

Convicts and Emigrants in Early Tasmania | Summer School in Hobart, Tasmania

Reading List

Tasmania's Convicts

by Alison Alexander

To the convicts arriving in Van Diemen's Land' it must have felt as though they'd been sent to the very ends of the earth. In Tasmania's Convicts Alison Alexander tells the history of the men and women transported to what became one of Britain's most notorious convict colonies. Following the lives of dozens of convicts and their families' she uncovers stories of success' failure' and everything in between. While some suffered harsh conditions' most served their time and were freed' becoming ordinary and peaceful citizens. Yet over the decades' a terrible stigma became associated with the convicts' and they and the whole colony went to extraordinary lengths to hide it. The majority of Tasmanians today have convict ancestry' whether they know it or not. While the public stigma of its convict past has given way to a contemporary fascination with colonial history' Alison Alexander debates whether the convict past lingers deep in the psyche of white Tasmania.

Corruption and Skullduggery

by Alison Alexander

"It's 1805, and Maria Riseley - single, poor and pregnant - finds herself in the gloomy Female Factory, Parramatta. Her future looks bleak: separation from her baby then back to the round of housework and sex that is the lot of an assigned female convict. Then Edward Lord arrives. Young, aristocratic, imperious, he wants a woman. A lieutenant in the marines, he has been posted to the tiny new settlement at Hobart Town, where women are scarce. So he has come to Sydney, a much more promising field." So begins the story of Edward and Maria, told by Alison Alexander. It's not just about two people from different social classes making their way in a new society; Alison uses their story to shine a light on early government in Van Diemen's Land, exposing the corruption and skullduggery that went on at all levels of administration, from the top down.

A Shorter History of Australia: Revised

by Geoffrey Blainey

A broad, concise and inclusive vision of Australia and Australians by one of our most renowned historians. After a lifetime of research and debate on Australian and international history, Geoffrey Blainey is well-placed to introduce us to the people who have played a part and to guide us through the events that have created the Australian identity- the mania for spectator sport; the suspicion of the tall poppy; the rivalries of Catholic and Protestant, Sydney and Melbourne, new and old homelands and new and old allies; the conflicts of war abroad and race at home; the importance of technology; defining the outback; the rise and rise of the mining industry; the recognition of our Aboriginal past and Native Title; the successes and failures of the nation. For this enlarged edition Blainey has rewritten or expanded on various episodes and themes and updated relevant matter. He has described significant events and trends of the early-20th century. A ready-reference timeline of major events in Australian history is also included. The Shorter history of Australia is a must for every home and library.

Van Diemen's Land

by James Boyce

Almost half of the convicts who came to Australia came to Van Diemen's Land. There they found a land of bounty and a penal society, a kangaroo economy and a new way of life. In this book, James Boyce shows how the convicts were changed by the natural world they encountered. Escaping authority, they soon settled away from the towns, dressing in kangaroo skin and living off the land. Behind the official attempt to create a Little England was another story of adaptation, in which the poor, the exiled and the criminal made a new home in a strange land. This is their story, the story of Van Diemen's Land.

For the Term of His Natural Life

by Marcus Clarke

First published in 1874, this is the most famous work by the Australian novelist and poet, For the Term of His Natural Life is a powerful tale of an Australian penal settlement, which originally appeared in serial form in a Melbourne paper.

The Fatal Shore

by Robert Hughes

In 1787, the twenty-eighth year of the reign of King George III, the British Government sent a fleet to colonize Australia. An epic description of the brutal transportation of men, women and children out of Georgian Britain into a horrific penal system which was to be the precursor to the Gulag and was the origin of Australia. The Fatal Shore is the prize-winning, scholarly, brilliantly entertaining narrative that has given its true history to Australia.

Girt: The Unauthorised History Of Australia

by David Hunt

Girt. No word could better capture the essence of Australia . . . In this hilarious history, David Hunt reveals the truth of Australia's past, from megafauna to Macquarie - the cock-ups and curiosities, the forgotten eccentrics and Eureka moments that have made us who we are. Girt introduces forgotten heroes like Mary McLoughlin, transported for the crime of 'felony of sock', and Trim the cat, who beat a French monkey to become the first animal to circumnavigate Australia. It recounts the misfortunes of the escaped Irish convicts who set out to walk from Sydney to China, guided only by a hand-drawn paper compass, and explains the role of the coconut in Australia's only military coup. Our nation's beginnings are steeped in the strange, the ridiculous and the frankly bizarre. Girt proudly reclaims these stories for all of us.

True Girt: The Unauthorised History of Australia Volume Two

by David Hunt

First there was Girt. Now comes . . . True Girt In this side-splitting sequel to his best-selling history, David Hunt takes us to the Australian frontier. This was the Wild South, home to hardy pioneers, gun-slinging bushrangers, directionally challenged explorers, nervous indigenous people, Caroline Chisholm and sheep. Lots of sheep. True Girt introduces Thomas Davey, the hard-drinking Tasmanian governor who invented the Blow My Skull cocktail, and Captain Moonlite, Australia's most famous LGBTI bushranger. Meet William Nicholson, the Melbourne hipster who gave Australia the steam-powered coffee roaster and the world the secret ballot. And say hello to Harry, the first camel used in Australian exploration, who shot dead his owner, the explorer John Horrocks. Learn how Truganini's death inspired the Martian invasion of Earth. Discover the role of Hall and Oates in the Myall Creek Massacre. And be reminded why you should never ever smoke with the Wild Colonial Boy and Mad Dan Morgan. If Manning Clark and Bill Bryson were left on a desert island with only one pen, they would write True Girt.

My Home in Tasmania

by Louisa Anne Meredith

Louisa Anne Meredith's account of her life in Tasmania was published in 1852. She was an experienced traveller, and this work is remarkable for being the first detailed account by a woman of life in the colony. Its shrewd observations and descriptive personal narrative make it an engaging read, as well as providing a valuable historical record. A keen botanist and artist, Meredith describes the island's natural life in great detail in beautiful and evocative passages. The first volume covers the journey to the island and her initial impressions of it and provides fascinating examples of colonial attitudes in the period. In Volume 2 she provides more anecdotes of her life, including descriptions of the animals and journeys within the island, and also covers more social issues, looking at religion and custom in the colony.

A History of Tasmania

by Henry Reynolds

This captivating work charts the history of Tasmania from the arrival of European maritime expeditions in the late eighteenth century, through to the modern day. By presenting the perspectives of both Indigenous Tasmanians and British settlers, author Henry Reynolds provides an original and engaging exploration of these first fraught encounters. Utilising key themes to bind his narrative, Reynolds explores how geography created a unique economic and migratory history for Tasmania, quite separate from the mainland experience. He offers an astute analysis of the island's economic and demographic reality, by noting that this facilitated the survival of a rich heritage of colonial architecture unique in Australia, and allowed the resident population to foster a powerful web of kinship. Reynolds' remarkable capacity to empathise with the characters of his chronicle makes this a powerful, engaging and moving account of Tasmania's unique position within Australian history.

In Tasmania : Adventures at the End of the World

by Nicholas Shakespeare

In this fascinating history of two turbulent centuries in an apparently idyllic place, Shakespeare effortlessly weaves the history of this unique island with a kaleidoscope of stories featuring a cast of unlikely characters from Errol Flynn to the King of Iceland, a village full of Chatwins and, inevitably, a family of Shakespeares. But what makes this more than a personal quest is Shakespeare's discovery

that, despite the nineteenth century purges, the Tasmanian Aborigines were not, as previously believed, entirely wiped out.

A Cargo of Women : Susannah Watson and the Convicts of the Princess Royal

by Babette Smith

Intrigued to discover a convict ancestor in her family tree, Babette Smith decided to investigate her life and the lives of the 99 women who were transported with her on the ship Princess Royal in 1829. Piece by piece she reveals the story of her ancestor the indomitable Susannah Watson who, trapped in the crowded filthy slums of Nottingham, stole because she could not bear to see her children starving'. Separated forever from her husband and four children, she was transported to Australia for 14 years. She endured the convict system at its worst, yet emerged triumphant to die in her bed aged 83 singing Rock of Ages'. Babette Smith reconstructs the lives of the women from the Princess Royal from fragments of information in shipping lists, official records, newspapers and court transcripts. Her research overturns stereotypes of women convicts as drunken whores and criminals. Caught in an England convulsed by change, they become the unwitting and unwilling pioneers of a new land. Many proved to be resourceful and resilient, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by a new society. First published two decades ago, A Cargo of Women became a bestseller and remains one of the most valuable accounts of convict life in Australia. This new edition includes further information about the women from the Princess Royal and new illustrations.

The History of Tasmania

by John West

John West (1809-1873) was an English-born minister who received a Colonial Missionary Society post in Tasmania in 1838. West became an outspoken opponent of the ongoing government policy of transporting convicts from Britain to Tasmania. Around 1847 a wealthy supporter approached West to write the colony's history, although it had been a British territory only since 1803. West accepted the task and, amid his campaigning and other responsibilities, completed this two-volume work which was published in 1852. It is divided between a straightforward narrative of events and thematic issues such as the treatment of the Aboriginal peoples and the issue of the convict transport system.
