

Liberty Plains
Colony of New South Wales
Australia
21st February 1793

Dear Joseph,

I write to you from Australia. The long and difficult journey on the 'Bellona' was extremely tiresome. However, I am thrilled to begin a new life, with my family, in this foreign land away from the harsh poverty we were facing in Britain.

I am pleased to report that the British government has given us free land to use for farming. We chose land about 11km west of Sydney. Fortunately, we have been provided with free farming tools and convict labour. This will certainly help us establish the new farm. Our first challenge was to clear the land and build a strong fence around it. We have noticed that the land we chose is not very fertile and the soil is poor. I fear that I have made a hasty and terrible decision in choosing this place to settle, so we may have to move soon.

Food has been scarce, and starvation is a major concern for us. We receive rations such as pork, flour and rice. The free settler farmers are doing their best to grow crops in this unfamiliar environment so that we don't have this problem. However, the seasons are different here and the hot, dry climate is proving challenging. I have heard that some of the settlers have tried eating native food such as kangaroo, wombat and emu. I haven't tried any of these yet! We do have access to fish, shellfish and oysters which is wonderful.

We have built a very basic house. It is more of a hut than a house, but it does well to provide us with shelter. We made it from slabs of wood that we split into logs and the roof is made of thatch. This was a tough task because not all the trees here are useful for building. The big and bulky eucalyptus tree, which is native to Australia, is one such tree. Its wood was so hard that it broke some of our tools as we were trying to cut it.

Jane and the children are well and send their love. Jane spends her days completing the domestic duties of cooking, cleaning, and raising the children. Thomas and Joshua are old enough to help me around the farm and I put them to work. They complete daily chores such as gathering wood. Mary-Rose is learning how to sew and knit, and she helps Jane look after her younger siblings.

Whilst it has been a demanding time in this new and sometimes strange place, I am hopeful that we have started to make a positive impact on this colony. We are in desperate need of more farmers, so if you fancy a change, I would love for you to join us in Australia.

Take care,

Thomas Rose