven by the people in them rather than, and often in spite of, the government’s agenda. Colonial Governments may have imposed the laws and made plans implicating the colonists, but it was the people, whose day-to-day actions, needs and desires created the character of the society.

The significance of Neptunian relationships with military and free men

The Neptunians were working-class women in a colonial society dominated by the working-class. In 1790, eighty-seven per cent of the population were from the convict class, the majority of these had a working-class background.\textsuperscript{669} In the early colony, having the protection and assistance of a partner would have been at the very least preferable and, at the most, essential. Having the protection of a man from outside the convict classes had the potential, despite the relative egalitarianism of this early era, to offer even greater advantage.

Three Neptunians — Mary McDonald, Jane Thompson and Ann Carey — had stable, long-term relationships with retired marines on Norfolk Island. These three relationships can be termed inter-status, occurring as they did between a female convict and a free man. In all three cases the men were marines from the New South Wales Corps who had taken up the opportunity to ‘turn settler’ and farm on Norfolk. Mary McDonald partnered with First Fleet marine private John Woods, remaining with him until John’s death in 1829. Jane Thompson married First Fleet marine John Griffiths, maintaining a relationship that lasted until her death in February 1813. Ann Carey married First Fleet marine settler Stephen Gilbert on Norfolk Island in November 1791, the couple farming their sixty-acre land grant at Balls Bay, Norfolk Island before returning to Sydney in March 1793. Stephen died circa 1799. All three relationships

\textsuperscript{667} Vincent, "Love and Death and the Nineteenth-Century Working Class," 228.
\textsuperscript{668} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{669} Butlin, \textit{Forming a Colonial Economy: Australia 1810-1850}, 34.
offered stability and, in a colony of gender imbalance, a partner for the males. Whilst inter-status, however, all three relationships were between individuals of the same social class. The marines were largely working-class in background, and as such these three relationships offered fewer challenges than those that were both inter-status and inter-class.\textsuperscript{670}

Inter-class relationships, conducted between convict women and free, middle-class men, were exceptional, not just because they crossed class boundaries, but because they led to different challenges and outcomes for the convict women involved. The middle-class idealization of marriage was foremost amidst those challenges. Whereas the working-classes accepted co-habitation, the middle-class and the middle-class colonial government, regarded marriage as the very foundation of the colony. Yet inter-class relationships sat outside this ideal, with convict women somehow regarded as suitable concubines but not as acceptable wives. There was hypocrisy in the taking of a convict woman as a long-term partner yet regarding her as somehow ‘unfit’ as a wife, an hypocrisy that undoubtedly explained and perpetuated both the stereotyping and objectification of convict women.

Three \textit{Neptunians}, Elizabeth Smith, Sarah Griggs and Catherine Crowley, had inter-class relationships. For all three women, the class divide resulted in an invisibility within both the colonial record and the historiography, an invisibility borne of the power imbalance relating to gender, class and status.\textsuperscript{671} Whilst the women may have

\textsuperscript{670} My statement that the marines were from a working-class background is supported in Clem Sargents article. He states that recruiting was rumoured to have included 'persuading gullible yokels to accept the King's shilling.' Whilst this may not have been correct, we do know, for example that the husband of \textit{Neptunian} Molly Morgan, William, escaped when apprehended and joined the Corps. This tends to support that members of these early regiments were predominantly from the working-class. Clem Sargent, "The British Garrison in Australia 1788-1841: Conditions of Service: Wives and Children," \textit{Sabretache} 43, no. 4 (2002): 40.

\textsuperscript{671} The impact was not as significant, however, when \textit{Neptunians} established relationships with men of lesser status, namely free settlers or marines. Mary McDonald, Jane Thompson and Ann Carey, for example, all had stable, long-lasting relationships with retired marines turned settlers of Norfolk Island. These three relationships can still be termed inter-status, occurring as they did between convict and free. In all three cases the men were marines from the New South Wales Corps who had taken up the opportunity to ‘turn settler’ and farm on the Island. Mary McDonald partnered with First Fleet marine private John Woods, remaining with him until John’s death in 1829. \textit{Neptunians} did, in some cases, marry their marine partners. Jane Thompson, for example, married First Fleet marine, John Griffiths, maintaining a relationship that lasted until Jane’s death in February 1813.\textsuperscript{671} Ann Carey married First Fleet marine settler Stephen Gilbert on Norfolk Island in November 1791, the couple farming their sixty-acre land grant at Balls Bay, Norfolk Island before returning to Sydney in March 1793.
held some status within the private, domestic sphere, where their role was one of partner and mother, in the public sphere they were obscured by the limitations of their class and status. They appeared in neither convict nor official record, belonging to neither. For Elizabeth, Sarah and Catherine, analysis using family history methodology reclaims them from obscurity, providing valuable insights as a result.

During the period 1788-1792, the artificial population ratios resulted in a blurring of social boundaries. In a colony where females comprised a mere nine-percent of the population, the majority convict women, their company as partners inevitably took precedence over the barriers of class and status. In this regard, the *Neptunians* were victims of colonialism and its artificial social composition, for despite being able to enter into inter-class relationships, they appear to have been unable to completely transcend the prejudice of their background, in Lake’s words ‘carrying the stigma of convictism forever.’

Inter-class relationships muddy the concept of relative social egalitarianism attained by the convict class through Phillip’s policy of equal rations and punishments. They did occur, as did the social compromises that resulted. Inga Clendinnen struggles with the realities of these partnerships, questioning ‘how did those delinquent officers manage their courtly duties’ and concluding that ‘such arrangements were simply designated unspeakable and, therefore, invisible. Social myopia has always been a British virtue.’ Family History Methodology goes some way to reversing this invisibility, providing these women with a profile often neglected in the historiography and official documentation.

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672 This statistic is based on Tench's data from Rose Hill and extended to the colony as a whole, given no formal population gender break-down exists. Tench, *Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”*, 258 - 9.


674 Clendinnen reminds us that the Rev. Johnson was alone in bringing his wife to the colony, 'poor lonely soul as she must have been.' Phillip took no colonial partner, but 'most senior officers', such as David Collins, John White, Philip Gidley King, Ralph Clark and George Johnston, all took convict partners. Inga Clendinnen, *Dancing with Strangers* (Melbourne, Vict: Text Publishing, 2003), 153.

675 Ibid.
In a small colony, ‘hothousing’ between classes inevitably occurred, with artificially close interactions between the convict-classes and the middle-class free officers and administrative staff. In December 1791, the 104 free-men in the colony were outnumbered ten-to-one by predominantly working-class convicts. Of those 104 free men, only nine appear to have had wives or partners. The result of these abnormally skewed dynamics were two-fold. Firstly, the cultural norms of the majority would have challenged and ‘swamped’ the minority. Secondly, free, middle-class men could only source partners from amongst the convict women who were, understandably, in high demand as servants, mistresses, wives and mothers. This was a society very different from the class-segregated British model.

Insights into daily interactions in the early colony are rare. The transcript of the trial of Mary White for theft in May 1791, for example, reveals that four Neptunians, Mary White, Elizabeth Smith, Molly (Mary) Morgan and Mary Mitchell, worked together in Parramatta, washing and ironing for John Harris, the surgeon’s mate in the New South Wales Corps, Captain Nepean of the NSW Corps and Lieutenant James Shairp of the British Marines. This documentation is of value in showing how the women interacted on a daily basis with the men, in their huts. It also supports the rumoured association between Molly Morgan and Captain Nepean. Colonial gossip in 1791 hinted that Captain Nepean ‘is so Gear with Mrs Morgan [Neptunian Mary or Molly Morgan] that He is the Common talk of this place [Rose Hill] and Sydney.’

676 Tench, Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 258.
677 Ibid.
678 Joy Damousi, Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 34.
679 "Mary White. Theft. Trial."
680 John Cobley, Sydney Cove: 1791-1792, vol. 3 (Sydney, NSW: Angus And Robertson, 1965), 101. The innuendo here is that the couple were engaged in an affair, and that innuendo continues to the current day.

Modern-day ‘gossip’ continues the insinuations regarding Molly’s affair with Nepean. Online posts include ‘William appears to have joined the army and is assigned to Captain Nicholas Nepean as his unofficial aide de comp with the second fleet and Molly has become Nepean's mistress for the voyage and later in Australia.’ AndCarred (Post name), "William Morgan Convict to Soldier," MyHeritage, https://www.rootschat.com/forum/index.php?topic=738794.0.
Integral to the colonial master/servant relationship, and indeed inter-class intimate relationships, was the issue of power. It has been established that there was a minimal deployment of power over the convict class during this era. Convict women were a rare commodity in a colony of gender imbalance, vital in fulfilling the role of the colony’s partners and mothers.\(^{681}\) This guaranteed them a degree of bargaining power, both with individual men and with the state, that went some way to countering the usual power dynamics associated with status and class.\(^{682}\)

Historians, including Lake and Summers, showed convict women did attain agency, establishing, in the words of Lake, their ‘status, their credentials as human subjects.’\(^{683}\) During these early years, when there were few emancipist settlers and a symbiotically reliant convict / non-convict population with skewed gender ratios, it is probable that this agency was even greater. The very concept of agency for women from the convict class in a settler colonial society warrants comment. Agency is a complex notion, made even more so by the class, status and gender of these women within the context of a fledgling, patriarchal, settler colonial settlement. There are so many variables to be considered — the individual nature of the woman; her resourcefulness within a new environment; her skill set and cultural background. All this framed within the network of her new community and her response to the dynamic of transportation and loss of the familiar. Agency is, therefore, always to be regarded as nuanced and, possibly, contradictory.

**Neptunian Inter-class relationships**

If Elizabeth Smith was acknowledged in history at all, it was solely for her later relationship with convict and colonial brewer, Thomas Rushton. Elizabeth, however, was a woman of interest in her own right. When we shift the paradigm, analysing her

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\(^{681}\) Oxley, *Convict Maids: The Forced Migration of Women to Australia*, 267-90.

\(^{682}\) Reid, *Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia*, 99.

narrative using Family History Methodology and Archival Research, Elizabeth emerges as an individual whose story illustrates strength, survival and determination. 684

Elizabeth gave birth to a daughter, Harriot Davey, on June 13th 1793. Harriot’s birth registration lists her mother as Elizabeth Smith and her father as Thomas Davey. 685 In recognizing Davey’s paternity at the birth registration, Elizabeth openly acknowledged the relationship, demonstrating, according to Karskens, no shame:

For convict women who had children to military men, the children were not badges of shame or degradation, but the opposite: evidence of her connections with rank and status, which together with her own talents and skills had left her well-off, propertied and respected. 686

Elizabeth certainly did benefit from this relationship. Davey, a lieutenant on the First Fleet, returned to England in December 1792, to pursue his career and, possibly, a more respectable marriage. 687 Whilst there are no colonial records or acknowledgement of his relationship with Elizabeth, we know that, by the time Davey departed, Elizabeth was four months pregnant. As outlined in Chapter Two, it appears that Davey made allowances for her financial security through the purchase of a property in the Prospect district. 688 Elizabeth was left propertied and with enhanced financial prospects. She lived and worked on the Prospect land, expanding her holding and referring to herself in later documentation as a ‘landholder.’ 689 In taking possession of her Prospect Hill land

684 Elizabeth Smith had no surviving children, so detailed research had not previously been undertaken on her.
685 Harriot bore her father's surname, and this is cited both on the birth registration and the baptismal entry. NSW Government, "New South Wales Registry of Births, Death & Marriages." 1793, V1793231 4.
687 I have been unable to identify Thomas Davey’s wife, apart from her Christian name Margaret. She also remains invisible. The couple had one daughter, Lucy Margaretta Davey, baptised in Yorkshire (I believe) on October 8th 1796.
688 It is impossible that Elizabeth had the resources or ability as a convict to purchase land herself, given her lack of resources in London necessitating theft.
689 State Records Authority of New South Wales, "Population Muster of 1814," 141. Entry #6255

Elizabeth’s elevated status is best reflected through her 1814 Muster registration under the name of ‘Mrs Elizabeth Smith.’ This melding of her maiden name with the prefix ‘Mrs’ indicates Elizabeth’s desire for, or attainment of, enhanced respectability. Carol J Baxter, General Muster of New South Wales, 1814 (Australian Biographical and Genealogical Record, 1987).
circa 1792, Elizabeth became one of the first female convicts working her own holding, as well as a pioneer settler of the Prospect district.\footnote{690}

Biographies of Thomas Davey — including those on the National Centre of Biography, Dictionary of Australian Biography, and Wikipedia sites — make no mention of his relationship with Elizabeth Smith, nor of Harriot, his first daughter.\footnote{691} To all intents and purposes, Elizabeth is rendered invisible in the official documentation.

At top right are the original landholdings of John Silverthorn and John O’Croft, whose holdings both combined under Elizabeth Smith’s ownership.\footnote{692}

\footnote{690} It is interesting to acknowledge that, of the twenty original land grantees at Prospect, including Silverthorn and O’Croft whose grants comprised Elizabeth's land (see footnote 20 below), only six remained by 1798. Elizabeth retained her Prospect grant from 1792 until 1818, many years longer than many of the male grantees. Roberts, History of Australian Land Settlement 1788-1920, 9.


Percival Serle, Davey, Thomas, Dictionary of Australian Biography (Sydney, NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1949).

\footnote{692} "Prospect Parish Map.” (New South Wales Lands Department).
Elizabeth was not alone in attaining financial benefit as a result of a relationship with a military man. Norfolk Island Neptunian Sarah Griggs had, by 1792, formed a relationship with John Townson, Lieutenant Governor of the island, and a well-educated and highly-respected officer. He and Sarah had a daughter, Sarah Griggs, on May 30th 1793. Whilst the child did not bear Townson’s surname, he did acknowledge his ‘reputed daughter’ in his will.

As to the remaining one third part or share thereof in Trust to pay upon transfer and assume the same unto Sarah Wright (my reputed daughter), Wife of Joseph Wright of York Plains, Settler to use for her own proper use and benefit.

Townson’s paternity of Sarah Griggs is acknowledged on some public sites (e.g. Wikipedia) but others, like the Australian Dictionary of Biography, ignore both mother and daughter. The latter goes further, inaccurately paraphrasing the will and omitting the bequest to Sarah Griggs Wright: ‘[Townson] died in Sydney on 8 July 1835, leaving an estate sworn at £5000 to his nephew, Captain John Witts, R.M., his nieces and his two sisters.’ Sarah Griggs Wright is, like her mother, intentionally obliterated from the public record. Sarah Griggs herself appears to have received financial benefit from John Townson. In March 1810, Townson transferred ownership of Brackenrigg Farm at Petersham Hill to Sarah Griggs for the token cost of one shilling. In that year

694 The legacy is of great interest as, in leaving Sarah, his “reputed daughter” a sum of money, Townson directs that “the share of her, the said Sarah Wright, shall not be subject or liable to the control, direction or interference of her present, or any future husband but may be at her own disposal in the same or like manner as if she were sole or unmarried”. "Will of John Townson," ed. State Library of New South Wales (1827).
695 Ibid.
696 M Austin, "Townson, John (1759–1835)," in Australian Dictionary of Biography (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1967). The two nieces referred to are Anna Witts and Apphia Witts, who received the other two thirds share in Townson’s will. Their names appear in the same will clause as that of Sarah Wright nee Griggs. This biography was compiled in 1967 and reflects the anonymity of convict women and their children in the historiography of that time.
697 At this stage I have been unable to validate this land transaction however, it is common for formal documentation of early colonial land transactions not to exist. Naked Possession of land meant there was no documentation, as was the case for Elizabeth Smith’s Prospect land. It was only when land was later sold that records sometimes reflected ownership. There is, however, record of a grant of 25 acres made to James Brackenrigg along Parramatta Road. Lieutenant John Townson was granted 100 acres (40 hectares) in 1793, to the east of Brackenrigg's land grant. As such it is probable that Townson absorbed Brackenrigg's grant and passed it on to Griggs. "Sarah Griggs Descendants Research Pages ", http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tasmanianfamilies/sarahgriggs.html https://jameshuntlucas.wordpress.com/type/image/ see linked URLs
Townson intended to return to England. As part of the reconciliation of his affairs he gifted Sarah the twenty-five-acre land parcel, which neighboured his own land-holding, to ensure her financial security.

Catherine Crowley, the *Neptunian* who had the most significant inter-class relationship, is also the woman who most clearly illustrates the invisibility of convict women in ‘respectable’ society. Catherine formed a partnership with Assistant Surgeon D’Arcy Wentworth soon after boarding the *Neptune* and remained ‘under his patronage’ until her death on January 6th 1800. Aboard the ‘hell ship’, Catherine enjoyed a lifestyle very different from her fellow transportees, her position as ‘concubine’ to Wentworth ensuring relative comfort.

Catherine lived, and still lives, in the shadow of her infamous husband and famous eldest son, William Charles Wentworth. She brought stability to D’Arcy Wentworth’s life and had a certain power and strength within the domestic sphere, despite her public anonymity. During her lifetime, for example, her children bore the matronymic surname of Crowley and there is little doubt that it was Catherine who chose her sons’ Christian names — William, Dorset and Matthew. Soon after her death,

Colonial Secretary’s Department, "Colonial Secretary’s Papers, 1788-1856." Series: NRS 897; Reel or Fiche Numbers: Reels 6041-6064, 6071-6072 Letter from Robert Townson, brother.
The relationship is significant in that it was Catherine’s only colonial relationship, lasting until her death in 1800, aged approximately 28. It also involved a high-profile partner and resulted in the birth of three children, one of whom was William Charles Wentworth, renowned politician, writer and statesman.
She would not have suffered complete social isolation for she was not the only convict partner of a free man of class. Whilst on Norfolk Island, for example, Catherine would have developed a friendship with William Balmain’s (Senior Assistant Surgeon) convict mistress, Margaret Dawson. The pair would have shared the same challenges and joys, both thrust into a lifestyle unlikely in their homeland, enjoying privileges they would never have dreamed of whilst still sitting on the fringe of respectable society. Needham, *The Women of the 1790 Neptune*, 138.
Burke’s Colonial Gentry mistakenly lists her as Catherine Parry and many other volumes on the Wentworth family omit her altogether.
D’Arcy Wentworth had thrice been tried for highway robbery and thrice escaped the charges. His voyage to the colony is recognized as being a strategic escape from the social and legal fallout of his dubious activities. Wentworth’s reputation as a womanizer in England appears to have been staunched during his years with Catherine, only to begin again after her death.
D’Arcy changed two of the boys’ Christian names — Dorset became D’Arcy and Matthew became John — and all three boys assumed the surname Wentworth. This name change could be interpreted as a means of eliminating Catherine from the historiography — as part of the social dominance displayed by Wentworth in removing Catherine from the Wentworth family narrative altogether. It could also represent D’Arcy publicly recognising his sons and taking responsibility for their ongoing maintenance and education. Whatever the motivation, it was unsuccessful in countering the social disadvantage represented by having a convict mother.

Catherine’s son, William Charles Wentworth (born 1790) — described variously as statesman, explorer, barrister, landowner, and author — never escaped the stigma of having a convict mother. He wore ‘the convict stain’, branded as being ‘the son of an Irish highwayman by a convict whore.’ Nevertheless, William Charles paid due honour to his mother. Buried initially on the family’s leasehold land in Parramatta, Catherine’s body was exhumed by William, who united his parents in the family grave, acknowledging her on the headstone. Unlike many who hid their convict origins, William paid it tribute through a mosaic of Triton, son of the Greek God Neptune, which lies inside the mausoleum gate at Vaucluse House. This overt reference to his Neptunian links speaks of pride in his origins and of respect for his mother.

703 William was most likely born aboard the Neptune or before arrival on Norfolk Island. Dorset and Matthew were born on Norfolk Island. A fourth child, a daughter, Martha, died in infancy.

The significance of her sons bearing Catherine’s surname during her lifetime lies in the fact that, as Crowleys, they remained divorced from the Wentworth kin network. It was not uncommon for illegitimate children to take their father’s surname, so either Catherine chose to retain the children’s links to her through retaining her own surname or D’Arcy refused to publicly acknowledge the boys as his. Certainly in changing the boys names after Catherine’s death there occurred a change in both personal narrative and identity for the boys. Janet Finch, "Naming Names: Kinship, Individuality and Personal Names," Sociology 42, no. 4 (2008): 14.


705 Catherine’s original headstone was found in 1849 during renovations to a century-old home in Campbell Street, Parramatta. The inscription read: Sacred to the memory of Kathleen Crowley, died January 6, 1800 aged 32 years.

706 Gary Crockett, "Putting Wentworth to Rest," Sydney Living Museums, Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

707 The man described as ‘Father of Australia’s Freedoms’ also appears to have made reference to his mother in his famous poem Australasia. It is believed by many that the childhood tears
Catherine won and held the attention and the affection, not only of her son but of D’Arcy. His reputation as a womaniser was renowned, yet his time with Catherine appears to have been stable. Despite this, she receives scant mention in Wentworth histories. John Ritchie in *The Wentworths: Father and Son*, makes several incidental references to Catherine. Of her he states: ‘the record of Catherine’s appearance and character, her thoughts and deeds, remains a blank.’

Yet Ritchie seems able to attribute D’Arcy Wentworth with thoughts and emotions, empathising with him whilst unable to extend Catherine that courtesy:

> Perhaps the turning point came with William’s birth [1790]. At Cascade Bay he [D’Arcy] had helped him from his mother’s womb, cut the cord, and washed, wrapped and warmed the babe. In that profound instant of becoming a father, D’Arcy saw Catherine at her most vulnerable. Their son was born at least five weeks premature. The infant’s fight for life drew his father closer to him and placed D’Arcy’s own struggles in perspective. The experience brought with it humility, as well as added resolution.

The feelings that Catherine would have experienced at the birth of her son in 1790 could just as easily have been explored. Giving birth to their first child and heir was a significant event for Catherine, given her convict status. She would have experienced mixed emotions of joy and fear at how her son would fare in the new colony and trepidation at what her future would hold once she disembarked. In this, and other histories, Catherine is denied her due voice. Her objectification, reduced to the role of convict concubine, means she is denied feelings and accreditation for her achievements.

Catherine’s story illustrates the anonymity and stigma arising from inter-class colonial relationships. Removed from convict society and its related documentation, being disassociated from, and ignored by, ‘polite society’ and having stigma attached to her

mentioned in Wentworth’s poem were those shed after his mother’s death. *Scenes, which though oft remember’d, still are new; Scenes, where my playful childhood’s thoughtless years Flew swift away, despite of childhood’s tears;*

709 Ibid., 53.
710 William Charles Wentworth IV (1907 - 2003) was reported to have believed that Catherine Crowley was William Charles the 1st's step-mother not natural mother. This represents denial rather than reality, but is yet another way in which the 'convict concubine' was relegated to the shadows. Tony Stephens, "Firebrand Style Hid True Substance," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 17 2003.
position as mistress, Catherine left few primary sources behind her and even fewer acknowledgements. Stigma was the defining characteristic of inter-class relationships, making them very different from same-class partnerships. The evidence suggests that, despite being in a long-term and seemingly committed relationship, Catherine was unable to bridge that class gulf.

For Elizabeth Smith, Sarah Griggs and Catherine Crowley, there was some advantage gained from their liaisons. Elizabeth Smith became a landholder, as did Sarah Griggs. Catherine Crowley experienced a far better voyage than her fellow-transportees aboard the *Neptune* as a result of partnering with D’Arcy Wentworth. So too did she live the colonial life of a free, somewhat advantaged women, no doubt attaining benefit from her association with a middle-class partner from landed ancestry. These relationships followed different rules from those conducted within the same class and status and, as such, may have deterred some women from pursuing them. Those rules, including piousness, subservience and respectability, would have compromised the relative agency of the convict woman, just as it reduced her visibility. 711

**The strong bonds of community**

It has been argued that, in order to act as true agents of colonisation, it was essential for the *Neptunians* to remain in the colony, as permanent settlers, once their sentences expired. Intimate relationships, land-ownership and home-making were, as we have seen, vital to this process, but so too was the development of a sense of community and societal belonging.

Common indicators critical to the development of a sense of community include informal interaction with neighbours, feelings of safety and privacy, and a desire to participate in neighbour interaction and affairs. 712 Thomas Bender’s definition of

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community includes ‘shared understandings and a sense of obligation’ but also that ‘individuals are bound together by affective or emotional ties rather than by a perception of self-interest.’ Karskens, in applying the general research on community to The Rocks settlement during the colonial era, adds that a sense of community is also enriched through ‘networks of human interaction’ and the sense of belonging. There is little doubt that familiarity, mutuality and a shared sense of obligation existed in all settlements during the period 1788-1792 — Sydney, Norfolk Island and Rose Hill. The Neptunians would have clung to their bonds with fellow-transportees, the familiar faces in a strange new land. It was these women, after all, who triggered a ‘shared sense of personal relatedness’ as well as the ‘shared emotional connection’, two factors identified as vital to developing a sense of community.

Only through the establishment of a sense of home and of community, could there emerge the feelings of belonging essential for the Neptunians to regard the colony as their permanent home. Emotional ties and affiliation, emotional bonds, attachment and behavioural commitment were required for the women to regard themselves as settlers. ‘Networks of interaction’ were strong in the case of the Neptunians, both during and after the Phillip era.

Given their shared experiences of hardship, illness and survival, the Neptunians would certainly have developed strong emotional ties. The longer people are together, the closer these bonds, enabling them to share the numerous challenges of early colonial life. In the Parramatta district, regular interaction between the Neptunians was

717 Neptunian Ann Wheeler exemplifies the ties binding friends. Although they did not travel together on the Neptune Ann and Elizabeth Barnsley’s story are of interest as a footnote. The pair were tried together for shoplifting and were transported separately, Ann aboard the Neptune and Elizabeth on the Lady Juliana. Upon arrival, they re-established their friendship, moving together to Parramatta, and then, in November 1791, transferring to Norfolk Island. Ann returned to Sydney on the same vessel as Elizabeth in November 1794. The two then disappear from colonial records, leading to the assumption that both returned to England. Elizabeth
clearly evident. Ann Toy and Mary Butler were not only neighbours at the Northern Boundary but had both married Afro-descent First Fleet convicts, sharing the challenges of inter-racial marriage. Their close interaction continued until Ann’s death in 1806. Mary Leary and Ann Calcut both baptised children on the same day, October 2nd 1791, the baptism entries succeeding each other in the St John’s Parramatta Register. It would be nice to think both families celebrated the births of their firstborn colonial children together. Mary Leary and Elizabeth Rymes were neighbours, settling on the land they had both been granted (July 18th 1791) just outside Parramatta with their respective husbands, John Ramsay and Matthew Everingham. Ramsay and Everingham set off in October 1795 to become early white explorers of the Blue Mountains. There is little doubt that these two women maintained a friendship well beyond the confines of the *Neptune*. Mary Butler, Sarah Willis and Elizabeth Carter all married on the same day, September 5th 1790, at St John’s Parramatta, sharing common witnesses to their marriages, and most certainly, a wedding celebration. Their successive marriage entries appear on the historic first page of the St John’s Register.

Witnessing another’s marriage potentially indicates a friendship bond. On November 7th 1790, Thomas Hodgetts, husband of Harriet Hodgetts, witnessed the marriage of *Neptunian* Eleanor Sandwick to George Fry; both Thomas and George were blacksmiths, and undoubtedly Harriet celebrated with them. Thomas Hodgetts also witnessed the marriage of *Neptunian* Ann Toy to John Martin at St John’s Parramatta on August 20th 1792. Harriet Hodgetts witnessed the marriage at St Phillip’s, Sydney of fellow *Neptunian* Mary Desmond to James Bird in December 1790. Mary Mitchell witnessed the marriage of fellow *Neptunian* Jane Reed to William Davis on July 30th 1790, just weeks after arriving and one day prior to Jane and William’s departure for

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718 Samuel Becket died February 3rd 1793, aged sixteen months. "Baptisms, 1790-1825; Marriages, 1789-1823; Burials, 1790-1825; Parish: St. John's Anglican Church Parramatta."

719 Ibid.

720 NSW Government, "New South Wales Registry of Births, Death & Marriages." 108/1790 V1790108 4

721 "Baptisms, 1790-1825; Marriages, 1789-1823; Burials, 1790-1825; Parish: St. John's Anglican Church Parramatta." Reference Number: REG/COMP/1; Description: Vol 01.

722 NSW Government, "New South Wales Registry of Births, Death & Marriages." 119/1790 V1790119 3A
Norfolk Island.\textsuperscript{723} Elizabeth Jones witnessed the marriage of Mary Cragg to Thomas Murphy on July 31\textsuperscript{st} 1790, the same day they boarded the \textit{Surprize} for Norfolk Island.

The first page of the St John’s Parramatta Register, September 5\textsuperscript{th} 1790, showing the marriage registrations for \textit{Neptunians} Mary Butler (No 1), Sarah Willis (No 4) and Elizabeth Carter (No 5).\textsuperscript{724}

We gain rare insight into the closeness and challenges of early \textit{Neptunian} interactions in Sydney, from the transcript of the trial of Mary White.\textsuperscript{725} Molly Morgan, Elizabeth Smith and Mary Mitchell all worked together (as did White) as housekeepers and

\textsuperscript{723} Ibid. 82/1790 V179082 3A
\textsuperscript{724} "Baptisms, 1790-1825; Marriages, 1789-1823; Burials, 1790-1825; Parish: St. John's Anglican Church Parramatta."
\textsuperscript{725} "Mary White. Theft. Trial.." Mary White was acquitted on two counts of theft on May 10th and 11th 1791, namely stealing a white linen shirt, the property of Lieutenant Shairp and a petticoat belonging to fellow-transportee, Molly Morgan. James Shairp had come to the colony aboard the First Fleet and had acted as second in command at Rose Hill. He acted as assistant Judge in the colony’s criminal courts and continued to do so despite disputes over military participation in civilian law enforcement.
washerwomen to men of the NSW Corps and all three gave evidence at the hearing against White.\textsuperscript{726} The testimony reveals that Neptunians were in daily contact with each other, coming and going between huts and interacting numerous times in a day. Morgan, Smith and Mitchell’s evidence against White may have been driven by self-preservation or fear, or perhaps by a willingness to uphold the law and avoid further punishment. Perhaps it quite simply represented dislike of, or retribution against, White.\textsuperscript{727} It serves to remind us that daily interactions were not always harmonious, but so too does it exemplify that membership of communities means that, at times, some are excluded, with the ‘us and them’ mentality resulting, at times, in rejection.\textsuperscript{728}

Those who were sent to Norfolk Island five weeks after arrival in the colony, would have had especially close and sustained contact. We know, for example, that Hannah Hawkins and Ann Meredith worked together on the island. They were the first and only Neptunians to be flogged for open defiance of colonial authority.\textsuperscript{729}

The early Rose Hill settlers — Elizabeth Carter, Elizabeth Connor, Sarah Smith, Maria Wood, Mary Butler, Ann Toy, Ann Calcut, Susan Carr, Mary Cooksey, Mary Donovan, Elizabeth Ireland, Ann Griffiths, Mary Leary, Sarah Manlove, Mary Martin, Elizabeth Rymes and Sarah Willis — would have lived and worked together in the convict huts hastily erected at the time of their arrival. Their time together at Rose Hill as the earliest settlers in the new township, their support of each other through the challenges of arrival, survival and adjustment, would have created indelible bonds.

The sense of community and belonging developed by the Neptunians relied on much more than just their pre-existing links with fellow-transportees. Sarah Fielder and her husband William became so entrenched in the community life at The Rocks, that they

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{726} Elizabeth Smith as housekeeper to Assistant Surgeon John Harris and Mary White to Lieutenant Shairp.
\textsuperscript{728} McMillan and Chavis, "Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory," 9-10.
\end{flushleft}
declined the later opportunity of settling on the sixty-acre grant of land made to Sarah at the Eastern Farms. Karskens regards The Rocks as unique in having at its core clusters of people who arrived on the early fleets and remained. This provided a sense of familiarity and mutuality whereby people met in the street, stopped for a chat and dropped into each other’s houses to eat, drink and talk.

Women also helped each other with their children and during childbirth, thus contributing to a sense of commonality and community in early colonial society. *Neptunian* Sarah Smith was a midwife, and her services would have been greatly valued by those who lived near her.  

We know from a petition written by Sarah herself that she attended ‘the families of all the female prisoners of the District Gratis’, becoming, in the process, a valued and respected citizen.

**Relationships with First Peoples**

The interactions between First peoples and white settlers examined previously within this thesis revealed instances of empathy and support, of bafflement and of misunderstanding based on cultural differences. Clendinnen regards this era to have been one of cross-cultural discovery, concluding that ‘Racist terror would come soon enough, but not in Phillip’s time.’ The *Neptunian* encounters largely support this conclusion.

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730 As an interesting postscript in regard to Sarah, The Mitchell Library recently assessed Sarah’s status as ‘upper working-class’, due to her role as an emancipist (former convict) midwife and farmer. During the period 1788-1792, however, the conceptual social divisions on which class is based simply did not exist. There were no rich or poor; propertied and non-propertied; capitalist and worker; wage-worker and self-employed — there were only convict and non-convict classes, and at this time those two classes shared a rare equality, as this thesis has demonstrated. Backler, *Sarah Cobcroft*.

Karskens provides interesting reflections on the complexities of colonial, pre-industrial class divisions. She regarded them as fluid. Whilst rank in the higher-orders was dependent on birth, manners, wealth and profession, amongst the lower orders skills, trade and literacy were important. So too were attributes such as stability, property and accumulation of capital. Add to this the complexities of gender, ambition and cultural aspects and the whole notion of class became a complex one as the colony expanded and diversified. Karskens, *The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney*, 147-8.

731 Colonial Secretary’s Department, "Colonial Secretary’s Papers, 1788-1856." Series: NRS 899; Reel or Fiche Numbers: Fiche 3001-3162

732 Clendinnen, *Dancing with Strangers*, 5, 286.
Karskens’ statement that Phillip’s policy of kindness and gifts could stop neither Eora violence nor settler transgressions, is supported by the evidence of both Charles Cross and of Henry Sells, partners of Neptunians Rose Flood and Sarah Smith.\textsuperscript{733} Both testified to gifts and kindness, both witnessed violence. Karskens goes further in acknowledging that Phillip was following orders in the establishment of an agricultural colony, in the full knowledge that farms meant dispossession, and dispossession meant violence.\textsuperscript{734} The Neptunians, too, were caught in this cycle. They had unwillingly arrived in the colony, became agents of the colonial project of settlement and dispossession, and were forced to survive as best they could, following the dictates of both their cultural and settler roles.

In both Sydney and Rose Hill, the Neptunians co-existed with First Peoples. We know that Kezia Brown and her partner William Roberts, then later Ann Baker and her husband John Boxley, lived on land at The Brickfields that served, in the words of Obed West (1807-1891) as ‘a great rendezvous of the blacks … and as one of their great feasting grounds as …well as the scene of many hard-fought battles … chosen by the natives as the place of meeting for the settlement of disputes.’\textsuperscript{735} The Brickfields, like Sydney and Rose Hill, had strong Aboriginal links and it is likely that Kezia and Ann, along with the other Neptunians settled in those two regions, had regular encounters with the Aboriginal people on whose land they made their home. Whilst no records of other encounters exist, the information paints a hazy picture of close societal links, of imagined interactions, of possibilities of kindness and of hostility, of confusion and cultural differences. This was to be the nature of the Neptunians’ relationships with First Peoples during these early years of the colony’s settlement.

**Conclusion**

This analysis of the Neptunians’ intimate and community interactions has provided a valuable insight into social dynamics during the period 1790-1792. It revealed the networks that bound the women to their new home, the ties that enabled them to accept the colony as their new home and themselves as settlers. It also emphasised the importance of intimate relationships in facilitating settler colonialism, laying the

\textsuperscript{733} Karskens, "Phillip and the Eora: Governing Race Relations in the Colony of New South Wales," 51.
\textsuperscript{734} Ibid.
foundation for greater stability, enabling the founding of families and the cementing of British values and customs, so vital to the prospering and extension of white settlement. The women’s relationships — intimate and communal — were often conducted on their terms, according to the dictates of the Neptunians’ class and cultural background, an expression, in fact, of their individuality. Their relationships with First Peoples were dictated by their role as agents of settler colonialism. They shared events, spaces and places with their Indigenous neighbours, bound by the land they had taken from them.

In occupying the land, building and personalising homes and forming intimate and community relationships, the Neptunians were cementing their place in the colony. Within months of landing they were fulfilling their role as settlers, displacing First Peoples, fencing properties and claiming the land as theirs. This was truly serving the purposes of colonialism. Forming relationships took dispossession to the next level, effectively giving the Neptunians a sense of their own place in the colony, the place of neighbour, partner, wife, lover or mistress.
Conclusion

This thesis is founded on a genealogical study of the sixty-one women with convict links who arrived at Sydney aboard the vessel Neptune in June 1790. The research identifies the idiosyncratic conditions that existed in the colony during the first four years of settlement (1788-1792). The Neptunians, in belonging to the earliest era of both convictism and settlement, are identified as occupying a unique role in both the history of convictism and the history of white settlement in Australia. Their contribution — through land-ownership, homemaking, dispossession of First Peoples, and relationship-building — cemented their contribution as agents of settler colonisation. Given their convict origins, the achievements of these women is of even greater significance. Whilst it is outside of the scope of this thesis to explore the women’s lives as emancipists post-1792, the analysis of their first two years as settlers hints at the contributions they were to make, not only in New South Wales and Norfolk Island, but also during the infant years of the settlement of Van Diemen’s Land.

Convictism cannot be regarded as a homogenous entity. Throughout the eighty-year history of transportation to Australia, conditions morphed and changed in response to the social, political and economic conditions. The first four years of the colony’s history, 1788-1792, are shown to have provided a very different convict experience than that experienced by convicts arriving post-1792.

This study identified the Neptunians as implicit in the dispossession of First Peoples. In their taking up land grants and in their reproduction of British-style homes and domestic landscapes, the Neptunians acted as the agents of colonisation. Their simple actions in improving their original huts, in transforming them over time to comfortable whitewashed cottages with gardens and orchards, represented the transplanting of British values and culture that is at the heart of dispossession of First Peoples.

This research challenges the perception of settler colonialism as a largely male construct. It reveals the vital role of the domestic realm in the establishment, embedding and gradual expansion of the colony. In recognising the contribution of the Neptunians as landowners — and, therefore, agents in the dispossession of First Peoples — and in
the establishment of homes and significant relationships, both intimate and communal, this thesis adds a valuable dimension to historiography of the role of women in the earliest years of the settlement of Sydney, Norfolk Island and Parramatta.
Postscript

Forty-eight of the sixty-one Neptunians with convict links are mentioned specifically within this thesis. Their stories comprise the individual jigsaw pieces that join to form the picture of early colonial society and the contribution the women made to it. Those not mentioned specifically have not been ignored. Mary Martin, Mary Jones, Elizabeth Jones, Ann Griffiths, Mary Gregory, Elizabeth Goodwin, Amelia Gill, Jane Elley, Mary Donovan, Elizabeth Davis, Mary Cooksey, Margaret Clarke, Mary Bond, Ann Baker and Maria Wood left behind few records pertaining the period 1790-1792. Of these many have stories of interest post-1792. Others have powerful stories that sit outside the themes and arguments discussed within the thesis. Alice Lynch was joined by her husband William, who arrived as a convict in August 1791. Perhaps theirs is a love story and William purposely transgressed in order to be transported and join his wife. Their colonial life was tinged by tragedy, however. Alice gave birth to a daughter, Jane, on November 29th 1792 at Parramatta, but she died just five months later in April 1793. Her baby daughter was buried with her two months later.736 Sadly, some Neptunians, including Elizabeth Hawkins (buried September 1st 1791) died before the end of 1792, leaving few life stories behind. All sixty-one women are acknowledged for the contribution they made to the new colony.

Appendix

Neptunian Biographies

Convict Women (survived and included in thesis)

I acknowledge the work of Michael Flynn and Ann Needham in the records of English trials and sentences.\textsuperscript{737}

N.B: * = Thought to have been married Nov 1791 Norfolk Island by Rev. Richard Johnson. No records exist of the more than 100 couples married at that time.

**Ann Baker** (c1775–1804)

**Elizabeth Baker**

**Martha Bates** (c1748–1823)

**Mary Bond** (1756–1841)

\textsuperscript{737} Needham, *The Women of the 1790 Neptune.*
Kezia Brown (1771–1854)
Gloucester. Theft. Tried 9.10.1789. 7 yrs. Eldest daughter of yeoman farmers — agricultural experience prior to transportation. Married William Roberts (First Fleet), Sydney, 14.8.1793. 10 children (1791–1813). Lived first at The Brickfields, then at Mulgrave Place (Hawkesbury). Farmed successfully, increasing their initial 30-acre grant to 130 acres by 1806. Kezia continued farming after William’s death in 1820. She died Richmond 22.6.1854. Aged 83. The last of the convicted Neptunians to die. N.B Ancestress of author.

Mary Butler (died 1802)

Ann Calcut

Ann Carey (c1772–1830)

Susan Carr (c 1752–1813)

Elizabeth Carter (died 1799)
Rebecca Chippenham (c1770–1819)

Margaret Clarke (c1729–1814)

Mary Cooksey (c 1775–1812)

Mary Cragg (c1763–1822)

Catherine Crowley (c1773–1800)

Elizabeth Davis (died 1809)
**Mary Desmond** (died 1792)

**Mary Donovan** (died after 1828)

**Jane Edwards**

**Jane Elley**

**Rose Flood** (c1758–1836)

**Mary Frost** (c 1761–1847)

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**Amelia Gill** (b c1744)

**Elizabeth Goodwin**
Hereford. Theft. Tried 17.3.1789. 7 yrs. No records until 1811 when she is described as a widow of Sydney. Possible daughter Elizabeth (born c 1795?). Received assistance from the Benevolent Society 1826 -1829.739

**Ellen Gott** (1765–1843)

**Mary Gregory** (c1770–c1805)

**Ann Griffiths**

**Sarah Griggs**

740 Searches have not revealed Land Titles evidence of these two land transfers. Research does confirm the likelihood of the Brackenrig Farm transfer. Flynn, *The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790*, 307.
Ann Hannaway (c1758–1829)

Hannah Hawkins (c1762–1837)

Elizabeth Ireland (c1762–1838)
Kent. Theft (4 fowls). Tried 6.10.1789. 7 yrs. May have been in charge of rations at Parramatta.† Married John Limeburner, Parramatta 26.9.1790. Farmed (Prospect Hill. 50 acres. 29.9.1792). Childless. By 1800 self-supporting on their property. 1802 — sold farm and moved to Sydney, operating shop and bakery. 1809 onwards lived Chapel Row (Castlereagh Street). Died Sydney 12.11.1838. Aged approx. 75.

Elizabeth Jones (c1754–1832)
Liverpool. Theft. Tried 3.8.1789. 3 yrs. Arrived Norfolk Island 7.8.1790. Returned to Sydney March 1793, probably as partner to John Jones, a sailor.‡ Lived with him in Sydney (1811). Childless. John Jones appointed constable at Liverpool District, possibly Bringelly and, therefore, amongst the earliest settlers in that district. 1822 Elizabeth in the Infirmary at Windsor 1822 then receiving support from the Benevolent Society.§ She died Sydney Benevolent Asylum 30.10.1832. Aged approx. 79.

Mary Jones
Hampshire. Burglary. Tried 5.3.1789. Death / Life. Four Mary Jones’ aboard Second Fleet. 1801 - Mary Jones *Neptune* was in Sydney. No other information.

Mary Leary (c1771–1813)

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‡ Ibid., 149.
§ Ibid.
December 1791 by Watkin Tench. Very successful at farming and, despite challenges, continued farming then later ran a public house. Died Parramatta 7.2.1813. Aged approx. 42.

Alice Lynch (c1759–29.4.1793)

Sarah Manlove (c1765–1837)

Mary Martin (c1773–1847)

Mary McDonald (McDonough) (c1752–1832)
Portsmouth. Tried 19.10.1789. Theft. 7 yrs. Married at time of trial to Michael McDonough. Arrived Norfolk Island 7.8.1790. Lived with John Woods (First Fleet marine). One child James b 25.9.1796 when Mary was in her early 40s. Farmed (6 acres). Forcibly transferred to Van Diemen’s Land, 5th embarkation, 3.9.1808. Farmed at New Norfolk (40 acres). Suffered declining fortunes. Mary died 21.2.1832 aged approx. 80. In the death register Mary is described as a “poor woman”.

Ann Meredith (c1768–1805)

Mary Mitchell

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744 Tench, Sydney's First Four Years: Being a Reprint of “a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson”, 253.
living with Edward Pugh. Married Sydney 7.3.1810. Pugh was in the 73rd Regiment and the couple may have transferred to Ceylon in 1814.

Jane Molloy (c1773 – 1823)

Mary (Molly) Morgan (1762 –1835)
Shropshire. Theft. Tried 8.8.1789. Death / 14 yrs. Apprehended with husband William Morgan, who escaped. Mary attempted suicide post-trial. William joined NSW Corps and travelled as a free man to colony aboard the Neptune. Mary escaped aboard the vessel Resolution in Nov 1794 and returned to her two children (1783, 1786) in Shropshire. Married Thomas Mears, Surrey England 8.11.1797. 10.10.1803 convicted of theft (shift, petticoat, napkin). Sentence transportation for 7 yrs. Arrived Sydney June 1804. Worked at Parramatta Female Factory in 1806. Later farmed in Parramatta (Aug 1809 lease in her name 37 rods, Church Street). Business woman by 1810. Farmed at Parramatta (dairy). April 1814 convicted of receiving a stolen cow, the property of the Government. Sentence 7 yrs at Newcastle Penal Settlement. In 1818, aged 56, she became one of Maitland’s pioneering settlers, one of 12 convict settlers given 30 acres at Wallis Plains. She was the only female grantee. Married Thomas Hunt, Maitland 5.3.1822. He was one of her assigned servants. Original grant resumed by the Government in 1823 and Mary (Molly) granted 159 acres Maitland. Owner of the Angel Inn, which she operated for a year before leasing it to focus on agriculture. Renown as a capable and hard-working settler and business-woman. Purchased 200 acres Greta for cattle grazing (possibly there is 1828). Died Greta 27.6.1835. Aged 64.

Elizabeth Risam (c1753–1836)

Elizabeth Rymes (c1774–1841)
**Eleanor Sandwick** (died after 1820)
Carlisle (Cumberland). Receiving stolen goods. Tried 29.7.1785. 14 yrs. Married to Jacob Sandwick. 2 children (1762, 1784). Tried with son who didn’t arrive in NSW. Married George Fry, Sydney 7.11.1790. He was a blacksmith and died 17.2.1810. In 1814 listed as residing in Windsor. Eleanor is listed by Needham and Flynn as dying 1815 but the 1817 Muster lists her specifically as Eleanor Sandwick, *Neptune*, 1790, Trail (Captain), Carlisle. Aug 1785. The 1820 Convict and Settler list also specifically lists her as in the colony. Her death occurred after 1820.

**Elizabeth Smith** (c1755–1826)

**Sarah Smith** (c1774–1836)

**Mary Stultz**

**Jane Thompson** (c1767 – 1813)

**Ann Toy** (died 1806)
Rachel Watkins (c1759–1840)

Ann Wheeler

Ann White (1771–1820)

Mary White
Surrey. Theft. Tried 26.8.1789. 7 yrs. Charged with two thefts in Sydney May 1791. May have been sent to Norfolk Island. Possibly partnered with Samuel Wheeler, returned Sydney 1793. 1798 housekeeper to William Browning and his wife and children. Listed as concubine in 1800–1802. Possibly with Samuel Wheeler as he was listed as supporting a woman and one child. Little clear information and no record of child born to Mary.

Sarah Willis (died 1791)

Elizabeth Wood (died 1808)
Sarah Woolley (c1768–1809)

Free wives of convict men (had convict links – included in thesis)

Elizabeth Connor (c1748–1808)

Sarah Fielder (c1760–1810)

Harriett Hodgetts (c 1765–1850)

Jane Reed
There are no records of Jane Reed’s arrival in the colony as a First or Second Fleet convict, but her marriage to William Davis on 30 July 1790 makes her arrival as a free partner likely. After marriage the couple went to Norfolk Island, arriving in August 1790. Jane was on convict stores in 1795 but there are no further records of either her or of William Davis.
Sarah Smith

Maria Wood (died 1803)

Free wives of convict men (not included due to doubts that they arrived aboard the Neptune)
Ann Bockerah (died 1793)

Jane Reed (died 1800)

Convict Women (Little or no information. Not included in thesis)
Elizabeth Hawkins (c1747–1791)
Bedford. Perjury. Tried 7.7.1786. 7 yrs. Died Sydney 1.9.1791 aged approx. 44 years

Elizabeth Linsley (died 1790)
Yorkshire. Theft. Tried January 1789. 7 yrs. Attempted suicide the night after sentencing. Died Sydney 11.9.1790, 10 weeks after landing.
Sarah Phillips (died 1790)
Old Bailey (London). Theft. Tried 8.7.1789. 7 yrs. Married to George Phillips. Sarah was buried Sydney October 18th 1790.

Mary Walters (died 1790)

Catherine Williams (died 1791)

**Convict Women (Died at Sea. Not included in thesis)**

Mary Anthony (c1769–1790)

Mary Bather (died 1790)
Chester. Stealing. Tried 9.4.1787. 7 yrs. Tried with her husband, John Bather, for the same crime. He was acquitted. This in contravention of the law of coverture. Died aboard the Neptune.

Elizabeth Beilby (died 1790)
York. Receiving stolen property. Tried 14.3.1789. 14 yrs. Wife of William Beilby. Margaret Ireland, who stole the goods received by Elizabeth, received a sentence of one year’s imprisonment and a fine of one shilling. Died aboard the Neptune.

Betty Bradley (died 1790)

Margaret Callahan (died 1790)
Old Bailey (London). Theft. Tried 8.7.1789. 7 yrs. Reported in petition for mitigation of sentence to be a widow with 4 children and in poor health. Tragic in that letter granting Margaret release on a good behaviour bond arrived on the same day, but after Margaret’s embarkation on the Neptune. Needham believes the 4 children may have been with Margaret in gaol and even aboard the Neptune. If so, they died on board, as did Margaret.

Frances Handley (died 1790)
Stafford. Theft. Tried 12.3.1788. 7 yrs. A widow at trial. Died aboard the Neptune.

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**Rebecca Heathcote.**

**Garter Jenkins (c 1765–1790)**

**Margaret Jones (died 1790)**

**Mary Justin (c 1739–1790)**
Buckinghamshire. Perjury. Tried 1787. 7 yrs? No further records.

**Elizabeth Mayo (died 1790)**

**Margaret Neave (Gregg) (died 1790)**
Carlisle (Cumberland). Theft. Tried 11.1.1786. A widow, 4 children, poor and pregnant. Reverted to her maiden name of Gregg after conviction. No further records after her being sent to board the Neptune with Eleanor Sandwick and Mary Wilson.

**Hannah Prince (c1774–1790)**

**Elizabeth Rice (died 1790)**

**Elizabeth South (died 1790)**
Hereford. Theft. Tried 20.3.1788. 7 yrs. Died aboard the Neptune.

**Mary Wilson**
Penrith. No details of crime. Tried 3.10.1786. 7 yrs. Travelled to Neptune with Eleanor Sandwick and Mary Neave. No further records exist.

**Women with no convict links**
Mary Bray, Mrs Crowther, Diana Haddock, Martha Landsley. Possibly also Elizabeth Guise, Ann Hortle and Ann Jamieson (no identification of ship)
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A facsimile is shown in HRNSW vol. 3 opp. p. 72. Hunter sends to Portland "(...)a chart which I have constructed wholly for the purpose of shewing more clearly than any written description possibly can the particular situation of our principal cultivation in this colony. (...) this chart is entirely a work of my own, and not intended as an official representation."
An enlarged design of this chart was used for the later version of Hunter's map 'Map of New South Wales in 98' enclosed in Gov. Hunter's letter to the Duke of Portland of 10th Jan'y 98.

Ink and wash. Colours. No borders or graticule. All writing appears to be in Hunter's hand and a column of references is initialled J.H. Of the red lines on the map, some seem to represent roads, e.g. from Sydney Cove to "Toongabbe" and thence to the Hawkesbury settlements. Others represent the routes of Governor Hunter's journeys to the "Cowpasture Plains" in Nov. 95 and in June 96 and when he climbed "Mount Hunter". A slightly smaller ms. version was enclosed in Hunter's despatch to Portland, 20 Aug. 96, and pub. as a reduced facsimile in Historical Records of N.S.W., vol. 3 opp. p. 72. A photograph, apparently of yet another ms. version is in a volume in the Mitchell Library entitled Reproductions of Manuscript Maps of Australia preserved in the Public Records Office. --Dixon Library Catalogue Card.

Notes in Hunter's hand: "The Red Lines shew the Country which has been lately walked over. [Yellow dots] Places where the Latitude has been observed. The places which are Colourd green are where our principal Cultivation and farms are." North to right.

The map in David Collins' Account of the English colony of New South Wales differs only in naming the Obelisk at Outer South Head "Piramid". State Library of NSW. Dixon Map Collection Ch 79/ 7, 1796.


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