

Pre-Visit Activity: Comprehension

Moreton Bay Penal Settlement (Brisbane)

In 1823, John Oxley, on the “Mermaid”, was sent by Governor Brisbane to find a site for a Penal Settlement for those convicts who had committed another crime since being sent to New South Wales. This included convicts who had escaped and been re-captured. As a punishment for committing the second crime, the site was to be far away from Sydney.

On arriving in Moreton Bay, Oxley found three European men: Pamphlett, Finnegan and Parsons. They had been shipwrecked on Moreton Island seven months earlier. Pamphlett showed Oxley the mouth of a large river which Oxley explored and named the Brisbane River.

In 1824, under Commandant Miller, a group of 29 convicts volunteered to go to Moreton Bay. By volunteering, the convicts hoped to have their sentences reduced.

Commissariat Store

Supplies such as food were sent with this group and following groups. After 1829, the stores were housed in this Commissariat Store: its main function in Moreton Bay was to supply provisions to the Penal Settlement.

Captain Patrick Logan, the third commandant, decided to build a Commissariat Store of stone. The store faced the Brisbane River and backed onto William Street. The supplies arrived at the Commissariat Store by ship.

During the construction one convict assaulted another convict who later died. The attacker was convicted of murder and hanged at the gallows in Sydney.

Construction of the building commenced in 1828 and was completed in 1829. The building is in use today as a museum.