

**Convicts & Cthulhu** is a setting for Lovecraftian roleplaying in the early penal colonies of Australia. To date there have been more than a dozen supplements published, describing many different aspects of the historical settlements, through the (dark) lens of Mythos horror. Look for the numerous scenario-based publications ("**Tickets of Leave**") that are available as free, or "Pay-What-You-Want" downloads. Together with the core **Convicts & Cthulhu** book, these provide everything you need to run a massive and far-reaching campaign of convict horror!

# Convicts & CTHULHU

## Convict Document Pack #1



### CREDITS

This **Convicts & Cthulhu** Convict Document Pack features prop (replica) documents designed by Dean Engelhardt based on historical research undertaken by Geoff Gillan. Copyright © 2019. Published by Cthulhu Reborn Publishing. ([WWW.CTHULHUREBORN.COM](http://WWW.CTHULHUREBORN.COM))

The **Convicts & Cthulhu** roleplaying setting is published by Cthulhu Reborn Publishing and is available via DrivethruRPG as a "Pay-What-You-Want" title.

## Introduction

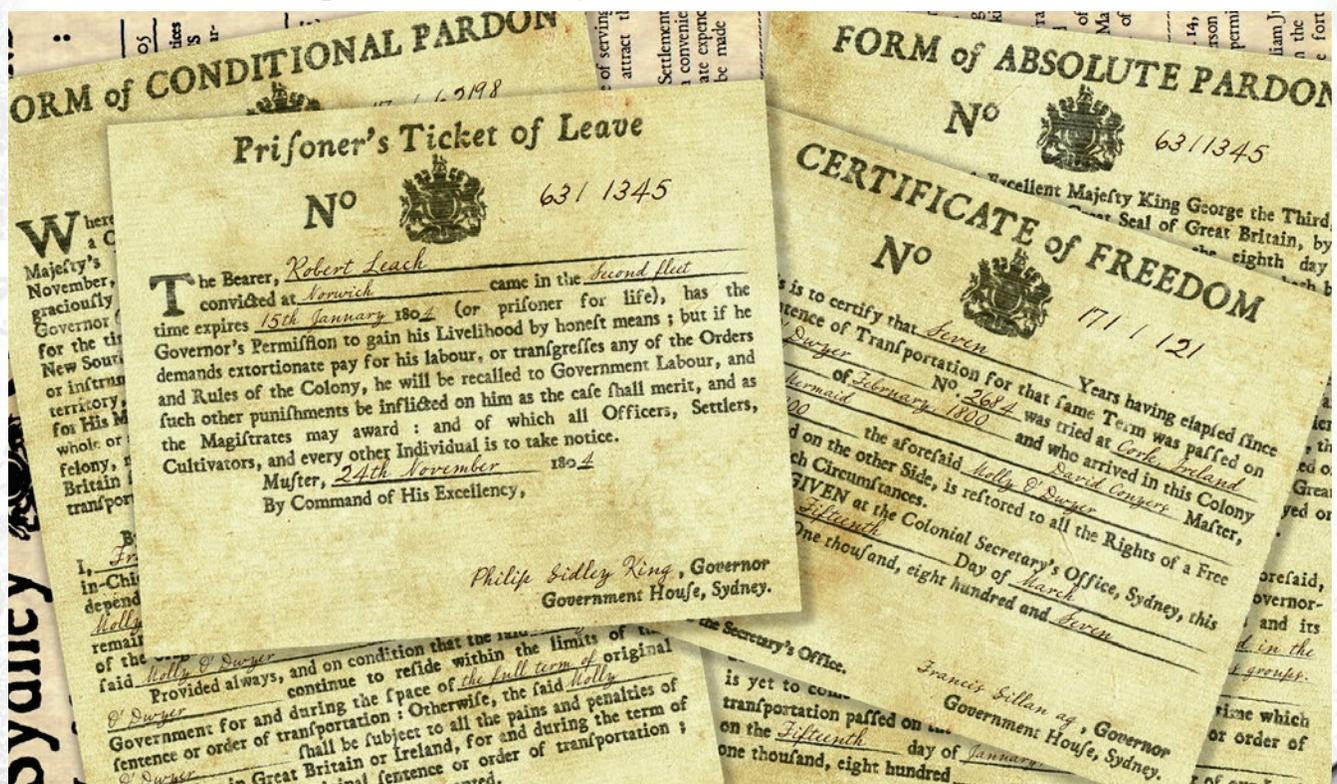
It's easy to imagine that games of Lovecraftian investigation set in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century penal colonies of Australia would need to dispense with the notion of document-based clues. After all, with a colony full of undesirable convicts, being guarded by an equally-undesirable set of military guards, and which lived perpetually on the brink of starvation, who would have time for paperwork?

Historically-speaking, though, this assumption is rather unfounded. The penal colonies, in fact, produced a large amount of paper-based documents. The most voluminous set of records related to the convicts imprisoned in the colony The

pre-occupation with knowing every detail about each convict's original sentence, the date when they would earn their freedom, and any misdemeanours or misbehaviours, was significant.

If you're running a **Convicts & Cthulhu** campaign, chances are that your investigators will find some reason to look through the convict records. If they are convicts themselves, they will be doubtless guard the grubby pieces of official paper which bestow upon them a degree of freedom — perhaps even the rights of full subjects. This pack provides historically-realistic prop versions of some of these documents. You're invited to use them as you wish, to add some realism and colour to your scenarios and campaigns.

Also included is a template for the sole "newspaper" in the colony — the *Sydney Gazette*.



# Types of Convict Documents

This pack primarily features four types of convict-related documents commonly found in New South Wales during the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era. They can easily be adapted to games set in later eras and in different settlements (since the format of convict paperwork doesn't vary much for decades to come).

To understand the significance of each of these document-types, it is worth revisiting the different levels of "privelege" that convicts could be afforded in the colony, depending on their behaviour and usefulness. This is described in the core *Convicts & Cthulhu* book, but is summarized below.

The most untrusted class of convicts are those who are obliged to spend each night in the Sydney Gaol. During the day, these convicts are permitted to leave the Gaol to work as part of gangs of labourers, or perform some form of craft, but otherwise their lives are akin to traditional 'prisoners.' On arrival in the colony, it's likely that this is the kind of life that most convicts can look forward to (unless they have special skills).

## Assigned Convicts

A slightly more trusted class of convicts are those who are 'assigned' — this involves the convicts being sent out to a Free Settler homestead or business, to work as a kind of unpaid labourer or craftsman. An assigned convict often doesn't need to return to the Gaol each night (especially if he or she is assigned to a remote homestead far from Sydney), but they have few other privileges. They are effectively indentured servants to those to whom they are assigned, and can be locked up and mistreated however their assigned masters choose.

To earn any degree of true freedom, a convict must either prove their trustworthiness, or perform some special service which inclines the Colonial Government to indulge them some freedom.

## Tickets of Leave

Convicts which are deemed at least partially trustworthy may be granted a "Ticket of Leave." This is a document which permits them to somewhat go as they please about the colony and attempt to earn their own living. A Ticket of Leave is a two-edged-sword: while it allows a convict to keep the profits earned from his or her labour, it removes the Government's obligation to feed and clothe them (or expectation that their assigned settlers would undertake that responsibility).

## Pardons

A convict who has performed in some exemplary way might hope to earn a pardon. This is effectively a document which overturns their original sentence. Pardons can be conditional on something (usually good behaviour, and staying in the colony) or they can be absolute pardons. Both bestow upon the convict the rights of any free settler in the colony. An absolute pardon also grants the right to leave the colony. Pardons are only granted in rare situations.

## Certificate of Freedom

More likely, convicts will be obliged to serve out the number of years of their original sentence. Some sentences are for life; but in all other cases, once the convict has seen out his or her time, they will receive a Certificate of Freedom which also confers the rights of a free settler, and the right to leave the colony.

## Carrying Documents

Convicts who have been granted any of these documents are expected to carry them on their person *at all times*. Officials can challenge them to produce them; the penalty for failing to do so is being sent back to gaol.

## Using the Prop Documents

Realistic blank versions of four convict documents may be found on the following pages (and in a separate fillable PDF). These are: a *Ticket of Leave*, a *Certificate of Freedom*, Conditional and Absolute *Pardons*.

The fields on these forms are self-explanatory. Two versions of each document are included, with authentic signatures of two different Governors (King: use for 1800-1806 and Bligh: use for 1806-1808).

*Note: this PDF is multi-layered, with background textures in an isolated PDF layer which can be disabled in viewers, for printing against a white background.*

To make your prop documents more authentic again, consider hand-writing a description of the convict on the back of the printed document. Historically, the types of identifying information usually included in such descriptions a: Name, Native Place, Trade or Calling, Age, Height, Complexion, Hair, Eyes, General Remarks. Certificates of Freedom should *always* carry such information on the back.

# Prisoner's Ticket of Leave

N<sup>o</sup>



The Bearer, \_\_\_\_\_  
convicted at \_\_\_\_\_ came in the \_\_\_\_\_  
time expires \_\_\_\_\_ 180\_ (or prisoner for life), has the  
Governor's Permission to gain his Livelihood by honest means ; but if he  
demands extortionate pay for his labour, or transgresses any of the Orders  
and Rules of the Colony, he will be recalled to Government Labour, and  
such other punishments be inflicted on him as the case shall merit, and as  
the Magistrates may award : and of which all Officers, Settlers,  
Cultivators, and every other Individual is to take notice.

Must, \_\_\_\_\_ 180\_

By Command of His Excellency,

Philip Gidley King, Governor  
Government House, Sydney.

# Prisoner's Ticket of Leave

N<sup>o</sup>



The Bearer, \_\_\_\_\_  
convicted at \_\_\_\_\_ came in the \_\_\_\_\_  
time expires \_\_\_\_\_ 180\_ (or prisoner for life), has the  
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and Rules of the Colony, he will be recalled to Government Labour, and  
such other punishments be inflicted on him as the case shall merit, and as  
the Magistrates may award : and of which all Officers, Settlers,  
Cultivators, and every other Individual is to take notice.

Must, \_\_\_\_\_ 180\_

By Command of His Excellency,

William Blyth, Governor  
Government House, Sydney.

When printing a Ticket of Leave, if the convict has been convicted for a certain number of years, fill in the date the sentence is due to expire and strike out the words "(or prisoner for life)". Conversely, for life-long sentences, leave the expiry date blank and circle the words "prisoner for life".

# CERTIFICATE of FREEDOM

N<sup>o</sup>



This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ Years having elapsed since  
Sentence of Transportation for that same Term was passed on  
\_\_\_\_\_ N<sup>o</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_ was tried at \_\_\_\_\_  
on the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and who arrived in this Colony  
by the Ship \_\_\_\_\_ Master,  
in the Year \_\_\_\_\_ the aforesaid \_\_\_\_\_  
who is described on the other Side, is restored to all the Rights of a Free  
Subject under such Circumstances.

GIVEN at the Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, this  
\_\_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_  
One thousand, eight hundred and \_\_\_\_\_

Philip Gidley King, Governor  
Government House, Sydney.

Registered in the Secretary's Office.

# CERTIFICATE of FREEDOM

N<sup>o</sup>



This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ Years having elapsed since  
Sentence of Transportation for that same Term was passed on  
\_\_\_\_\_ N<sup>o</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_ was tried at \_\_\_\_\_  
on the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and who arrived in this Colony  
by the Ship \_\_\_\_\_ Master,  
in the Year \_\_\_\_\_ the aforesaid \_\_\_\_\_  
who is described on the other Side, is restored to all the Rights of a Free  
Subject under such Circumstances.

GIVEN at the Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney, this  
\_\_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_  
One thousand, eight hundred and \_\_\_\_\_

William Bligh, Governor  
Government House, Sydney.

Registered in the Secretary's Office.

# FORM of ABSOLUTE PARDON

N<sup>o</sup>



**W**hereas his Most Excellent Majesty King George the Third, by a Commission under the Great Seal of Great Britain, by his Majesty's Royal Sign-manual, bearing date the eighth day of November, in the thirty-first year of His Majesty's reign, hath been graciously pleased to give and grant full power and authority to the Governor (or in case of his death or absence, the Lieutenant-Governor) for the time being of his Majesty's territory of the eastern coast of New South Wales and the islands thereunto adjacent, by an instrument or instruments in writing under the Seal of the Government of the said territory, or as he or they respectively shall think fit and convenient for His Majesty's service, to remit, either absolutely or conditionally, the whole or any part of the term or time for which such persons convicted of felony, misdemeanour, or other offences amenable to the laws of Great Britain shall have been or shall hereafter be respectively conveyed or transported to New South Wales, or the islands thereunto adjacent.

By virtue of such power and authority so vested as aforesaid, I, \_\_\_\_\_, Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief in and over the territory of New South Wales and its dependencies, taking into consideration, \_\_\_\_\_

do hereby absolutely remit the remainder of the term or time which is yet to come and unexpired of the original sentence or order of transportation passed on the aforesaid \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred \_\_\_\_\_.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Territory, at Government House, Sydney, in New South Wales, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred \_\_\_\_\_.

*Philip Gidley King*

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do hereby absolutely remit the remainder of the term or time which is yet to come and unexpired of the original sentence or order of transportation passed on the aforesaid \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred \_\_\_\_\_.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Territory, at Government House, Sydney, in New South Wales, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred \_\_\_\_\_.

Registered in the Secretary's Office.

# FORM of CONDITIONAL PARDON

N<sup>o</sup>



**W**hereas his Most Excellent Majesty King George the Third, by a Commission under the Great Seal of Great Britain, by his Majesty's Royal Sign-manual, bearing date the eighth day of November, in the thirty-first year of His Majesty's reign, hath been graciously pleased to give and grant full power and authority to the Governor (or in case of his death or absence, the Lieutenant-Governor) for the time being of his Majesty's territory of the eastern coast of New South Wales and the islands thereunto adjacent, by an instrument or instruments in writing under the Seal of the Government of the said territory, or as he or they respectively shall think fit and convenient for His Majesty's service, to remit, either absolutely or conditionally, the whole or any part of the term or time for which such persons convicted of felony, misdemeanour, or other offences amenable to the laws of Great Britain shall have been or shall hereafter be respectively conveyed or transported to New South Wales, or the islands thereunto adjacent.

By virtue of such power and authority so vested as aforesaid, I, \_\_\_\_\_, Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief in and over the territory of New South Wales and its dependencies, taking into consideration the good conduct of \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby conditionally remit the remainder of the term or time which is yet to come and unexpired of the original sentence or order of transportation passed on the said \_\_\_\_\_

Provided always, and on condition that the said \_\_\_\_\_ continue to reside within the limits of this Government for and during the space of \_\_\_\_\_ original sentence or order of transportation : Otherwise, the said \_\_\_\_\_ shall be subject to all the pains and penalties of re-appearing in Great Britain or Ireland, for and during the term of \_\_\_\_\_ original sentence or order of transportation ; or, as if this remission had never been granted.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Territory, at Government House, Sydney, in New South Wales, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred \_\_\_\_\_.

*Philip Gidley King*

Registered in the Secretary's Office.

# FORM of CONDITIONAL PARDON

N<sup>o</sup>



**W**hereas his Most Excellent Majesty King George the Third, by a Commission under the Great Seal of Great Britain, by his Majesty's Royal Sign-manual, bearing date the eighth day of November, in the thirty-first year of His Majesty's reign, hath been graciously pleased to give and grant full power and authority to the Governor (or in case of his death or absence, the Lieutenant-Governor) for the time being of his Majesty's territory of the eastern coast of New South Wales and the islands thereunto adjacent, by an instrument or instruments in writing under the Seal of the Government of the said territory, or as he or they respectively shall think fit and convenient for His Majesty's service, to remit, either absolutely or conditionally, the whole or any part of the term or time for which such persons convicted of felony, misdemeanour, or other offences amenable to the laws of Great Britain shall have been or shall hereafter be respectively conveyed or transported to New South Wales, or the islands thereunto adjacent.

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