



Front cover, Programme of celebrations for the opening of the first parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1901.

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CHAPTER 16

STATE AND NATION

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THIS SECTION LISTS books that offer a broad view of the continent as a whole or of particular colonies and states. Some have been selected because of their present value, others because they have been widely read in the past or have been influential in the development of Australian historiography. The value of every book on the list will depend, of course, on what each reader hopes to learn from it. Readers looking for an introduction to Australian history should also peruse other topics, including Social history (chapter 38) and Economic history (chapter 30), and consider books that address themselves to particular themes or make general observations about the Australian people, such as K.S. Inglis's *The Australian colonists* (MUP, 1974), Geoffrey Serle's cultural history *From deserts the prophets come* (Melbourne, Heinemann, 1973), Geoffrey Sherington's *Australia's immigrants 1788–1978* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1980) and Russel Ward's *The Australian legend* (OUP, 1958; repr, 1978).

General histories in the nineteenth century usually dealt with individual colonies, the main exception being Rusden (1883). Narrative in structure, the early histories influenced their successors by mapping chronological high points and identifying topics which at the time seemed to have been important. The best remain valuable, especially when their authors were directly acquainted with the events and people they described. Turner (1904; facs, 1973), for example, boasted 'some intimacy' with the colony's leading politicians during the preceding thirty years.

After Federation, histories of colonies and states became less fashionable, making way for works which, usually in a single short volume, attempted to sum up the national experience. If 'general history' is only loosely a topic, 'short history' can claim to be a distinct genre, having been made so for Australian historians by the New Zealander Keith Sinclair in an essay entitled 'On writing shist' (*Hist stud* 13, 51, 1968, 426–32). Sinclair, himself the author of a short history of his own country, laid out criteria for what he regarded as adequate 'shist'. Although he was too delicate to name those Australian historians who in his view failed to make the grade, his essay remains a useful guide for students who wish to assess the relative merits of various 'shists'.

Sinclair's clearest message to aspiring writers of short history is that they should have something to say. The most informative and thought-provoking books are written by authors with a deep commitment to their task and who give most of themselves. In Sinclair's phrase, 'the author must be in the book'. W.K. Hancock later wrote that he had given his book (1930; repr, 1961) everything he had, 'heart and brain'.

There are many ways in which short histories differ from one another: in the relationship

between narrative and analysis, the degree of generalisation, attention to chronological detail, the importance attached to individuals, and so on. The main differences arise from the purposes for which the books were written. Hancock (1930; repr, 1961) wrote 'while wrestling painfully with myself in the endeavour to discover why I was so much at home and not at home in my own country'. His aim of contributing to national self-awareness was shared by others, like Manning Clark, R.M. Crawford and Russel Ward. At a more mundane level, each author (and publisher) of a short history has a particular market in view, and this influences the book's content and approach. Historians aiming at school or university readers often have an eye to specific curricula. Others aim more vaguely at a non-specialist readership, and perhaps at an overseas market. The shape of a short history is also influenced by its relationship to the author's other works. Russel Ward (1965; repr, 1979), for example, elaborated and expanded upon the insights of his earlier *The Australian legend* (1958; repr, 1978); while Manning Clark (1965; repr, 1981) adumbrated themes which he was developing in his longer history. Where some short histories are based chiefly on primary sources, others are almost wholly derivative of the work of other historians. Sometimes arguments or passages breathe originality; on the other hand, certain facts are repeated from one book to the next and become tired in the telling.

If there are variations in the genre, there are also significant similarities. Most short histories published after Hancock owe something to his notions of a liberal and democratic Australia. The majority were written or conceived in the 1950s and 1960s and, with notable exceptions, reflect the optimism of those decades. Implicitly at least, their emphasis is on harmony rather than conflict, on what Australians have in common rather than what draws them apart, on success rather than failure. They also tend to share a relative lack of interest in certain subjects which have since become important to historians, such as Aborigines, women, childhood, science and technology, and medicine. Some authors have rectified past omissions in new editions.

The longer general histories which deal with the whole of Australia have less in common with one another. Clark's multivolume history (1962–) is unique as an extended account, largely chronological in approach and narrative in style, which relies heavily on primary sources. With a few other exceptions, most writers of general history have contributed to edited works, including Greenwood (1955; repr, 1977) and Crowley (1974), both of which were written as textbooks. Although such works profit from the variety of views presented, multiple authorship can also be a drawback—as when some authors implicitly contradict others.

In recent decades histories that confine their attention to a particular state or colony have again become popular. Some, like the works of Pike (1967) and Serle (1978, 1971), discuss a limited period, while others, including histories associated with the sesquicentenaries of Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia, cover longer time spans. As well as providing insights into the peculiar identity of each state, these histories tend to question the broad generalisations that are often applied to the continent as a whole.

This list also includes representative school texts and some general collections of documents on Australian history. Most collections, however, are devoted to a particular subject or theme, such as 'convicts', or 'Aborigines', and are therefore listed under the appropriate topics.



- ALEXANDER, F. *Australia since federation: a narrative and critical analysis* (3rd edn). Melbourne, Nelson, 1976. 434 p, illus.
- An attempt to 'trace and to assess the growth of Australian nationhood ... within the framework of a federal policy'. The emphasis is heavily political. First published in 1967.
- BARNARD, M.F. *A history of Australia*. A & R, 1976. 710 p, maps.
- Best for the early nineteenth century, though continued to the early 1960s. Not always reliable. First published in 1962.
- BARTON, G.B. AND BRITTON, A. *History of New South Wales from the records*. Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1980. 2 vols. Based on documents from the Public Record Office, London, Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney and the papers of Sir Joseph Banks. First published in 1889-94.
- BLAINEY, G.N. *Our side of the country: the story of Victoria*. Sydney, Methuen Haynes, 1984. 250 p, illus, maps.
- A partly chronological account, emphasising the lives of ordinary people. Strongest on the late nineteenth century.
- CAMBRIDGE *history of the British Empire*. Vol 7, pt 1. *Australia*. CUP, 1933. 759 p, maps.
- Synthesis of Australian history by professional historians. The tone is celebratory, its central theme the success with which 'the planting of English stock in the South Pacific' has been achieved. Bibliography with special concern for primary sources.
- CLARK, C.M.H. *A history of Australia*. MUP, 1962- . v, illus, maps.
- The most ambitious general history to date by a single author. Controversial in both style and content. Clark describes what he sees as the great human drama that was enacted on Australian soil. There is a continuing pessimism about what the author regards as the emptiness and conservatism of Australian society.
- CLARK, C.M.H. ed, *Select documents in Australian history*. A & R, 1977. 2 vols.
- Includes documents and tables covering 1788 to 1900 still not conveniently found elsewhere. The introductory notes embodied many new interpretations which foreshadowed Clark's later writings. First published in 1950-55.
- CLARK, C.M.H. *A short history of Australia* (rev edn). Macmillan, 1981. 256 p, illus.
- Emphasising the human element in historical processes, the book is both more reliable and more controversial than most other short histories. Many of the themes are further developed in his later writings. First published in 1965.
- CRAWFORD, R.M. *Australia* (rev edn). Melbourne, Hutchinson, 1979. 199 p, maps.
- Outlines broad themes in Australia's past, particularly the nineteenth century. Includes extensive treatment of the Aboriginal past. First published in 1952.
- CRAWFORD, R.M. *An Australian perspective*. MUP, 1960. 82 p.
- Three lectures delivered to an American audience and entitled 'A pastoral aristocracy', 'The birth of a culture' and 'Coming of age'.
- CROWLEY, F.K. *Australia's western third: a history of Western Australia from the first settlements to modern times* (2nd edn). Melbourne, Heinemann, 1970. 404 p, maps.
- Crowley challenged the prevailing view of WA's past (see Kimberly, 1897), but was criticised for lack of insight into the major themes of Western Australian history. First published in 1960.
- CROWLEY, F.K. *A documentary history of Australia*. Melbourne, Nelson, 1980- . v.
- Each volume contains documents chronologically arranged, selected from a wide range of printed sources on diverse subjects. Introductions place the documents in their context of events. Five volumes published: final volume in press in 1985.
- CROWLEY, F.K. ed, *A new history of Australia*. Melbourne, Heinemann, 1974. 639 p.
- A 'new overview', arranged chronologically, of Australian history from 1788 to 1972. The interests of the contributors differ markedly in approach. Some subjects, notably Aborigines, receive cursory treatment. Comprehensive bibliography and index.
- DONOVAN, P.F. *A land full of possibilities: a history of South Australia's Northern Territory*. UQP, 1981. 267 p, illus, maps.
- Covers the period from 1863 to 1911, with emphasis on SA's colonial rule of north Australia and the economic exploitation of the Territory.
- FITZGERALD, R. *From the dreaming to 1915: a history of Queensland*. UQP, 1982. 354 p, illus, maps.
- FITZGERALD, R. *From 1915 to the early 1980s: a history of Queensland*. UQP, 1984. 653 p, illus.
- In these two volumes the author questions the concept of progress in Qld from precolonial days through periods of 'Labor dominance' (1915-57) and 'Conservative monopoly' (1957 to the early 1980s).
- FITZPATRICK, B.C. *The Australian people 1788-1945*. MUP, 1946. 279 p, map.
- A survey by Australia's major Marxist historian of the 1940s and 1950s. The book is considered eccentric, but contains his 'most brilliant irony and sharpest insights'. Second edition published in 1951.
- GIBLIN, R.W. *The early history of Tasmania*. London, Methuen, 1928; MUP, 1939. 2 vols.
- The first volume, 1642-1804, dealt mainly with exploration and geographical history. The second, 1804-28, largely ignored the role of convicts and emancipists in Tasmanian history.
- GRATTAN, C.H. *The southwest Pacific to 1900, a modern history: Australia, New Zealand, the Islands, Antarctica*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1963. 558 p, illus, maps.
- GRATTAN, C.H. *The southwest Pacific since 1900, a modern history: Australia, New Zealand, the Islands, Antarctica*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1963. 759 p, illus.
- To the time of their publication the best distillation of existing scholarly work on Australian history. Describes how Europeans became established in the southwest Pacific. Places Australia well in the context of world affairs.
- GREENWOOD, G. ed, *Australia: a social and political history*. A & R, 1977. 465 p, illus, maps.
- First published in 1955, this work filled a vacuum in Australian historiography, serving as a text for two decades and longer.
- HANCOCK, W.K. *Australia*. London, E. Benn, 1930, 326 p, illus, maps.
- A seminal work of history and political and social commentary, still influential. Among Hancock's themes are the notions of 'independent Australian Britons' and political parties of initiative and resistance. Second edition published in 1961.
- JOHNSTON, W.R. *The call of the land: a history of Queensland to the present day*. Brisbane, Jacaranda, 1982. 229 p, illus, maps.
- A probing investigation of 'how the spirit and mind of Queensland have developed', drawing out continuities and discontinuities in the state's history.
- JOSE, A.W. *A short history of Australasia*. A & R, 1899. 252 p, illus, maps.

Published in many editions with varying titles, the most common being *History of Australia from the earliest times to the present day*; the 15th edition was published in 1930. It was a bestselling text which emphasised politics and land settlement.

KIMBERLY, W.B. *History of West Australia: a narrative of her past, together with biographies of her leading men*. Melbourne, Niven, 1897. 593 p, illus.

With its emphasis on material progress and consensus, Kimberly's work had a strong influence on later writers, including J.S. Battye, *Western Australia: a history from its discovery to the inauguration of the commonwealth* (1924; facs, UWAP, 1978).

LACOUR-GAYET, R. *A concise history of Australia*. Trans by J. Grieve. Ringwood, Vic, Penguin, 1976. 484 p.

A French view of Australian history, based largely on secondary sources; it is valuable for its refreshing approach and new insights. French-Australian contacts receive prominence.

LANG, J.D. *An historical and statistical account of New South Wales both as a penal settlement and as a British colony*. London, Cochrane and McCrone, 1834. 2 vols.

An opinionated and widely read series of sketches which the *Westminster review* suggested in 1834 should be titled 'The history of Doctor Lang, to which is added the history of NSW'.

MELLOR, S. ed, *Australian history: the occupation of a continent*. Melbourne, Eureka, 1978. 411 p, illus, map.

Comprehensive coverage by six authors of traditional subjects, with convenient subtitles. A companion volume is Mellor, *Readings in Australian history: the occupation of a continent* (1979).

PIKE, D.H. *Australia, the quiet continent* (2nd edn). CUP, 1970. 243 p, illus, maps.

'Australia's quiet story is perhaps best explained by combining geographic and economic influences with the British tie.' Pays particular attention to the less populous states, especially SA. First published in 1962.

PIKE, D.H. *Paradise of dissent: South Australia 1829-1857* (2nd edn). MUP, 1967. 580 p, maps.

A history of SA's foundation and early years, countering the view of Australia 'through eastern eyes'. First published in 1957.

POWELL, A. *Far country: a short history of the Northern Territory*. MUP, 1982. 301 p, illus, maps.

A straightforward history of the Territory, ranging widely in subject matter.

ROBSON, LL. *A history of Tasmania*. Vol 1. *Van Diemen's Land from the earliest times to 1855*. OUP, 1983. 632 p, illus, maps.

This book is a case study in 'that form of exploitation which a colonial-metropolitan relationship must by definition involve'. Robson relies more heavily on imperial than local archives. A second volume is in preparation.

RUSDEN, G.W. *History of Australia*. London, Chapman and Hall, 1883. 3 vols.

Rusden was a Victorian public servant with first-hand knowledge of many of the people and events he wrote about. His bias was fiercely conservative. A second edition was published in 1897 and reissued in 1908.

SCOTT, E. *A short history of Australia*. London, OUP, 1916. 363 p, maps.

First published in 1916 and the first of the so-called short histories. The seventh edition, revised by Herbert Burton, was published in 1947.

SERLE, A.G. *The golden age: a history of the colony of Victoria, 1851-1861*. MUP, 1978. 469 p, illus, maps.

An account of a tumultuous decade, enriched by the author's command of significant detail. First published in 1963.

SERLE, A.G. *The rush to be rich: a history of the colony of Victoria,*

1883-1889. MUP, 1971. 392 p, illus, map.

Focusing on the 1880s, but linked to *The golden age* by a prologue. Serle again shows how large questions and themes can be approached through a narrow span of time and place.

SHAW, A.G.L. *The story of Australia* (4th edn). London, Faber, 1972. 336 p, illus, map.

A political and economic history since 1788, reflecting the optimism of the 1950s and 1960s and exalting the triumph of the 'common man'. First published in 1955.

SHAW, A.G.L. AND NICOLSON, H.D. *Australia in the twentieth century: an introduction to modern society*. A & R, 1967. 287 p, illus.

A history for schools, emphasising Australia in a world context, politics and technology. Includes timelines and eight biographies.

STANNAGE, C.T. ed, *A new history of Western Australia*. UWAP, 1981. 836 p, illus, maps.

Nineteen authors reflect diverse approaches to the past rather than pursuing a single theme. WA's Aborigines receive extensive coverage.

TURNBULL, C. *A concise history of Australia* (rev edn). Melbourne, Currey O'Neil Ross, 1983, 258 p, illus.

A lively short history, for a wide readership, impressionistic with emphasis on eastern Australia. First published in 1965, this revised edition by Marjorie Tipping brings the story to 1983.

TURNER, H.G. *A history of the colony of Victoria from its discovery to its absorption into the Commonwealth of Australia*. London, Longmans, Green, 1904. 2 vols, maps.

The annals of Victoria affectionately recorded by one who had lived there for half a century. New edition in 1973 (Melbourne, Heritage Publications).

THE VICTORIANS: BROOME, R. *Arriving*. 258 p, illus, maps;

DINGLE, A.E. *Settling*. 274 p, illus, maps; PRIESTLEY, S. *Making their mark*. 382 p, illus, maps. Sydney, Fairfax Syme & Weldon, 1984.

Issued to mark the sesquicentenary of white settlement in Victoria. Notes and references issued separately.

WARD, R.B. *Australia, a short history* (rev edn). Sydney, Ure Smith, 1979. 218 p, illus.

Ward depicts Australia 'feeling its way forward to its own identity'. A useful textbook. First published in 1965.

WARD, R.B. *Australia since the coming of man*. Sydney, Lansdowne, 1982. 254 p, illus, maps.

A substantially revised edition of *Australia, a short history*. Changes include a useful summary of Aboriginal prehistory and the extension of the final chapter to 1982.

WARD, R.B. *A nation for a continent: a history of Australia 1901-1975*. Melbourne, Heinemann Educational, 1977. 515 p, illus, maps.

A detailed history of Australia since Federation, with the emphasis on federal politics.

WEST, J. *The history of Tasmania*. Launceston, Tas, Henry Dowling, 1852. 2 vols.

An outstanding colonial history. The 1971 edition includes a valuable introduction and detailed references by A.G.L. Shaw.

WESTGARTH, W. *The colony of Victoria: its history, commerce and gold mining; its social and political institutions; down to the end of 1863*. London, Sampson Low, 1864. 503 p.

An account of the 'greatest of our colonies', written from personal recollections and other earlier general works.

YOUNGER, R.M. *Australia and the Australians: a new concise history*. Melbourne, Hutchinson, 1982. 986 p, illus, maps.

A detailed narrative along conventional lines emphasising material progress. First published in 1970.