

Australia as known from 1770 to 1798.  
From Hall's Encyclopaedia,  
published about 1800.



PORT JACKSON  
on these early maps  
is now called Sydney

A thousand miles into the Pacific, Norfolk Island had recently been discovered and one of the Navy ships was sent to land a small party with six month's provisions. It seems that the nine hired ships left, probably northwards to load tea for the return voyage to England. It was expected that the Second Fleet would soon arrive to help out the First, and help was needed because producing food was proving difficult.

On 19th October of that first year (1788) Elizabeth Thomas married William Connolly (a convict from Bristol) at St Phillip's, Sydney. Also in that month, Governor Phillip cut the rations and sent the larger Navy ship to Cape Town for emergency supplies. It arrived back at Sydney Cove in May 1789 with four month's supplies but no news of any help from Britain. In June Elizabeth had a son, but he lived only till October.

By March 1790 the camp was facing starvation and the Governor sent a proportion of the people to Norfolk Island, including William and Elizabeth Connolly. There, on 14th June, Elizabeth was tried for stealing a seaman's kettle, and ordered to return it. But it does seem that the couple were working hard on their plot on the island. On 5th February 1791 they received two piglets from Government Stores. The long-awaited Second Fleet arrived at Sydney Cove on 3rd June 1791, but this was probably not even known on Norfolk Island where a report dated 1st July 1791 shows that William Connolly had cleared one acre of a timbered block. On 26th August Elizabeth received another piglet, and on 19th October she had another son.

In November 1791 more people were moved from Sydney to Norfolk Island, bringing the population to almost a thousand. The island is about six miles long and four miles broad and is very fertile with a pleasant climate, but at that time only a small part had been cleared for cultivation and there was much fish and seabirds on the menu. On 16th February 1792 William Connolly sold three bushels of maize to the Stores, value £1-4s and on 8th May he sold them a sow for £3-15s. On 30th January 1793 he sold 43 bushels of maize, for which Stores paid him £10-15s in Spanish dollars. His sentence was now completed but he had to wait until 26th October 1793 for a ship to England, via Bengal, leaving Elizabeth with another son just two days old.

Government policy allowed grants of land to the Marines and to those convicts whose sentences had been completed. By about 1794 the colony was becoming self-supporting, although very few free settlers had left Britain for a new life in Australia. The next information about Elizabeth is for 16th June 1794 when she was listed as "off Stores" (presumably, having served her sentence and not receiving Government help) "a free woman with one child living with convict Thomas Hill". On 29th November 1794 she had a daughter Mary from whom Joe Harvey is descended. Thomas Hill departed in 1796, but the plot of land must have remained in Elizabeth's name.