

'Through George's Eyes' - Examining Historical Sources

In November 1892, a newspaper article titled 'Backward Glances' was published in the Launceston Examiner. This article was written by George Pullen about his memories of the Female Factory from the time he spent there as a young child. This article is one source of information used by Historians today to discover what life was like at the Female Factory.



Activity:

1. The Cascades Female Factory closed in 1877. The 'Backward Glances' newspaper article was published in November 1892. Using the boxes below as a guide, is the article a primary or secondary source?
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Primary sources are 'first hand' sources.
Examples may include:

- personal sources such as letters, diaries, photographs, paintings and memoirs
- official sources such as newspapers, government publications, speeches, birth and death certificates, shipping lists, court records, council records and maps

Secondary sources are produced after the event.
Examples may include:

- books written many years after the event
- later newspaper accounts
- fictional films and television programs
- documentaries
- encyclopaedias

2. What other types of secondary and primary sources do you think would be useful when researching the history of the Female Factory, and why?

- The extract below from the 'Backward Glances' article tells us a lot about the food that was eaten by the convicts in the Female Factory. Read the extract and underline each item of food that is mentioned.

The dietary scale was very meager, the rations per head... being one pound of coarse brown bread, and half a pound of meat (bone included), with one pint of 'skilley' each morning and evening. In addition to the meat at dinner, there was served out a pint of water in which the latter was cooked, slightly thickened with flour. On one day in the week, one pint of pea soup well made and nourishing was substituted for the meat allowance.

- When George writes that 'The dietary scale was very meagre' he means that there was very little food given to the convicts each day. To find out if this was true, we can recreate the meals described by George and compare them to what a healthy diet looks like today.

From comparing the convict meals to the food pyramid, I think that the foods missing from the convict's diet were:

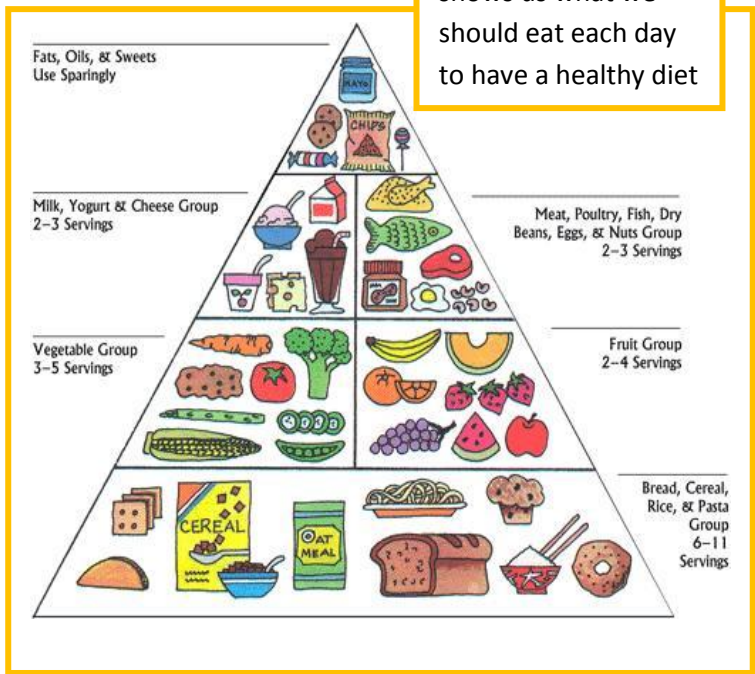
A Convict's Rations

Find out more about the Convict's rations by filling in the gaps below

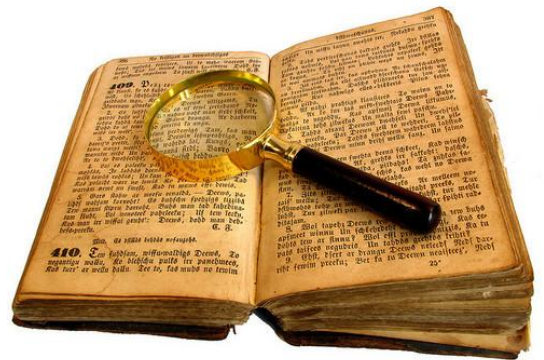
- 1 pound equals approximately..... grams
- An average loaf of bread weighs.....
- Skilley is a thin porridge, usually made of.....
- 1 pint equals approximately millilitres

Image of re-created CFF rations

This food pyramid shows us what we should eat each day to have a healthy diet



5. When we look at historical sources we need to remember that what has been written is not always 100 per cent true. For example an artist painting a portrait might be asked to change some features, such as making the person look taller than they actually were! Give one reason for why the information in 'Backward Glances' might not be 100 per cent true:



6. Imagine that it is 100 years from now and a Historian wants to find out what life was like in your classroom. List **5 primary sources** that would provide the Historian with information about your classroom:

Source	Type of Information
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	