

FOODWAYS UNFETTERED

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FOOD IN

THE SYDNEY SETTLEMENT

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the coursework requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Gastronomy

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October 2007

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ABSTRACT

The received perception of food in eighteenth-century Sydney is that colonists survived on meagre and monotonous rations. Having failed to engage with the local environment, or to learn from Aboriginal people and utilise indigenous resources, the salt rations dependent newcomers found themselves victims of hunger and starvation. This view is largely due to the predominant historical interpretation of British penal colonisation in Australia, where New South Wales was settled in an atmosphere of ignorance and governmental neglect. This received view is overly narrow and simplistic. The colony developed from penal settlement to a vibrant commercial centre by the turn of the century. Food was a vital factor in this process. Rations, which were controlled by the authorities, underpinned the colonists' diet, however other foods, both introduced and indigenous, were used to supplement it. Primary sources reveal much about the foodways of the eighteenth-century settlers, and the factors that affected availability and distribution. Where most studies on food in early settlement focus on convicts and rations, this thesis takes a more comprehensive approach, which encompasses rationing and the broader, more liberated aspects of colonists' dietary patterns. It explores contributing factors such as established English cultural practices, governance, socio-political forces and the natural environment, which influenced colonists' consumption. This study provides a fresh interpretation of eighteenth-century food in Sydney, establishing that whilst having to work within a corporate victualling system, the early colonists were not passive victims of a food supply controlled entirely from above, but played an active role in food procurement and consumption, exercising individual and collective rights and preferences. The evolution of their foodways reflects the transformation from penal colony to a prospering colonial society, as the first settlers made new lives in New South Wales.

DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr Nancy Cushing for her significant contribution to this project as supervisor, and for her commitment to the thesis topic, and support and guidance throughout the research and documentation process.

The University of Adelaide Library has made a significant contribution to facilitating research through their electronic access provision and Remote Lending Service. In particular I would like to thank Margaret Hosking and Margaret Galbraith from University of Adelaide Library for their continued support and assistance.

The staff at the Mitchell Library and State Library of New South Wales should also be acknowledged for their willing assistance in finding reference sources and materials.

I would also like to acknowledge Le Cordon Bleu and the Food Media Club Australia for their support in the form of an educational scholarship, which contributed towards the financial cost of the final component of the Master of Arts in Gastronomy, 2007.

My thanks extend to Dr Barbara Santich and Dr Rachel Ankeny from the University of Adelaide Graduate Program in Gastronomy, for their assistance and ongoing support throughout this research dissertation.

My family must be acknowledged for their patience and for the sacrifices they have made to allow me the time and effort this thesis has required.

FOODWAYS UNFETTERED

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY ON THE MENU

This thesis examines the foodways of the eighteenth-century European settlement in the Sydney region of New South Wales. It constructs a clearer picture than has yet been established of food availability, distribution and consumption in the colony, by considering the foodways, social practices and expectations that were imported from England with the colonists, and how they were shaped by governance, social forces and the natural environment, all which contributed significantly to this picture. This examination extends beyond convicts and rations, taking a more comprehensive approach to food across the wider community. This thesis challenges the received view that the first settlers endured and existed on starvation rations by clinging to English foodways in ignorance of indigenous resources.¹

New South Wales was established as a penal colony, however the broader objective was strategic colonial settlement and agricultural development in the region.² Food was a prime consideration and concern for the viability of the settlements, and had significant bearing on colonial labour systems and social organisation.³ A well-established victualling system based on preserved, transportable staples, was adopted to support the settlements in New South Wales. Free settlers only started to arrive to from 1793, and took time to establish themselves, so all efforts towards the establishment and development of the colony, including food procurement,

¹ Jones , S. *Colonial Food and Drink*. : Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales. , 1985 p2; Davey L, Macpherson M, Clements FW. . "The Hungry Years: 1788-1792." *Historical Studies* 3, no. 11 (1947) (1947): 187-208, p206

² HRNSW. *Historical Records of New South Wales*. Edited by Government Printer Charles Potter. Vol. 1, Part 2 - Phillip. 1783-1792, *Phillip*: facsimile published by Landsdown Slattery and Co. NSW, 1892. Reprint, 1978. p87. Phillip's Instructions April 25, 1787; Collins, David. "An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales Volume 1 with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners &C. Of the Native Inhabitants of That Country. To Which Are Added, Some Particulars of New Zealand: Compiled by Permission, from the Mss. Of Lieutenant-Governor King [Online]." Place Published: Prepared from the print edition published by T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies 1798, 1798. <http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/colacc1> (accessed May - August 2007). p13, February 1788

³ Wilk, Richard. "The Extractive Economy: An Early Phase of the Globalization of Diet and Its Environmental Consequences." *Review - Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilisations* 27, no. 4 (2004): 285 - 306. p289,290

production and distribution, were overseen by civil servants and military personnel using convict labour. The attitudes and actions of the Administration and founding governors regarding food management, access and distribution, had a direct impact on the development of the colony, and the shaping of society.

The First Fleet of eleven ships, carrying around seven hundred and eighty convicts and two hundred marines, arrived in Sydney Cove on January 26, 1788 after an eight-month journey from England.⁴ The settlement was established on either side of what we now refer to as the Tank Stream (see appendix 7.1), with priority given to the construction of a hospital and secure storehouses, for food and other items brought to sustain the colony. Food rations and other provisions were sent with the fleet in accordance with military standards of the day. It was expected that the provisions would “be fully sufficient for their maintenance and support” for two years, when supplemented with locally raised foods, which the colonists would produce.⁵ Replenishment provisions were to be shipped from England twice a year, though no further ships arrived from England until June 25, 1790.⁶ New supplies subsequently but sporadically arrived with each ship from England, but they also brought more convicts, and more mouths to feed. By 1795, the European population had expanded to nearly 3500, of whom 500 were attached to the military, and by 1799, to over 5000.⁷ Over time, other expeditions were sent from the colony to Batavia (Indonesia), India and the Cape of Good Hope, seeking provisions as the colonists made efforts towards becoming self-supporting.

The administrative and economic focus in the colony was primarily on agricultural development, although attention began to shift to the management of shipping and imports after 1798.⁸ The

⁴Exact numbers are not known; Collins states “person[s] belonging to the settlement...amounted to 1030” Collins, David. "An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales Volume 1. [Online]." Prepared from the print edition published by T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies 1798, 1798.
<http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/colacc1> (accessed May - August 2007). p6

⁵ HRNSW p18 August 18, 1786

⁶ Collins (1798) p219 June 1792

⁷ Cobley, John. *Sydney Cove 1795-1800*. North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1986 1986. p xix; ABS, Australian Bureau of Statistics. "Population by Sex, States and Territories", 31 December, 1788 Onwards; Document Number: 3105.0.65.001 Table 1. Federal Government of Australia, 2007.
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3105.0.65.001> accessed September 21, 2007

⁸ Atkinson, Alan. "Taking Possession: Sydney's First Householders." In *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie*, edited by G.J.

description of the image on the official Colonial Seal (see appendix 7.2) issued from 1790 to 1817 gives some impression of the English administration's objectives:

Convicts landed at Botany Bay; their fetters taken off and received by Industry, sitting on a bale of goods with her attributes, the distaff (a spindle for spinning wool or flax), bee-hive, pick axe, and spade, pointing to an oxen ploughing, the rising habitations, and a church on a hill at a distance, with a fort for their defence.⁹

There was a profound difference between the first two governing powers. Captain Arthur Phillip, who practised a paternalistic style of governance, was Governor from arrival in Port Jackson in January 1788 until his departure in December 1792. The New South Wales Corps (hereafter NSW Corps) under Lieutenant Francis Grose and then temporarily William Paterson, took charge of the Colony until late 1795. Civil governance was re-established when John Hunter returned to New South Wales as Governor in September 1795, however Hunter made little difference to the systems and practices established by the NSW Corps, and many of the Corps' Officers remained in positions of power in the colony.

There were periods of near famine in the early years, and undisputedly times of hunger, but there were also periods of relative plenty, within and beyond the constraints of official rations. The first settlers actively supplemented their rations with many other foodstuffs, at first those they foraged for in the surrounding bush, and later from produce they raised themselves. The penal authorities acknowledged the necessity of these activities, and allocated time for convicts to procure native foodstuffs, and to establish and tend gardens.¹⁰ Fine-grained research into the primary records has shown that whilst having to work within a corporate victualling system, the early colonists were not passive victims of a food supply controlled entirely from above, but

Aplin, 72-90. Kensington NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1988. p75

⁹ Heritage Council of NSW. 2007. First Seal the First (or Territorial) Seal of New South Wales of 1790 - 1817. NSW Government, <www.heritage.nsw.gov.au-10_subnav_08_01_02>. (accessed August, 2007).

¹⁰ Collins, David. "An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales Volume 1 with Remarks on the Dispositions, Customs, Manners &C. Of the Native Inhabitants of That Country. To Which Are Added, Some Particulars of New Zealand: Compiled by Permission, from the Mss. Of Lieutenant-Governor King [Online]." Place Published: Prepared from the print edition published by T. Cadell Jun. and W. Davies 1798, 1798. <<http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/colacc1>> (accessed May - August 2007). p101 March 1790

played an active role in food procurement and consumption, exercising individual and collective rights and preferences.

Methodology

This thesis draws on food references from primary sources to help paint a picture of the food situation in this late eighteenth-century penal colony and settlement, and to explore where food fits in the broader context of daily life. McCarty argues that a “proper understanding of Australian history requires that it be placed in the comparative context...[so] that the historian could identify what is unique, and what is not, in Australian history”.¹¹ To this end, it is necessary to develop an insight into the common practices and understanding of food “norms” and dietary preferences of the times. Social order and attitudes, government responsibilities, practical logistics, the indigenous Peoples and natural environment, and the social actors themselves shaped early colonial foodways. Broader research into secondary sources has therefore been undertaken on Australian and English social, economic and political history in the eighteenth-century.

There is an abundance of literature on the early years of settlement in New South Wales, including primary sources (both contemporary and reflective) and secondary sources in the form of academic works and popular writing. Very few academic writings are dedicated specifically to food, a gap which this thesis seeks to address. As many students and advocates of gastronomy discover, food is such a basic function of daily life it is often overlooked as a subject in its own right. Many colonial studies feature foodways as a secondary factor in other aspects of colonisation, such as convictism, agriculture, archaeology, and colonial health. Standard primary sources are indexed in a way that positions food as an institutional function. “Food” in the index of the *Historical Records of New South Wales* (hereafter HRNSW) for example, directs the reader “see Provisions.”¹² “Food” as such is not referenced in the *Historical Records of Australia* (hereafter HRA) index, however “Rations” is directed to “Commissariat”.¹³ Even in later texts,

¹¹ McCarty, J.W. "Australian Regional History." *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand* 18, no. 70 (1978): 88-105. p105.

¹² HRNSW. *Historical Records of New South Wales*. Edited by Government Printer Charles Potter. Vol. 1, Part 2 - Phillip. 1783-1792, *Phillip*: facsimile published by Landsdown Slattery and Co. NSW, 1892. Reprint, 1978.

¹³ HRA. *Historical Records of Australia* Vol. Series 1, Vol 5; 1788-1796: Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1914.

when attention is given to food the focus is on Government rations (and the lack thereof), or quickly moves its evidence and references to the period post 1800.¹⁴ The archaeological investigation report from the Cumberland/Gloucester Streets site in The Rocks acknowledges this gap stating, "Our knowledge of Australian Colonial dietary habits is extremely imprecise...[our principal source] relied on rations issued to convicts...and does not examine the diet of the free or emancipated population".¹⁵ This is largely due to the limited documentation on food and food habits beyond rations, official provisions lists and agricultural reports, until the Sydney Gazette was published from 1803, providing a far more accessible information source about food availability for the broader community, from advertisements and market reports. Fine-grained research into primary sources however, reveals a great deal about the colony's eighteenth-century foodways.

Primary sources consulted include the letters, journals and accounts of many individuals who had some experience of exploration and settlement in New South Wales from 1770. The *Historical Records of New South Wales* (1892) and *Historical Records of Australia* (1914), which chronologically present transcripts of official letters and documents have been principal sources. Copies of the published accounts and journals and the HRNSW and HRA are available for reference in the Mitchell Library in Sydney. Early historians had only limited access to colonial manuscripts held in the Public Records Office in London, which is evident in the bibliographies of Davey, Macpherson and Clements, King, and Cobley's earlier publications. These records were made available on microfilm at the Mitchell Library in 1984, and their release stimulated new interest and interpretations of English settlement in New South Wales.¹⁶ John Cobley's *Sydney Cove* series, which delivers a chronological documentation of events as recorded in contemporary despatches, logs, journals and letters from 1788 to 1800, collated from the HRNSW, HRA, State records (as they became available) and other sources such as private

¹⁴ Karskens, Grace. *Inside the Rocks: The Archaeology of a Neighbourhood*.: Hale & Iremonger Pty Ltd, 1999. p64.

¹⁵ Wilson, Graham. "Ceramics and Tobacco Pipes Artifact Report: Cumberland/Gloucester Streets Site, the Rocks." In *Cumberland/Gloucester Streets site, The Rocks: Archaeological Investigation Report: Specialist Artifacts Reports*, edited by Grace Karskens Sydney Cove Authority, Godden Mackay Pty Ltd, 206-366, 1999.p313. ("Principal source" refers to Roberts & Walker *From Scarcity to Surfeit* 1988)

¹⁶ Colonial Office New South Wales, 1789. London via Australian Joint Copy Service (1984), Courtesy Mitchell Library; McGillivray, Angus R. "From Sods to Seed-Beds: Cultivating a Familiar Field at Port Jackson." *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, v.5 (2004): (1)-29.p3

letter collections, has also been very useful.¹⁷ Selected transcripts and images of original manuscripts are now available electronically through the State Library of New South Wales, and SETIS, which is a scholarly electronic text and image service, a joint project between University of Sydney and the State Library of New South Wales.¹⁸ The ability to access and search primary sources electronically has enhanced the opportunity to search, examine and compare food references in these documents. This wealth of primary material allows for a detailed analysis of food and foodways in the infant colony.

1.1 Invisible Luggage – B.Y.O.

In the late 1970s, R.M. Crawford pioneered the use of the term “invisible luggage”, to describe the social customs, habits, beliefs, and general expectations that the Europeans brought with them to the colonies.¹⁹ This imported thinking and associated attitudes based upon their own homeland, military or maritime experiences influenced the Europeans’ ability to cope and survive as they faced unanticipated situations and circumstances. In order to assess and analyse historical writings, actions and decisions about food, it is important to consider the “invisible luggage” that the early colonists would have brought with them. Some insight into the common practices of eighteenth-century immigrants to the colony can be found in E.P. Thompson’s “Eighteenth-century English society: class struggle without class?”²⁰ Many of the situations and circumstances Thompson describes occurring in eighteenth-century England can be paralleled with early Sydney in the relationships between convicts, the military and colonial officials. This

¹⁷ Cobley, John. *Sydney Cove (5 Volumes) Contents: V. 1. 1788 - V. 2. 1789-1790 - V. 3. 1791-1792 - V. 4. 1793-1795 - V. 5. 1795-1800*. First published: London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962 (v. 1.) and Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1963,1965,1983 (v. 2-4).and London ;North Ryde, N.S.W. : Angus & Robertson, 1986 (v. 5.) 1962-1986.

¹⁸ SETIS. Sydney University collection of literary and historical texts from the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. setis.library.usyd.edu.au; NSW, State Library. 2004. PICMAN Original Manuscript Images and Transcripts. State Library New South Wales, <<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au>>. (accessed February - September, 2007).

¹⁹ Crawford, R.M. *Australia*. Fourth (revised) 1979 ed: Hutchinson of Australia, 1979. p13. Jones, E.L. and G.W. Raby. *The Fatal Shortage: Establishing a European Economy in New South Wales, 1788-1805*. Vol. Discussion Paper No. 16/88. 1988. Occasional Papers No. 6, 1989. p23

According to Jones & Raby, this concept has been developed further by A.T. Yarwood (1979) as “invisible baggage” however I have not been able to access an original transcript as it was not included in the ANZAAS Conference microfilm. Any developments I have made to the concept have been made without reference to his work and are my own.

²⁰ Thompson, E. P. "Eighteenth-Century English Society Class Struggle without Class?" *Social History* 3, no. part 2 (1978): 133-65.

cultural baggage is reflected in the behaviour, actions and decisions taken by the people in the colony, and made an impact on food in the colony.

Part of the invisible luggage brought with convicts, marines and other settlers was a concept of what constitutes “food”. An understanding of eighteenth-century English food habits allows us to view the colonists’ dietary habits in their cultural context. While there are no references to cookbooks in the early colony, *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* first published in 1747 offers a comprehensive picture of food consumed in eighteenth-century England.²¹ Drummond and Wilbraham provide an overview of English diets across the many societal groups in *The Englishman’s Food*. They stress the change in economic conditions as the eighteenth-century progressed, and the diminishing variety and quality of foods available to the institutionalised and the poor, trends experienced by many convicts from this social grouping.²² Jennifer Stead’s *Georgian Cookery* provides information on favoured cooking techniques and recipes for both the commoner and higher order Englishman, which gives an idea of the type of food the early settlers may have tried to prepare, and the concessions that primitive circumstances may have dictated.²³ Further insight into the attitudes of early colonists, has been drawn from “The Extractive Economy; an early phase of the globalisation of diet and its environmental consequences,” by Richard Wilk.²⁴ While material extraction was not the focus of settlement in New South Wales, parallels can be drawn between the diet and conditions of early settlers and workers in extractive industries such as logging or mining; temporarily or perhaps terminally displaced groups of generally lower class individuals, reliant on rations and local food procurement.²⁵ The First Settlers’ foodways developed from the knowledge and resources of their old and new worlds, both of which were never static.

²¹ Glasse, Hannah, intro Karen Hess. *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy; Excelling Any Thing of the Kind Ever yet Published*.: Applewood Books USA., 1747, 1805, 1997. Reprint, 1997.

²² Drummond, J.C. and Anne Wilbraham. *The Englishman’s Food*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1957. Reprint, 1957.

²³ Stead, Jennifer. *Georgian Cookery*. Swindon, UK: English Heritage, 1985.

²⁴ Wilk, Richard. "The Extractive Economy: An Early Phase of the Globalization of Diet and Its Environmental Consequences." *Review - Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilisations* 27, no. 4 (2004): 285 - 306.

²⁵ Wilk pp299,305

1.2 An Appetite for Hunger? Or Cooking the Books?

Legend and Interpretation

The concept of invisible luggage can be further developed in assessing secondary sources of Australian colonial history. Historians bring their own cultural baggage to their interpretation of the contemporary documents. Within the historiography of early settlement in New South Wales there are conflicting interpretations of the recorded history, depending on when the history is being reviewed or interpreted, by whom, and for whom. According to Angus McGillivray there is “a well established and cherished historiography of the early years” of the English settlement of New South Wales, which largely attributes the difficulties that early settlers faced, including hunger and starvation, to an incompetent and neglectful executive Government, and bureaucratic mismanagement from the outset.²⁶ This is evident in CJ King’s work on early Australian agriculture, which paints a very grim picture of life in the earliest settlement and cites the most negative accounts of starvation and privation.²⁷ In his chapter titled *Food and Famine*, King wrote:

Even the schoolboy is aware...near famine conditions operated over the whole five years [of Phillip’s governorship]...Nothing could cure the evils following the neglect of a careless, short-sighted and inefficient home government failing to maintain supplies to the colony in the developmental stage.²⁸

This thinking has continued, with historians directly attributing food shortages to the “ignorance and mismanagement of the authorities in England.”²⁹ Historians have reinforced the notion that

²⁶ McGillivray p2

²⁷ King C, citing Eldershaw pp28

²⁸ King C. 48,54

²⁹ Ross, Valerie. *Matthew Everingham : A First Fleeter and His Times*. Sydney Library of Australian History 1980.p71

colonists faced “extinction from starvation”³⁰ due to ignorance of local conditions, and arrogance in failing to learn from the indigenous population about local resources and the techniques required to harness them.³¹ These oft-repeated views have become an accepted tenet of historiography of early settlement in Australia, and now pass as facts in the nation’s historiography.³²

Primary sources however, reveal that the early settlers were aware of the new country’s geographical and climatic differences, and demonstrated an active curiosity and desire to learn about indigenous food sources and techniques. Despite evidence of comprehensive deliberation, planning and ongoing provision for colonisation in New South Wales, the established assumption and cherished historiography of English mismanagement and neglect in many aspects of the settlement has remained.³³ Rather than acknowledge a consciousness of “the dependent nature of our culture,”³⁴ many history writers work to satisfy an audience that has embraced the myth that Australia was settled as a dumping ground for England’s “Banditti”³⁵, and due to local ignorance, government mismanagement and uncaring abandonment upon a “fatal shore”, colonists were forced to survive on a meagre supply of ships’ rations.³⁶ The tendency to support this historiography is embedded in Australian cultural baggage, with a lingering attachment to the “Australian legend” of independence in the face of Imperial

³⁰ Jones p2.

³¹ Dyson, Laurel Evelyn. *How to Cook a Gallah: Celebrating Australia’s Culinary Heritage*. Melbourne: Thomas C. Lothian Pty Ltd, 2002. p16; Jones, p2; Alexander, G. 2000. My Story: Surviving Sydney Cove. In, www.goldiealexander.com (accessed January - August, 2007).

³² Parsons, George. "The Commercialisation of Honour: Early Australian Capitalism 1788-1809." In *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie*, edited by G.J. Aplin, 102-19. Kensington NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1988. p103
Brampton, Bill. "A Stewed Cockatoo, a Parrot Pudding: Perceptions of Bush Foods in Colonial South Australia." *History forum* (1030-3405), no. 20 (1) (1996): 19-21.p19

³³ McGillivray p3

³⁴ Hirst, John. *Sense & Nonsense in Australian History*. Black Inc. Agenda, 2005. p123; Knight, Roger. "The First Fleet - Its State and Preparation 1786-1787." In *Studies from Terra Australis to Australia*, edited by John Hardy and Alan Frost, 121-36, 256-62. Canberra: The Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1989.p4.

³⁵ Dallas, K.M. "The First Settlements in Australia: Considered in Relation to Sea-Power in World Politics." In *The Founding of Australia*, edited by ed. Ged Martin, 39-49. Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1978. p39; Roe, Michael. "Motives for Australian Settlement: A Document." In *The Founding of Australia*, edited by ed. Ged Martin, 53-56. Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1978 p55

³⁶ Hallpike, Paul. "Australia's Foodways - Botany Bay to the Packaged Present." *Australian Folklore* 15, no. August (2000): 166-77. p175; Parsons p116,117;

dominance, and survival over hardship in a harsh land.³⁷ Despite these imperially imposed circumstances, Australia(ns) managed not only to survive but flourish. The notion of having to exist on starvation rations finds currency within this ideology.

In recent years, revisionist historians have taken a different view, challenging this popular perception.³⁸ Food has not been their primary topic of study, but plays a significant role in arguments within various fields of focus including agriculture, economy, consumerism, colonisation strategies, health and mortality. The revisionist scholars are impassioned about debunking the myths and conspiracy theories created through misrepresentations and misconceptions in Australian colonial history, which have such a strong hold over popular consciousness.³⁹ They decry the “mean-spirited failure in modern writings” that favour negative images of early settlement rather than promote the achievements made by the early colonists.⁴⁰ *The Fatal Shore* by Robert Hughes for example, was published in anticipation of intended bicentennial celebrations of 1988.⁴¹ Hughes is not a historian, yet his book is promoted as “history on an epic scale”.⁴² Hughes book attracted criticism from many historians for its exaggerations. Jones and Raby allude to Hughes book in stating, “contrary to the received wisdom...this was no Fatal Shore.”⁴³ Hughes’ chapter titled “The Starvation Years” covers events in New South Wales, Norfolk Island and Tasmania from 1788 to 1810. Hughes’ implication that these were “starving years” is challenged by Frost, who argues that negative assumptions about poor planning, governmental neglect, and ignorance of local conditions, are unfounded.⁴⁴ This thesis follows the revisionist historians’ interpretation of this period in Australian history, as a time of extraordinary development and achievement, performed by

³⁷ Parsons p115,116. For further investigation into “The Australian legend” consult Crawford, R.M. *Australia*. Fourth (revised) 1979 ed: Hutchinson of Australia, 1979. p130-139.

³⁸ Hirst p1 For example Aplin, Frost, McGillivray

³⁹ Parsons p115,116

⁴⁰ Jones and Raby. p32; Frost, A. (1994) p225; McGillivray (2004) p43; Parsons p103, naming writers such as Manning Clark, David Mackay, and Robert Hughes.

⁴¹ Hughes, Robert. *The Fatal Shore*. Great Britain: Collins Harvill 1987.

⁴² Hughes, Inside front dustjacket.

⁴³ Jones and Raby. p21

⁴⁴ Frost, Alan. *Botany Bay Mirages*.: Melbourne University Press, 1994.p233

resourceful people who should be lauded for their industriousness, and not be presented as victims of a social experiment.⁴⁵

The earlier interpretations of history have shaped our view of the experiences of the First Settlers, especially their food situation, and little seems to have been written on early settlement since the flurry of work preceding the bicentenary of settlement in the 1980s. Most published works about colonial food and food habits focus on convictism, rations and hunger in early settlement, then skip quickly to the next iconic period, the pastoral era of the nineteenth century, when pioneering settlers existed on a staple diet of mutton, damper and tea.⁴⁶ The complexity of the food situation was acknowledged by historians Davey, Macpherson and Clements in "The Hungry Years 1788-1792", which provides a chronological examination of the food supply and general conditions on the voyages and early settlement during Governor Phillip's time as governor.⁴⁷ Their investigation into official rations and supplementary foods, both indigenous and cultivated is based on primary accounts of Collins, Tench, Hunter and White, and Phillip's official accounts recorded in the HRNSW. Drawing on their own cultural baggage of Second World War experiences, the authors emphasised the vulnerability of a community reliant on a restricted, unappetising diet, and the effects of this on physical and mental health.⁴⁸ Particular attention is given to nutritive evaluation, especially vitamins, which were still in the process of being identified and understood in the 1940s.⁴⁹ The authors are critical of the colonists for scorning the Aborigines rather than learning from them, in order to adapt to their new circumstances.⁵⁰

Almost forty years later, renewed interest in food saw the publication of three significant works on colonial food. Each dedicates an opening or early chapter to circumstances that affected the colonists' diets in the early years of settlement, including rationing, crude cooking facilities and utensils, agricultural hurdles, and cultural prejudices and preferences. Richard Beckett describes

⁴⁵ Frost (1994) p225; Jones and Raby p21; Hughes inside front dust jacket, King p28

⁴⁶ Beckett; Dyson; Gollan, Anne. *The Tradition of Australian Cookery*. Canberra: National University Press, 1978; Jones.

⁴⁷ Davey L, Macpherson M, Clements FW. . "The Hungry Years: 1788-1792." *Historical Studies* 3, no. 11 (1947) (1947): 187-208.

⁴⁸ Davey, Macpherson & Clements p199

⁴⁹ Davey, Macpherson & Clements p188

⁵⁰ Davey, Macpherson & Clements p193

the early colonists' food habits and techniques in the opening chapters of *Convicted Tastes*.⁵¹ Beckett emphasises the Englishness of the colonists' food, whilst acknowledging a willingness to experiment with local resources. Beckett's examination of eighteenth-century foodways focuses on British dietary practices, experiences from Cook's expedition in 1770 and colonists' accounts from early settlement to 1792. Little more attention is given to the colony's foodways until the period after 1820. In *One Continuous Picnic*, food historian Michael Symons' work supports the commonly received view that the colonists failed to connect with the soil and integrate native resources instead favouring imported, industrialised English foodways.⁵² Symons' develops the notion put forward in "The Hungry Years," that the early settlers' disenfranchisement from the soil had a lasting impact on Australia's cultural future.⁵³ While events in the eighteenth-century contributed to Australia's future foodways, the agricultural nature of settlement until the late 1790s indicates that many of the earliest colonists did not follow this model. *One Continuous Picnic* was republished in 2007, indicating a continued interest in Australia's food culture and history. *From Scarcity to Surfeit* by Walker and Roberts examines the nutritive quality of the rations based diet of the convict era until mid nineteenth-century.⁵⁴ It acknowledges the use of other foods in the colonists' diet, however convicts and rations are the prime focus.⁵⁵ Central to each of the arguments in these works is the narrowness of staples and the secondary nature of other foods, engendered by the transference of English dietary practices and dependence on rations. Echoing Davey, Macpherson and Clements, Symons is unforgiving of the settlers' rejection of local resources, in their wont to adhere to these accustomed dietary patterns.⁵⁶ While the colonists' efforts to raise their own foods are acknowledged in all the historical studies, the dominant nature of rations in the colonial diet has overshadowed other aspects of the colony's foodways. This thesis challenges this narrow perspective, by taking a comprehensive look at the colonists' food resources, leading to a more optimistic conclusion about the rationale behind their food choices.

⁵¹ Beckett, Richard. *Convicted Tastes*. Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1984.

⁵² Symons, Michael. *One Continuous Picnic*: Penguin Books Australia, 1982. Reprint, Penguin Books Australia, 1984.

⁵³ Symons pp10,11; Davey, Macpherson, Clements p207

⁵⁴ Walker, Robin and Dave Roberts. *From Scarcity to Surfeit*. New South Wales University Press, 1988.

⁵⁵ Wilson G. p313

⁵⁶ Davey, Macpherson & Clements p206; Beckett p8; Symons pp11,19

1.3 Proof of the Pudding? Or Cooking the Books?

Evaluation of Primary Sources

The first years of settlement involved periods of famine and hunger, and for some were “Starvation Years” as Hughes implies. Many questions need to be asked; who was starving, and why did they starve when others survived, or indeed, thrived? If colonists were not starving, what did they eat, and how did they procure and thence prepare and eat their food? John Cobley states,

To understand the daily activities of this small community, their thoughts, reactions and motivations, it is necessary to study the journals of the time, and not a later interpretation of them.⁵⁷

It is from these sources that the answers to the aforementioned questions are sought, albeit with the caution which primary sources demand.

“So often we rewrite history to suit our own ends”, observed Tim Flannery, in his Introduction in *Watkin Tench 1788*, “but in Australia we have the writings of Phillip, White, Tench and many others to inform us about how things were.”⁵⁸ Primary sources, in the form of official documents, despatches and communications provide a valuable resource as records of the situation of the day, but they are not necessarily objective accounts. They were written for practical and political purposes, and while they may reflect personal attitudes and concerns, they were written in an official capacity, often with a desired outcome or agenda in mind. Some communications to authorities in England may have been propaganda, and at times provide a skewed picture. According to biographer John Curry, Judge-Advocate Collins’ official Account was not always

⁵⁷ Cobley, John. *Sydney Cove 1788*. Angus and Robertson, 1980.p5

⁵⁸ Flannery, Tim. "The Extraordinary Watkin Tench." In *1788 Comprising a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, 1-12. Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 1996. p10

candid; at times his “written record was full of promise...but in his heart he was pessimistic.”⁵⁹

Individuals’ logs and diaries provide more independent and personal insights into happenings of the day, and express the interests and personalities of the writers within and beyond their official capacity. Personal letters often provide the most intimate glimpse at individuals’ views and feelings regarding all manner of events and occurrences, though again it must be remembered that they were written for a specific audience and with particular intentions.

Flannery’s cautionary observation assumes a cryptic form when considering the cultural baggage the colony’s diarists’ might have brought to their own records. Some of the colonists’ logs and diaries were published as “narratives” and “accounts” in England by their authors, in the hope they might turn a profit from their firsthand experiences in the colony. These were edited, as in the case of Collins’ *Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, into a publishable form at the author’s discretion.⁶⁰ Tench says in the introduction to his published accounts that he was “... careful to search for the truth and repress that spirit of exaggeration which is almost ever the effect of novelty on ignorance.”⁶¹ Tench’s version of colonial life and conditions drew criticism from one of his contemporaries however:

Tench’s Narritive is wrote with much accuracy and correctness but He has been much too sparing of his opinion of the place...I think it myself but just to give a True statement.⁶²

Primary sources from eighteenth-century Sydney are predominantly those of the official, the educated and the articulate (though not necessarily all three!), and few are written by women.⁶³ Few firsthand references have been found from lower order marines and from convicts themselves. Some are not contemporary records but reflective memories recorded some years later. Typical examples are those of Joseph and Mrs Smith, and Henry Hale whose accounts of

⁵⁹ Currey, John. *David Collins: A Colonial Life*: Melbourne University Press, 2000. p125

⁶⁰ Currey, John. *David Collins: A Colonial Life*: Melbourne University Press, 2000. p188

⁶¹ Tench, Watkin edited by Tim Flannery *1788: Comprising a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*. Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company (1789 and 1793) Reprint 1996.pp15,16.

⁶² Harris, John cited in Copley (1965) p34 from letter dated March 20, 1791

⁶³ For more information regarding female roles in this period in history and historiography consult Grimshaw, Patricia. "Writing the History of Australian Women." In *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives* 151-69. Hampshire, UK: Macmillan, 1991; Daniels, Kay. *Convict Women*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1998; and Dixson, Miriam, *The Real Matilda*, 3rd edition, Melbourne: Penguin, 1994.

their earliest experiences in the colony were volunteered more than fifty years after arrival as “reminiscences”.⁶⁴ Thus it is difficult to construct an account which balances gender, status, class and prospective audience.

Food references are found in official documents, especially those of Phillip and his staff, in records regarding rations, agricultural progress, health, productivity, and progress of public works. Further food references are made in transcripts and reports of court cases, and a great many crimes and misdemeanours involved food, or were food motivated. Food, especially when locally procured, is mentioned as a subject of interest in letters, accounts and diaries, as means of providing audiences with a taste of their distant and curious environs. Sadly, many food references are those recorded as a consequence of deaths. Letters penned by Elizabeth Macarthur and Captain Parker’s wife offer an insight into food for those in privileged positions, and food mentioned in the few surviving letters from convict females provide an alternative perspective. While being conscious of these qualifications regarding the integrity of primary sources, original records or accounts have been the principal sources for this thesis.

Conclusion

Responding to these historical debates and informed by the primary sources, this thesis argues that while the penal and naval systems that underpinned the establishment of the colony were intertwined with the rationing system, early colonial Sydney operated far beyond the limitations of existence on “starvation” rations and stolid English customs. The primary sources show that the colonists were resourceful and industrious, utilising native food sources while establishing the means to raise their own introduced foods to supplement the ration. Food was an integral element in the process of colonisation and the development of the settlement. The control of food was a key component of governmental authority, but restricted rations were not part of the penal sentence. Starvation was counterproductive to the colony’s progress, and was avoided through a variety of measures. The two initial phases of government each played their own distinctive role in the access, availability and distribution of food, which had a direct impact on

⁶⁴ King C.J. pp29,30 with reference to Chisolm, C. *Sydney, Three Colonies* (1865); Hughes, Robert. *The Fatal Shore*. Great Britain: Collins Harvill 1987. p107

the development of the colony and the society within. By the end of the eighteenth-century colonial Sydney had developed from a penal settlement to a prospering colonial society. Departing the colony in 1796 Collins claimed that,

In the houses of individuals were to be found most of the comforts, and not a few of the luxuries of life... the former years of famine, toil, and difficulty, were now exchanged for years of plenty, ease, and pleasure.⁶⁵

The colony's foodways reflect this transition. The colonists' diet evolved from institutional rations dominated consumption, to highly individualised, consumer driven foodways, as they made new lives in New South Wales. Far from being totally rations dependent, the colonists' demonstrated their resourcefulness in utilising native produce, their industrious perseverance in raising their own foods, their independent nature in exercising individual preferences and their entrepreneurial spirit in profiting from their abilities, acquiring access to global commodities that were once only available to the privileged and socially elite, all from within a fettered social framework.⁶⁶

The first section of this thesis examines "Fettered Foodways", being the foods available to first settlers when the colony was essentially a penal establishment. Chapter two explores rations and rationing, and the notions of starvation rations and rejection of indigenous foods in favour of English dietary practices are evaluated in chapter three. Food security, famine, and the ways and means of food preparation and consumption are explored in chapter four. As time progressed, a more complex society than simply convicts and their keepers evolved, and access to food changed greatly. The second section, "Unfettered Foodways" examines the influences of social and governmental change, which can be paralleled with socio-political change in eighteenth-century England, and the consequent effect this had on food and consumption in the colony.

⁶⁵ Collins (1798) p496 September 1796

⁶⁶ Karskens pp170, 238

FETTERED FOOD

CHAPTER TWO

SET MENU

2.1 Managed Food – Rations and Rationing

The expedition to New South Wales and colonial penal settlement were a naval-like operation. Governor Phillip had been a captain in the Royal Navy, though his Governorship of New South Wales was a civil appointment. The colony was essentially a military outpost and daily routines were dictated with military regimen. As in the Royal Navy, providing “established” rations for those commissioned, employed and transported was the government’s responsibility. Provisioning large groups of civil servants was a common and long-standing practice in the eighteenth-century; indeed the Victualling Board had operated in England since 1684.¹ Victualling extended from navy ships to facilitating government and mercantile ventures, and extractive industries such as whaling, mining, logging, that supported organised labour forces. New South Wales was established to be a permanent settlement, with broader ambitions than material extraction, however the early colony’s foodways were based on a diet commonly experienced in colonial extractive expeditions.² The rations scheme was not administered as part of the punishment of a penal sentence, but was an accepted part of the Government’s duty of care for those involved in the process of colonisation and the development of the colony, whether convict, civil or military.

Rations type and quantities were based on British naval standards of the day.³ The official rations for one week for males in the First Fleet were set at:

7lbs bread or flour (3080g – about 4 standard bread loaves in today’s terms)

¹ Morriss, R. (2004). *Naval Power and British culture, 1760 - 1850: Public Trust and Government Ideology*, Ashgate Publishing Aldershot, Hants, England. p60; (“victualling” is a term for corporate food provisioning).

² Wilk pp299,305

³ Dallas p41; Frost (1994) p126.

For further discussion on nutritive or caloric values of convict rations consult Walker and Roberts, *From Scarcity to Surfeit* 1988, Nicholas *Convict Workers* 1988 and Watt, S. J. (1989) “The Colony’s Health.”

4 lbs salt pork (1760g) or 7lbs salt beef (3080g)

3 pints pease (dried split peas/legumes 1800g)

6 oz butter (185g)

1/2 lb rice (220g) or 1lb flour in lieu (440g)

Due to inconsistencies in quality and proportions it is difficult to provide an accurate nutritional assessment, but it is thought that the standard full rations provided between 4000 and 5500 kjs per day, well above the current estimate of 3500kj required for a labouring man, with 2400kjs estimated to be sufficient for light work.⁴ Phillip insisted on parity of rations issue throughout the social tiers, however “free people” occasionally gained extra benefits from the stores, such as oil, vinegar or alcohol. Women, both convicts and wives of marines and officers, were allocated two-thirds of the male allowance, and whilst not initially allowed for, Phillip decided that children would receive a half issue.⁵

All rations recipients, including convicts, saw rations as their due. The First Fleeters were on full rations until November 1789, when Phillip became concerned that the scheduled shipment of supplies might not arrive as expected from England. Deciding that he should not risk depending entirely on the possibility of a new shipment, Phillip took steps to preserve the colony's stores, and to seek supplies independently. He reduced men's rations by a third, and sent the *Sirius* to the Cape of Good Hope to procure whatever provisions possible. The rations continued to be cut, and only rarely were they fully restored, as each new shipment of supplies from England was accompanied by extra dependents. Short rationing was not a disciplinary penalty, but was implemented as a necessary prudence to conserve resources.

Convicts were expected to pay their debt to society by providing labour, and might better be regarded as human capital than prisoners.⁶ From the outset, all were advised that those who did

⁴ Watt, Sir James. "The Colony's Health." In *Studies from Terra Australis to Australia*, edited by John Hardy and Alan Frost, 137-51, 262-66. Canberra: The Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1989. p44

⁵ HRNSW. p194

⁶ Jones and Raby p23; Walker and Roberts p2

not work would not eat.⁷ Food was recognised as necessary fuel for this involuntary labour force. Phillip was aware of the affect of short rationing on working convicts' health and strength, and shortened official working hours in response, despite his concerns about lost productivity.⁸ Public works were hindered until "by the enjoyment of a full ration they [the convicts] were capable of exertion."⁹ When convicts completed their sentences, those who wished to "stay on the stores" had to continue to participate in work activities, inciting Collins to record with some empathy, "little was gained by their being restored to the rights and privileges of free people."¹⁰ Although a basic right for convicts and civil servants, food had to be earned.

The women's allocation reflects the status of women and the low regard for their work activities, such as washing, sewing, cooking, and seed sowing.¹¹ Collins noted in November 1789 that women "did not labour" however the Official Orders for the settlement on Norfolk Island indicate women's duties there, and it is likely the roles were similar in Sydney Cove:

V. The women are to sweep round the houses or tents every morning, and to cook the victuals for the men...

VII. The women are to collect the dirty linen belonging to the men every Friday, and to return each man his proper linen, washed and mended, on the Sunday morning.¹²

Women were also employed as seamstresses, sewing the convicts' "slops" (clothing), which arrived unmade. In 1792 Phillip reported "we can now find full employment for all the women as hutkeepers, or at labour in the fields."¹³ When rations cuts were implemented in November 1789, Phillip did not extend further restrictions to the women's ration:

⁷ Bowes Smyth, Arthur. "A Journal of a Voyage from Portsmouth to New South Wales and China in the Lady Penrhyn, Merchantman William Cropton Sever, Commander by Arthur Bowes, Smyth, Surgeon, 1787-1789 ", 254. Sydney: Australian Documents Library, 1979. Paul Fidler and R.J. Ryan (eds), 1790. February 7, 1788.

⁸ Collins (1798) p144 November 1790

⁹ Collins (1798) p144 November 1790

¹⁰ Collins, (1798) July 31, 1789 p74

¹¹ Cushing "Exactly Like Brutes" (unpublished) p10

¹² Hunter, John. "An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island." In *An Historical Journal of the Transactions at Port Jackson and Norfolk Island*. Place Published: Prepared from the print edition published by John Stockdale London 1793 538pp., 1793 (accessed May – August 2007) <<http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/hunhist>> April 1788 p308.

¹³ HRNSW. p628 Phillip to Nepean June 26, 1792.

They were already upon two thirds of the man's allowance; and many of them either had children who could very well have eaten their own and part of the mother's ration, or they had children at the breast...¹⁴

The apparent fecundity of convict females, and relatively low child mortality rates are indicators that nutrition and general health levels in the colony must have been sufficient for reproduction, even on restricted rations.¹⁵ Births significantly outnumbered deaths between November 1791 and September 1796 (see appendix 7.12).¹⁶ Successful reproduction is not likely in an environment of starvation.

Much to their chagrin, marines were offered the same entitlement of rations as the convicts, with the only exception being that the marines could have a weekly allocation of spirits. This was an area of great contention, and a factor in an ongoing wrest for authority between the civil and military departments.¹⁷ Rather than be limited to overseeing security and maintaining order in the colony, Phillip expected the marines to assist in work tasks and supervising labouring convicts. Ross regarded this demeaning and a degradation of their professional status. According to Morriss, this was typical of naval culture of the time, when "commissioned and warranted officers demanded respect from civil officials and artificers".¹⁸ Ross wrote a letter of complaint to Whitehall:

I know not why, or whither it was so intended by administration that the only difference between the allowance of provisions served to the officer and served to the convict, be only half a pint (per day) of vile Rio spirits.¹⁹

¹⁴ Collins (1798) p84 November 1789

¹⁵ Frost (1994) p214,215

¹⁶ Collins (1798) p515,516 October 1796

¹⁷ Foster, William. "Francis Grose and the Officers." *Royal Australian Historical Society* 51, no. 3 (1965): 177-99. p177

¹⁸ Morriss p38

¹⁹ Major Ross, HRNSW p173 July 10 1788.

There was ongoing dissent throughout Phillip's time, evident when Phillip marked His Majesty's birthday in 1792 by issuing a bonus measure of rum "to the Civil and Military departments and to the Convicts: The Soldiers refused it, thinking themselves slighted by having an "equal quantity with the Convict."²⁰ This situation was resolved on Phillip's departure, when conditions were altered in favour of the military personnel under acting-Governor Lieutenant Grose.

Ships operated as separate entities, responsible for accommodating their own crews from their own stores of rations. Several harbour coves were allocated "for the different Ships boats to go to, to haul their Seynes."²¹ Any fish they caught could be served to the ship's company, and at times they enjoyed "so successful a catch...we have been able to supply the Officers Tables on Shore".²² The HMV *Sirius* and the *Supply* tender were to stay and serve the colony, while the other First Fleet ships returned to other duties. Land was allocated for the ships' crews to use as a garden (Garden Island, still used by the Navy today), and a bakehouse was built onshore for the *Sirius*.²³ They also employed a man to shoot game to supply fresh meat for the ship's company. The burden of rations cuts was shared from November 1789, when "the like reduction was enforced afloat as well as on shore".²⁴ After 1791, few ships were attached to the colony for extended periods. Garden Island and other facilities continued to be used for naval purposes, and ships, both English and foreign, were accommodated and provisioned when in harbour, apparently paying their own way.

The absence of choice and availability in rations staples gives the impression that the diet of the early colonists was monotonous and dull.²⁵ Meat and bread (or ships biscuit at sea) were regarded the core staples in the provision, and other items were often omitted or substituted with

²⁰ Atkins, R. (1792 - 1794). "The New South Wales Journal of Richard Atkins." Retrieved April - June 2007 from http://www.law.mq.edu.au/scnsw/html/atkins_intro.htm. June 4, 1792

²¹ Bowes Smyth January 28, 1788

²² Worgan, George. *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon*: Library of Australian History, Sydney 1978; Griffin Press, S.A, 1978 p21

²³ Collins, cited by Copley (1980) p226 September 20, 1788

²⁴ Collins (1798) p84

²⁵ Karskens (1999) p64: Cushing, Nancy. "The Mysterious Disappearance of Maize: Food Compulsion and Food Choice in Colonial New South Wales." *Food, Culture and Society* 10 *University of Newcastle* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2007) (2007): 109-30. p10

other products in lieu.²⁶ It is difficult to understand whether Tench expresses disappointment or disdain at the absence of these seemingly subordinate items however, questioning whether a "full allowance...can be called so...without either pease, oatmeal, spirits, butter or cheese."²⁷ To Judge-Advocate Atkins disappointment, "In Lieu of 2 Id of Pork which was taken from us, they gave us 1 Id of Indian Corn an 1 Id of Doll ..."²⁸

Primary accounts make regular references to rations quality, quantity and fluctuations, and some individuals - marines and emancipist settlers, sought compensation for short issue (see appendix 7.3).²⁹ Rationing was a central part of every person's existence, and rations, especially their core of wheat and meat, were regarded a right in principle. White recorded, "The Convicts dissatisfied with their ration, not thinking it adequate to what they had before; `tis hard."³⁰

2.2 Controlled Food – Rationing and Social Control

"Dispensing food from the store was one of the colonial authorities chief means of social control," according to Steele.³¹ Rations were distributed weekly from a central store, to convicts on Saturdays and marines on Mondays. Doling out the correct allowance of flour, salt meat, peas and butter to each and every person in the colony was a painstaking and arduous task. Bulk supplies were divided up into seven-day portions to ensure parity and expedient distribution. The seven days allowance caused some difficulties, in that individuals would have to manage their supply to make it last the full week. Collins noted, "It was soon observed, that of the provisions issued at this ration on the Saturday the major part of the convicts had none left

²⁶ National Maritime Museum, R. O. G. "Sustaining the Empire: War, the Navy and the Contractor State." Retrieved April - June 2007, from <<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.21346>>.

²⁷ Tench, (1996) p152 November 1790.

²⁸ Atkins June 20 & 25 1792

²⁹ Collins (1798) p221 June 1792, p358,359 March 1794; Easty, J. (1786 - 1793). "John Easty - Journal titled `Pt Jno Easty A Memorandum of the Transa[] of a Voiage [sic] from England to Botany Bay in The Scarborough transport Captn Marshall Commander kept by me your humble Servan[] John Easty marine wich [sic] began 1787', November 1786 - May 1793." Retrieved April - June 2007. pp176-182.

³⁰ Atkins June 20 & 25 1792

³¹ Steele, Dominic. "Animal Bone and Shell Artifacts Report." In *Cumberland/Gloucester Streets site, The Rocks: Archaeological Investigation Report: Specialist Artifacts Reports*, edited by Grace Karskens Sydney Cove Authority, Godden Mackay Pty Ltd, 140-237. Sydney, 1999 pp170-210.

on the Tuesday night...³² Some would eat their full quota in the first few days, and steal from others for the rest of the week.³³ Further, food would often be traded illegally with marines for rum, to which the convicts had no other access. As a consequence,

the provisions should be served in future on the Saturdays and Wednesdays. By these means, the days which would otherwise pass in hunger, or in thieving from the few who were more provident, would be divided, and the people themselves be more able to perform the labour which was required from them. Overseers and married men were not included in this order.³⁴

This entry indicates that social order and productivity were the motivation and justification for such changes in rationing control.

In another bid to control consumption, theft and illicit trading when the stores were critically low in April 1790, rations were issued daily. The pre-measured seven-day portion for each person was instead issued daily to a group of seven people. Work hours were altered to accommodate the change, ceasing in the afternoons so that people could receive their day's ration and prepare a meal before dark; "much time was not consumed at the store, and the people went away to dress the scanty allowance which they had received."³⁵ Similar discipline was again implemented against labouring convicts in 1791, after the arrival of the Second Fleet, resulting in "the first instance of any tumultuous assembly among these people... ascribed to the spirit of resistance and villainy lately imported by the new comers from England and Ireland". Phillip stood his ground until the dissenters promised "implicit obedience to the orders of their superiors, and declared their readiness to receive their provisions as had been directed."³⁶ While this outcome demonstrates the importance of food control as a means of maintaining order, this

³² Collins (1798) p84,85 October 1789

³³ Collin (1798) p33 June1788

³⁴ Collins (1798) p84,85 October 1789

³⁵ Collins (1798) p103 April 1790

³⁶ Collins (1798) p193 December 1791

incident exhibits a growing tendency for convicts to assert their rights within the rationing system.

Food theft invited severe penalties. Sentences of up to 500 lashes were issued for stealing from the stores, and the most severe penalty for food or livestock theft was execution. Tench absolved to some extent, those who acted with a “depredatory spirit” during times of short rationing in 1791 stating,

The first step in every community which wishes to preserve honesty should be to set the people above want. The throes of hunger will ever prove too powerful for integrity to withstand.”³⁷

Even on full rations, when “no difference was made between them [convicts] and the governor, or any other free person in the colony,” thefts and depredations continued.³⁸ Crime in a penal colony seems inevitable, however the “universal plea was hunger” in defence.³⁹ It was not only convicts who pilfered and stole however, nor was hunger the only requisite. A military position offered little protection, “six marines, the flower of our battalion, were hanged...for having at various times robbed the public stores.”⁴⁰ In addition to flour and meat, these marines stole spirits, tobacco and many other items. Undoubtedly food was stolen for immediate consumption, with hunger a prime motivation, but food theft was executed for other advantages, and not solely a product of hunger.

Food was used as reward, incentive, and as punishment for crimes committed in the colony; allowances could be reduced, or components of the ration could be denied. William Edwards’ ration was reduced by a third for three months for “attempting to defraud the public store of thirty pounds of meat”, and Elizabeth Jones was fined two pounds flour for not attending church.⁴¹ As a reward, sixty pounds of flour, being in April 1790 “more tempting than the ore of Peru or

³⁷ Tench (1996) pp183,184 April 1791

³⁸ Collins (1798) p147 January 1791

³⁹ Collins (1798) p210 May 1792

⁴⁰ Tench (1996) p102 March 1789; Collins p147 January 1791

⁴¹ Cobley (1963) p42 June 3, 1789, p296 November 11, 1790.

Potosi”, was offered to anyone who successfully apprehended garden thieves.⁴² Controlling the colony’s core food supply reinforced the government’s authority.

Some members of society had independent access to additional food, however the penal establishment attempted to ensure that from the convicts’ perspective, food was predominantly controlled by the authorities.⁴³ It was in the authorities’ interests for the convict community to believe that the territory beyond the settlement area was inhospitable and threatening. Many tales are recorded of failed escape attempts, with the absconders giving themselves up, hungry and desperate.⁴⁴ Under Phillip, any convict who happened to catch any wildlife was to surrender it as property of the government, and it was illegal to trade rations or purchase food or alcohol from others.⁴⁵ Rationing was integral to the colonisation process, with rations fuelling the settlement’s development. Food control was a key factor in the colony’s socio-political structure as a means of discipline and social order.

According to Cushing, “rationing made food part of a set of impersonal transactions between government and convict or employer and employee”.⁴⁶ If rations are taken as the only food source, this was generally the case, however there were other foods that were outside the government’s jurisdiction, which supplemented the colonists’ diet. It was these foods that marked the difference in health and quality of life between the social tiers, and also amongst convicts themselves. While not completely “unfettered”, supplementary foods signified a level of independence and individualism beyond the passivity of receiving corporate government rations.

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⁴² Tench (1996) p125 May 1790.

⁴³ Karskens (1999) p64

⁴⁴ For example Phillip HRNSW p 154 July 9, 1788; Barrington George. 1795. *A Voyage to Botany Bay: with a Description of the Country, Manners, Customs, Religion &C. Of the Natives.* In *SETIS*, University of Sydney Library from the print edition published by C. Lowndes. London c.1795, <http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au>. (accessed July, 2007) p17; Tench (1996). p67 1788, p211-212 1791

⁴⁵ Bowes Smyth February 25, 1788 “all the Convicts got was the property of Government...”

⁴⁶ Cushing (2007) p125

⁴⁷ Karskens (1999) p64

CHAPTER THREE

SPECIALTIES OF THE HOUSE

3.1 Wild Food – Indigenous food

The received view about food choice and resources in Australian historiography is that Australia held a wealth of food resources that had sustained the native population for tens of thousands of years, but “in complete ignorance of this, the first white settlers lived through famine as they tried to survive on ship’s rations.”¹ Had the first settlers shown more respect for Aborigines and their ways, they would not have been threatened with “extinction from starvation.”² Primary records do not support this view, providing evidence that there was much experimentation and consumption of local produce. Many of the officers’ journals and accounts make detailed references to the habits and practices of Aboriginal peoples and the early colonists did seek to find out about the Eora peoples’ food sources and practices.³ Until introduced foods were successfully produced and in good supply in the colony, indigenous foods played an important role in the colonists’ diet and officially supplemented the rations when salt provisions were short.

Much of the invisible luggage brought with the colonists pertained to food, and familiar ingredients were sought to replicate understood foodways using the practices they knew.⁴ Native foods which could be adapted to familiar English foodways such as greens, “tea”, berries, and cabbage trees, were willingly adopted, while others were overlooked or rejected due to dietary preferences and cultural prerequisites. The English settled way of life was intrinsically linked with a European approach to food and eating, and was literally worlds apart from the Aboriginal

¹ Hallpike p175

² Jones p2; Davey, Macpherson & Clements p193; Beckett citing Banks, p8; Hallpike p175

³ see for example Collins, Phillip, Bradley, Tench, Hunter.

⁴ Symons p17

peoples' hunter-gathering, non-acquisitive food systems and consequent living patterns.⁵ It is reasonable therefore to consider Low's claim that "due to a gulf in cultural outlook and techniques...the two cultures, although living side by side, were using quite different resources."⁶ The rejection of many Aboriginal foods and practices was not simply a matter of ignorance and disrespect for Aboriginal culture, but recognition that native foodways were not viable for mass consumption in a penal colony that relied on a consistent, efficient and manageable food supply, to support a permanent colonial settlement. Like Wilk's extractive workers, the colonists' food patterns were enmeshed in their labour systems and social organisation, and affected the way they approached the natural environment.⁷

It is commonly recognised that nutritional value is not the only factor that constitutes something edible as "food". There were (and still are) many items native to Australia with high nutrient value that were not recognised as foodstuffs, or were disregarded or rejected as food by colonists, just as many edible substances were disregarded or rejected by Aboriginal peoples. Authors found it noteworthy that turtle, stingray and shark, all eaten by seafarers of the day, had been rejected by Aborigines as food.⁸ Many factors contribute to the adoption or rejection of potential foods, individually or communally, including cultural habits and taboos, personal and learned preferences, social connotations and associations, and not least, the means to procure foodstuffs and make them palatable. Barbara Santich states that "food can never be simply sustenance for the physical body; it also represents the myths and mores, the priorities and practices of a society."⁹ The "priorities and practices" of this imported society were based on political, penal and potentially commercial colonisation, executed with the civil and military authorities' agendas, expectations and ambitions, in the company of convicts whose options

⁵ Horton, Dr David editor. *The Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands History, Society and Culture*. 2 vols. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Studies 1994. p382,383

⁶ Low, T. (1987-1988). "Foods of the First Fleet: Convict Foodplants of Old Sydney Town." *Australian Natural History* 22(7): 292-297. p293

⁷ Wilk pp299,305

⁸ Phillip, HRNSW p192 "Natives would neither eat shark nor stingray" September 22, 1788; Bradley, William. "William Bradley Journal : A Voyage to New South Wales, December 1786 - May 1792." Prepared from the original manuscript held by State Library of NSW, 1786-1792. October 1788 (re stingrays and sharks); Tench (1996) p118 December 1789 (re turtle); Banks 13 July 1770 re turtle and stingray accessed 4/8/07; 6 May 1770 "...we dined today on stingray and his tripe..." accessed 4/8/07

⁹ Santich p43

were to be accepting of the authorities' control, or opportunistic and adventurous in a bid to improve their lot. In a corporate sense, the English administrators showed little interest in local resources, with their interests lying in the potential extraction of introduced commodities which had an established commercial worth such as flax or spices.¹⁰ Individuals took a more localised approach to natural resources, consuming native plant products such as vegetables and tea, game and seafood, and some even kept hives of native bees.¹¹

It had always been intended that local resources would be utilised. Joseph Banks had identified potentially useful plants on his expedition to Australia with James Cook in 1770, and Phillip continued to communicate with him about native flora, sending seeds and specimens back to England for his attention.¹² After months at sea, relying on ships rations, fresh food was a welcome commodity as Banks wrote, "its not being salt...alone was sufficient to make it a delicacy".¹³ From their first encounter on Australian soil, members of the First Fleet surveyed the land for means of survival. Fresh water was the first priority. Fish were caught and cooked on shore. Native plant foods were quickly sought with "local greens added to the dietary" for the sick soon after arrival.¹⁴ Surgeon White acquainted himself very quickly with the local plant resources, possibly with the assistance of local Aboriginal people, and found many plants very useful in treating dysentery and scurvy, the two most common ailments after the voyage.¹⁵ He recorded, "wild celery, spinach, and parsley, fortunately grew in abundance about the settlement."¹⁶ Imported provisions included specialised equipment to assist colonists in harnessing local resources. "2 Wheels for grinding and 2 Iron pans for drying the Casada Root"

¹⁰ HRNSW p5 Matra 1786.

¹¹ HRNSW p220 Consider re tea; Ross, Valerie. *The Everingham Letters*: Anvil Press, Wamberal.1985. p37 re keeping native bees

¹² Phillip, Arthur. 1787-1792, 1794-1796. Letters, with Related Papers and Journal Extract Received by Banks from Arthur Phillip, 1787-1792, 1794-1796. In *Papers of Sir Joseph Banks*, State Library of New South Wales, www.sl.nsw.gov.au/banks/series_37/37_view.cfm. (accessed June-September, 2007); Banks, J. (1770). "Some account of that part of New Holland now called New South Wales." [The first Pacific voyage of James Cook - Section 2](#). Retrieved May - July, 2007, from <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/banks/series_03/essays/03_733mr.cfm>.

¹³ Banks <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/banks/series_03/essays/03_733mr.cfm>.

¹⁴ Copley (1980) citing Collins p92 January 1788

¹⁵ White, J. (1790). "Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales." <http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/ozlit>. Retrieved May 2007. p166 May 30, 1788; Aplin, G.J. "People in an Alien Landscape: Early Sydney's Environmental Context." In *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie*, edited by G.J. Aplin, 18-38. Kensington, NSW: University of New South Wales, 1988. p26

¹⁶ Collins, (1798). p7

for example, were sent to process casada root, a starchy yam-like vegetable. The colonists found what “might possibly be the casada root...” but without understanding the necessary preparation process for native yams “ ...it occasioned violent spasms, cramps in the bowels, and sickness at the stomach.”¹⁷ While some vegetation which seemed innocuous caused gastric upsets, others were found “tolerably” comparable to English produce, and even surprisingly pleasant, such as native Sarsparilla (*smilax glycopylla*) leaves which gained the name “sweet tea”¹⁸;

We also found a plant which grew about the rocks & amongst the underwood entwined, the leaves, of which boiled made a pleasant drink & was used as Tea by our Ships Company: It has much the taste of Liquorish & serves both for Tea & Sugar & is recommended as a very wholesome drink.¹⁹

As neither tea nor sugar were part of the official provisions, sweet tea was a welcome substitute for Chinese teas which were popular at the time, and became a universal “comfort”, enjoyed by convicts and others.²⁰ Colonists had to venture further and further afield to gather sweet tea, and other wild vegetables, suggesting that local resources were fairly quickly diminished by heavy demand from a large population.²¹ These plants were not however, traditional Aboriginal foods.²² European cooking techniques such as boiling and pickling were required to make many of the coastal plants edible; a “Sort of Kidney Bean which grows on the Rocks which are very good Pickled but no other Way.”²³ Boiling was not a cooking method employed by Sydney’s Aborigines; “they never considered it possible... to dress meat by this method, having no vessel capable of containing a fish or a bird which would stand fire.”²⁴

¹⁷ Hunter p153 July 6, 1789

¹⁸ Low p284

¹⁹ Bradley October 1788.

²⁰ Tench (1996) p102

²¹ Low p296

²² Low p295

²³ Fowell, Newton. 1788. Newton Fowell Papers and Letters in the Mitchell Library. via *SETIS*, State Library of NSW and University of Sydney Library. Prepared from the original manuscript held by State Library of NSW, <<http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/fowjour>>. (accessed May - July, 2007). July 12, 1788

²⁴ Tench (1996) p261

Fish was the most important supplementary food, especially in the summer months when great quantities could be caught by those with the means. Fish had been expected to contribute to the food supply; 8000 fishhooks and 48 dozen lines accompanied the First Fleet, plus harpoons, lances and whale line.²⁵ There are numerous records of abundant fish supplies; “At one haul of the Sein we caught Fish enough to serve the Ships Company, Hospital, Battalion & great part of the Convicts.”²⁶ Fresh fish was for some “a comfortable change”,²⁷ but despite the government’s suppositions, fish was regarded a poor substitute for salt meat by rations recipients, even when 10lbs fresh fish was issued in lieu 2.5 lbs salt pork.²⁸ Eels and mud oysters could be sourced from the Parramatta River, and from around the harbour, “Oysters, Cockles & Muscles are to be got for a little Trouble.”²⁹ Archaeological evidence from the Rocks and other areas of Sydney suggests that shellfish were an important food source from the earliest years of settlement. The prevalence of oyster shells in domestic sites in particular, indicates that oysters were readily available and accessible, providing valuable protein and other nutrients for colonists.³⁰ Mud oysters and cockles diminished in quantity and size as time progressed, either over harvested or because their habitat was compromised, however oysters remained a common food source for all levels of society into the nineteenth-century.³¹

There are many references in the officers’ letters and journals to local birds, and game meat such as emu and kangaroos, which were shot, or caught with the assistance of greyhounds, being consumed.³² Local game must not have been too scarce as Elizabeth Macarthur claimed in 1794, “my table is constantly supplied with Wild Ducks or Kangaroos...not less than three

²⁵ Frost (1994) p137

²⁶ Bradley April 30, 1788

²⁷ Southwell cited by Cobley (1980) p135 May 5, 1788

²⁸ HRNSW Phillip to Grenville July 17, 1790. p359

²⁹ Worgan p14

³⁰ Steele pp173,201; Karskens (1999) p66

³¹ Steele p187

³² Tench p239

hundred pounds average per week”, caught by the Macarthurs’ fulltime game hunter.³³

Kangaroo appears on market lists in 1793, significantly cheaper than any other meat, fresh or salted.³⁴ (see appendix 7.7). From the lack of physical archaeological evidence of native animal bone remains in early Sydney domestic sites, Karskens determined that while local game might have been tolerated by “men of reason...lower orders were far more conservative in their taste.”³⁵ Tench, “a man of reason”, recorded “I have often eaten snakes, and always found them palatable and nutritive, though it was difficult to stew them to a tender state,”³⁶ however not everyone could cross cultural boundaries, or were perhaps not driven to, as Lieutenant Clark wrote “nothing goes a miss here Snakes and Lisards are become good eating but these I cannot yet to bring myself to Stomack...” Clark was willing to eat wild birds however, “Parrets, haws and every kind of birds ...the crows goes down the Same as a Barn dove foul in England”³⁷

Karskens’ archaeological evidence suggested that lower order colonists kept to culturally conventional meats such as beef or pork, and later, mutton, however this is not supported in primary evidence from early settlement.³⁸ Collins reported that one of his servants, “an European” had often eaten witchetty-type grubs, finding them “sweeter than any marrow he had ever tasted.”³⁹ A female convict wrote, “our kingaroo rats are like mutton...”⁴⁰ The possessive use of “our” suggests this convict’s adoption of the native species and environment, as early as 1788.

Indigenous foods were clearly welcomed, albeit for some through surreptitious means. A black market in food existed, and the illegality of the following transaction suggests this writer’s convict status, “The opossum, of which there is a great number...eat very well...we sometimes get...cangaroos...to buy for sixpence per pound, but it must be done privately, as the governor

³³ Macarthur p39 August 22, 1794

³⁴ Collins (1798) p333 December 1793

³⁵ Karskens (1999) p65

³⁶ Tench, W. (1793). "A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson." [online] Retrieved May 2007, from <<http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/ozlit>>. p177

³⁷ Clark, R. (1787-1792). "The Journal and Letters of Lt Ralph Clark 1787-1792." Retrieved May 2007. p265 July 10, 1788

³⁸ Karskens (1999) p65

³⁹ Collins (1798) p557 September 1796

⁴⁰ Heney, Helen. *Dear Fanny*: Pergamon Press (Australia) Pty Ltd, 1985 p1 letter dated November 14, 1788, author unknown

will not allow it.”⁴¹ Access to fresh meat and fish was essentially limited to officers and soldiers who had some freedom from the main settlement, and the good fortune to carry a loaded weapon or take out boats. For security reasons, convicts were denied access to watercraft unless under supervision, “If the poor convicts had but an opportunity to fish, it would be a great resource, but there is no trusting of them with a Boat.”⁴² The low consumption of native foods, especially meat and fish was not necessarily a rejection of Indigenous foodways but the result of penal policy and socio-political intervention. The authorities bolstered their power and reinforced their predominance by controlling the colony’s staple foods the rationing system.

3.2 Native Food – Existing Foodways

From their various explorative expeditions around and beyond the Sydney area, the journals and reports of Collins, Tench, Bradley, Hunter, and Phillip, demonstrate a great interest in Aboriginal practices and techniques, both as curiosities and for potential use by the settlers.⁴³ Transactions with the Eora people were guarded but government orders were “that the Natives...were to be treated with every mark of Friendship”.⁴⁴ There is evidence of Aborigines advising colonists that some potential foods were unsafe to eat.⁴⁵ In an effort to discover more about their habits and customs Phillip captured various Aboriginal people, including Arabanoo and Bennelong, and had them live with him in the settlement “for the purpose of knowing whether or not the country possessed any resources by which life might be prolonged.”⁴⁶ It appears these Eora men, taken from their habitat by force, learned more English ways than the other way round. Arabanoo was “as much at ease at the [governor’s] tea table as any person. He managed his cup and saucer

⁴¹ Copley (1963) p167 letter, author unknown November 24, 1791

⁴² Atkins April 24, 1792

⁴³ For more detail refer to the officers’ journals and accounts on observations of the habits and practices of Aboriginal people.

⁴⁴ Worgan p21 January 27 1788.

⁴⁵ White p166 May 30, 1788

⁴⁶ Tench (1996) p116

as if he had been long accustomed to such entertainment."⁴⁷ Although respected personal relationships developed between Phillip and some of his officers and their captives, the Aborigines' survival techniques remained a mystery, especially those from different tribes who resided away from the coast.⁴⁸

Many diarists recorded Aboriginal hunting methods such as bird traps, animal snares and fishing techniques. These appear to have been academic observations rather than details for practical application. As imported food sources diminished however, the colonists were "driven by necessity" to use Aboriginal peoples' techniques: "...one of the convicts (a rope-maker) was employed to spin lines from the bark of a tree which they [the Eora people] used for the same purpose."⁴⁹ It was only when the stores were alarmingly depleted that Phillip dedicated people to hunt and fish so that local resources could be issued in place of official rations.⁵⁰ Until then, game hunting and fishing had been recreational or food-sport activities for the military and officers rather than systematic engagements for the benefit of the public. This supports assumptions that indigenous resources were ancillary rather than integral to the basic diet. Even when in abundant supply, it seems that local vegetables, meats, fish and seafood in season were not readily preserved (potted, salted or pickled) to extend availability, yet these were common practices in England.⁵¹ It seems careless not to preserve local resources for lean times, and the failure to do so reflects the secondary nature of indigenous produce in the colonists' diet, and the administration's faith in the supply of salt provisions.⁵² What could be seen as inaction and imprudence in failing to incorporate native protein sources into the government rations further demonstrates the faith that authorities had in supplies coming from England, and the common understanding of the acceptable composition of rations.

⁴⁷ Hunter pp132,135 May 1789

⁴⁸ Ross, Anne. "Tribal and Linguistic Boundaries: A Reassessment of the Evidence." In *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie*, edited by G.J. Aplin, 42-53. Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1988. p47

⁴⁹ Collins (1798) p113 May 1790

⁵⁰ Tench (1996) p123

⁵¹ HRNSW p180 Phillip to Nepean July 12, 1788

⁵² Stead p90; Farrer, Keith. *To Feed a Nation: A History of Australian Food Science and Technology*. Collingwood, Vic: CSIRO PUBLISHING, 2005. p11,12

British colonists approached their new environment heterogeneously, adopting and relying on a narrow range of foods, leading to scarcity or exhaustion of many food sources in the local area.⁵³ Cabbage palm hearts for example, were much enjoyed by colonists until supply was extinguished through “wholesale massacre”, their trunks being useful for building huts.⁵⁴ Cockles and other seafood species probably suffered the same plight.⁵⁵ The colonists’ followed similar practices to Wilk’s extractive workers in that “while indigenous people’s exploitation of wild animal foods was limited by population, technology, and common property regimes designed to limit access and control harvest... extractivists knew no such limits,” and were unsustainable.⁵⁶

There is some debate about the received view that “...there was an abundance of food for the indigenous population” in the Sydney region.⁵⁷ According to Low “the Aborigines would have lived a comfortable existence.”⁵⁸ Conversely, Flannery says “the Aborigines of the Sydney area were slight of stature, possibly the result of living in such a nutrient-poor environment.”⁵⁹ Their modest population numbers also support this theory.⁶⁰ Despite their reputedly rich resources, some of the earliest observations from 1788 suggest that the Eora people endured times of hunger and famine conditions; “...some of the Natives [are in] a most deplorable situation for want of food in the winter Months”,⁶¹ “they are greatly distressed for food...several dying from hunger.”⁶² Tench observed, “to alleviate the sensation of hunger they tie a ligature tightly around the belly, as I have often seen our soldiers do from the same cause.”⁶³ According to the Sydney Botanic Gardens Trust the local Cadigal people were starving “because their local food sources

⁵³ Dwyer, Peter D. "Companion Foods, Schedules and Archaeology." In *Archaeology with Ethnography: An Australian Perspective*, edited by Meehan & Jones, 148-55. Canberra: Australian National University, 1988. p150

⁵⁴ Beckett p16

⁵⁵ Steele p187

⁵⁶ Wilk p298,299

⁵⁷ Hallpike p175

⁵⁸ Low p293

⁵⁹ Flannery Footnote p144

⁶⁰ Horton, Dr David editor. *The Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands History, Society and Culture*. 2 vols. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Studies 1994. p382,383

⁶¹ Bradley p184 October, 1788

⁶² HRNSW Vol 1 p154 Phillip July 9, 1788

⁶³ Tench (1996) p260

were exhausted...just one year after the British arrived.”⁶⁴ Except for fish, which were at times heavily drawn upon, and kangaroos which were occasionally caught by colonists, this statement conflicts with Low’s findings that the two different peoples relied on different food sources, however the sudden increase in population and colonial development in the region must certainly have had an impact on the Eora people’s traditional foodways. Over time, more and more Aboriginal people came to visit the settlement, seeking food and sometimes shelter. “With the Natives we are hand and glove. They throng the camp every day [with an] importunity for meat and bread (which they now all eat greedily).”⁶⁵ Some Aboriginal people came to reside in the settlements and barter or work for food, and were, according to Collins in 1796, “living in considerable numbers among us without fear or restraint.”⁶⁶ This could have been through individual preference or an outcome of European invasion into their territory, however it is beyond the parameters of this thesis to ascertain why this occurred, and must be left for another area of study.

The examination of primary records demonstrates that from the outset, the colonists looked beyond ships rations for survival, sought information about Aboriginal foods and techniques, and recognised the value of native foods in the diet. Due to the nature of wild food in the region, and the lack of resources and systems in place to procure, preserve, store and distribute mass quantities of seasonal produce, none were considered suitable for victualling or corporate food management. As cultivation of introduced foods became fruitful, the dependency on native food resources diminished relatively quickly. Without doubt however, indigenous resources, whether regarded by the Eora peoples as food or not, contributed to the colonists food supply, and thus enhanced their general health. Further, native bush resources provided colonists with an opportunity to augment their rations, adding nutrients and variety to an otherwise repetitive diet. By actively seeking native produce to supplement their diet, even subordinate colonists could exercise an ability to exist beyond the passivity normally associated with total reliance on corporate rations.

⁶⁴ Botanic Gardens Trust. *Indigenous People of Sydney*. Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW. <http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/education/for_students_and_teachers/indigenous_people_of_sydney> accessed 10/8/07.

⁶⁵ Tench (1996) p151,152 November 12 1790.

⁶⁶ Collins (1798) p543

3.3 Farmed Food - D.I.Y

The historical records show that the British administrators intended that the official ration would be supplemented with locally sourced fresh food. Native produce was the principal source of supplementary foods until introduced foods that were brought in the First Fleet could be “raised by a common industry on the part of the new settlers.”⁶⁷ As the oxen-plough and harvested bale of goods depicted on the Colonial Seal indicate, agriculture was a significant aspect in the colonisation of New South Wales (see appendix 7.2). Cultivation was a priority undertaking in Phillip’s official instructions, and the establishment of vegetable gardens was one of Phillip’s first directives upon arrival, on a public, military and personal scale.⁶⁸ Seeds were planted experimentally on the many explorative expeditions in different areas around and beyond Sydney, exploring options for future cultivation and settlement, demonstrating that agricultural expansion was a considered objective.⁶⁹ Livestock was highly valued, as only a limited number of animals and poultry survived the sea journey (see appendix 7.4). Not only was livestock valued as a source of potential food, but prized for a bi-product vital to agriculture: manure. The preservation of livestock was of such great consequence, that “stealing the most trifling article of stock...[would] be punished with Death.”⁷⁰

From years of experience as a sea captain, Phillip, who suffered severe renal pain from prolonged salt diet, had a great respect for fresh produce, especially vegetables and fruit, which he was careful to procure at each of the ports of call in the long voyage from England.⁷¹ The good health and low mortality rate of thirty-six people for a cargo of over seven hundred convicts and their accompanying two hundred marines and Officers stands testament to this.⁷² What is

⁶⁷ HRNSW p18 August 18, 1786; Roe p54 citing government transcript dated October 24, 1786, author unknown.

⁶⁸ HRNSW p87, April 25, 1787

⁶⁹ Hunter cited by Cobley (1963) p65. July 6, 1789; Atkinson p75

⁷⁰ Bowes Smyth February 7, 1788

⁷¹ Watt, Sir James. "The Colony's Health." In *Studies from Terra Australis to Australia*, edited by John Hardy and Alan Frost, 137-51, 262-66. Canberra: The Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1989. p146

⁷² Collins (1798) p50, December 1788

now the Botanic Gardens, and the Domain area of Sydney, accommodated the Governor's garden and the first public garden, tended by convict labourers. A great variety of seed and plant stock had been brought from England, and more was collected in Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope on the journey out. Although the Fleet arrived in the height of summer, seeds were planted in the hope that some might survive and supplement the official salt ration. Many plants perished, but by springtime Phillip was able to report that "we have about 20 acres of ground in cultivation and those who have gardens have vegetables in plenty, and exceedingly good in kind."⁷³ Convicts tended the public garden, but all colonists, including convicts, were encouraged to establish and tend their own gardens in the afternoons. This initiative proved positive,

Being indulged with having their own gardens is a spur to industry, which they would not have if employed in the publick garden, tho' [the public garden was] intirely for their own benefit, as they never seemed to think was for their own...⁷⁴

Many people thus had an opportunity to improve their circumstances, however not all were diligent in this respect, and many productive allotments fell victim to thievery. Convict farmer James Ruse reported, "the greatest check upon me is, the dishonesty of the convicts, who, in spite of all my vigilance, rob me almost every night."⁷⁵ Beyond providing seeds and time off to tend them, gardens were left to the individuals' initiative and were not the government's responsibility.

Collins waxed lyrical of "...seeing the grape, the fig, the orange, the pear, and the apple, the delicious fruits of the Old, taking root and establishing themselves in our New World," and the primary records make many mentions of gardens abounding with produce including beans, cabbages, cucumbers, cauliflower, fennel, and Indian corn, leeks, melons, onions, peas, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, turnips, although drought, pests, inadequate fencing and security

⁷³ HRNSW September 24, 1788.

⁷⁴ HRNSW p359 Phillip to Grenville July 17, 1790

⁷⁵ Ruse cited by Tench (1793) p81 November 1790

rendered them vulnerable.⁷⁶ It was soon recognised that soils in the Parramatta area were better suited to cultivation than the sandy soils around Sydney Cove, and another settlement was established there. The Governor persisted with his own extensive garden, however the Government (public) farm in Sydney was abandoned following drought in 1790, and principal efforts put into Rose Hill.⁷⁷ Comparing conditions in the two settlements, Collins noted during the extreme food shortage in 1790 that “not a theft nor any act of ill behaviour...” had occurred for some time at Rose Hill “... the convicts conducted themselves with much greater propriety”. This entry is footnoted, “They had vegetables in great abundance.”⁷⁸ Agricultural persistence paid off again during food shortages in 1792,

Great quantities of vegetables had also been given to those who were in health, as well as to the sick, both from the public ground at the farther settlement [Parramatta]... and from the governor’s garden.⁷⁹

The stores may have become alarmingly low, but clearly the personal and public gardens helped stave off complete famine in the lean periods and clearly improved conditions for the convict population.

Again, the military operated independently, as Phillip reported,

The ground which the military may cultivate will be for their own convenience, and nothing from that quarter or from the officers of the civil department can be expected to be brought into the publick account.⁸⁰

We are left to wonder how the military’s garden produce was distributed, as a seaman caught stealing cabbages from the Governor’s garden in 1790 used hunger as his defence; the court

⁷⁶ Collins (1798) p7 (reflective notes)

⁷⁷ Tench p152 November 12, 1790

⁷⁸ Collins, (1798) p112 May 1789

⁷⁹ Collins (1798) p215 June 1792

⁸⁰ Phillip, HRNSW p359 July 1790

reported "he has very little vegetables from the Garden on the Island - and what he does receive are very bad."⁸¹ The officers themselves complained of corruption and disparity within their own ranks,

Nep is on the same old Vagary...he means to monopolize, the soldiers by which means are always without vegetables and from this living very weak...The Governor has given him a game keeper but tho' many kangaroos are Killd...he never sends any of his Officers a mouthful...⁸²

These records indicate that there were other resources available in the colony at the time, but seemingly, distribution was discretionary.

Bread was as culturally important as meat in the colonists' diet, for energy and as a familiar staple; "Beef and Pork will make but sorry Meals without Bread."⁸³ Wheat was the principal English cereal staple, and bread made from fine wheat flour had become a symbol of status.⁸⁴ Flour had become so scarce in the colony by 1790, that when invited to dine with others, even the Governor, each guest would arrive with his own bread. Southwell advised, "in visiting it has long, long! Been the custom to put your bread, at least, in your pocket."⁸⁵ Great hopes were held for the successful cultivation of wheat, "that essential grain", to relieve the dependence on imported flour.⁸⁶ Initially however, maize, commonly referred to as "Indian corn", proved far more productive and resilient to New South Wales' soil, climate and pests. Maize was issued as part of the official ration in 1792, and the flour issue accordingly reduced, but there was difficulty processing maize as it had different milling requirements to wheat. Atkins despaired for the convicts, "they have no Mills to grind it and many are so weak that they cannot pound it...Oh! Shame Shame!"⁸⁷ The government made steps to rectify the problem,

⁸¹ Cobley (1963) p196 May 28, 1790

⁸² Harris to Hill cited by Cobley (1965) p101 August 8, 1791

⁸³ Collins cited by Cobley (1965) p168 November 25, 1791

⁸⁴ Drummond, J.C. and Anne Wilbraham. *The Englishman's Food*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1957. Reprint, 1957 p221.

⁸⁵ Southwell cited in Cobley (1963) April 14 1790

⁸⁶ Collins (1798) p365 April 1794

⁸⁷ Atkins April 1792.

As maize or Indian corn was now necessarily become the principal part of each person's subsistence, hand-mills and querns were set to work to grind it coarse for every person both at Sydney and at Parramatta; ...wooden mortars, with a lever and a pestle, were also used to break the corn, and these pounded it much finer than it could be ground by the hand-mills...but at great labour.⁸⁸

Even when these obstacles were overcome, maize made a poor substitute to an equivalent issue of flour or rice; "the maize when perfectly ground, sifted, and divested of the unwholesome and unprofitable part, the husk, would not give more than three pounds of good meal."⁸⁹ Corn was seemingly attractive enough to steal however, with authorities' going to great measures to quell such activity; "tho' the seed is steep'd in urine some of the Convicts cannot refrain from stealing and eating it."⁹⁰ This was at a time, according to Atkins, when the ration was issued in full. Small farmers found wheat difficult to grow on crudely cleared land, and maize became their staple crop.⁹¹ Locally grown maize continued to be part of the rations issue for many years to come, especially for convicts, though marines demanded their ration have more flour and less maize than the civil population, as recognition of their superior status.⁹² Despite having higher nutritive value than wheat, maize was regarded inferior to traditional English cereals, and was eaten by necessity rather than choice, "the poor...have nothing but a little Indian corn meal to make gruel on."⁹³ As wheat cultivation expanded and a more open economy emerged, maize became further associated with convictism and poverty.⁹⁴

For introduced crops to be successfully cultivated, it was clear that nutrient rich fertiliser was required. Hunter reported in 1788 that "the soil... will require much manure to improve it, which is here a very scarce article,"⁹⁵ and continued in 1791, "without manure this country is too poor

⁸⁸ Collins (1798) p211 May 1792

⁸⁹ Collins (1798) p211 May 1792

⁹⁰ Atkins September 11, 1792

⁹¹ Parsons p109

⁹² HRA, Series 1, Vol. 1, 578 – 79. Hunter to Portland, 10 August 1796.

⁹³ Rev Johnson, cited by Cobley (1983) p139 May 1794; Drummond p221

⁹⁴ Cushing (2007) p111; Jones and Raby pp25,26

⁹⁵ Hunter p77 1788.

ever to yield tolerable crops.”⁹⁶ A small supply of livestock arrived with the First Fleet but many perished or were slaughtered or stolen. To worsen matters, “The whole of our black cattle, consisting of five cows and a bull” that survived the journey, escaped soon after arrival, and were not relocated until 1795.⁹⁷ Encouragingly, after seven years in the wild, the herd was found in a district still known today as Cowpastures, and numbered over forty.⁹⁸ Livestock continued to be imported, although most were privately owned and protected as breeding stock, so fresh beef and mutton were rarely consumed.⁹⁹ Pigs thrived in the colony however, and stocks of goats and poultry stock quickly grew (see appendices 7.4 and 7.5).

In the earliest years, fresh meat was a rare and revered resource in the colony. To come across a meal of fresh meat, local or imported, was considered very lucky. So revered was fresh meat that Southwell, a marine officer, declined an invitation to dine with the Governor “as I was to eat some kid with Mr P.”¹⁰⁰ It was not until March 1790 that fresh pork was purchased from private individuals by the Commissary in the face of dwindling salted meat supplies, and issued then to the military department in lieu of salt rations.¹⁰¹ Unaware of the illicit trade in wild game, or perhaps for dramatic affect for his audience, White wrote in April 1790, the people had “not had one ounce of fresh animal food since first in the country.”¹⁰² Fresh beef was rarest. Accordingly, in 1793, the civil and military establishment experienced only their third taste of fresh beef, each occurrence memorable and remarkable.¹⁰³

Collins’ footnote on the 1793 market prices record indicates the exclusivity of stock ownership (see appendix 7.7).¹⁰⁴ An idea of supply in 1794 is provided by a NSW Corps officer: “We have

⁹⁶ Hunter p202 February 1791

⁹⁷ Tench (1793) p111 June 1789

⁹⁸ Collins (1798) p33 June 1788 and p436-438 Nov 1795

⁹⁹ Collins (1798) p495 September 1796

¹⁰⁰ Southwell cited by Cobley (1963) August 1790

¹⁰¹ Collins p352, March 1790

¹⁰² Dr White to Mr Skill, cited by Cobley (1963) p191 April 17, 1790

¹⁰³ Collins (1798) p338 January 1794

¹⁰⁴ Collins (1798) p333 December 1793

many pigs and goats, but they are chiefly in the hands of gentlemen. Poultry and fish are tolerably cheap..." (see appendix 7.5).¹⁰⁵ Despite the "gentlemen's" stock holdings, even the wealthier tables showed restraint in their meat consumption. The Macarthurs owned one thousand sheep by 1798, however their prudence is evident in their refrain from killing any to eat, furnishing their table with ducks and kangaroo instead, although "next year Mr Macarthur tells me, we may begin."¹⁰⁶

Livestock continued to be bred and be imported, and locally produced butter and cheese were sold in marketplaces from at least 1792, though there would have been scant supply, unless from goat or sheep's milk (see appendix 7.6).¹⁰⁷ Trade in poultry, eggs and other domestic produce had existed "if the price was right" from first settlement.¹⁰⁸ Captain Parker's wife was "often favoured with...presents of eggs, milk and vegetables...from the officers on shore" in 1791.¹⁰⁹ An indication of the rarity and privilege of owning a cow comes from Elizabeth Macarthur, who in 1793, received "a very fine cow in calf..." from Lieutenant Grose. The feeling of privilege and pride in being given such an asset is evident in her response, "...to a family in this country in its present situation it is a Gift beyond any value that can be placed upon it."¹¹⁰ The Macarthurs' farm had a dairy and produced enough butter to supply their family by 1798, although caution again prevailed, with breeding clearly the priority, "we are careful not to rob [the cows] of too much milk."¹¹¹

From the outset, the British colonists expected to supplement their rations with locally procured foods. They actively sought and consumed native foods and showed initiative in experimenting with and adapting native produce to their needs, even those not consumed by the Eora people.

¹⁰⁵ HRNSW 815-818. December 1794

¹⁰⁶ King, Alice Hazel K. *Elizabeth Macarthur and Her World*. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980. p21

¹⁰⁷ Farrer, Keith. *To Feed a Nation: A History of Australian Food Science and Technology*. Collingwood, Vic: CSIRO PUBLISHING, 2005. p25

¹⁰⁸ Scorgie, Michael. "Andrew Miller, Commissary - a Fresh Interpretation." *History (Sydney NSW)* Dec 1997, no. 54 (1997): 13-17. p14

¹⁰⁹ Mrs Parker cited by Cobley, John. *Sydney Cove 1791-1792*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1965. p139. October 1791

¹¹⁰ Macarthur, Elizabeth transcribed by Joy N. Hughes. *The Journal and Letters of Elizabeth Macarthur*. Glebe, NSW: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 1984, 1789-1798. December 1793

¹¹¹ Macarthur p41

They engaged with their new environment raising familiar and exotic foods from seeds and plant stock they imported. This was not a spontaneous response to short supplies, but had been anticipated as part of the colonisation process. Increasing success in agriculture and animal husbandry meant the colony's food supply was more stable by 1792. As the settlements expanded, and the areas under cultivation increased, English lifestyle and customs became more prevalent. Fewer references were made regarding native resources, and the population became more reliant on introduced foodstuffs to supplement the ration. Rations remained the mainstay of the colonists' diet, however markets were established in Sydney and Parramatta, selling a variety of vegetables, flour and maize, poultry, eggs, fish, fresh and salt pork, and sometimes hams and bacon, enabling access to a broader range of foods to supplement the standard provisions. Coffee, tea, sugar, cheese, soap and locally grown and imported tobacco, were also available, reflecting an increase in shipments of commercial commodities, and an opportunity for discretionary consumption.¹¹²

¹¹² Collins (1798) p215 May 1792

CHAPTER FOUR

SIGNATURE DISHES

4.1 Famine, a Favoured Flavour?

The colonists had access to a broader range of foods than official rations. They actively utilised native resources, in conjunction with crops and animals they raised in the colony. How then, has the perception of early settlement as a time of extended hunger, subsisting on a monotonous diet of substandard rations, under an uncaring and neglectful government arisen? Part of the answer lies in historians' focus on limited periods of food insecurity in the primary records. Concentrating on these alone fails to acknowledge the larger picture. There is no dispute that the early colony suffered some very lean times resulting in hunger and despair. There are varied opinions on the duration of the "hungry" or "starvation" years, or at least when famine was no longer feared in the colony; Phillip's departure in 1792¹, December 1794,² and 1795³ have been proffered. Gandevia's study on health in the settlement between 1788 and 1803 however determines that "at no stage was the colony literally starving, although the prospect came perilously close to reality early in 1790, and again in the winters of 1791 and 1792."⁴ A close examination of those crisis periods shows that they were isolated incidents, and that despite their severity, the majority of colonists were able to survive.

¹ Davey, Macpherson & Clements 187-208.

² Fletcher, Brian H. 2006. Grose, Francis (1758? - 1814). In *Australian dictionary of Biography, Online Edition*, Australian national University. (accessed July 25, 2007, 2007).

³ Statham, Pamela. "A New Look at the New South Wales Corps, 1790/ 1810." *Australian Economic History Review* v.30 no. no. 1 (1990): 43-63. p49.

⁴ Gandevia, Bryan. "Socio-Medical Factors in the Evolution of the First Settlement at Sydney Cove 1788-1803." *Royal Australian Historical Society* 61, no. 1 (1975): 2-25. p8

The first food crisis in the colony reached its peak in April 1790. Despite Phillip's efforts to conserve supplies, the stores were so low that the rations issued provided recipients less than 2000kjs per day.⁵ The *Sirius* had not returned from her mission seeking provisions from the Cape of Good Hope, and fears arose for her safety. To ease pressure on Sydney's resources Phillip sent three hundred convicts to Norfolk Island, where cultivation was more productive, and rations could more readily be supplemented by "mutton" birds, which were being caught in their thousands in nesting season.⁶ Phillip had by now reduced the weekly ration to 2 1/2 lbs flour, 2lbs salt pork and 2lbs of rice, "to every person...without distinction". What was issued was in such poor condition that "every grain of rice was a moving body from the inhabitants lodged within it"⁷ and "the two pounds of pork, when boiled...shrunk away to nothing; and when divided among seven people for their days sustenance, barely afforded three or four morsels each".⁸ To worsen matters, "the pease were all expended", depriving colonists of another protein source. Public works and other duties were put aside in Sydney, and "our labour and attention were turned on one object — the procuring of food. — Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war were no more."⁹ A futile attempt to catch kangaroos was made, but fish were caught and served in lieu of salt meat, making a small saving of salt meat supplies.¹⁰ Too little too late perhaps, to make a great saving of salt meat supplies, but fresh fish would have offered variety and nutrient value, and inspired hope that local resources might postpone true starvation.

Phillip donated three hundredweight of his own flour to the commissary, and

from a motive that did him immortal honor, in this season of general distress...he wished not to see any thing more at his table than the ration which was received in common from the public

⁵ Watt p44

⁶ Hunter p182

⁷ Tench (1996) p122

⁸ Collins (1798) p109 April 20, 1790

⁹ Tench (1996) p124 April 1790

¹⁰ Collins (1798) pp102,113,114 April 1790

store, without any distinction of persons; and to this resolution he rigidly adhered, wishing that if a convict complained, he might see that want was not unfelt even at Government house.¹¹

Those with gardens found some relief from restricted rations, not least Reverend Johnson, who did not display such Christian sacrifice as his Governor; “As an individual I am as well off as most – Have plenty of Vegitbles, Potatoes etc... which are chiefly the fruits of my own hard labour.”¹² Phillip’s act of nobility was as much a political tactic to minimise dissent, as a demonstration of respect for his subordinates. His true beliefs are evident in a private letter to Nepean; “we shall not starve, though seven-eighth of the colony deserves nothing better...”¹³

Phillip recognized the 1790 “season of scarcity” as a threat to the colony’s security, and feared that the local Aboriginal people might take advantage of their weakened state. Bennelong, a native residing (in irons) at the Governor’s during this time, was not subject to the restricted rations. Tench explained “every expedient was used to keep...our friend Baneelon... in ignorance. His allowance was regularly received by the governor’s servant, like that of any other person, but the ration of a week was insufficient to have kept him for a day...”¹⁴ Despite the colonists’ well established presence, Phillip and his men obviously felt extremely vulnerable in the face of famine.

Deaths were recorded almost daily throughout this time but comprehensive study of death rates in the first five years of settlement has concluded that higher incidences of mortality were experienced after the arrival of each new fleet, than can be related to phases of severe rationing.¹⁵ Despite the extreme rations shortage, Phillip reported that before the Second Fleet arrived in June 1790, “we had not fifty people sick in the colony”.¹⁶ By all accounts, many people suffered from extreme hunger, yet largely due to Phillip’s discipline and determination, and the

¹¹ Collins (1798) pp108,109 April 1790.

¹² Cobley (1963) p168 citing Johnson in a letter to Henry Fricker, April 9, 1790.

¹³ Cobley (1963) p188 citing Phillip in a letter to Nepean April 15, 1790

¹⁴ Tench p126 May 1790

¹⁵ Watt p144

¹⁶ HRNSW p 355 Phillip to Grenville July 13, 1790.

native and cultivated foods the colonists managed to procure, the majority of the people avoided starvation.

This shortage of supplies was not the result of neglect or mismanagement of the British authorities. The promised replenishment provisions, and other items that Phillip had requested, had been dispatched from England in September 1789 on the *HMS Guardian*. The *Guardian* struck an iceberg off the Cape of Good Hope and her cargo was lost at sea. This was to have devastating effects in the colony, which according to Collins, was well positioned in January 1790 when she should have arrived, “the large quantity of live stock in the colony was daily increasing; the people required for labour were, comparatively with their present state, strong and healthy...” Had the *Guardian*’s mission been successful, “...the ration of provisions would have been increased to the full allowance; and the tillage of the ground [proceeded unhindered and] the settlement could render itself independent of the mother country for subsistence.”¹⁷ The *Guardian*’s expedition and her cargo of provisions stood testament to the Administration’s commitment to the foundling colony, quashing accusations that the colonists were abandoned and neglected by the imperial government.¹⁸ (see appendices 7.10 and 7.11).

The fear of famine was clearly active in people’s minds in the early years, and was conveyed in letters and accounts to England, fuelling the colony’s reputation for hardship and hunger. “Famine besides was approaching with gigantic strides, and gloom and dejection overspread every countenance.” (January 1790).¹⁹ “I positively give over all hopes [of seeing England] not from Sickness But from Starvation. Hunger has once... been dreadfully pressing and if a Ship is not at hand soon we will be worse than before...” (March 1791).²⁰ English authorities promoted the view that New South Wales was a wretched and inhospitable place from “dismal accounts...sent to England”, as a deterrent for crime.²¹

¹⁷ Collins (1798) p116 June 1790

¹⁸ Frost (1994) p147; For extensive investigation on the loss of the *Guardian* consult Frost, *Botany Bay Mirages* (1994).

¹⁹ Tench (1996) p119 January 1790

²⁰ Harris cited by Cobley (1965) March 1791 p34

²¹ Cobley (1963) p188 Phillip to Nepean April 15, 1790

I every day see wretches pale with disease and wasted with famine. How striking is the effect of subordination; how dreadful is the fear of punishment! The allotted task is still performed, even on the present reduced subsistence. (April 1791).²²

Propaganda was not only rife in England, but also active locally, with those on the ground fearing “there may be Policy in putting the best Face on things,” and that the food situation was worse than the authorities admitted.²³ Phillip was aware of negativity in the colony, and recognized the effect this had on morale, “if despondency and discontent once take place, they spread, and are not easily removed.”²⁴ Collins wrote in a letter home in October 1791, (but not in his Account) that he survived “under constant Apprehensions of being starved, and constantly living on a reduced Ration of Provisions...”²⁵ It is little wonder therefore, that New South Wales held a reputation as a “Fatal Shore”, as there is evidence of fears of starvation. When considering the positive achievements being made in the colony, it is clear that in the broader picture, this is a misconception.²⁶

Phillip received a report in May 1791, that emancipist farmer James Ruse, who had declared himself self-supporting in March 1790, was “starving.” Phillip offered him 20lbs of salt provisions to compensate for earlier short rationing. Dispelling this myth, Ruse

assured his excellency that he did not stand in need of his bounty...he absolutely begged permission to *decline* the offer. So very contradictory was his own account of his situation to that which had been reported.²⁷

By 1792 the colonists’ agricultural pursuits were proving successful, and the colony was showing signs of prosperity, yet an image of wretchedness prevailed.²⁸ Collins was anxious to contradict

²² Tench (1996) p183 April 1791

²³ Private Southwell cited by Cobley (1963) p189 April 14, 1790

²⁴ HRNSW p471 Phillip to Grenville March 4, 1791

²⁵ Collins cited by Cobley (1965) p129 October 15, 1791

²⁶ Jones & Raby pp19, 21

²⁷ Collins (1798) p163 May 1791

²⁸ Jones & Raby pp20,21

reports in England in 1794,

through some evil design [which] continued to be insidiously propagated, of the wretched unprofitable soil of New South Wales...every attempt to mislead the public [should] cease...our public stores are filled with wholesome provisions...wheat enough in the ground to promise the realizing of many a golden dream, a rapidly increasing stock...²⁹

Malaspina, a Spaniard visiting in 1793, commented on the orderliness of the settlement and “the abundance of fresh food which the vicinity afforded” providing a neutral source to verify the flourishing state of the colony.³⁰ Those in power after Phillip’s departure took a mean-spirited view of their predecessor’s accomplishments, claiming credit for transforming the colony “from a state of desponding poverty and threatening famine” themselves.³¹ On his arrival in the colony in April 1792 though, Grose had been pleasantly surprised by the state of the colony, “I find there is neither the scarcity...nor the barren lands that I was taught to imagine...the whole place is a garden [of the] greatest luxuriance”.³² Lieutenant Governor Paterson used an interesting measure of comfort and prosperity in the colony in 1794, assuring his reader that “we never set down to a salt meal.”³³ It is at this same time however, that Reverend Johnson stressed the demise of the poor having to subsist on gruel made from Indian corn.³⁴ Clearly not all in the colony had gained from its progress and prosperity, however the primary sources belie the enduring image of a colony gripped by starvation and wretchedness. By focusing on periods when the official rations were insufficient, and consequent despondent personal accounts, historians have provided a distorted view of food security in the colony.

²⁹ Collins (1798) pp360,361 March, 1794, p375 June 1794

³⁰ Malaspina cited by Cobley (1983) p18 March 1793

³¹ Macarthur, p39, transcribing John Macarthur, August 22, 1794

³² HRNSW p613 April 1792.

³³ Paterson cited by Cobley (1983) p135 May 1794

³⁴ Rev Johnson cited by Cobley (1983) p139 May 1794

4.2 Familiar Foods, Favoured Fare

Phillip reported, “The convict knows he must be fed, and to him it is very immaterial at what expence.”³⁵ Convicts understood what official rations should entail, and were reluctant to accept inferior quality or changes to standard components, especially flour and salt meat, the two dominant staples in the ration.³⁶ Commentators often remark on the monotony of a diet based on salt rations.³⁷ As has been shown in chapter three, colonists did not necessarily welcome fresh fish or fresh meat in lieu of salt provisions however, even “at such a place as Port Jackson, where fresh meals are a great rarity.”³⁸ Phillip found that “the established ration was expected while the store was able to furnish it.”³⁹ Although fresh fish and meat were issued at a greater weight measure, colonists preferred salt rations, as they were “able to make them go the farthest.”⁴⁰ Certainly the keeping quality of fresh meat would have been limited in Sydney’s climate, and perhaps more importantly, would be difficult to accumulate for trade.

For economy and expediency, provisions were increasingly sent to the colony from India, where the English held a strong trade base, and the Dutch settlement of Batavia (now Jakarta), however their recipients were not happy with the quality of the provisions being sent.

Of this allowance the flour was the best article; the rice was found to be full of weevils; the pork was ill-flavoured, rusty, and smoked; and the beef was lean, and, by being cured with spices, truly unpalatable. Much of both these articles when they came to be dressed could not be used.⁴¹

The authorities were aware of the people’s dissatisfaction at receiving “such trash as they had

³⁵ Phillip to Grenville HRNSW p471 March 3, 1791

³⁶ Collins (1798) p422 July 1795

³⁷ Cushing (2007) p10, Karskens (1999) p64

³⁸ Bowes Smyth February 1788

³⁹ HRNSW Phillip to Grenville July 17, 1790. p359

⁴⁰ Collins (1798) p352 March 1794

⁴¹ Collins (1798) pp158 April 1791

from time to time been obliged to digest.”⁴² “Being the best that could be procured at Batavia, no inclination was excited by these specimens to try that market again”⁴³ and Phillip requested that food provisions be sent from England rather than from elsewhere. Dhal lentils and rice assumed an increasing presence, often served in lieu of dried peas and flour. While rice was a known ingredient in England, it did not enjoy the same status or universality as flour, and similarly, Indian lentils held poor regard. “Dholl and rice were never well received by the prisoners as an equivalent for flour, particularly when pease formed a part of the ration”, and it is recorded that dhal was found useful as stock feed.⁴⁴ Similarly, maize was a culturally unfamiliar product and although it was the principal cereal crop, was regarded a poor substitute for flour and even rice, which “was used by the convicts in a much greater variety of modes than it was possible to prepare the maize in.”⁴⁵ Maize too was used to feed poultry and pigs; by 1795 Indian corn was declared “an essential article in the nourishment of livestock.”⁴⁶

This reluctance to accept foreign foods and a preference for salt meat evident in primary accounts do not support an environment of starvation, where food in any palatable form would be valued for human consumption, nor do they suggest that variety was a principal concern to colonists. The official records show that the authorities were aware of colonists’ preferences and dissatisfaction with substitution. Colonists, including convicts, were able to express their partiality based on an understanding of their right to acceptable rations. Primary sources have revealed that the colony was neither in a perpetual state of starvation, nor solely reliant on salt rations. They also reveal the cultural preferences and practical restrictions that influenced the colonists’ foodways.

It would be naïve to think that colonists had much time or energy for developing gastronomic prowess, or consulting household management and cookery books, but the colonists did endeavour to create the foods they were accustomed to at home, despite having crude facilities

⁴² Collins (1798) p422 July 1795

⁴³ Collins (1798) pp158,159 April 1791, HRNSW p471 Phillip to Grenville, March 4, 1791

⁴⁴ Collins (1798) p422 July 1795

⁴⁵ Collins (1798) p211 May 1792

⁴⁶ Hunter cited by Copley (1986) p6 September 1795; Jones and Raby p24,25

and limited ingredients. Popular dishes in Georgian England included boiled puddings, pies, soups, stews, or roasted meat and game with vegetables “boiled in plain water; on which they pour a sauce of flour and butter, the usual method of dressing vegetables in England”.⁴⁷ There is evidence of similar dishes being made in the colony.

Some more enterprising marines and officers brought personal “comforts” with them, such as tea, coffee, chocolate, pepper and sugar, and purchased livestock at The Cape for personal use or potential profit in the colony (see appendix 7.4).⁴⁸ Although the cattle absconded only a few months after arrival, goat’s milk and eggs from turkeys and hens enabled some colonists to cook familiar English style dishes. The early colonists used native wildlife in conjunction with rations items to make familiar meals using crows, cockatoos and lorikeets for soups and stews, using salt pork to stuff ducks roasted over an open fire, for example.⁴⁹ Kangaroo haunches were roasted and tails stewed.⁵⁰ Oysters and other shellfish were universally enjoyed, as was typical in England, and fish were abundant in the warmer months. Native sarsaparilla leaves made an enjoyable “sweet tea”, and tetragonia leaves (Warragul greens) were found to be a good substitute for spinach.

Bradley’s map of the settlement dated March 1, 1788 shows a dedicated “cooking place” where a large cauldron was set up for common use (see appendix 7.1). Court records state that a watch was set up “at the copper” in the hope of catching whoever stole a quantity of flour. They caught their man, who arrived to cook “a very large pudding”.⁵¹ In another incident, a convict was caught “baking a large cake...at...the fireplace” with flour he had stolen.⁵² The “cake” was probably damper-style bread, which could be cooked on a shovel on an open fire.

⁴⁷ Drummond p220, citing C.P.Moritz, 1782.

⁴⁸ Currey p37; Atkins, November 14, 1792 (re chocolate).

⁴⁹ White pp148,149 April 1788

⁵⁰ Tench (1996) p239

⁵¹ Cobley (1980) p91 February 29, 1788

⁵² Cobley (1980) p149 May 26, 1788

The map also shows a Bakehouse and an Oven positioned on the western shore of Sydney Cove. Over time, baking houses were built “for the public conveniency”, where a quantity of flour could be exchanged for a baked loaf at the equal weight “but no compulsions exists for anyone to take his bread; it is left entirely to everybody’s own option to consume his flour as he pleases.”⁵³ Ovens were used in private huts as early as June 1788. A convict was charged with stealing three pounds of flour and one and a half pounds of meat, having been accused of taking “some cakes and a pie” from an oven in a hut.⁵⁴

Utensils were a continual problem, for even in 1791 some colonists were, “awkwardly placed for kitchen utensils, and I cannot get a plate here.”⁵⁵ Wooden bowls, platters and spoons (at a value of 6d per person) for convicts and marines are recorded on provisions lists, plus 500 tin plates are listed as being sent with the First Fleet, along with 330 iron pots, 40 camp-kettles and 200 wood canteens.⁵⁶ Phillip complained to Nepean about the bowls supplied, “The wooden ware sent out are too small; they are called bowls and platters, but are not larger than pint basons. There was not one that would hold a quart.”⁵⁷ This indicates that a meal serve was larger in volume than 600ml, and perhaps, that these bowls would have been of little use in collecting the weekly food allowance.

Colonists had to be resourceful in regards to cooking techniques. Captain Tench was enterprising enough to set “a couple of ramrods” over a campfire to cook a meal.⁵⁸ Frying pans were scarce, and many of the 700 shovels sent out were used for cooking, much to the frustration of the Governor. This was apparently a punishable offence, Mary Phillips received 25 lashes “for baking flour over a fire on an iron spade” in February 1789.⁵⁹ Phillip’s resignation to the practice is evident in his plea to Nepean for more equipment nearly two years later, stating

⁵³ Tench p157 November 16, 1790.

⁵⁴ Cobley (1980) p165 June 16, 1788

⁵⁵ Cobley (1965) p131 citing Grimes October 21, 1791

⁵⁶ Frost (1994) p132

⁵⁷ HRA p86 Philip to Nepean September 28, 1788

⁵⁸ Tench (1996) p111

⁵⁹ Cobley (1963) p10 February 4, 1789

“two or three hundred frying-pans will be a saving of spades”.⁶⁰ According to the provisions inventory, 330 iron pots were sent to service 1000 people, though the distribution of cookware is unclear.⁶¹ Lieutenant Clarke was most distressed when “the Iron pot which was Served out from the Commissary by order of the Governour was Stole from my Servants hutt last Tuesday”, so we can assume that senior officers had their own pieces, and lower orders had to share.⁶² Soldiers in barracks took turns to cook in messes, using communal coppers to boil their meat with or without vegetables, and the cooking liquid consumed as broth after the solid food was served.⁶³ Hunter complained that on Norfolk Island, “there is not a pot to every twelve men [troops]...it is nearly night before some of them have cooked their dinners”.⁶⁴

Convicts were responsible for preparing their own meals,⁶⁵ and were “nearly as much distressed for utensils to dress their provisions, as they had been for provisions.”⁶⁶ One convict’s death from hunger was attributed to

Not having any utensil of his own wherein to cook his provisions, nor share in any, he was frequently compelled, short as his allowance for the day was, to give a part of it to any one who would supply him with a vessel to dress his victuals; and at those times when he did not choose to afford this deduction, he was accustomed to eat his rice and other provisions undressed.⁶⁷

The Australian tradition of helping a “mate” had not yet been established to help save this unfortunate fellow. Unmarried convicts generally shared huts that accommodated ten people, where someone (often a woman) would stay to guard property and provisions and “dress their

⁶⁰ HRNSW November 18, 1791. Phillip to Nepean. p556

⁶¹ HRNSW Vol II p388

⁶² Clark p279 February 9, 1790.

⁶³ Sargent, Clem. “The British Garrison in Australia 1788-1841: Conditions of Service Soldiers.” *Sabretache* 43.3 43, no. 3 (2002): 40-47. p42

⁶⁴ Hunter HRNSW p437 February 11, 1791

⁶⁵ Gandevia, Bryan. *Life in the First Settlement of Sydney Cove*: Kangaroo Press, 1985 p13; Sargent p42

⁶⁶ Collins p245 November 1792

⁶⁷ Collins (1798) p111. May 1790

victuals".⁶⁸ It can be surmised therefore, that rations would be pooled and communal meals be prepared and shared between the hut's dwellers. Fuel to cook with was not the problem it had been in parts of England⁶⁹, however cookware limitations meant one-pot stews and pottages would have been the most practical form of cookery.

Archaeological investigations support the historical evidence that early settlers would most commonly have eaten "wet" dishes, such as gruels and stews. Excavations have revealed a lack of flat plates and prevalence of bowl shaped dishes.⁷⁰ This style of "dressing" such foodstuffs is analogous with Laudan's findings that the poorer classes in Europe "subsisted on vegetable soups and gruels with bread or porridge" well into the nineteenth century.⁷¹ There is reference to a woman's fare of "flour and greens, of which she made a mess during the day, and ate heartily".⁷² Stewing was well suited to "dress" salt meat, which was often soaked in fresh water before cooking to draw out excess salt. According to Karskens, salt meat would be inedible if cooked any other way.⁷³ Tench offers an alternative cooking technique for cooking "aged" salt meat through necessity however, "We soon left off boiling the pork as it had become so old and dry that it shrunk one half in its dimensions when so dressed...[we would] cut off the daily morsel and toast it on a fork before the fire, catching the drops which fell on a slice of bread, or in a saucer of rice."⁷⁴ Despite its inclusion as an institutional foodstuff, salted meat was a food of preference, as Phillip found when issuing fresh fish, and even fresh meat, in its place.⁷⁵ This preference extended beyond the 1700s. In Karskens' study of people living in the Rocks area of Sydney in the nineteenth century, salt pork was still readily purchased, despite good supplies of fresh meat.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ Johnson cited by Cobley (1983) p5 January 1793

⁶⁹ Drummond p206

⁷⁰ Karskens (1999) p70

⁷¹ Laudan, Rachel. "Birth of the Modern Diet." *Scientific American Exclusive Online Issue*, no. January 2004 (2004): 6.; Beckett p34, Gollan p20

⁷² Collins, Account p110. April 1789

⁷³ Karskens (1999) p67

⁷⁴ Tench (1996). p123

⁷⁵ HRNSW p359 Phillip to Grenville July 17, 1790

⁷⁶ Karskens (1999) p65

Increasingly, due to their regional proximity, ships from Batavia, Canton and Calcutta brought food supplies and other consumer goods. An archaeologist's report has interpreted the reliance on "Indian-based foods" to mean that early settlers consumed "rice, dhal and curries", implicitly suggesting Indian style meals. From examining late eighteenth-century English foodways and the examples of cookery in primary references from the colony, this is somewhat unlikely; curries became fashionable in the nineteenth century, however documentary evidence from 1791 has indicated an aversion to "unpalatable" Oriental flavours.⁷⁷ Colonists had trouble adapting foreign ingredients, which were imported as substitutes for English product, to their cooking styles:

The different species of provisions which had been received from Calcutta were not much esteemed by the people. The flour or soujee, from our not knowing the proper mode of preparing it for bread, soon became sour, particularly if not assisted with some other grain; the dhol, or pease, were complained of as boiling hard, and not breaking, though kept on the fire for a greater length of time than the impatience of those who were to use it would in general admit of.⁷⁸

The English commonly used rice in pottages and cloth-boiled puddings, or combined rice with milk and sometimes with eggs, similar to traditional rice puddings today,⁷⁹ however the rice from Calcutta, "though termed the best of the cargo, was found to be full of husks, and ill dressed."⁸⁰ The colonists used rice and dhal lentils received from India to thicken soups and stews or what was termed a "mess", made from whatever was available, or a pease pudding boiled in cloth.⁸¹ Colonists did not value foreign ingredients for their exotica or differences, but attempted to use them in familiar ways.

Salt meat was often valued in lieu of seasonings, as confirmed by Surgeon White, who remarks that slices of salt beef used as stuffing for a roasted duck served "as a palatable substitute for

⁷⁷ Collins (1798) p158 April 1791

⁷⁸ Collins (1798) p222,223 July 1792

⁷⁹ Wilson, C. Anne. *Food and Drink in Britain*. London: Cookery Book Club, 1973 pp156, 319-321

⁸⁰ Collins (1798) p222,223 July 1792

⁸¹ Wilson p313

the want of salt, and gave it an agreeable relish... never did a repast seem more delicious".⁸² Other seasonings were not commonly available, causing one convict woman to complain, "a scarcity of salt and sugar makes our best meals insipid".⁸³ Salt was gleaned from excess in salt-meat provisions, but as they diminished, there became a need to manufacture salt and distribute it amongst the people. Large cauldrons were used to boil seawater down for this purpose.⁸⁴ Recipes from eighteenth-century England regularly feature spices and flavourings such as vinegar, pepper, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and mace, and dried fruit, especially currants. These appear on the list of provisions sent to New South Wales in 1788 for the use of the hospital, along with sugar, sago and raisins to be requisitioned at the Cape of Good Hope, indicating that they were regarded as holding medicinal value.⁸⁵ Additional quantities of sugar, vinegar and pepper came with the First Fleet, but such luxuries were privately owned. Vinegar was a useful ingredient for preserving vegetables and shellfish. Pickling cucumbers, beans, cauliflower, fennel, cabbage, oysters, cockles and mussels were known practices of the day, but preserving would have involved time, planning and resource materials, including suitable vessels and sealants for storage, possibly beyond the realm of casual foragers and hunters. Samphire, which "here is in great quantities..." was a popular pickling vegetable in England, however "...the only thing wanted is Ingredients to Pickel them with."⁸⁶ Local herbs and greens were sought to add flavour as well as nutritive content to a monotonous diet, and according to Collins, the people were "glad to introduce them into their messes, and found them a pleasant as well as wholesome addition to the ration of salt provisions."⁸⁷

Special occasion foods offer further indication of consumption habits and preferences. Royal birthdays were marked with bonuses from the stores "to people of all descriptions" when supplies allowed.⁸⁸ Formal dinners that included native and imported foods, reinforced the

⁸² White C. p149.

⁸³ Heney p2, letter dated November 1788, author unknown.

⁸⁴ Collins (1798) p113 May 1790, p424 August 1795

⁸⁵ HRA p88 September 22, 1788

⁸⁶ Fowell July 12, 1788

⁸⁷ Collins (1798) p7

⁸⁸ Collins (1798) p118, June 4 1790, p418, June 4, 1795

importance of maintaining “civilised” English cultural traditions, especially at the Governor’s residence, where according to Currey, “ the officers gathered to dine... in a brief re-enactment of the life they had left behind” .⁸⁹ Food also featured in recreational activities for the few ladies in the leisure class like Elizabeth Macarthur, who enjoyed little boating parties on the harbour, “...taking refreshments with us and dining out”⁹⁰ at pleasant locations such as Garden Island where “we sent for our tea equipage and drank Tea on the turf”⁹¹ or Captain Parker’s wife who “feasted on oysters” that sailors gathered and shucked, “placing them around their hats in lieu of plates, by no means diminishing the satisfaction we had in eating them.”⁹² Celebratory food was not isolated to those of privilege however, with evidence that a convict, being married the next day, made a goat pie “for the wedding dinner”.⁹³ Food was not only a function of survival, but was used to observe special events, and add customary cheer to celebrations and recreational activities.

The colony’s foodways were not just unadorned basics. The early settlers demonstrated that the “priorities and practices” of this society extended beyond practical expediency, making efforts to maintain culturally familiar consumption patterns and search for flavour.⁹⁴ The colonists were discerning, resourceful and inventive, and by actively engaging with their new environment their salt provisions based diet was enhanced by native and locally raised foods.

⁸⁹ Currey p85; Worgan p34,35. June 4, 1788; Tench (1793) p13 June 1788

⁹⁰ Macarthur p34 November 18, 1791

⁹¹ Macarthur p28 March 7, 1791

⁹² Mrs Parker cited by Cobley (1965) p139 October 1791.

⁹³ Worgan June 2, 1788

⁹⁴ Santich (1996) p43

UNFETTERED FOOD

CHAPTER FIVE

MENU A LA CARTE

5.1 Acquiring the Tastes of Freedom

The New South Wales Corps arrived in 1792, to assume governance under Lieutenant Grose on Phillip's departure. They brought their own invisible baggage, an expectation of commercial gain, and a military sense of social superiority, which Phillip had refused to entertain from Major Ross. The Corps officers were less willing to "make do" with what the colony had to offer than their earlier counterparts. Much to Phillip's chagrin, a co-operative of Corps officers chartered a ship to acquire "comforts and necessaries" from the Cape of Good Hope in October 1792, and mercantile activities became a significant part of many officers' roles in the colony.¹ This exercise set in train a change in social and economic direction of the colony, from predominantly penal settlement to a capitalist society.² An increasingly urbanised society emerged as the century progressed, as shipping and trade became more commercially important to Sydney than agriculture.³ Town dwelling colonists were more reliant on marketed consumer goods and purchased food produced by others, than their rural counterparts, and people became further disconnected from the land and indigenous resources. A multi-layered system of consumption evolved, with the privileged adhering to traditional middle or upper class English customs and foodways. Their ability to do so was seen as representative of their superior social status.⁴ Native animals such as duck and kangaroo were welcome on wealthier tables just as local game was on the tables of the English gentry.⁵ According to Brampton, the caricature that sees the

¹ Foster p178; Aplin, G.J. and Parsons, G. "Maritime Trade: Shipping and the Early Colonial Economy." In *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie*, edited by G.J. Aplin, 148-63. Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1988. p149

² Parsons p103

³ Aplin and Parsons p160

⁴ Brampton p19

⁵ Drummond, J.C. and Anne Wilbraham. *The Englishman's Food*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1957. Reprint, 1957. p210

colonists' maintenance of a western diet as an indication of their rejection of the bush, ignores the settlers attempts to adapt to their new environment.⁶ Indeed the lower classes' diet had become more Australianised, adapting to locally procurable resources and cooking techniques, whether indigenous or introduced. As the population became more urbanised however, middle class practices were emulated, and "respectability" was demonstrated through the display of consumer goods including clothing and food and dining customs.⁷

New South Wales was established without a treasury or formal currency.⁸ Court documents and government accounts indicate that from the outset, food items and other provisions were understood to have a prescribed monetary value, which may have been a precept of the judicial and treasury systems. Despite Phillip's edict that provisions were not to be traded, food was a major form of currency, and an active part of the barter style economy. As cultivation expanded and markets were established, colonists gained access to a broader range of locally raised and imported foods, and rations became less important as subsistence food than for their bartering power.⁹ The rationing system itself was a principal part of the economy.¹⁰ In 1792, the government established retail markets in Parramatta and Sydney in a bid to prevent black market activity.¹¹ Lists of articles available for sale from primary sources provide valuable insight into the range of commodities available, and their comparative values (see appendices 7.6-7.8). It is interesting to note in particular, the difference in price between salt and fresh pork, and the relative affordability of cabbages and greens. The lists from 1796 show the expanded range of consumer items by then available for sale, with the shortage of livestock reflected in their relatively high prices. These market lists confirm the presence of discretionary spending and the range of supplementary foods that were available to colonists, although complaints abound about the "dearness" of many basics and "comforts" such as tea and soap, from convicts and

⁶ Brampton p19.

⁷ Karskens (1999) pp50,51,64,72,74; Symons p11

⁸ Parsons p102

⁹ Cushing (unpublished) p3

¹⁰ Parsons p108

¹¹ Collins (1798) p444 June 1792

soldiers alike.¹²

With a broader open market for everyday and luxury commodities, convicts demanded a return to weekly allocation of rations, increasing the power of the "Receiver", and providing more lucrative bartering opportunities to acquire comforts and necessities.¹³ According to Karskens, convicts regarded the government rations and provisions as basic "wages".¹⁴ Phillip had established an opportunity for convicts to work for personal gain (in the form of tradable goods), which could be earned by performing extra duties outside the prescribed working hours. Convicts therefore had the opportunity to make money, with some skilled convict tradesmen and artificers making "considerable profits".¹⁵ Others received money, flour, salt meat, tobacco and tea for privately commissioned building and labour work.¹⁶ In 1796 a labourer's wage was 3s per day, a carpenter's 5s, paid "in such articles as they or their families stood in need of... If a woman was hired, she had one shilling and six-pence for the day, and her meals" (see appendix 7.9).¹⁷ The ability to earn an income beyond official duties enabled all classes access to additional discretionary or ancillary foods and other consumer goods, via an increasingly broad consumer market.¹⁸ Thus it appears that although primarily provisioned by the government, food choice and procurement in the colony was not simply institutional or passive.

Convicts and soldiers who had finished their terms were encouraged to settle in the colony, and were offered land and assistance to establish themselves as farmers, in an effort to develop land for cultivation, provide employment for convicts, and eventually become self sustaining.¹⁹ James Ruse was the first convict to be offered land and assistance in a farming experiment, when his

¹² For example Captain Hill cited by Cobley (1963) p254 July 1790, Heney, Helen. *Dear Fanny*: Pergamon Press (Australia) Pty Ltd, 1985. p9 November 1792.

¹³ Karskens, Grace. *The Rocks: Everyday Life in Early Sydney*: Melbourne University Press, Victoria, 1997. p165

¹⁴ Karskens (1997) p165

¹⁵ Collins p170 July 25, 1791

¹⁶ HRNSW (1892). p66 Rev Mr Johnson, September 1793.

¹⁷ Collins (1798) p500 September 1796

¹⁸ Hirst (2005) p36

¹⁹ HRA p14,15 April 25, 1787; McLoughlin, Lynne. "Landed Peasantry of Landed Gentry: A Geography of Land Grants." In *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie*, edited by G.J. Aplin, 119-47. Kensington NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1988. p126

term was completed in August 1789. After fifteen months, Ruse relinquished his claim to “any further provisions from the store...able to support himself by the produce of his farm.”²⁰ The Ruse experiment demonstrated that given start-up assistance, individuals would be able to become self sufficient, and eventually support their families and extra workers. Indeed by May 1792, Collins was able to record that despite existing on reduced rations, “the settlers... were found in general to be doing very well, their farms promising to place them very shortly in a state of independence on the public stores...” Further still, some were even in a position to support convict labourers, bartering farmed produce for the workers’ salt provisions.²¹ Atkins, gave this assessment of independent settlers:

Tho' they have not begun cultivating the Ground above 10 months, they are for the most part (and the whole might be with proper industry) very comfortably lodged, have plenty of vegetables, Indian Corn, for their families as well as to keep some two some t[h]ree Pigs... In short they are in every particular much better situated than they could possibly be in England.²²

Hoping to increase productivity, stability and permanence in the colony, incentives were offered to free settlers, who started to arrive in 1793, and officers were offered land grants from that time.²³ Settlers were entitled to receive standard rations for eighteen months, along with other basic materials and stock, to assist while they established their own farms with the intention of becoming self-subsistent after that period. The government promised them a market for their grain harvest, and other produce could be sold independently.²⁴

²⁰ Collins (1798) p158 March 1790

²¹ Collins (1798) p212 May 1792

²² Atkins May 22, 1792

²³ McLoughlin p129

²⁴ McLoughlin p128,129

5.2 Capitalism, a Consuming Passion

Under Phillip's governance, food control was directly linked with social order and political authority. The government controlled access to the foods which provided greatest energy and which had highest cultural value, being meat, bread and alcohol. "Lesser" foodstuffs were in the domain of the individual. Even when markets were established to service a broader consumer market, they were operated under the auspices of government authority.²⁵ In testament to his patriarchal and conservative approach to the responsibilities of governorship, Phillip displayed great caution and discipline in rations allocation and distribution, maintaining parity throughout the social ranks. He understood that there was a finite stock of each "species" of provision and made efforts to conserve supply in the stores. Grose however, made no attempt to conserve food supplies.²⁶ He was critical of Phillip's extension of short allowances to military personnel, and once the founding governor had departed, "a distinction [in rations] was made for the first time."²⁷ This practice continued, and in December 1794 for example, "Civil, Military, Free People, and Free Settlers" received double the convicts' allocation of flour and 3lbs rice, of which convicts received none.²⁸ By July 1795, the stores were again in "a precarious state," when a symbolic and defining incident occurred; the government failed to issue any meat to convicts, "being the first time that they had gone from the stores without receiving either salted or fresh provisions".²⁹ Led now by Lieutenant Paterson, the government had not felt compelled to purchase fresh meat to serve convicts in lieu of salt rations, as had been done in the past. On the Monday following, the civil and military population received 2lbs salt pork in their ration.³⁰ This indicates the stark difference between Phillip and the military Governors' attitude to governmental duty of care, and their regard for convicts' status and their dependent position.

²⁵ Collins (1798) p208 April 1792

²⁶ Watt p142.

²⁷ Collins (1798) p254; Foster p178,179.

²⁸ Collins (1798) p402 December 1794

²⁹ Collins (1798) p421 July 1795

³⁰ Collins (1798) p421 July 1795

Phillip's paternalistic nature, conservative governance and egalitarian principles, were rarely appreciated, nor were they effective in terms of productivity. Despite having an indentured convict labour force, the government farms could not generate enough produce to feed the colony.³¹ The more commercial nature of industry under the NSW Corps meant that productivity increased as convict and emancipated workers responded much better to the indulgences and incentives the military offered (rum, tobacco, sugar etc) than they did to Phillip's policy of equal rations.³² The consumer driven market created after Phillip's departure however, favoured mercantile enterprises, which NSW Corps officers including John Macarthur and D'arcy Wentworth and those of lower rank, dominated.³³ Government farming was wound down and private farmers supplied grain to the government for the stores.³⁴ Other produce was sold or traded through authorised markets in Sydney and Parramatta. Well-resourced, larger landholders employed more convict labourers and produced most of the wheat, whereas smaller settlers found growing maize less labour intensive.³⁵ Profits in wheat were high and officers dominated production, thus enabling them to control production and price.³⁶ The officers further increased their personal wealth and political power by controlling imports of liquor and consumer goods, thereby manipulating and monopolising local markets, which marginalised poorer and less privileged colonists.

These events paralleled proceedings in England, which experienced great social and political change in the eighteenth century. Paternalistic values came to be regarded "antique", traditional authority was challenged, and the landed gentry conceded much wealth, status and power, to those involved in commerce and industrialisation.³⁷ According to Thompson, England underwent "a predatory phase of agrarian and commercial capitalism."³⁸ The opening of the new world

³¹ Parsons p107

³² Hirst, John. *Convict Society and Its Enemies*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983. p39; Watt p142

³³ Parsons p106

³⁴ Hirst (1983) p37

³⁵ Parsons p109

³⁶ McLoughlin p130

³⁷ Thompson pp137,138, 143

³⁸ Thompson p139

enabled the aspirant professional to increase social status, personal wealth and political power by taking advantage of geographical mobility.³⁹ Mirroring these trends, the enterprising officers of the NSW Corps imported with them in the early 1790s, an entrepreneurial spirit that celebrated competitive individualism and engendered capitalism. The exploitation and seemingly corrupt activities of the Officers in the manipulation of credit and monopoly over the market for basic essential needs was not peculiar to the military controlled penal society, but were underpinned by capitalistic attitudes and practices already emerging in England.⁴⁰ The strategies used by the NSW Corps officers in colonial Sydney were exactly those Thompson described occurring in England, where

the real killings were to be made in the distribution, cornering and sale of goods or raw materials (wool, grain, meat, sugar, cloth tea, tobacco...), in the manipulation of credit and in the seizure of the offices of the State.⁴¹

Many convicts prospered within the new socio-political and economic environment however, especially those who had arrived earliest, having had the opportunity to establish themselves socially and financially.⁴² Some amassed great fortunes by engaging in commercial and enterprising activities as emancipists, while others improved their conditions, were healthier and better fed, with private employment from prospering colonists.⁴³ The “new guard” had kick-started the economy, taking advantage of their positions and access to the colony’s human and financial capital, and capitalism quickly replaced paternalism as a means of government. A complex social and economic structure emerged within a parallel system of convictism and rations, and a consumer driven economy. The consequences of these changes and circumstances had a direct impact on food standards, distribution, availability and sustainability, and the future foodways of Australia.

³⁹ Thompson p143

⁴⁰ Thompson pp 139,143

⁴¹ Thompson p139

⁴² Karskens (1999) p50

⁴³ Hirst (2005) p111; Watt p142.

Independent settlers on small land holdings found life increasingly difficult in this aggressive economic environment.⁴⁴ The government became concerned about manipulation in the grain market, as Collins recorded in 1794 “settlers were withholding supplies of [wheat] and using it for their own purposes.”⁴⁵ At the next harvest, the government gave preference to “Indian corn growers... who had disposed of their wheat to government”, in an effort to combat market manipulation.⁴⁶ The NSW Corps officers however, increasingly controlled imports of necessities and luxury items, and in particular, alcohol, further monopolising consumer markets. By 1798, independent farmers were compelled to petition the Hunter government for support against the officers’ stranglehold over the market. Collins recorded that the public purchasing system “was so completely monopolized... the settlers had but few opportunities of getting the full value for their crops.”⁴⁷ The new class of large pastoral landholders which had started to emerge under the NSW Corps, profited from the land through “capitalized agriculture”, compromising small landholders who were more vulnerable to environmental and seasonal happenstance, and an increasingly competitive market.⁴⁸

Had Phillip’s vision for domestic gardening and subsistence farming succeeded, Australia might have established an agrarian based society underpinned by a peasant class that engendered responsive integration with the land, the missing components, according to Symons, in Australian food culture’s fabric.⁴⁹ According to Valerie Ross, the independent settlers’ lives “had a biblical quality” existing in a mutually supportive community which was intrinsically linked with the soil.⁵⁰ Hunter made efforts to support this culture, ordering that preference be given

to the man whose grain was the produce of his own labour; and if any favour were shewn, to let it

⁴⁴ Crawford p46,47

⁴⁵ Collins (1798) pp358,359 May 1794

⁴⁶ Collins (1798) pp411,412 March 1795

⁴⁷ Collins, D. (1802). *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales From Its First Settlement, in January 1788, to August 1801* Volume 2 p106. March 1798.

⁴⁸ Crawford p107; McLoughlin p132

⁴⁹ Symons p10

⁵⁰ Ross, Valerie. *Matthew Everingham : A First Fleeter and His Times*. Sydney Library of Australian History 1980. p59

be to the poor but industrious settler who might be encumbered with a large family.⁵¹

The wealthier and more influential landowners proved to be the greater force. The colony's focus was moving from agricultural development into a more globalised commercial phase, driven by shipping, importing and trading, resulting in urban population expansion and consolidation in Sydney as a trade centre.⁵² Just as the peasantry and their way of life had fallen victim to the development of capitalistic individualism in England during industrialization in the eighteenth-century, the small colonial landowners' subsistence lifestyle seemed outdated in Sydney, only years after it had been initiated.⁵³ It does not seem surprising, that a colonial society, and even more so a penal colony, recently unbridled from corporate and patriarchal controls, would celebrate the social and economic freedom that capitalism engendered.⁵⁴ By the end of the century, capitalism and consumerism had all but extinguished this colonial society's connectivity with the land.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Collins, D. (1802) p106. March 1798

⁵² Parsons p104

⁵³ Parsons, p102; Thompson p154

⁵⁴ Parsons p103

⁵⁵ Atkinsonp75

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION:

THE PROOF...IS IN THE EATING

Eighteenth-century Sydney is renowned for convictism, starvation-rations, mismanagement and corruption. This period of establishment and development however, laid the foundations for a relatively comfortable life, and prosperity for many settlers, some who started out as convicts.¹ Certainly many convicts and others fell victim to their circumstances, however these cannot be attributed simply to hunger or to being a convict. Privately or independently resourced convicts were better off than their government-fed counterparts, nutritionally and financially, with many becoming active and successful members of the broader social and economic community.² The colony's foodways evolved as a product of traditional and revolutionary cultural practices, reflecting an era of colonial expansion and extraction, penal and military policies, and socio-political reform in eighteenth-century England. Familiar dietary constructs based on cultural and social expectations, the colonists' willingness and at times, need to experiment with natural resources, and governmental mandates and penal restrictions shaped the first settlers' food consumption patterns.

Many historians have given an incomplete account of food in the early colony, by basing their studies on rations and convict rationing, or founding their views on the premise that the first settlers faced famine and starvation as they ignored the abundant supply of indigenous resources around them in favour of ships rations.³ Through fine-grained examination of primary records this thesis has revealed a wider, more nuanced picture of food in eighteenth-century New South Wales. Rations were the principal and usually the most substantial part of the colonists' diet, however the government and individuals used other foods to supplement the official rations,

¹ Karskens (1999) pp50,51

² Hirst (2005) p111; Karskens (1999) p50, Watt p142

³ Davey, Macpherson & Clements ; Jones; Hallpike; Walker & Roberts.

including indigenous resources. Although native foods were regarded ancillary to rations and introduced produce they were actively sought to improve the diet, for economic prudence, and to augment short provisions supplies. Historians focus on the general submissiveness of the settlers' dependency on rations and imported foodways, but this is not supported by primary evidence. The colonists made constructive efforts to ward off episodes of famine in the early years. The early settlers were not passive victims of a food supply controlled entirely from above, but played an active role in food procurement and consumption, exercising individual and collective rights and preferences. They were resourceful, industrious and opportunistic, engaging with the natural environment utilising indigenous resources, raising their own foods, and worked independently to acquire imported foods to enhance their diet.

Phillip's efforts to conserve provisions, perseverance with agriculture, and the colonists' resourcefulness in adapting to the new environment, meant that in a relatively short period of five years, the colony was well enough established to support itself through times of rations shortages. As cultivation of introduced foods became successful, reliance on indigenous resources diminished, however colonists on all levels remained active players in food procurement, albeit in an increasingly commercialised capacity. Although the colony was to be founded upon agricultural settlement, the dependent nature of an English convict-colonial past ensured that Australia was destined to preclude an agrarian culture, as Symons lamented, which would grow from the ground up.⁴ Any prospect for an agrarian based society was inhibited by eighteenth-century English socio-political attitudes and eclipsed by consequent opportunistic pragmatism and capitalistic ideologies.⁵ Australia's first settlers were convicts and soldiers, not peasants. An atmosphere of aspirant and ambitious individualism imported as invisible luggage with the NSW Corps fed a society hungry for freedom, and liberated the colony from the risk of starvation. The NSW Corps' officers' penchant for capitalism and consumerism supported large-scale agricultural production and their interests in trade encouraged global commercial activities. Urbanisation spawned from mercantile enterprises in the late 1790s engendered the colonial society's disconnection from the soil and abandonment of native foods, which according to Symons, produced an impoverished

⁴ Symons pp10,12

⁵ Thompson p165; Aplin and Parsons p148

and malnourished food culture in Australia.⁶ If periods in history must be labeled, it is this period, which followed the “Hungry Years”, that could in a gastronomic sense, be regarded as the “Starvation Years”.

While having to accommodate social, governmental and environmental restraints and limitations on their foodways, the first settlers – convicts, emancipists, and ex-military men, upheld English traditions as a way of freeing themselves from the shackles of convictism and its prescribed social limitations, while initiating new, independent, respectable lives in New South Wales.⁷ Active involvement rather than passive consumption from first arrival ensured that the eighteenth-century colonists’ foodways would be to some degree, unfettered.

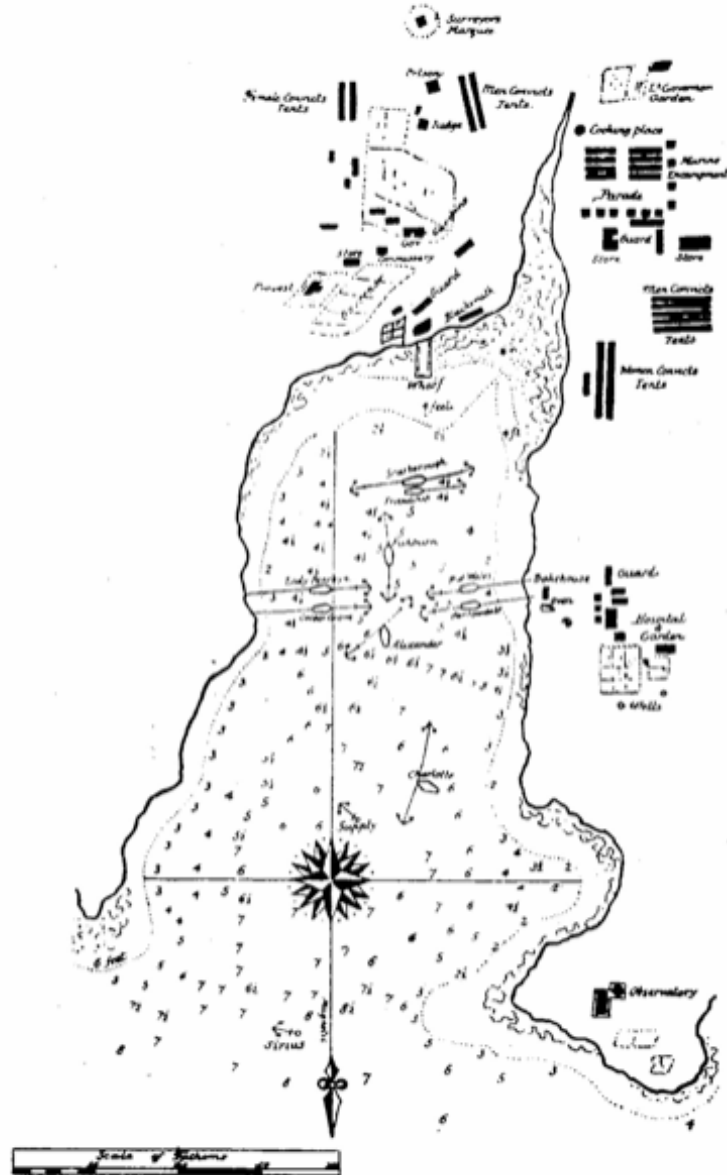
⁶ Symons pp10,12

⁷ Karskens (1997) pp227,238

APPENDICES

7.1 MAP OF SYDNEY COVE 1788

THE FIRST MAP OF SYDNEY



Source: Barrinton's Map March 1788 copied from Aplin, G.J. ed. *A Difficult Infant: Sydney before Macquarie*. Kensington NSW: University of New South Wales, 1988. np.

7.2 THE FIRST (OR TERRITORIAL) SEAL

OF NEW SOUTH WALES 1790 - 1817



Source: Heritage Council of NSW www.heritage.nsw.gov.au-10_subnav_08_01_02.

7.3 JOHN EASTY'S RATIONS LOG

JANUARY 28, 1788 – DECEMBER 11, 1792

[180

A Copy of the Allowance of P ... Sarved on the Hand of NS
Wai . . . from Janry 28^b 1788 to the 6th of October on full from
octbr ye 6th on 7Lb of flower
to may the 18th 1789 from may the 18th to octb
26 on ...full Allowance from octbr the 26th 1789
to April the 1st 1790 on 2/3ds Allowance and
April the 1st to the 12th on half allowance
from April the 12th to June 10th on 2 1/2 lb of flowr 2Lb of Rice
2Lb of Pork from June the 10th to the 21st 4Lb of flower from June
the 21st to July the 12th on full allowance from
July 12th to the 26 on 4Lb of Pork or 7lb of
Beef 7Lb of flower 1/2 lb of Rice 2 of oatmeal
1/2 of Pease from July the 26 to octbr ye 23d on 8Lb of flower and
4lb of pork or 7 of Beef from octbr the 23d to Novbr 13th an
addition of 3 pints oatmeal from Nov ye 13 to Decbr the 4th stopt
the oatmeal and served 3 pints of pease from Decbr the 4th to the
25th stopt the pease from Decbr 25 to Janry the 1st Sarved 1
Quart of pease from Janry the 1st 1791 to the 8th Stopt the pease
and from Janfy the 8th to March the 19th on 4lb of flower 5Lb of
Rice 4lb of Pork or 7lb of Beef and 6 ounces of butter from
March the 19th to April the 2d Stopt the Butter from April the 2d
to July the 18th on 3lb of flower 3lb of Rice 3Lb of Pork or 4 1/2 lb
of Beef from July the 18th to August the 4th to
the 22d Sarved . . . lb of flowr and 6 ounces of S...

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. . . m August the 4d eft to august the 22 Sarved 5
of Rice
. . . om August 22d to Sepbr the 12th on
. . . of flower 3 1/2 lb of Rice and 4lb of pork
or in Lieu 7lb of Beef from Sepbr the 12th

to Novbr the 14th Stopt the Rice from Novbr
the 14 to Decbr 26" > on 6lb of flower 4lb of Pork
or 7lb of Beef lp of Pease and lp of oatmeal
from Decbr 26 1791 on 5lb of flowr and
2P of oatmeal till Janry the 9th 1792 and
from Janry the 9th on 4lb of pork or 7lb of
Beef and 5 of flower untill Febry
13th and from Febry 13 5lb of flower llb of
Rice 4lb of pork to March the 5th and
from march the 5th on 5lb of flower
and 4 of pork till april the 16th and
from april the 16 on 3lb of flower
2lb of Indian Corn and 4lb of Pork
untill may the 14 and from may
the 14 on one pound & 1/2 of flour
4lb of Maze and 4lb of pork till
June the 25 and from June the 25
on l 1/2 lb of flower 2lb of pork 5lb of maze
1Q of Pease until July the
2st from July the 2dt on 1 1/2 lb of Suge . . .
4Lb of Maze 1lb of Rice 1Q of Dool
2lbs of Pork until the 31 and

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from July the 31th on 3lb of suger
4lb of Maze 3Pts of Pease 4lb of Pork
and 1/2 lb of Rice from July the 31 on untill
august the 7
7lb of Suger from agust the 7 3P of Doll 1/2 lb of Rice Beef till
august the 21 from august the 21 or
3lb of Suger 4 of Weat 1/2 lb of Rice 4 of Pork till Sepbr the 3d
from Sepbr the 3d on 7lb of Beef 2 of flowr 1 1/2 of Suger 3d of lb
Doll untill the 10 from the 10 on 2 of flower 5 of Rice 4 of Pork
3P of Doll
untill octbr the 22d from octbr 22d on 2lb of
flower of Rice 4 of Pork 3P of pease and
6 ounces of oil up to Decbr the 3d from Decber 3d on 3lb of flower
4 of pork 5 of Rice 3pst of doll and 6 ounces of oil up to the day
of my Leaving that Colliney on december the 11 1792

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A Memmorandam of...

Stopt or Issued to the Marin . . .

Port Jackson N S Wailes

March the 8th 1790 this day pit on

one Gil Each man per day

June the 11th put on full allowance

July the 1st Stoped the whole

Novbr the 23d Sarved full allowance

Febrv the 15th 1791 Sloped the Sprits

Decbr the 24th 1791 Searved Spirits

March the 17 1792 Stopt the Spiri . . .

June the 27 Sarvd the Spirits at ½ July the 18 the Spirits Stoped

ADMIN/BIOGRAPHY NOTE: Little is known of John Easty, private marine on the Scarborough. Neither his birth nor death dates are known. He returned to England in December 1792, on the Atlantic, the same ship that conveyed Arthur Phillip home. In September 1794 he was employed by a London grocer and spent some years petitioning the Admiralty for compensation promised for short rations in New South Wales. (see Mollie Gillen, *The founders of Australia*; ADB)

SOURCE NOTES: This journal has been published in transcription: 'John Easty, Memorandum of transactions of a voyage from England to Botany Bay, 1787-1791: a First Fleet Journal' (Sydney: Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales, 1965. See ML Q991.1/16A1 and CY 914, frames 99-203).

ACCESSED VIA STATE LIBRARY NSW <http://libapp.sl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/spyduS/ENQ/PM/FULL1?412912> JUNE 4, 2007

Additional Notes:

According to the State Library NSW biographical notes, Easty spent some years petitioning the Admiralty on his return to England, for compensation promised for short rations in New South Wales and this may have been the reason of keeping this record.

These pages are extracted from the transcript taken from State Library of New South Wales PICMAN database of the manuscript of John Easty - Journal titled `Pt Jno Easty A Memorandum of the Transa[] of a Voiage [sic] from England to Botany Bay in The Scarborough transport Captn

Marshall Commander kept by me your humble Servan[] John Easty marine wich [sic] began
1787', November 1786 - May 1793. Accessed and extracted June 4, 2007. The lists appear on the
final pages of the transcript as indicated [# and appear not to be in relevant order, however they
do demonstrate constant change in the issue. For the purposes of this paper I have not altered the
page numbers as recorded, however have presented them chronologically. Thumbnail facsimiles
of the original manuscript pages are available via the PICMAN database on the State Library
NSW website.

7.4 LIVESTOCK INVENTORY 1788

The governor having directed every person in the settlement to make a return of what live-stock was in his possession, the following appeared to be the total amount of stock in the colony:

1 Stallion,
25 Pigs,
3 Mares,
5 Rabbits,
3 Colts,
18 Turkeys,
2 Bulls,
29 Geese,
5 Cows,
35 Ducks,
29 Sheep,
122 Fowls,
19 Goats,
49 Hogs,
87 Chickens.

Source: Collins (1798) p28 May 1788

7.5 LIVESTOCK INVENTORY SEPTEMBER 1796

To whom belonging.	Mares and Horse.	Cows and Cow-Calves.	Bulls and Bull-Calves.	Oxen.	Sheep.	Goats.	Hogs.
To government,	14	67	37	46	191	111	59
Officers civil and military,	43	34	37	6	1310	1176	889
Total of government and officers,	57	101	74	52	1501	1287	948
To settlers,	—	—	—	—	30	140	921
General total,	57	101	74	52	1531	1427	1869

The wild cattle to the westward of the river Nepean were not included in this account.

All kinds of poultry were numerous.

Extracted from: Collins (1798) September 1796 via SETIS

7.6 MARKET PRICES JUNE 1792

The following were the prices of grain and other articles, as they were sold during this month at Sydney, and at the market-place at Parramatta.

At SYDNEY.

Flour from 6d. to 1s. per lb.
Maize per bushel from 12s. 6d. to 15s.
Laying hens from 7s. to 10s. each.
Cocks for killing from 4s. to 7s. each.
Half grown chickens from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. each.
Chickens six weeks old 1s. each.
Eggs 3s. per dozen, or 3d. a-piece.
Fresh pork 1s. per lb.
Potatoes 3d. per lb.
Good white heart cabbages 1d. each.
Greens per dozen 6d.
Turnips 6d. per dozen.
Sows in pig from 4l. 10s. to 6l. 6s.
Sows just taken the boar from 3l. to 4l. 4s.
Growing pigs from 1l. to 2l. 10s. each.
Sucking pigs 10s. each.
Moist sugar from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per lb.
Coffee 2s. to 2s. 6d. per lb
Salt pork per lb. from 8d. to 9d.
Tobacco, Brazil, per lb. from 3s. to 5s.

At PARRAMATTA.

Flour, 1s. per lb.
Maize per bushel from 11s. to 13s.
Laying hens from 7s. 6d. to 10s. each.
Cocks for killing from 4s. 6d. to 5s. each.
Chickens two months old 3s. each.
Eggs per dozen 3s.
Fresh pork per lb from 1s. 1d. to 1s. 3d.
Salt pork per lb. from 10d. to 1s.
Potatoes per lb. from 3d. to 4d.
A lot of cabbages, per hundred 10s.
Tea per lb. from 16s. to 1l. 1s.

Coffee per lb. from 2s. to 3s.

Moist sugar from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per lb.

Tobacco grown in the country from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per lb.

Virginia or Brazil from 4s. to 6s.

Soap from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per lb.

Cheese from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per lb.

Source: Collins (1798) p214,215. May 1792

7.7 MARKET PRICES JUNE 1792

The following were the prices of grain, live and dead stock, grocery, spirits, &c. as they were sold or valued at Sydney and Parramatta at the close of the year 1793:

At SYDNEY.

Grain.

Wheat per bushel, for cash, 10s.

Wheat per bushel, in payment for labour, 14s.

Maize per bushel, for cash, 7s.

Maize per bushel, in payment for labour, 12s. 6d.

Caffre corn 5s.

English flour per lb. 6d.

Flour of this country, for cash, 3d.

Flour of this country, for labour, 4d.

Vegetables.

Potatoes per cwt. 10s.

Potatoes per lb. 3d.

Live and dead stock.

Ewes (Cape) from 6l. to 8l. 8s.

Wethers (Cape) from 4l. to 5l. 10s.

She goats, full grown, 8l. 8s.

She goats, half grown, 4l. 4s.

Male goat, full grown, 2l.

Breeding sows from 3l. to 7l.

Sucking pigs from 4s. to 7s 6d.

Turkeys per couple, nearly full grown, 2l. 2s.

Ducks per couple, full grown, 1l. 1s.

Laying hens, each from 4s. to 7s. 6d.

A full grown cock 5s.

Half grown fowls 3s.

Chickens, six weeks old, per couple 2s.

Fresh pork per lb. 9d.

Mutton per lb. from 2s. to 2s. 6d.

Kangaroo per lb. 4d.

Salt pork per lb. 9d.

Salt beef per lb. 5d.

Groceries.

Tea (green) from 12s. to 16s.

Tea (black) from 10s. to 12s.

Loaf sugar per lb. 2s. 6d.

Fine moist sugar per lb. 2s.

Coarse moist sugar per lb. 1s. 6d.

Butter from 2s. per lb. to 2s. 6d.

Cheese from 2s. per lb. to 2s. 6d.

Soap per lb. from 2s. to 3s.

Tobacco per lb. from 1s. to 1s. 6d.

Lamp oil, made from shark's liver, per gall. 4s.

Wine,—Spirits,—Porter.

Jamaica rum per gallon from 1l. to 1l. 8s.

Rum (American) from 16s. per gall. to 1l.

Coniac brandy per gallon from 1l. to 1l. 4s.

Cape brandy per gallon from 16s. to 1l.

Cherry brandy per dozen 3l. 12s.

Wine (Cape Madeira) per gallon 12s.

Porter per gallon from 4s. to 6s.

At PARRAMATTA.

Grain.

Wheat per bushel, for cash, 10s.

Wheat per bushel, in payment for labour, 14s.

Maize per bushel, for cash, 7s. 6d.

Maize per bushel, in payment for labour, 10s.

Caffre corn, none.

English flour per lb. 6d.

Flour of this country, for cash, 4d.

Flour of this country, for labour, 6d.

Vegetables.

Potatoes per lb. 1½d.

Greens per hundred 6s.

Live and dead stock.

Ewes from 4l. to 10l.

Wethers from 2l 10s to 4l.

She goats from 4l to 10l. 10s.
A young male goat 3l.
Breeding sows from 3l. to 6l.
Sucking pigs 6s.
A full grown hog from 3l. to 3l. 10s.
Turkeys per couple, nearly full grown, 2l. 2s.
Ducks per couple, nearly full grown, 10s.
Laying hens, each 5s.
A full grown cock 4s.
Half grown fowls 2s.
Chickens, six weeks old, per couple 2s.
Fresh pork per lb. 9d.
Mutton per lb. from 2s. to 2s. 6d.
Kangaroo per lb. 4d.
Salt pork per lb. 9d.
Salt beef per lb. 6d.

Groceries.

Tea (green) from 16s. to 1l. 1s.
Black tea from 10s. to 16s.
Moist sugar (coarse) 2s.
Butter per lb. 2s. 6d.
Cheese per lb. 2s. 6d.
Soap per lb. 3s.
Tobacco per lb. 2s.
Lamp oil, made from shark's liver, per gall. 4s.

...The live stock in the country belonging to individuals was confined to three or four persons, who kept up the price in order to create an interest in the preservation of it. An English cow, in calf by the bull which was brought here in the Gorgon, was sold by one officer to another for eighty pounds; and the calf, which proved a male, was sold for fifteen pounds. A mare, brought in the Britannia from the Cape, was valued at forty pounds, and, although aged and defective, was sold twice in the course of a few days for that sum. It must however be remarked, that in these sales stock itself was generally the currency of the country, one kind of animals being commonly exchanged for another.

Source: Collins (1798) p332,333 December 1793

7.8 MARKET PRICES SEPTEMBER 1796

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Extracted from: Collins (1798) pp498,499 September 1796 via SETIS

7.9 Wages 1796

At this time the following prices were demanded and paid for labour and work done at Sydney and the different settlements, viz.

[P.500]

	£.	s.	d.
A carpenter for a day's work,	0	5	0
A labourer for a day's work,	0	3	0
For clearing an acre of ground,	3	0	0
For breaking up an acre of ground,	1	0	0
For threshing a bushel of wheat,	0	1	6
For reaping an acre of wheat,	0	10	0
For felling an acre of timber,	0	17	0
The price of ground was from 12 s. to 1 l. an acre.			
For making a pair of men's shoes,	0	3	6
For making a pair of women's shoes,	0	3	0
For making a coat,	0	6	0
For making a gown,	0	5	0

For washing, three-pence for each article was paid; and the person who washed found soap, &c. If a woman was hired, she had one shilling and six-pence for the day, and her meals.

Extracted from: Collins (1798) pp499, 500 September 1796 via SETIS

7.10 GUARDIAN/JULIANA RATIIONS LIST

*Def. Port of Ticon Supplied in the Lady Juliana
Transposed & Guardian Membran. of issue dated 13 May 1789
Six Hundred Tons.*

Lady Juliana marked A Guardian C		Corn
I	30 Tuns Beef 1/2 p. 8. French	16.200
G	446 Tuns 8 1/2 p. 8	149.856
	496 Powder Beef	166.656
I	150 Barrels Pork 50 p. French	30.000
G	365 50 p. 4	73.000
	271 52 p. 4	56.368
	786 Barrels	159.368
G	548 Tuns Pork 53 p. 6	174.264
	Powder Pork	333.032
I	200 Barrels Ticon 336/round each	67.200
G	879 Barrels 336	295.344
	1079 Barrels Flour	362.544
	1005 Barrels Ticon left out of the Guardian and now in the King's Store Houses	Powder 337.680
		Shops 362.544
		Powder Flour 700.224
		Powder Beef 166.656
		Pork 383.632
		1200.512
	1000 Men at 100 weeks 212/round 5	500.000
		7 weeks 700.000
		1200.000
	600 Tons at 2000 p/round to the Ticon	1200.000

Guardian marked "G" carried 3/4, Juliana "J" 1/4

SOURCE: Australian Joint Copy Service Courtesy Mitchell Library, Colonial Office New South Wales, CO201/4 f.43 London 1789.

The HMS *Guardian* was commissioned to carry three-quarters of the supplies shipment, the *Juliana* 1/4. This, and the following document supports the argument that the neglected by the homeland government had not abandoned and neglected the New South Wales colonists, and had responded to the requests of Phillip and his senior officers. It also reinforces that had the colonists received this shipment of supplies, near famine and despair that were experienced in 1790 would have been averted.

7.11 GUARDIAN/JULIANA PROVISIONS LIST

For New South Wales	No of the Lady Juliana	No of the Guardian
25000 yds Linnen		
9000 yds Daise		
1700 Pair Stockings		
2100 Pair Shoes		
1200 Handkerchiefs		
2070 Hats		
3700 Pair Blankets		
40 m Needles		
7500 lb Thread		
2000 lb Leather		
100 Axes		
100 Chalk Lines		
200 Folding Axes		
74 Croft Cut Saws		
1 m Files		
500 Gumballs		
250 Augers & Chisels		
200 Iron Nails		
500 Pair Hooks		
12 Locks		
48 Snythes		
100 Pickles		
40 Iron Bars		
3 Iron Hoes		
3 Iron Armoured Tools		
500 Iron Plates		
2 Iron Chains & Musket Balls		
60 Bricklayers Trowels		
2 Iron Blacksmiths Hammers		
100 Carpenters Hammers		
100 lb Alder		
12 Folding Saws		
1 m Boards & Platters		
100 Casks Nails		
10 Casks Spikes & Screws		
40 @ Shut up Pig Lead, shot & Brass		
16 Kegs Paint		
30 Gallons Oil		
100 Brushes		
48 Ironstones		
100 Chalk Stones		
5 m Copper Nails		
2 Tons Weights		
6 Steel yards		
34 Bolts Canvas		
10 @ Twine		
200 Pair Needles		
		30 Barrels Gunpowder
		10 Am Cartridge Paper
		30 Axes & Saws
		4 m Fishing Hooks
		500 Fishing Lines
		300 Hammocks
		12 Iron over Coats
		100 Wheel Barrows
		4 Timber Carriages
		12 Coils Rope
		2 Hawsers
		15 Paper Wine
		60 @ Sugar
		20 @ Sage
		60 @ Barley
		100 @ Rice
		200 @ Cornmeal
		40 @ Currants
		5 @ Spices
		20 @ Raisins
		40 @ Potatoes
		10 @ Hammonds
		15 m yds Linnen for sheets
		1 m Saddle & Saddlepad
		12 Chests Muscivores

Guardian carried 3/4, Juliana 1/4. SOURCE: Australian Joint Copy Service Courtesy Mitchell Library, Colonial Office New South Wales, CO201/4 f.99: London 1789.

7.12 BIRTHS AND DEATHS NOVEMBER 1791 – SEPTEMBER 1796

Account of births and deaths from November 12th, 1791, to September 31st, 1796.

Births.

Civil. 10

Military. 3

Convicts. 178

Total. 191

Deaths.

Civil. 1

Military. 4

Convicts. 94

Children. 38

Total. 137

From 1 month to 2 years - 38 have died.

2 years to 18 - 2

18 to 30 - 36

30 to 45 - 30

45 to 65 - 31

Total 137

Teething, 23 have died.

Dysentery, 45.

Cholera morbus 1,
obstipation 1,- 2.

Fevers 7, consumptions 8, - 15

Debility, 22

Lues venerea, 5

Dropsy 3, putrid sore throat 1, - 4

Convulsions and epilepsy, 4

Surfeit 2, scalded 1, abscess and canker 2, - 5

Eruptions, scald head, and mortifications, 3

Iliac passion, 1

Shot 1, casualties 2, executed 1, suicide 2, - 6, Ophthalmia, 2

Total 137

Source: Collins (1798) p515,516 October 1796

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