

Australia was discovered in 1606 by William Jansz who confirmed to European navigators that a Great Southern Land mass existed.

It was not until the 18th Century (1700's) that an official landing was recognised.

James Cook

James Cook lived from 1728 until 1779. He landed in Botany Bay on the ship called Endeavour in 1770. He took possession of the land for the British, helping to establish the first penal colony in New South Wales.

It wasn't until 26th January 1788 that Britain took formal possession of the Eastern Coast of Australia, including Tasmania. This is now marked as Australia Day.

Convicts

Britain was having a terrible time housing all its convicts as there were a lot of poor and starving people in Britain and they were becoming desperate and breaking lots of laws.

So Britain decided to send them to Australia and between 1788 and 1856, 157,000 convicts were sent to Australia to live in the colonies.

Free Settlers

In 1793 Free Settlers began to arrive in Australia from all over the world, including China. The Chinese came here for the Gold and are among the first group of immigrants that were not from the British Empire.

SHEEP

Between 1796 and 1801, John MacCarthur brought about 2000 Merino sheep into Australia. He wanted to breed them and produce a high quality wool that could be sold back to England.

They also cross-bred Merino sheep with other sheep and England loved the quality of the wool.

In 1807 Australia sold its first lot of wool to England. Yipee, we're going to be rich.

But by 1811, the sheep were eating the colonies out of house and home. The colonies needed to find more grazing lands and fast. The Blue Mountains were holding the colonies back from spreading out as no-one could get over them.

In 1813 Gregory Blaxland and Lieutenant William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth succeeded where many others had failed. They crossed the Blue Mountains and found what they thought were endless grazing pastures for as many sheep as they could get there.

The convicts cut out the road over the Blue Mountains so that people and stock could pass and Bathurst was born in 1815.

And with the sheep came the squatters.

SQUATTERS

Only those given land by the Governor could breed sheep. So with nowhere to go, people began to sit or squat on land outside the colonies. They started to breed their own sheep from sheep that they stole from others.

Some squatters were convicts who had finished their time, and others were those who escaped. Anyway the squatters looked after each other and were not like the other settlers.

There were another group of hard working and honest squatters who just wanted a good chance at life. Some of these squatters became very rich and some of the old homes you see today were actually built by squatters.

When you think about it, if you were in the colony and you didn't want to open a shop, what would you do? Might as well go and get some land and breed sheep and try to

make some money. The trouble was that some squatters claimed huge amounts of land for themselves that they didn't need, just for sheep and the Government was losing control of the land.

LAND RUSH

Everyone wanted land so they could make money from sheep. 1824 saw Governor Bourke placing restrictions such as limited grazing space but it didn't work.

Everyone disobeyed and the people began to feed their sheep wherever they could find pastures. To control the squatters, a licence fee was introduced as part of the Squatters Act in 1836. Each squatter had to pay a licence per sheep but they didn't get to keep the land. It was like a hire fee. They had to remain as occupier of the land, or else lose their entitlement. Many squatters lost their land when they left it to take care of business in the townships.

In 1840 Governor Gipps gave up on trying to control the squatters.

SQUATTERS LIFE

The life of a squatter was very lonely. Convict shepherds or paid shepherds were used to control flocks of sheep. Drover's were also employed to move herds of stock to stations and back again to market. Squatters would live with little or no comforts until they could afford to build a house and many just lived in shacks and tended to their sheep. They lived on meager supplies of flour and any local food that they could muster up. In the 1850's The Gold Rush saw many shepherds and squatters leave their flocks in search of gold. Because of the shortage of people to watch the flocks, wealthy squatters began to fence their herds in.

SHEARERS

The only way to get the wool off a sheep is to shear it. Men took to shearing for wages. They lived in rough huts and cut the wool from the sheep with blade scissors. They worked hard for a few months of the year, traveling from station to station. Soon shearing machines and wool presses were available which made the job quicker and easier. To date, there is still only one way to shear a sheep.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Everything! Wool prices fell. Droughts. Floods. Bushfires. Disease. The conditions of Australia were unfamiliar and many squatters failed to survive the harsh weather. Plus the Gold Rush came along.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

The squatters proved to be beneficial in settlement by contributing to the wealth of the colony. Their hard work and poor way of life turned into high profits which let them build big houses. Building houses provided other work for people who didn't like sheep.

EXPLORERS

Captain Cook landed at Botany Bay in 1770 and claimed the land for Britain. He met the locals but they didn't get on, so he kept traveling North along the East Coast until he crashed into the Great Barrier Reef. They made repairs at Cooktown. All the while Captain Cook drew pictures of what the Coastline looked like.

MATTHEW FLINDERS

Matthew Flinders arrived in Australia in 1795 and with his friend George Bass, they set out to prove that Tasmania was an island. On their way they discovered Bass Strait.

GREGORY BLAXLAND WILLIAM WENTWORTH AND WILLIAM LAWSON

In 1812 there was a drought which meant that more pastures were needed urgently. Many people had tried to cross the Blue Mountains which were stopping the colony from expanding.

Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson set out in 1813 and scaled the ridges rather than getting lost in the valleys as others had done.

Once they made the hard trek to the top they saw all the pastures that lay before them and knew that there was enough land there to feed countless numbers of sheep for a very long time. Governor Macquarie ordered the road to be made and the colony spread out.

EDWARD EYRE

In 1841 Eyre set out from Point Lincoln South Australia heading for Albany in Western Australia. He was trying to find a stock route. No-one knew that the Nullabor existed but Eyre found out the hard way.

They met with many disasters along the way, and were eventually helped by a whaling ship before returning to land and completing their journey.

Eyre and his party were treated as heroes for surviving the trip even though they didn't find a stock route.

BOURKE AND WILLS

In 1860 Bourke and Wills set out to cross the continent from South to North. Neither of them had any exploring experience. They took off from Melbourne heading for the Gulf of Carpentaria. They left five men at Cooper Creek to wait for them and went on with John King and Charles Gray.

They never made it to the Gulf. They got stuck on Mango swamps and decided to turn back to Cooper Creek. On the way back, Charles Gray died. When they got to Cooper Creek it was deserted and they didn't see the note that told them where food was buried.

They continued on to Mount Hopeless but Bourke and Wills died on the way. John King survived with the help of the Aborigines and lived to tell the tale.

THE RUM REBELLION

Money was in short supply in the colonies during the early 1800's, so people took to trading in rum. It was always in good supply. To make the supplies go further it was watered down by Admiral Vernon. He always used to wear a Grogham cloak. That's where the term 'grog' comes from.

Anyway, because an illegal trade of rum was going on, Governor Bligh tried to outlaw the use of rum for trade.

So John MacArthur, (the wealthy wool guy) was put in charge of the Rum Corps, who was put in charge of the rum, and they threw Governor Bligh out of his office and into jail with military force. They used police and the army officers.

Governor Bligh was not a very popular guy. He was known as a tyrant which meant he didn't listen to anybody's else's opinion and often put in laws that were unfair.

John MacArthur was sent back to England for trial but returned to Australia in 1817 and continued his wool business.

The Rum Rebellion was the first time military force was used to remove a political leader from his office.

Additional Resources

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rum_Rebellion

THE GOLD RUSH AND EUREKA STOCKADE

Around 1850, Gold was discovered in the colonies, all over Australia but especially in the Ballarat Gold Fields in Victoria.

People came from interstate and overseas to share in the rush for Gold.

The government couldn't cope with that many people and so they introduced martial law.

The surface gold was soon all gone and this meant that the only way to get to the gold was to mine for it underground, through shafts, deep into the rock. Up to 25,000 miners occupied the Ballarat fields.

The government's answer to control everyone was to introduce a miner's licence which was a fee that the miners paid the government so that they could work a small section of land.

It was a monthly fee which was due to be paid whether or not you found gold. The introduction of the monthly fee made the miners very angry. The government also had weekly spot checks to make sure each miner had a licence.

The government increased its fees and the spot checks to twice a week and the miners began to feel bullied. When an Armenian miner was wrongfully arrested and The Eureka hotel keeper was acquitted from a crime against a miner, the miners got really mad and burned the Eureka Hotel down.

The miners began to demonstrate against the government and the Ballarat Reform League was created. The League tried to work out changes to the miners conditions with the government.

On 28 November 1854 a group of military were set upon by miners.

On 29 November 1854, at a meeting of the Reform League, about 12,000 miners gathered to hear that the League had been unsuccessful in getting reforms.

They flew the Eureka Flag in defiance of the British.

Peter Lalor was a miner who took control of the League after more miners were arrested.

On 1 December 1854 the miners protected themselves in a stockade they built out of spare timber and vowed not to let the military do any more licence searches.

On 3 December 1854 the police and military approached the stockade and they had a battle. The military won with a poor contest from the miners who did not have enough equipment to beat them.

After the battle there was a huge public outcry about the over-use of force by the police and military.

13 miners were tried in court but acquitted.

A Commission of Enquiry was begun in 1855 and found that the gold fields had not been managed well by the government. The gold licences were abolished. Instead a yearly licence was introduced based on the amount of gold found in your mine.

This was a much fairer system.

Eureka Stockade is said by some to be the Birth of Democracy in Australia. It enabled the people to take a stand against the government and the government listened and changed the laws when they could.

Additional Resources

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eureka_Stockade