

Among the first expedition to arrive at Port Phillip Bay from England amidst the calm of the late October weather in 1803 was a strange mixture of officials, Marines, free settlers and convicts, the latter being by far in the majority. Most of these, it is well to point out, were much more prisoners than they were criminals. Granted, some had been found guilty of crimes of a most brutal nature and justly so, but in the main their offences were of a trivial nature and in many cases the offender, often an immature youth, would commit his breach of the law quite unwittingly.

In this particular category was William Buckley, a man of sturdy build who stood six feet six inches tall and possessed a physical strength which matched his height. Although he had faced the rigours of imprisonment and deportation, Buckley's strength still held good and he was reputed to be a good worker. His offence had been "being in possession of stolen goods" and the charge that led to his conviction dated back to the days not long after he had run away from home, taken the "King's shilling" and found himself in the army. The alleged theft concerned a "cloth".

Buckley's defence had been that he had been given the item to deliver to a person in the barracks of his army camp, and, whilst trying to sort out the owner, was arrested and charged with stealing the cloth, which belonged, unfortunately, to one of the senior officers of his unit. After being convicted he had been assigned as a servant to Colonel Collins, whom he found to be a very hard master; he had been brought to the Port Phillip district under the same officer, and upon arrival put to the task of making bricks. Here he had found life hard, so much so that he even fancied that life among the "savages" would be better than the one he now led.

Another prisoner--whose crime and the evidence surrounding his conviction were both of a vague nature--was a married man named Fawkner. Fawkner's pain of transportation was lessened by the loyalty of his wife and eleven-year-old son in accompanying him to the place where he would serve his sentence. The boy had been christened John Pascoe Fawkner, who, despite the ramifications, became attached to the Port Phillip district. It was here that the lad made up his mind that one day he would return to explore the land more fully. The circumstances under which the family lived at that time, of course, gave no encouragement to such enthusiasm.