In the 1850s, the Government installed a public whipping post and stocks on this site for criminals to be exposed to public humiliation. The mildest of offences were deemed punishable; in 1833 two children who had been caught stealing fruit from the Government gardens were placed in the stocks and their parents were ordered to flog them publicly. It was also briefly the location of Perth’s first gaol, a temporary lock-up, prior to the completion of Perth Gaol on the corner of Beaufort and Francis Streets in 1846. However this temporary lock-up was constantly mocked, as the inmates escaped easily from the mud walled structure. The romantic style gothic house now seen here was built in 1859 by ticket-of-leave men and housed the Anglican Diocesan of Perth until 1955.

Many convicts had elaborate tattoos. John Baxter, a convict who arrived on the Penrues in 1840, had a multitude of body art including a soldier, a woman, the date 1st June 1840, a broken hand, a是我们要放 wrong arm, a crucifix, a mermaid, two hearts, three arrows, a rose, a thistle, an oar and a Ahead. The crucifix was a popular tattoo for convicts to have on their thighs, as if they were ‘flaged’ to show the appearance that their victim was being punished. Cross St Georges Terrace at the Pier Street lights to view Government House.

The Swan River Colony received 234 juvenile male convicts between 1852 and 1852. Once in the colony, these boys were pardoned on two conditions: that they began apprenticeships with local employers; and, during the term of their sentence, they would travel to Western Australia. He was a charming young engineer and much debate and controversy amongst the residents, who feared that their free colony would be forever tainted by the convict class. Whilst convict transport lasted only 18 years, the legacy of this period is embedded in the streets of the city and the folklore of the State.
Perth is the only Australian capital city with a cultural centre developed around an old prison. At the very heart of the Western Australian Museum is the gaol built by convicts in 1853–54, where hangings were first held in 1855. The Art Gallery of Western Australia’s long low administration block, directly facing the WA Museum, was designed by Helen Beasley and completed in 1905. It is a barrack for unmarried constables. It later housed police divisions including the Special Branch, which was set up to investigate ‘possible rebellious activities by suspected Communists and others’. The elegant French-style courthouse next door, designed by Beasley and George Temple Poole, once hosted a daily parade of drunks and trouble-makers. The former courthouse is now the Centenary Gallery with a display of colonial-era arts and crafts and the cells and dock remain intact. The Art Gallery of Western Australia is open from 9am to 5pm daily except Tuesday. Telephone: 08 9492 6600.

By 1854 Catholics made up to 18 per cent of the colony’s population partly due to the number of Irish convicts sent to Western Australia. The oldest Catholic church in Western Australia, the Pro-Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, was built in 1848. This is where the Sisters of Mercy started. When the Sisters of Mercy started the newly founded Catholic College of the Sacred Heart in 1855, the students were housed in a building on the site of what is now the Art Gallery of Western Australia. The new Pro-Cathedral was constructed in the Gothic style. Substantial additions were made to the cathedral in the 1920s, but it was never fully completed due to lack of funds. In 2006 work began to completely the Cathedral by adding a new North West tower and nave section in a contemporary design. The Cathedral underwent a $32m refurbishment in December 2009.

In contrast to many other buildings in this trail, Benedictine monks provided the main labour for St Mary’s Cathedral. Like the confraternity, they were a cheap source of labour, walking six miles a day between their quarters in Subiaco and the building site and working every minute of daylight. However, the monks, with a great deal of masonry experience, were far more skilled than the convict labour available. The new cathedral was the envy of the strong Anglican population.

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