*Life For Convicts From England to Australia*

*Introduction*

*18th century England, a place of crime and filth. And it’s only getting worse. To solve this problem the government came up with this flash idea to send these ‘wrongdoers’ to Australia, an uninhabited island, an eight month sail away! Australia was inhabited actually and these convicts were only trying to survive, nevertheless they were sent to Sydney Cove on the First Fleet. This report will discuss: England in the late 18th century, the First Fleet, arrival and early life in Australia, and the impact all this had on the First Nations Australia.*

*Life in 18th Century England*

*Imagine being hungry 24/7, 365 days a year, welcome to 18th century England! During the industrial revolution machines were replacing human labour. This left people starving, begging on the streets, stealing. The prisons were being filled with hungry people, just trying to survive, and once the prisons were full they shoved them into old anchored boats! Enough, was enough! The government had lost the War of Independence against America in 1783 so now England had nowhere to send their prisoners. But thanks to Captain Cook, who in 1770 discovered Australia, they now had a place to send them.*

*The First Fleet*

*Made of 11 ships in total: 2 naval ships, 6 carrying convicts and 3 storeships. The First Fleet left Portsmouth, England on the 13th of May 1787, and wouldn’t reach Australia until 8 months later! Out of 760 convicts on the first fleet there were only 48 recorded deaths, wow. Great efforts were made to ensure the convict stayed alive, and healthy, they made sure they had sunlight, food and water, but could only come on deck in perfect conditions. The men and women were kept separate, there were only 101 women, 50 children and 582 male convicts, as well as 550 crew and family. The floors of the ships were filled with poo, dirt and water resulting in a giant mess of sloppiness! As well as convicts and marines, they also carted livestock, such as sheep, cattle and chickens. Surprisingly as well as 48 deaths there were 28 births!*

*Arrival and Early Life in the Colonies*

*When the First Fleet arrived in Australia, on the 20th of January 1788 in Botany Bay 8 months later, they found this land had nothing to give them. The land didn’t have any known food, not enough water and the ground was too hard to grow anything. The colony was going to die! To start off they had enough food in storage to give each person a little chunk of meat and vegetables each night. As well as rations, the settlers also grew whatever they could. After a couple of days in Botany Bay the ship moved to a better location. On the 26th of January 1788 the First Fleet settled in Port Jackson. A new life full of possibilities, a new life full of danger!*

*Impact all this had on the first Nations*

*It took over 300 years for the whole of Australia to finally apologise to the First Nations australia for taking over their land! The impact the arrival of the English had on the First Nations was huge, the Small Pox sickness the English brought wiped out the whole Eora tribe! These new sicknesses made it hard for the Eora people to thrive properly, their immune systems just couldn’t fight it. These new people overfished, hunted too often, and stole their belongings! There was nothing the First Nations could do, the English had taken their land, and with what right? Eventually the English had wiped out entire groups, destroying cultures and losing languages forever! And to think that it took 300 years to apologise!*

*Conclusion*

*You can probably conclude now, that life as a convict was tough, not only for the Europeans but for the First Nations as well! There is no doubt that life as an early settler was hard, it’s a wonder they survived. Without those brave explorers enduring these hardships, none of us would be known as Australian’s! It really makes you stop and wonder though, why did England take Australia and claim it unoccupied? Why did they treat the First Nations so badly? And, would you have survived Sydney Cove?*