Tales from the First Fleet

The State Library’s First Fleet Collection includes journals, letters, drawings, maps and charts created by those who actually travelled with the First Fleet of British ships to Australia. It is one of the Library’s most significant and valuable collections.

These powerful eyewitness accounts not only tell us about how the British viewed Port Jackson and its inhabitants, they also record the hopes and ambitions of the First Fleeters, their feelings of homesickness and despair, along with detailed descriptions of the unfamiliar natural environment.

These observations also provide a glimpse into the Indigenous communities living in the Port Jackson area. Several journals record words from the local language groups and lengthy descriptions of the people, their daily pursuits of fishing, hunting and their responses to the new arrivals.

a3461012h.jpg [1]
Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, 1788

View collection item detail [3]a3461012

The Kangaroo, 1787-1789 by Arthur Bowes Smith [Call # Safe 1 / 15] [7]
Digital ID: a604004
View collection item detail [8]

About this item:
William Bradley - Drawings from his journal `A Voyage to New South Wales', 1802+

a3461011h.jpg [9]
`First interview with the Native Women at Port Jackson New South Wales` watercolour William Bradley
Call # ML Safe 1/14 [10]
Digital ID: a138469
View collection item detail [11]

About this item:
Grass tree, or `A View of the Tree at Botany Bay, wh yields ye Yellow Balsam, & of a Wigwan`, pen ink and watercolour, from Arthur Bowes Smyth - drawings from his journal `A Journal of a Voyage from Portsmouth to New South Wales and China in the Lady Penrhyn ...`, 1787-1789

a604006h.jpg [12]
Grass tree, or 'A View of the Tree at Botany Bay, wh yields ye Yellow Balsam, & of a Wigwan', pen ink and watercolour Arthur Bowes Smyth

Call #: Safe 1 / 15 [7]
Digital ID: a604006
View collection item detail [13]

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**Story**

*From Terra Australis to Australia*

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*Next chapter*

*Journals from the First Fleet*

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