

Learning Sequence 1, Teacher Resource 1

The Swan River Colony 1829 - 1846

Perth in 1845

This map of Perth in 1845 and activities includes an introductory lesson to stimulate student curiosity and questions about early Perth. It can also be used in conjunction with information in Teacher Resource 2: Features of Colonial Society 1829 to 1850. Teacher Resources 1 and 2 aim to develop an understanding of the physical, social, economic and political context for the study of the Sisters of Mercy, who arrived in the Swan River Colony in January 1846.



Source: Western Australian State Records Office

An online version of this map, which can be enlarged to view Perth streets in more detail, can be accessed through the State Records Office. To access the map you click on [Perth Townsite 1845 - Datasets - data.wa.gov.au](#) and then on the live link next to "Data portal". The map can be enlarged by using the cursor.

Use this map on a Smart Board or project it onto a screen to encourage student discussion which will check prior knowledge of Perth. Students can conduct a "Think, Pair, Share" activity to initiate questions. You might like to suggest some themes such as:

1. The origin of Perth's street names or any changes to street names.
2. The swamps in the city area - what has happened to them?
3. Location of current landmarks such as:
 - The WACA Grounds (Perth Meadows)
 - Government House

- Stirling Square and the Old Court House
- East Perth Cemeteries
- The jetties (at Mill and William Streets)

For more information on the jetties see:

http://cms.slwa.wa.gov.au/swan_river/shaping_perth_water/the_causeway

- The location of the Causeway
- The Town Hall (not built until 1870)
- St Georges Cathedral
- Victoria Square - St Mary's Cathedral (and Mercy Heritage Centre).

These and other landmarks can be plotted onto a current map of Perth city.

A copy of the pilgrimage walk to commemorate the arrival of the 1846 Sisters starting at Barrack Street Jetty can be obtained from the Mercy Heritage Centre Perth

4. The proximity of the Swan River to houses along St Georges Terrace and Adelaide Terrace.

Note: The reclamation of the River foreshore to create a recreation area was completed in 1881.

More information on the reclamation can be found at the following site:

http://cms.slwa.wa.gov.au/swan_river/shaping_perth_water/the_esplanade

Learning Sequence 1, Teacher Resource 2

The Swan River Colony 1829 - 1846

Features of Colonial Society 1829 to 1850

Protestant Power

Professor Tom Stannage wrote: "...there can be no doubt that the leading colonists thought of the church [of England] and the courthouse as two sides of the same coin. There was in fact little difference between Anglicanism and Law: both served the [wealthy] class and both [aimed to reinforce] in the "inferior class" a respect for private property, obedience to governors and a fear of punishment for wrong doing. And of course the law and religion were administered by the same people - Wittenoom, Irwin, Mackie and Moore... [Reverend] Wittenoom's Anglicanism and the needs of the state helped produce a society in which intolerance was a way of life." Source: Stannage 1979, p. 36.

Working Class Irish

Many wealthy landowners who came to the free settlement on the Swan River brought servants with them. As in Britain, these servants were often Irish workers. The Irish, some of whom were Roman Catholics, were treated as second class citizens because of their positions as servants and labourers, and because of their Catholic beliefs.

Demand for social welfare and education

In this period, the colonial government did not provide welfare for the poor or sick. There were no unemployment benefits, no public healthcare, and no compulsory education. It was the religious sisters who responded to these societal needs with the provision of education, healthcare, orphanages and refuges. This was even worse in the slowly emerging small towns away from Perth such as Kojonup and York. Here distance added to the difficulties facing the poor members of society.

Education in the Swan River colony

In 1847 a General Board of Education was established in the Swan River Colony to oversee the development of the Colony's schools. This resulted in the building of 'Perth Boys' School' and a government Girls' school. They also opened government assisted schools in rural districts and provided subsidies to religious schools in the Colony.

Governors of the Swan River Colony 1829 to 1850

Name of Governor	Years in Office
James Stirling	March 1832 - January 1839
John Hutt	January 1839 - 1845
Andrew Clarke	January 1846 - February 1847
Frederick Irwin (Acting Governor of WA)	February 1847 - August 1848

The main buildings in Perth by 1850

- i. **Court House** in Supreme Court Gardens. This is the City of Perth's oldest public building. When it opened in 1837 it also served as a church and a schoolroom.
- ii. **Government House.** Governor Stirling had moved in by 1834, prior to completion of the work in 1835. The current Western Australian Government House was opened in 1864. The first Government House ('Old Government House') was demolished in the 1880s.
- iii. **St George's Church.** (Church of England) On January 1st, 1841, Governor John Hutt laid the Foundation Stone of the first Church of St George. The church was opened on 22 January 1845.
- iv. **The Wesleyan Chapel.** Called the Centenary Chapel, was built during 1840 with the first service held on 3 January 1841. The current Church was built between 1867 and 1870.
- v. **The Perth Commissariat Store.** Built in 1834.
- vi. **The Perth Gaol.** The first Perth Gaol was built in 1830 and was in use until 1855 when it was moved from opposite Government House to a new location on Beaufort Street (The building still exists in the heart of the New Perth Museum).
- vii. **The Colonial Hospital.** In 1848 the hospital was expanded and moved east to the location of Royal Perth Hospital.
- viii. **St John the Apostle Catholic Church.** The first Roman Catholic Cathedral was built over a period from 1843 to 1846. It still exists and is called the Pro Cathedral.
- ix. **Holy Cross Convent 1848.** This first convent built by the Sisters of Mercy in Perth is still being used by Mercedes College.

Activities:

1. Instruct students to find sketches or images of at least six of the buildings constructed in Perth by 1850 (or other structures such as the Causeway and East Perth Cemeteries). Students work in pairs or groups of four to locate, name each building/structure they have chosen and briefly describe its use. Students choose to recreate a general map from "Perth in 1845" to locate the buildings. The images or posters could then be displayed on the classroom wall as "Buildings of Early Perth". Discuss the importance of preserving historic buildings such as these in Perth.

2. Vocabulary review. Students could find the meaning of each of these words. They could be included in a student glossary and written on cardboard to pin on a classroom "Colonial Word Wall": Anglican, Protestant, Welfare, Colonial Governor, Roman Catholic, Convent, Commissariat store.

Some useful resources:

Stannage, C.T, 1979, *People of Perth, A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City*, Perth City Council. p. 63

<http://www.govhouse.wa.gov.au/the-house/history.html>

<http://heritageperth.com.au/make-history/perth-heritage-gallery/>

<http://www.mercedes.wa.edu.au/index.php/Our-College/history.html>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-09/old-perth-gaol-now-museum/5503720>

http://cms.slwa.wa.gov.au/swan_river/shaping_perth_water/the_causeway

<http://www.lifeonperth.com/wesleychurch.htm>

See short comment on the earliest Wesleyan churches towards the end of this website.

Images of buildings which may be useful

Photographs taken by M. Southee 2017



Old Perth Gaol 1830



Holy Cross Convent 1848



Pro Cathedral 1843-1846



The Old Court House 1837

Learning Sequence 1, Student Resource 1

The Swan River Colony 1829 – 1846

Mapping exercise, Expansion of Swan River settlement.

Carefully locate and name the places noted on the list below onto a map of Western Australia. Use different colours for places founded in the 1820-30s, 1840s and 1850-63. You will need to include a clear title, a key, a scale and a north point on your map.

- 1826:** A military garrison (barracks) was established at Frederickstown (King George Sound) under the control of the government of New South Wales. Frederickstown was renamed Albany in 1832.
- 1829:** Perth, Fremantle and Guildford were founded. A military outpost was set up at Bunbury.
- 1830:** The towns of Williams and Kojonup were established on the main road to King George Sound.
- 1830:** Dale led the exploration over the Darling Range to Avon River area.
- 1830:** The Peel Settlement was established at Clarence (near Mandurah). As the settlement faltered some colonists moved inland to the area near Pinjarra.
- 1830:** A settlement began at Augusta.
- 1831:** The town site of York was established.
- 1836:** Bunbury was formally declared a town.
- 1836:** The towns of Northam and Toodyay were established.
- 1847:** The Benedictine mission at New Norcia was founded.
- 1847:** The town site of Busselton was established.
- 1848:** The district around Champion Bay (Geraldton) was opened for pastoralists.
- 1856:** A small timber industry began near Manjimup.
- 1857:** The Murchison River region was explored.
- 1858:** Francis Gregory and John Septimus Roe explored the Gascoyne River.
- 1858:** Shark Bay area was surveyed to find a township site.

Learning Sequence 1, Student Resource 2

The Swan River Colony 1829 – 1846:

Why did the Sisters of Mercy come to the Swan River Colony?

Use the primary sources provided here to answer the questions provided and suggest reasons for the Sisters of Mercy deciding to establish a foundation in the Swan River Colony.

Source 1: Population of the Swan River Colony from the 1848 Census

POPULATION. Swan River Colony				
Year	Adults above twelve		Children under 12.	Totals.
	Male	Female		
1832	Not distinguished	Not distinguished		1,511
1837	1,100	730		1,830
1840	1,205	557	592	2,354
1843	1,714	951	1,188	3,853
1848	2,818	1,804		4,622

http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/WA-1848-census-02_8

Note: Aboriginal people were not counted in censuses until the 1970s.

Source 2: Memories of Ursula Frayne

...one day in autumn of 1845 a...Bishop [Brady] was introduced to the Convent in Baggot Street [in Dublin, Ireland], by a valued friend of the Mercy Order. Their object was to [persuade] the Superioress, Mother Catherine Marmion, to send a [group] of her religious [Sisters] to the new diocese of Perth, W.A., a country not far from the 32nd degree South latitude. Many were the arguments made use of [by Bishop Brady] but that which most of all excited her ... was his ... statement that there were “seven schools”, containing about “four thousand children” and “no one” as he expressed it “to break them the bread of instruction”. (Source: Ursula Frayne, Conventual Diary, p 2)

Source 3: Religions in the Swan River colony from the 1848 Census

Religion	Numbers
Church of England (Anglican)	3,063
Wesleyan Methodists	276
Protestant dissenters and Independents	686
Church of Rome (Roman Catholics)	337
Mahomedans (Moslems)	90

http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/WA-1848-census-02_9

1. Use Source 1 to describe the changes to the population of the Swan River Colony from 1832 until 1848.
2. What is the meaning of the words in Source 2, “to break them the bread of instruction”?
3. Where do you think Bishop Brady's “four thousand children” for the Sisters to teach would come from?
4. Use Source 3 to rank the most to the least popular religions in the Colony according to the 1848 Census.
5. Use information from Sources 1 to 3 to suggest reasons why the Sisters of Mercy agreed to set up a Foundation in the Swan River Colony.

Learning Sequence 1, Student Resource 3

The Swan River Colony 1829 - 1846

The Travelling Trunk

What did the Sisters of Mercy bring with them to the Swan River Colony?



A travelling trunk at the Mercy Heritage Centre Perth, Photograph M. Southee

"So we had eight days to prepare for a voyage 16,000 miles! But many hands make light work, particularly when urged on by religious zeal and affection; before the week was ended materials were bought, and an abundant supply of all manner of clothing, coifs, guimps, veils, habits etc. etc. not to speak of our outdoor habiliments (clothing), were cut out made, washed, made up and packed into trunks and cases

ready for the voyage – that we afterwards discovered, say, a habit with a long and a short sleeve, or coifs with too many or too few strings, served but to remind us of the laborious task our beloved Sisters had undertaken for our comfort, and the wonderful haste they had made."

Source: Mother Ursula Frayne, *Sketches of Conventual Life in the Bush*, p. 3.

Activities:

1. Label the following items of clothing on the photograph of Ursula Frayne provided her: The coif, guimp, veil and habit. The Sisters wore this outfit every day on their voyage to Australia and each day they worked in the new Colony.
2. Write six special items that you would pack if you were leaving home to live in another country. Be prepared to explain your choices to the class.
3. Suggest any special items from Ireland that you think the Sisters would pack in their shipping trunks for their new Foundation in Perth?



Picture of Ursula Frayne rsm, Source:

<http://www.mercyworld.org/heritage/tmpl-t-foundressstory.cfm?loadref=213>