

Australia for convicts during the british domain history essay



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Australia is located in the Southern Hemisphere, and it occupies the major part of Oceania. Now it is a powerful and very developed country, with a position at the top of all the standards of life conditions, life expectancy, economy and in all the social aspects.

But back in time, before Australia started as a great power in the world, it was under the Great Britain domain. This is because Australia was first discovered and conquered by the British captain James Cook in 1770, and it automatically passed to hands of the British Government.

The purpose of this research paper is to show the importance and influence that had in the development of the country convicts being there during this period, when they impulsed both the economy and the population in the Colony, making it a very important part of territory for the British Kingdom.

First the country will be studied before it was discovered by the English, and also in the expeditions made by the Dutch in the XVII Century. As an important fact, the James Cook's discovery will be mentioned and how it led to the British Conquest of the territory.

After the conquest, will be treated the development in economical, social and political aspects of Australia as a part of the British Kingdom. At the end, the role of the convicts and how they played a very important part in the everyday life during this period will be treated, and how this helped to keep Australia and an economical active place for the Great Britain Government to have a benefit from the Colony.

It's important to mention that this paper was made to highlight a fundamental fact that changed both countries, Australia and Great Britain, in their future as nations. Both were changed, one was conquered, but at the end the two nations obtained a great benefit from that period of time.

Chapter I: Discovery of Australia and First Expeditions

Here we will speak about the first expeditions and how the country was found by Europeans, and finally conquered to end up as a Colony from the Great Britain Empire by James Cook.

The Dutch discoveries:

Australia long before it was discovered by the English was inhabited by natives that came from Asia and had been there for over 40, 000 years. But it was until 1606 when Australia was first sighted by the Dutchman William Janszoon. He was the captain of the Duyfken, a Dutch ship, and he called the new land Terra Australis Incognita, meaning Unknown Southern Land.

Between 1606 and 1770, an estimated 54 European ships from a range of nations made contact. Many of these were merchant ships from the Dutch East Indies Company and included the ships of Abel Tasman. Tasman charted parts of the north, west and south coasts of Australia which was then known as New Holland.

James Cook and the British Conquest.

James Cook was an Englishman, captain and navigator that discovered first for Great Britain the coast of Botany Bay in Australia, near what we now know as Sydney. This discovery was made in his ship called the Endeavour.

So, when he arrived to this coast he claimed that land part of the Great Britain Kingdom, under the name of King George III, during 22 August, 1770. And to this land he called New South Wales, a part that is still now called like that in the eastern part of the mainland.

Chapter II: The development of the Colony

In this chapter will be explained the history of the country during the period of the Conquest. First, the history in years and facts about the Colony, and then the convicts, how they worked, why they were taken there and which were their life conditions living in Australia.

From 1770 to 1850

On 18 January 1788 the First Fleet arrived at Botany Bay, which Joseph Banks had declared suitable for a penal colony after he returned from a journey there in 1770.

So, here we can figure out how the development went after the Colony was discovered and declared, and, for Great Britain to end up with the overpopulation in the convict system and the new territory, that was vast, big and suitable to be populated.

Then, the establishment changed place from Botany Bay to Port Jackson in 1788. Port Jackson is now one of the most important ports in the greatest city in the country, Sydney. On Sydney Cove, there was raised first the flag of the British Empire in 26 January 1788.

During the first years the fleets of convicts arrived and arrived to Australia, and until 1868, 162000 convicts were transported to the island. As the

Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts explains in its article:

“ When the last shipment of convicts disembarked in Western Australia in 1868, the total number of transported convicts stood at around 162, 000 men and women. They were transported here on 806 ships.”

The transportation of convicts to Australia ended at a time when the colonies' population stood at around one million, compared to 30, 000 in 1821. By the mid-1800s there were enough people here to take on the work, and enough people who needed the work. The colonies could therefore sustain themselves and continue to grow. The convicts had served their purpose.”

So we can see that the Colony had in great part convicts, the ones that were transported to do the hard work and start the development in the Colony, by creating all the infrastructure and industry that the Colony needed to perform a place like giving Great Britain the support and help to perform the trips from the Dominant Power to the Colony.

Characteristics of the Australian Life

As we can see in the letter written by Watkin Tench when he was in the Sydney Cove, there are pretty specific characteristics given during the Conquest, in the conditions of the inhabitants:

“ The nautical part of the work is comprized in as few pages as possible.

By the professional part of my readers this will be deemed judicious; and the rest will not, I believe, be dissatisfied at its brevity.

I beg leave, however, to say of the astronomical calculations, that they may be depended on with the greatest degree of security, as they were communicated by an officer, who was furnished with instruments, and commissioned by the Board of Longitude, to make observations during the voyage, and in the southern hemisphere.”

There was knowledge of every kind back there; the Colony had knowledge in astronomy, Aeronautics, and all the areas of knowledge.

But also there is a testimony of the Convicts, especially one that wrote this:

“ We have to work from 14-18 hours a day, sometimes up to our knees in cold water, 'til we are ready to sink with fatigue... The inhuman driver struck one, John Smith with a heavy thong.”

Here we can see the enormous differences between the two extreme poles of the society. The first testimony is from a captain that arrives to the Colony and performs the writing about the aspects of sciences and technological knowledge, meanwhile the second one is from one Convict that it's practically treated like a slave, and they were forced to work (as said in the quote) from 14 to 18 hours a day, from sun to sun, in impoverished conditions.

Chapter III. Role of the Convicts in the Life of Australia

In this final chapter the life in Australia as a Convict Colony will be explained, from the way they lived until the deep changes they caused in the natural land that existed before their arrival. And also here will be discussed their benefits through the Colony as a whole, pushing it to be one of the most important, just behind India during that period of colonization from the Great Britain Empire

Life Conditions

As we saw in the second chapter, life conditions for convicts and non-convicts varied a lot during the colonisation. While one part of the population was concerned about science and technology developed there, the segregated ones were bad treated and practically slaves.

We can see in this quote from Short Story of Australia there are several characteristics that were given according to the status people had in that place:

Convicts were allowed to marry, and were in some instances assigned as servants to their own wives. In one notorious instance a convict transported for forgery was followed out from England by his own wife, who brought with her a considerable sum of money which the authorities had reason to believe represented the proceeds of robberies. She opened a shop in Sydney, and secured her own husband as her assigned servant.

70% of the convicts there were English and Welsh, 20% Irish and 5% Scottish, and the 6% remaining were from India, Canada, China and New

Zealand. In that population there were also soldiers, who were being punished for crimes like insubordination or desertion.

Governor Phillip, during his period in the Colony's Government, created this law that established that convicts were going to work according their skills, and will act as brick builders, carpenters, nurses, servants, cattlemen, shepherds and farmers.

But if the convicts were educated they could get a job in an administrative organism, or work as record-keepers.

If the convicts were woman, it was said that they were more useful as mother and housewives, so they took care of the children and from the houses.

B. Convict's Contribution to the Colony

The transportation of convicts to Australia ended at a time when the colonies' population stood at around one million, compared to 30, 000 in 1821. By the mid-1800s there were enough people here to take on the work, and enough people who needed the work. The colonies could therefore sustain themselves and continue to grow. The convicts had served their purpose.

As expressed in this quote given by the Australian Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and Arts, a great part of the development of the Colony was given because of the Convict Labour, and how the planners in Australia managed to create a country where the force was given that people that being trapped in prisons would be useless.

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When the convicts passed the million in number the transportation stopped and the prisoners were useless to the colonies, which were allowed to continue with their development as a colony, yes but with all the infrastructure and potential to become a great power when it obtained the freedom from the Great Britain Empire. Australia is now a country pretty developed, and that is classified as an industrialized and first world country.

The transportation ended up to New South Wales (the most developed part of the Colony) in 1 October 1850, when it was abolished. The convicts had freedom after they accomplished their “ mission”. Some of them went as far as New Zealand, because the freedom was restricted and they were not allowed to return to their home in Great Britain, but also a lot of them stayed there for a fresh start, and continued to work there, getting new jobs.

Conclusion.

The purpose of this research paper was to prove that Australia is a place built by people not necessarily with a good record through the justice, but also people that at the end accomplished their job, to create a great nation and let it walk with its own feet. However, we can discuss and ask ourselves: Was all the conditions that were developed in the colony were appropriate or even worth at the end? We can say that it was necessary for the convicts to suffer a punishment, but we have to consider if that was the right one, or if the government was being cruel with them, treating them like slaves, with no rights and also with very poor life conditions.