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it supported Britain's claim to Australia and prevented French or Dutch settlement. Second, it provided a new trade route to China in case a French-Dutch alliance closed the East Indies route." Third, a colony in Botany Bay could provide naval resources for the eastern fleet, be self-sufficient in wartime, and provide sanctuary from French, Dutch, and Spanish bases in the area. As one scholar recently claimed, the choice of New South Wales served many motives but "the removal of the convicts from the realm was secondary • an accompaniment, but not a cause." It is a mistaken notion that the convicts...are consigned for Botany Bay. Such a voyage is too expensive for the resources of this kingdom.... The dregs of our society are bound for Nova Scotia, where many of them may, at a future day, become useful members of the British Empire. • Freeman's Journal, Dublin, May 29, 1788 fortunate females [as well].... This precious cargo is taken in for Nova Scotia and the Captain of the vessel is bound under severe penalty to land them all at the place of destination." Although Cape Breton sources are few, the Dublin newspapers provide some detail. The Freeman's Journal recorded: Meanwhile, removal of convicts from the realm was the prime reason for a ship loading Irish prisoners at Dublin on Saturday morning, October 18, 1788. Captain Debonham, master of the snow Providence from North Yarmouth, England, contracted to carry 126 convicts from Dublin and Cork to Nova Scotia. The Freeman's Journal reported: All the criminals under the rule of transportation were brought from the New Prison. There were no less than 14 cartloads of men; the large vehicles which carried the prisoners from the gaol to the Court was loaded with un- -ao- SUPERIOR OPTICAL UNITED Owned & Operated JAMES DEAN Optician COMPLETE OPTICAL SERVICE Shirley Sparling Optician Mon-Ti??0&-Sat: ID 'm - 6 pm Wodl-Thurs-'Frii Id am \* d i>m S64-8456 2nd Pair FREE "Kair Until April, we're in the freestanding building beside KFC, above Zellers After April, you'll find us in the Sydney Shopping Centre ? Your Ideas .. .Our Programs LErnsGteTTbW)RK At Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, we know that you and your ideas are our best resources. We have the tools to help you put your ideas to work. Whether your interest lies in the traditional industries or in a high-tech related business, we can and will help. It is time to combine your ideas and desire to accomplish something here at home with the resources at ECBC. Make your move, and with our assistance, make your mark on our area. Let's become partners for progress! Enterprise '? "" "" "" "" "" "" "" "" help, contact... Cape Breton Corporation Sydney: Commerce Tower, 4th Floor, 15 Dorchester Street, Sydney, N.S. BIP 677 Tel: (902) 564-3600 (Bilingual service available) • TTY: (902) 564-3962 a Port Hawkesbay: 32 Paint Street, Port Hawkesbury Light Industrial Park, N.S. | TeL-(902) 625-3111 TollFree in N.S. andP.E.1.1-800-705-3926 Among the prisoners now confined in the Newjail there are a considerable number of idle women committed by the divisional justices of police as vagrants of infamous character, who nightly infested the streets of this metropolis at unseasonable hours for the purposes of robbery or prostitution and having no honest means of livelihood." A further description of the prisoners



offered shortly after their departure noted: Among the transports sent off last Saturday morning, amounting to upwards of 140 male and females, there were several of the most daring and desperate lawless ruffians, as well as of the most infamous and abandoned prostitutes with which this metropolis...had been infested. The ridding of the city of these dangerous pests must greatly contribute to the establishment of public peace and personal security." Although many of their names and crimes remain unknown, identifying most of the convicts transported to Cape Breton that fall is possible. Among the lists were Elizabeth Jones, transported for seven years for theft of three silver tablespoons and several pieces of plate; John Hart, banished seven years for the theft of four pounds of brass; Michael Hutchison, seven years for cow and sheep stealing; fourteen-year-old Michael Reddy, seven years for theft of a silver spoon; Richard Corrigan, theft of a watch; John and Henry Walsh sentenced to transport for the "theft of a ladder with intent to use for more theft"; and Judith Butler, Rose Reilly, Ann Lynch and many other women convicted of vagrancy and transported for seven years. Aboard the Providence, as on all convict ships, they chained prisoners below decks in damp, unlit quarters. During the voyage they experienced seasickness, dysentery, and possibly smallpox or typhus. These diseases often claimed 1/3 of many convict transports and the Providence was no exception; 46 (37%) died on the crossing. The quality of shipboard food and water was poor as well. A historical compilation suggests a convict consumed a weekly diet of 1.2 pounds of beef and pork, 13.3 ounces of cheese, 4.7 pounds of bread, half a quart of peas, 1.7 quarts of oatmeal, 1.3 ounces of molasses, half a gill of gin, and 5.3 gallons of water.\* The pitiful shipboard conditions, however, were the least of a convict's worries. Since the American War, several Irish transports to North America ended in barbarous circumstances. When the Brig Nancy ran short of food in 1784, the captain landed 46 prisoners illegally on the Spanish Island of Ferro. Soldiers immediately surrounded the convicts and put them to death. A 1785 voyage sold 176 14