

INTO HISTORY

ANN CURTHOYS

AS EARLY AS June 1978 the annual Premiers' Conference agreed that there should be a national commemoration during the bicentennial year. The federal government's commitment was officially announced by Malcolm Fraser in April 1979, and the Australian Bicentennial Authority was created in January 1980 to manage the celebrations. These, however, were official decisions only. Formal designations of anniversaries do not necessarily result in a genuine celebration; and the activities for Australia Day, divided between 26 January and the next Monday, have long been desultory, especially outside New South Wales. Would 1988 be celebrated in a truly popular fashion?

By the mid-1980s the official moves had brought into prominence some major issues for public discussion. Debate arose on whether, or how, the bicentenary year of European settlement on the Australian continent ought to be celebrated. While these questions face all Australians to some degree, they have been particularly pressing and troublesome for those of Aboriginal descent. Confronted with an Australian Bicentennial Authority which sought to celebrate 200 years of European settlement and to include, at least in a minor way, Aboriginal people in that celebration, Aborigines have had the choice of ignoring the bicentennial activities altogether, or of participating for their own purposes—for example, by using them as a forum or base for pursuing political demands such as those for extended land rights.

Aboriginal activists responded diversely. Some saw bicentennial money as an attempt to forestall Aboriginal spoiling of the birthday party, and as a diversion of attention from the halt in the gaining of land rights. In August 1985 the Aboriginal author Kevin Gilbert rejected a \$6500 grant to support his writing from the Australian Bicentennial Authority as 'blood money', and was applauded for this action by another Aboriginal writer, Kath Walker, who is a contributor to this book. Many Aborigines supported their stand, seeing the bicentennial activities as nothing more than a celebration of their own people's dispossession and loss of sovereignty. Some of them expressed this opinion eloquently in 1985 on an

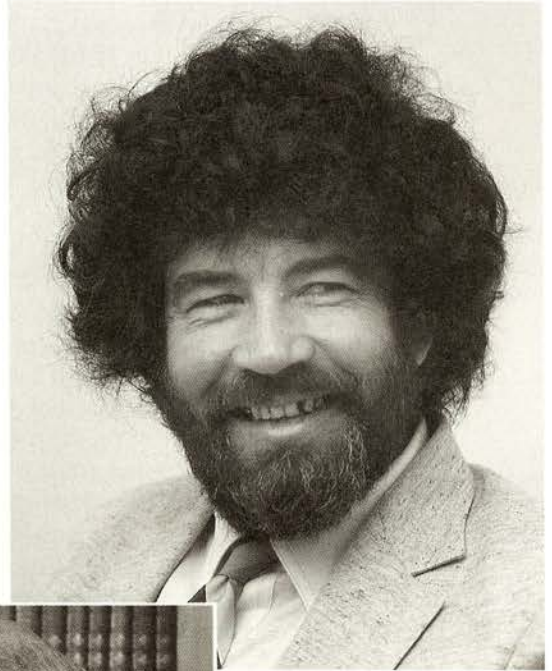


Aboriginal-made ABC television program. Other Aboriginal people took a different view. In the same month as Kevin Gilbert denounced the bicentennial celebrations, a public statement was made by Eric Willmot, at the time a senior public servant in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, who had just accepted appointment as the only Aboriginal member of the bicentennial authority's board. Willmot believed that the bicentennial year could be made to serve the cause of improving the lot of Aboriginal people. He wanted the bicentennial authority to provide funds towards the preservation of Aboriginal heritage, such as rock art, and argued that the occasion should be used to create a climate of opinion more favourable to land rights.

When Aborigines point out that 1788 represents for them the beginning of a long period of brutal dispossession and rapid loss of life for their own people, how are those not of Aboriginal descent to respond? Should they ignore the bicentenary? regard it as an occasion for celebration? an opportunity for restitution and coming to terms with the colonial past? a time neither for celebration nor for restitution, but rather simply for assessment? Some have taken the view that the bicentenary is indeed an opportunity for restitution, for ending the colonial period of Australia's history. In 1979 an Aboriginal Treaty Committee was formed by a group of well-known Australians who believed that a treaty with Aboriginal people was essential as a basis for any negotiation of issues between Aboriginal and other Australians. Given the absence of any treaties during the process of dispossession itself, a treaty for 1988 was seen as a way of establishing a new legal basis for the pursuit of issues specifically concerning Aboriginal people. One of those to call for a treaty was Professor Manning Clark, author of the monumental multi-volume series, *A history of Australia*. Clark's proposal was that bicentennial discourse should emphasise the achievements of Aborigines, who had paid dearly for the growth of European settlement, and that non-Aboriginal Australians should see the bicentenary as an opportunity to make amends either through a treaty or some other sort of understanding. The treaty idea, however, faced many obstacles, and while its aims met with considerable sympathy detailed proposals did not gain substantial support in either the Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal communities. By the mid-1980s support for Aboriginal demands, particularly land rights, was waning within the rest of the community. With successful observance of the bicentenary depending on a belief in national unity and social harmony, the Australian Bicentennial Authority taking as its theme 'Living Together', the growth in conflict over land rights implied problems for bicentennial planners.

Manning Clark's view was opposed by another well-known historian, Professor Geoffrey Blainey. Author of many widely read works, including an account of Aboriginal history to 1788, *Triumph of the nomads*, Blainey said that he was against highlighting the Aboriginal cause in the bicentennial context. Aborigines, he pointed out, were only one per cent of the population, and the remaining 99 per cent should not be discouraged from celebrating the achievements—in which he included the establishment of a successful democracy and the building of a nation—of the past 200 years. Blainey went further in a speech on Australia Day in 1986, seeing an emphasis on minority groups as a danger to national harmony and unity.

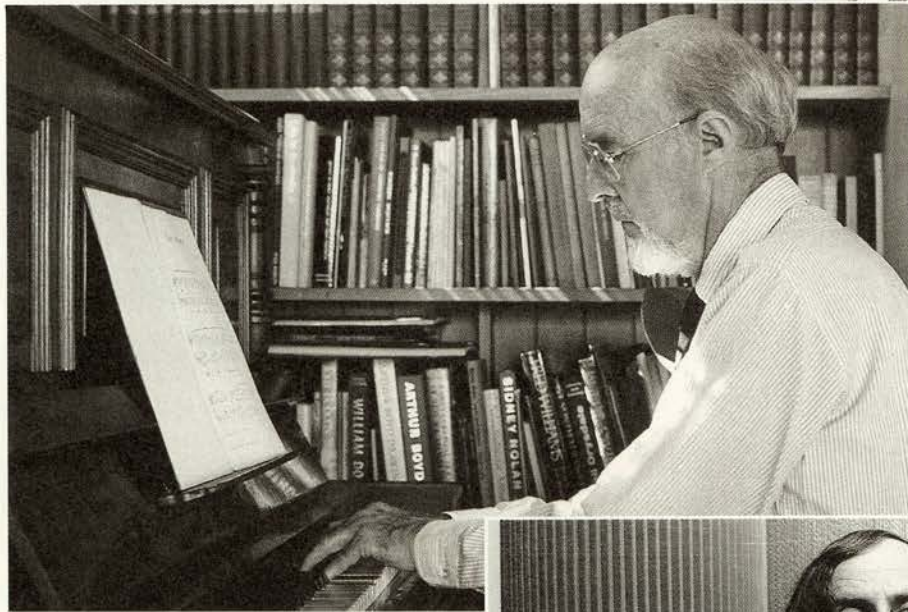
Both Manning Clark and Geoffrey Blainey were speaking as historians, offering quite different views of how Australia's history should be understood from the vantage point of the bicentennial year. They were not the only historians who found it necessary to formulate a response to official and unofficial plans for the celebration. Many were convinced that the occasion should be marked by serious historical analysis and reflection, and this series of volumes is one outcome of that



Above.
Eric Willmot, past principal of the Institute of Aboriginal Studies, believes that Aborigines should try to capitalise on the Bicentenary to promote Aboriginal issues.

AUSTRALIAN INFORMATION SERVICE

Above left.
Kevin Gilbert, Aboriginal author and activist and an outspoken opponent of the Bicentenary as a celebration of the European presence in Australia. Photograph by Adriaan van der Weel.



Professor Manning Clark, Australian of the Year in 1981, is a well-known member of the Aboriginal Treaty Committee.

AUSTRALIAN INFORMATION SERVICE

Right.
Professor Geoffrey Blainey, a controversial figure since 1984, when he provoked a heated debate about national immigration policy, remains concerned about the danger of an overemphasis on minority interests in Australian society. Photograph by Anton Cemak.

FAIRFAX PHOTO LIBRARY



conviction. While motivations for contributing differ, underlying the project has been a generally shared view that because 1988 will present an occasion for all sorts of statements about Australian history and its meaning for the present, those who are professionally concerned with researching, writing and teaching that history should contribute their knowledge and judgments. Other historians have believed that the whole enterprise is so likely to be bound up with nationalism and celebration, and so little able to become a time for critical reflection, that it is better avoided altogether; in this view the bicentennial year is likely to do little good for the cause of serious historical scholarship.

Arguments over how to mark the bicentenary rest on opposing views of what 'Australia' is and 'being Australian' is about. For some people the quest for a national identity involves reasserting our Britishness. For others it involves the notion that Australians are a mixed lot, whose very diversity pinpoints their distinctness. There is a view that only Aborigines are truly Australian; the rest of the population are perched here, as if temporary, failing to come to terms with the land and its natural features, or with its geographical location. For yet others an Australian identity is held to rest on the multi-influenced but now distinctive values, habits, and practices developed mainly but not exclusively by the non-Aboriginal population since 1788. All these conceptions of Australian identity rest on a particular concern with the past. The pro-British dwell on the British-derived character of Australian political and economic institutions, and social and cultural practices. The multiculturalists emphasise the non-British aspects of our history, especially in the recent past. Those who say Aborigines are the only Australians look to the millennia

Tom Burlinson as Tommy Woodcock with 'Phar Lap', 1983-84.

NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVES



before 1788, intending to show continuities with that ancient past. For believers in a distinct Australian identity our history is about the creation from a variety of materials since 1788 of a unique and coherent society.

Thus historians find that their work is of political significance. They find also that they can give no common answer to the question how Australian history should best be understood. Their disagreement is a product not only of political and theoretical differences, but also of the spectacular growth in their number and in the diversity of the ways historians are employed—growth attributable in large part to social developments separate from the approach of the bicentenary. To understand historians' responses we need to know something of the historians themselves, and of public attitudes to their work.

A rise in popular interest in Australian history is evident in a variety of contexts: the use of historical themes in the growing film and television industry; the growth of interest in museums, historical sites and buildings; the popularity of historical reconstructions of life in earlier times; the boom in genealogical interest and research and in oral history; and the growth of local history societies and interest in local history generally.

It is possible that most Australians now get most of their knowledge of Australian history not directly from books, or from lessons at school, but from film and television. Internationally, both media have always used historical themes as a staple. They have done so in Australia too, from the earliest films made here on the Kelly gang and other bushranging themes to the movies creating a nineteenth-century rural Australia for their audiences in the 1920s and 1930s, through to the historical dramas on ABC television from the early 1960s, to the explosion of screen history after 1970—notably on film, *Breaker Morant*, *Gallipoli* and *Phar Lap*, and on television, *Rush*, *Ben Hall*, *Against the wind*, *Anzacs*, *The dismissal*, *Cowra breakout*, *Waterfront* and others. Through these productions specific images of Australia and Australianism are created, many of them building on images promoted earlier by radical nationalist historians. Many have a decidedly anti-British theme, as they attempt to create an image of Australia for Australians which emphasises distinctness and struggle. These productions are popular, and while many historians criticise them for inaccuracy, or as exercises in nationalism and nostalgia, others argue that the ideals of Australian society created in them have affinities both with the writings of historians themselves and with beliefs and identities deep within Australian popular culture. The tasks of creating and increasing historical understanding, which historians set for themselves, are conceptualised differently from the tasks of entertainment and aesthetic achievement which producers for the screen undertake; yet the two groups are in many ways interdependent.

A second important stimulus has been the growing concern with conservation. To an older belief in the need to preserve and restore buildings and sites of significance has been added a more radical preoccupation with the environment, as discussed in chapter 10. From the late 1960s resident action groups opposed the destruction of homes for freeways, the 'green bans' movement expressed a determination to protect the old against developers, and campaigns to save buildings found more support than ever before. This grass roots, radical, unofficial movement had legislation passed requiring deeper investigation before structures and natural environments were destroyed to make way for the new. It was in response to such pressure that the Whitlam government set up a committee of inquiry into the National Estate, a term that was used to include both the natural (national parks, nature reserves, coastline, water expanses, landforms, geological features, woodlands and grasslands) and the cultural environment (Aboriginal sites,

Frontcover, Bulletin, 23 July 1985.



Jack Munday, environmentalist and former leader of the Builders' Labourers' Federation (NSW), in the historic Rocks area of Sydney holding a copy of *Green bans*, a book published by the Australian Conservation Foundation. AUSTRALIAN INFORMATION SERVICE

Concern about the preservation of Australia's past is reflected in the setting aside of an area on the western foreshore of Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, for the establishment of the National Museum of Australia, due to open in 1990.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA



Part of the National Capital Ethnographic Collection, poorly stored in the basement of the former Institute of Anatomy building. The collection of about 10 000 Aboriginal objects was later relocated in a repository at Mitchell, ACT, awaiting the opening of the National Museum of Australia.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

European sites and structures including buildings, towns and precincts). The committee reported in 1974 that there was a need for better preservation of, and public education about, both natural and cultural environments. In response, the government, with opposition support, established the Australian Heritage Commission as a statutory authority in 1975, and the Fraser government appointed the first commission in 1976. Among its tasks was to prepare and maintain a register, or inventory, of places of historical or natural significance. The commission's work was mainly educative, but it did have protective powers in relation to actions proposed by the commonwealth government.

There was action also at the state level, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria. The Heritage Council of New South Wales was established in 1977 to recommend to the minister for planning and environment measures for conserving, exhibiting, providing access to, and publishing information about the environmental heritage. From 1979 the Department of Environment and Planning was also made responsible for conservation issues. Historic sites could now be declared, preserved, and presented to the public by the council and by the department, as well as by the Historic Houses Trust and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Such agencies required the preparation of heritage studies and conservation plans as a basis for decision-making about protection of historic sites, creating a need for consultation with historians.

In Victoria the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands was formed in November 1983 from an amalgamation of two other departments and made responsible for preserving and managing historical places, using the advice of bodies such as the Historic Buildings Council and the Land Conservation Council. Similar developments occurred in other states. It was not only European sites which gained increased protection in this way. Legislation was passed in all states between 1965 and 1975 providing for the protection and preservation of Aboriginal places of cultural and historic significance, though the degree of protection varied.

Moveable objects of ethnographic and historical significance also attracted new interest. Museums, which had long suffered from poor accommodation, deteriorating collections and declining public interest, enjoyed a new popularity and a new diversity after 1970. Attendance at museums and art galleries rose from 3.6 million in 1970 to 4.4 million in 1978, partly as a result of the growth of local tourism. Museums began to present their objects in new ways, aimed at increasing the visitor's understanding of Australian history. An early sign of change was the creation in 1970 by the Western Australian Museum of a Department of History, the first in Australia. But so run down had many museums become that a shake-up was required before they could respond to the growth of public interest.

The beginnings of this shake-up came with the Whitlam government's appointment in 1974 of a committee of inquiry on Museums and National Collections. Its report, presented in 1975, argued that existing collections and collectible material urgently required protection if they were not to decay. It pointed to the desperate need for a national museum policy involving greater co-ordination and rationalisation, because part of the weakness in Australian museums lay in intercolonial and then interstate rivalry and unco-ordination. An important element of this policy, the report argued, should be the creation of a national register of significant objects, improved training for museum workers, and the establishment of a national museum in Canberra. While few moves towards national co-ordination were made, this report did prompt changes. It helped achieve increased funding for buildings and staff, a revitalised membership of the governing councils of state museums, and a growth in conservation training laboratories. The commonwealth government announced at the end of 1979 a plan

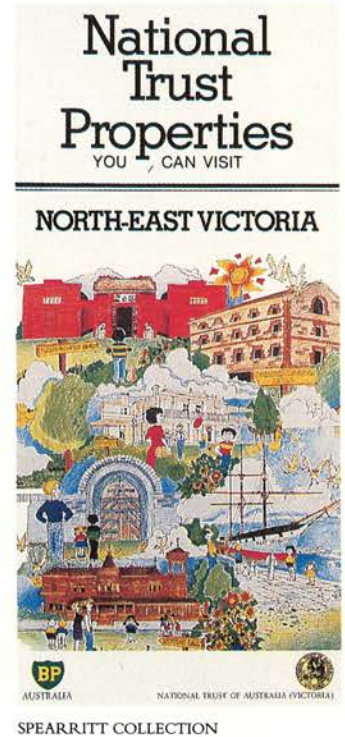
to build in Canberra a museum that would deal with Aboriginal history, the history of Europeans in Australia, and the interaction between people and the Australian environment. The Museum of Australia was established by an act of parliament in 1980, and was at the time of writing collecting vigorously in preparation for the opening of its first galleries in 1990.

There were changes also in the states. The History Trust of South Australia was formed in 1981, to collect and interpret the material evidence of the past and encourage research into regional history. Long-established museums in each state began to incorporate a broader perspective on the past. The Museum of Victoria organised in 1985 a sesquicentennial history exhibition tracing the story of Victoria from pre-European settlement to the present, while the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney entered the field of historical interpretation with the establishment of displays in Hyde Park Barracks. Historical exhibitions became more common across the country. In Canberra, the Australian War Memorial was upgraded to allow it to present more historical displays and to pursue a vigorous program of research and education. By 1984 it was attracting more than a million visitors a year and became the country's most visited museum.

Local museums proliferated in country towns, usually established by the local historical society. Enthusiasts often wished for 'an old cottage we could furnish in period style' as the proper site for their local collection. These museums raised their own funds and were supported by local councils and sometimes state governments. Their displays were often amateurish and jumbled; their purpose was to attract and entertain tourists rather than to advance the nineteenth-century ideal of the rigorous pursuit of scientific fact. They illustrated the domestic and social environment of 'pioneering' days with collections of furniture, clothes, china and silver, household equipment, farm machinery, books, letters and photographs. By the 1970s it was becoming more common also for replicas of early outback settlements to be built—mining towns, as at Sovereign Hill, Ballarat, in Victoria, timber-getting settlements, as at Wauchope in New South Wales, and so on. These were orientated towards the tourist industry and were immensely popular.

This growth of interest in preserving and displaying historical objects, buildings and sites was accompanied by controversy. The movement was attacked by developers seeing it as a threat to profits, workers afraid of losing jobs, and 'new right' conservatives keen to reduce public spending, privatise economic activity, and remove obstacles to corporate freedom. There was also internal dispute. Historians found themselves in unfamiliar roles, as consultants or even employees of government bodies other than educational institutions, advising on the preservation and presentation of sites. When they and their university colleagues began to consider seriously the issues involved in heritage policy, some were critical of the basis on which decisions for conservation and restoration were made.

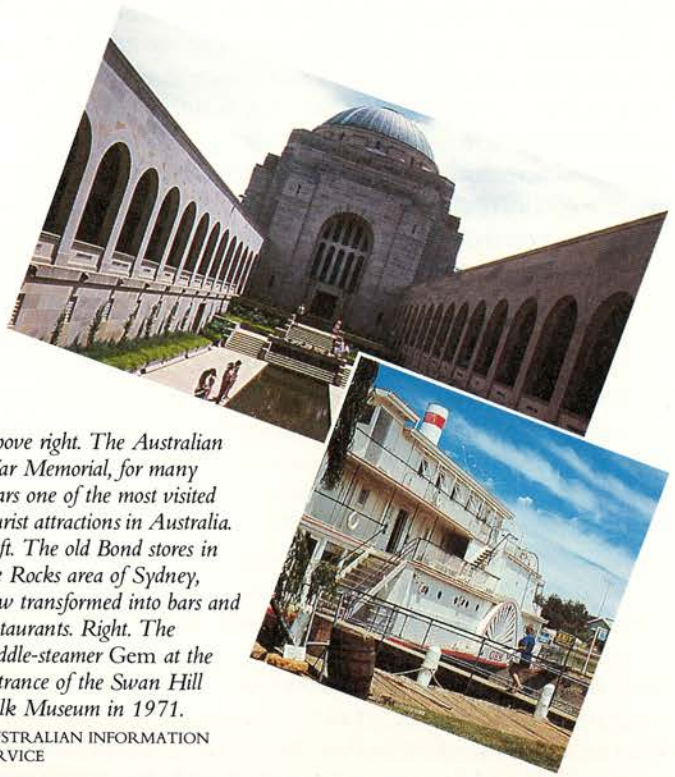
Chris McConville, a lecturer in history to town planning students at Footscray Institute of Technology, argued that conservation studies tended to take a narrow and specific view of cultural value, based on technical details of past building styles, rather than developing a method for arguing over rival readings of the material world. Professional conservation, he suggested, had departed from the radical politics that laid the basis for its initial growth and subsequent institutionalisation within the public sector, and had developed a 'history devoid of human society'. Conservationists, he pointed out, report not only on what should be preserved but also on what can be destroyed. They can be accomplices to the destruction of old working-class environments and their replacement with tourist sites full of trendy boutiques and authentically preserved but inauthentically presented artefacts and structures representing a forgotten, remade and sanitised past.





Above right. The Australian War Memorial, for many years one of the most visited tourist attractions in Australia. Left. The old Bond stores in the Rocks area of Sydney, now transformed into bars and restaurants. Right. The paddle-steamer Gem at the entrance of the Swan Hill Folk Museum in 1971.

AUSTRALIAN INFORMATION SERVICE



Team of working bullocks, Timbertown near Wauchope, NSW, in 1979.

AUSTRALIAN INFORMATION SERVICE

Margaret Anderson, curator at the South Australian Museum, together with Andrew Reeves and Helen Parrott, argued that ‘public interest has served to convince governments that Australian history is economically productive’. And not only governments: television stations, film finance backers, the advertising and tourist industries, all embraced Australian history, presenting, as Anderson and her co-authors said of the last two interests, ‘their own nostalgic view of the past to the market place’, a bland, consensual model of Australian society. These writers urged that museums present a less cosy vision of the past, and tackle politically sensitive themes. This move towards a more historical and a more radical conception of how

museums can present their collections to the public is a product in part of the entry into museums of the post-1960s generation of history graduates influenced by British, European, American and Australian models that emphasise 'history from below'. They are interested in the trials as well as the successes of immigration, in power structures, poverty and crime, working-class communities, and in Aboriginal-European contact history. Anderson and her colleagues call for the development of Australian history as 'a popular participatory discipline', as something more than 'theme parks, genealogy and historic reenactments, or the worn-out tales of explorers and bush-rangers'.

Genealogy, despite low esteem among professional historians, probably constitutes the most participatory historical form of all. There has been a striking growth of interest in tracing one's ancestors and their histories. While there is nothing particularly Australian about an interest in family history, it has a distinctive form and purpose here. Nancy Gray, active in the Society of Australian Genealogists, points out that in Australia, where immigration over long distances meant for many people the loss of contact with their parents and grandparents, and therefore of access to knowledge about them and their forebears, the gaps are supplied through research. The library of the Society of Australian Genealogists began to receive an increased flow of inquiries in the late 1950s. Before long the library's leisurely administration showed signs of breaking down. A research committee was set up, and it established genealogical research on a firmer footing. By the 1960s the society had to encourage more do-it-yourself research, and to this end published a guide for beginners as a booklet in 1965. Other local guides followed. By the 1980s archives offices were inundated with private researchers, often to the disgruntlement of other historical researchers. A private company, Videobiography, specialised in putting family history on video cassette; older members of the family could be interviewed and recorded on videotape, and close-ups of photographs, letters, the family tree and scrapbook clippings inserted.

Enthusiasm for oral history has also increased. Its earlier uses had been a by-product of the study of folklore, in particular folk music. One of the main practitioners, Wendy Lowenstein, has described the new enthusiasm for folklore of the 1940s as the product of a radical nationalist conviction that Australia's history was important in its own right. Interest was sustained through the folk music revival of the 1950s and 1960s, and the implications for an understanding of Australian history were drawn out by analysis of the lyrics of earlier ballads and songs by historians like Russel Ward. A quite different use began in 1967 when the National Library of Australia inaugurated an oral history project to record the memories and views of those 'Australians whose achievements or whose positions have brought them fame or notoriety throughout the country'.

Then came a rapid growth in the recording of memories of less well-known people, an enterprise that was facilitated by good, cheap, portable tape recorders and which by the late 1970s had penetrated even the universities. The products of the oral history movement reached a wider public, as books of transcripts of interviews were published. *The immigrants* (1977), based on conversations recorded by Morag Loh and Wendy Lowenstein with a diverse group of people who arrived in Australia between 1890 and 1970, was one of the first Australian books to present a series of uninterrupted monologues without authorial comment. The sales of this book, and of later ones by Loh and Lowenstein, indicated a large reading public for oral history. Yet teachers of history had misgivings. In 1979 Professor Patrick O'Farrell observed that the contents of collections such as *The immigrants* were statements of memory, not of what actually happened. Historians remain divided as to the value for historical research of such statements.



Wendy Lowenstein.
IN PRIVATE POSSESSION

The movement continued to expand. Where recordings of spoken memories of the past had earlier been collected by enthusiastic individuals, with the major exception of the National Library project, by the mid-1980s they were being collected by historical societies, community groups, ethnic organisations, museums, schools, libraries, government bodies, tertiary institutions and companies. People interested in local history made intensive use of the approach. Libraries instigated, financed and housed local oral history collections. Projects range from the remarkable individual effort of Helen Hannah, whose history of the Bulga Plateau in New South Wales was the product of two years' interviewing of local residents, to the North Queensland Oral History Project administered by the History Department at James Cook University. A number of institutions had substantial oral history projects funded through the Community Employment Program, instituted by the Hawke government to provide short-term employment. By 1985 concern was being expressed about the legal and ethical aspects of oral history, for example the control informants might have over the use of their taped recollections.



Pioneering oral historian Hazel de Berg interviews physicist Professor Harry Messel in 1972. Hazel de Berg recorded nearly 1300 interviews with Australians involved in the arts since the late 1950s, and in 1967 set up the National Library's Oral History Project, which records and preserves interviews with outstanding Australians.
NATIONAL LIBRARY



Parallel to this growth in popular interest in Australian history ran a boom in the study of history in universities and colleges. As universities expanded in the 1960s, and colleges a little later, the discipline of history grew with them. Trained historians increased in number: whereas in 1949 there were about fifteen full-time professors and lecturers in history in Australian universities, by 1973 there were more than 400 in permanent posts. The growth in the discipline of history led to the establishment of the Australian Historical Association in 1974; while many historical societies had existed earlier, this new association was based firmly in the profession of history as it existed within universities and colleges.

Rapid growth allowed for greater specialisation: the first full-time lecturer in Australian history was appointed in 1948, and specialised appointments became the norm. Whereas in 1960 British and European history provided the core of the syllabus of modern history in every Australian university, as they had done for decades, two decades later this was no longer so. New kinds of history courses had proliferated—in Asian, American, African and Latin American history, as well as specialist courses on themes such as race relations, social history, women's history, maritime history and labour history. In courses organised both regionally and thematically the Australian history component in most history departments grew. In some places you could complete a history major without studying any modern European or British history at all. A similar process was occurring in secondary schools. Whereas in 1950 matriculation history classes studied either European or English history, with only Victoria having an Australian history option, by 1974 in most states both Asian and Australian history were on offer, and students could avoid European and British history if they chose.

The growth in the teaching of Australian history was made possible by, and sustained, a rapid increase in research and writing in the field. In 1979, one of the editors of this book, Allan Martin, noted that most of the existing body of serious historical writing about Australia had been done since 1945. Many of the books began as postgraduate theses; others were written by historians employed as teachers or researchers in universities and colleges, or by writers working outside the education system. There was a rapid expansion in publication in historical journals. Another sign of the growth of interest in and institutionalisation of the study of Australian history was the establishment of the *Australian dictionary of*

biography, a multivolume series on people of significance in Australian history, still being produced from its headquarters at the Australian National University. Planning for the *ADB* began in 1958 when Sir Keith Hancock, head of the Department of History in the Research School of Social Sciences at ANU, called a meeting of historians from each state. The first volume appeared in 1966, and volumes continue to appear approximately every two years.

Within the vastly expanded publication in Australian history by professional historians, there were certain trends and schools of thought. In the early postwar period, the growth in the teaching of Australian history led to the writing of a number of general histories for courses: R.M. Crawford, *Australia* (1952); A.G.L. Shaw, *The story of Australia* (1955); Douglas Pike, *The quiet continent* (1962); Manning Clark, *A short history of Australia* (1963); and Russel Ward *Australia* (1965). Such introductory overviews fell out of professional favour as researchers applied themselves to more particular problems; and the long survey, the sweep from 1788 to the present, became the prerogative not only of 'general history' but of argumentative history such as Humphrey McQueen's *A new Britannia*, or Anne Summers' *Damned whores and God's police*, or Bob Connell and Terry Irving's *Class structure in Australian history*. Regional history flourished, for example in Duncan Waterson's study of the Darling Downs and Gordon Buxton's of the Riverina. The study of both political and economic history boomed, and social history followed. As always in history-writing, the topics created and chosen by those who wrote about Australian history reflected their changing preoccupations: in the 1970s the history of Aboriginal-European relations, male-female relations, and immigration policies and experiences grew apace. As the older general histories dated, the most widely used teaching text in Australian history at tertiary level in the late 1970s and early 1980s was probably a team effort edited by Professor Frank Crowley entitled *A new history of Australia* (1974). The looming of the bicentennial year, with its officially sanctioned celebrations, pushed historians back to writing general histories. With a greatly expanded number of practitioners, and a discipline more conscious than ever of the conflicts and differences in historical interpretation, many historians found it difficult to write the kind of general history that had served the needs of history students thirty years earlier.

Historians are generally well aware that history is rewritten by each generation, and by particular social groups, in the light of their concerns. They know also that particular conceptions of history are mobilised for conflicting political purposes—in the bicentennial year no less, indeed probably more, than ever. The strong sense of the malleability of the historical account according to the recounter has so captured the imagination of historians that titles for books and articles expressing this idea—*Making Histories*, *Constructing the Past*, *Recreating the Past*, and the like—are in danger of becoming clichés. On the other hand, totally relativist positions are rare. Most historians agree that the task of writing history imposes certain constraints different from those facing the writer of historical fiction. While both write drama, highlighting some things and playing down others, selecting both consciously and unconsciously in order to tell a particular story, there is a difference, hard to define but important; the historian must have a fidelity to the sources not required of the novelist or dramatist.

It is in this spirit that this volume has been written. The editors and contributors have very different values, theoretical frameworks and political perspectives. But underlying the project has been a common view that if the bicentenary is a time for taking stock of the past, then that taking stock has to be based on detailed research, an interrogation of the sources, an attempt to make sense of them, and an understanding that those attempts are themselves historically conditioned.



MEGALO WAGE PAUSE PROJECT,
CANBERRA

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NOTES ON ILLUSTRATIONS

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Page ii 114.6 × 162.9 cm. Purchased 1956.

I. AUSTRALIANS AND THE WORLD.

Page xvi 109.8 × 90 cm.

CHAPTER 1. AT WAR

Page xviii 1949, 45.6 × 60.9 cm (24072). Page 3 'VDC night patrol receiving final orders', 62 × 76.7 cm (22208). Page 4 Courtesy Kraft Foods Ltd. Page 5 Courtesy Federal Publishing Company Proprietary Limited. Pages 6, 7 and 9 Courtesy Herald and Weekly Times Limited. Page 9 'Darwin 19 February 1942', 122 × 182.8 cm, (28520). Page 10 Cover Winifred Towers, Sydney [1948]. Courtesy Coca-Cola Australia. Page 12 Courtesy Goodyear Tyre & Rubber Co. (Australia) Limited. Page 14 51 × 39 cm. Pages 15 and 19 Courtesy Herald and Weekly Times Limited. Page 22 'RAAF at Milne Bay, August-September 1942', 1968-69, 152.4 × 274.3 cm (27628). Page 28 Left: Pamphlet Jack Lindsay, published Labour Council of New South Wales; right: Courtesy Chesebrough-Ponds Page 29 49 × 37 cm (22746).

CHAPTER 2. FOREIGN POLICIES

Page 38 Artist unknown, 51 × 63 cm. Pages 40, 41

Page 42 Gatefold, Weaver Hawkins. 61 × 78.5 cm

Page 48 Courtesy News Ltd. Page 49 Artist unknown, 51 × 38 cm.

II: PEOPLE AND PLACE

Page 56 91 × 122.1 cm.

CHAPTER 3. THE PEOPLE

Page 58 122 × 151 cm. Page 59 Courtesy Australian Tourism Industry Association. Page 61 Top: 61.2 × 81.4 cm (43428); bottom: Courtesy Coles Myer Ltd. Page 64 Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences. Page 67 Courtesy Lansdowne Rigby. Page 69 *Australian Immigration: A Bibliography and Digest*. Edited Charles A. Price, no 4 Supplement, Canberra 1981. Page 75 Courtesy Alan Matheson.

CHAPTER 4. CITIES AND SUBURBS

Page 76 77.2 × 99.7 cm. Purchased 1950. Page 96 Courtesy BHP.

CHAPTER 5. THE COUNTRY

Page 105 Courtesy Wigmore's Tractors Pty Ltd. Page 107 Below left: Courtesy Allis-Chalmers Australia Limited; below right: Courtesy West Australian Newspapers Limited. Page 108 Courtesy Massey-Ferguson (Australia) Limited.

CHAPTER 6. CARS FOR THE PEOPLE

Page 118 Oil on canvas, 41 × 101.8 cm, purchased 1956. Pages 119, 120 and 125 Courtesy GMH. Page 128 816B/B 7088. Page 129 152.5 × 183.5 cm.

III. ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIANS

Page 130 Oil on canvas, 182 × 105.5 cm.

CHAPTER 7. ASSIMILATION AND AFTER

Page 132 121.8 × 61.2 cm. Page 137 Oil on PVA on paper, 46 × 58.5 cm. Page 141 50.1 × 40 cm. Courtesy Qantas.

CHAPTER 8. THE CENTRE: A LIMITED COLONISATION

Page 164 Source: *Report of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner – Uluru/Lake Amadeus*, Canberra 1980. Page 165 Top: Courtesy United Permanent Building Society Ltd; bottom; Yulara Development Corporation.

IV: POLITICS AND MEDIA

Page 176 32 Standard commercial size colour photographs on card, 75 × 100 cm. Purchased 1981.

CHAPTER 10. POLITICS

Page 187 Published Sydney, Current Book Distributors, 1956. Page 192 Courtesy WEL. Full poster 38 × 50 cm.

CHAPTER 11. RELIGION AND POLITICS

Page 196 55.6 × 43 cm. Purchased 1981 (1779). Page 201 Courtesy Penguin Books Australia Ltd. Page 213 Courtesy Anzea Publishers.

CHAPTER 12. PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION

Page 218 Courtesy Philips Industries Holdings Limited. Page 221 Courtesy News Ltd. Page 223 Courtesy Bob Ceveri. Page 230 Colour screenprint on paper, 58 × 45.1 cm. Page 234 Courtesy *Time Australia*: Courtesy Federal Publishing Company Proprietary Ltd.

CHAPTER 13. THE FILM INDUSTRY

Page 246 Courtesy Margaret Fink Films.

V. MAKING A LIVING

Page 252 38.6 × 47.1 cm. Gift of Howard Hinton.

CHAPTER 14. BOOM AND RECESSION

Page 254 61 × 72 cm. Page 255 Courtesy BHP. Page 258 Top: Courtesy Elders Pastoral; bottom: Courtesy BHP. Page 268 N72/1772.

CHAPTER 15. WORK

Page 272 33 × 55.5 cm. Page 278 816B/D1210. Page 279 Z147/24. Page 281 from *A Glimpse of Australia*, Sydney [nd].

Page 286 50 × 75.5 cm. Page 287 Solver scenic acrylic paint on canvas, 1984, 276 × 180 cm.

CHAPTER 16. BOSSES AND WORKERS

Page 288 Solver scenic acrylic paint on canvas, 1983, 198 × 197 cm.

Page 291 100.4 × 200.2 cm. Page 293 Banners-solver scenic acrylic paint on canvas Top: NSW Teachers' Federation Union, 1983, 280 × 180 cm; bottom: Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union of Australia, NSW Branch, 1983, 183 × 244 cm; insert: N24/843 Courtesy AMWU Pages 295, 297 and 299 Courtesy Communist Party of Australia. Page 300 Left: E113/15/12.

CHAPTER 17. CHILDREN, WOMEN AND MEN

Page 308 33.5 × 25.5 cm. Page 311 Courtesy Angus & Robertson Publishers. Page 317 Poster 38 × 50 cm. Page 319 Z147, Courtesy ACTU.

VI. SICKNESS AND HEALTH

Page 326 62 × 43.5 cm.

CHAPTER 18. CURE AND PREVENTION

Page 331 Courtesy Sterling Pharmaceuticals Pty Limited. Page 336 Courtesy Reckitt & Colman Pharmaceuticals. Page 340 Courtesy JNP Films.

CHAPTER 19. CHANGING MINDS

Page 342 122 × 243.7 cm. Page 349 Courtesy Nicholas Kiwi Pty Ltd.

VII. TAKING STOCK

Page 356 54.5 × 45.5 cm. Purchased 1951.

CHAPTER 21. INTO HISTORY

Page 438 Courtesy John Meredith. Page 449 38 × 50 cm.

ABBREVIATIONS

Periodical titles are followed, as appropriate, by volume or series number, issue number and year of publication.

%	per cent	AONSW	Archives Office of New South Wales
£	pound(s)	AP	Australia Party
AAL	Aboriginal Advancement League	ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission/Corporation	ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organization
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	ATC	Air Training Corps
ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation	AWAS	Australian Women's Army Service
ACSPA	Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations	AWGC	Australian Woolgrowers Council
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	AWU	Australian Workers' Union
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions	BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
ADB	<i>Australian dictionary of biography</i>	BHP	Broken Hill Proprietary Company
ADC	Aboriginal Development Corporation	BIG	Basic Industry Group
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union	BLF	Builders' Labourers' Federation
AFC	Australian Film Commission	BWIU	Building Workers' Industrial Union
AIF	Australian Imperial Force	C	Commonwealth
ALP	Australian Labor Party	CAAMA	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association
AMA	Australian Medical Association	CAD	Commission for Aboriginal Development
AMIA	Australian Meat Industries Association	CAGEO	Council of Australian Government Employee Organisations
AMWU	Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union	CAI	Confederation of Australian Industry
ANOP	Australian National Opinion Poll	CEP	Community Employment Program
ANZUS	Australia-New Zealand-United States Treaty		

ABBREVIATIONS

ch(s)	chapter(s)	NH&MRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (USA)	NRMA	National Roads and Motorists' Association
cm	centimetre	NSW	New South Wales
CMS	Church Missionary Society	NSWC	National South West Coalition
comp	compiled	NT	Northern Territory
CP/CPA	Communist Party of Australia	OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union	PD	<i>Parliamentary debates</i> (followed by volume, year and page number)
d	penny/pence	PIB	Papuan Infantry Battalion
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs	POW	Prisoner(s) of war
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross	PP	<i>Parliamentary papers</i> (followed by volume, year and page number)
DLP	Democratic Labor Party	Qld	Queensland
DP	displaced persons	RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
ECT	electroconvulsive therapy	RAF	Royal Air Force
ed(s)	editor(s)/edited by	RAN	Royal Australian Navy
EPA	Environment Protection Authority	RBT	random breath testing
esp	especially	RSI	repetition strain injury
EYL	Eureka Youth League	RSL	Returned Services League
FCAA	Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines	s	shilling(s)
FCAATSI	Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders	SA	South Australia
ff	following pages	SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
GMH	General Motors-Holden's	SEATO	South-East Asia Treaty Organisation
IAC	Industries Assistance Commission	SMH	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>
<i>ibid</i>	<i>in the same work</i>	TWU	Transport Workers' Union
IPEC	Interstate Parcel Express Company	UAP	United Australia Party
IRO	International Refugee Organisation	UN	United Nations
J	journal	US/USA	United States of America
km	kilometre	USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
MHR	Member of the House of Representatives	VDC	Volunteer Defence Corps
MJA	<i>Medical Journal of Australia</i>	Vic	Victoria
MP	Member of Parliament	vol	volume
ms	manuscript	WA	Western Australia
MTEA	Metal Trades Employers' Association	WAAAF	Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force
MTIA	Metal Trades Industry Association of Australia	WEA	Workers Educational Association
na	not available	WEB	Women's Employment Board
NAC	National Aboriginal Conference	WEL	Women's Electoral Lobby
NACC	National Aboriginal Consultative Committee	WRANS	Women's Royal Australian Naval Service
NAOU	North Australia Observer Unit	WWF	Waterside Workers Federation
NAWU	North Australian Workers Union	YCL	Young Communist League
NFF	National Farmers' Federation		

Convention Adopted in Quotations

Throughout this series quotations have been transcribed literally from the original documents. The use of 'sic' to refer to errors has generally been avoided.