Where did all the convicts go? – 1

Many convicts were transported to Australia for petty crimes such as stealing food. Others rebelled against the government because they felt that they and others were being treated unfairly. Whatever the reason for their sentence of transportation, there is no doubt that the convicts were responsible for establishing a new country — no easy task in such terrible conditions!

Read about what happened to some convicts after they reached the new penal colony or after they had finished their term of punishment.

Mary Bryant was convicted of stealing a cloak and transported on Charlotte when she was 21. When people were dying from lack of food, Mary, her husband, William, their two small children, and several others escaped to Timor Island. Eventually they were imprisoned and sent to jail in Batavia. William and one of the children died there and her daughter, Charlotte, died while they were being transported back to England. Mary was sent to Newgate Prison to await trial. Her story became so well known that she was soon a celebrity and was eventually pardoned and released. She went back to live with her family in Cornwall.

James Squire was transported for stealing a rooster and two hens. During his time as a convict, he began brewing beer, which he sold. He served his sentence and was granted 30 acres (12 hectares) of land at Emu Plains. James Squire successfully cultivated the first Australian hops (used in beer) in 1806. After the Rum Rebellion in 1808, James became a baker, supplied meat for the colony and worked in banking. He became a resident district constable despite having been a convict. Then he opened a tavern on the Parramatta River on the busy Sydney to Parramatta Road and was officially granted a licence to sell liquor. He died on 16 May 1822, aged 67. His grandson, James Farmel, became the first Australian Premier of New South Wales.

Elizabeth Thackery was transported for seven years for stealing five handkerchiefs when she was 20. She is thought to be the first white woman to set foot on Australia. She married Samuel King in Tasmania and made her home in the Derwent Valley until she died in 1856, aged 93.

James Bloodsworth was appointed master bricklayer when he arrived as a convict because he already had skills in that area. There were no architects so he was given responsibility for all design and building. He is credited with building the first Government House and the storehouse at King's Wharf at Sydney Cove. He was pardoned in 1790 and appointed superintendent of all the brickmakers and bricklayers. In 1802, he became a sergeant in the Sydney Loyal Association and farmed his land grant of fifty acres (20 ha) which he later increased to 245 acres (100 ha). He died from pneumonia, almost penniless, in 1804, but because he was held in such high esteem, Governor Philip Gidley King ordered that he be given a ‘state’ funeral with military honours.

John Baughan was transported for seven years on Friendship for stealing five blankets. In 1793, he took on the task of building a mill worked by nine men, which performed very successfully. His design soon replaced the existing one. He was granted a small land lease where he built a cottage. He constructed many mills which worked efficiently and many ‘neat dwellings’. Until he died in 1797, he was the foremen of the carpenters in Sydney.

Henry Kable/Cable/Cabell was transported for seven years for horse theft. He became a night watchman in 1791 and was granted 30 acres (12 ha). He operated a tavern and became chief constable in 1799. Then he built ships which he used for trading in seal skins. Later, he joined the rum trade and also dealt in iron, timber and other goods. He opposed Governor Bligh in the Rum Rebellion and died in 1846 at Windsor, Sydney.