AUSTRALIAN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES
An annotated bibliography

Volume 1: To 1850

Kay Walsh and Joy Hooton

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The National Library of Australia and the Australian Scholarly Editions Centre at the University College, Australian Defence Force Academy are delighted to publish this annotated bibliography of Australian autobiographical writing. This important work of reference represents the outcome of a close collaboration between two institutions both of which have a special interest in documenting and interpreting Australian life and experience. The project has drawn on the rich Australian collections of the National Library and the research skills provided by the Scholarly Editions Centre and the English Department at University College.

Meticulously researched and annotated, *Australian Autobiographical Narratives* is a fascinating and comprehensive guide to published Australian autobiographical writing dealing with the period to 1850. Until now the genre of autobiography as a source for the study of Australian history has been largely neglected. Yet, in the words of Joy Hooton, autobiographies are uniquely valuable sources providing an 'insight into the varieties of knowing nineteenth-century Australia as its European settlers knew it'.

Compilation of this bibliography is due to the determination, dedication and expert knowledge of Kay Walsh, Joy Hooton and their colleagues. Future students of Australian history and culture will owe them a debt of gratitude for undertaking the compilation of this work of reference. It is hoped that this joint venture between the National Library and the Australian Defence Force Academy will serve as the foundation for future cooperative ventures.

Warren Horton

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The Australian Scholarly Editions Centre at ADFA and the National Library of Australia both wish to thank the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand (est. 1969) for its support, in particular for its nomination of a panel of referees for the series. Professor Elizabeth Webby and Dr Brenda Niall are thanked for refereeing the present volume. The BSANZ's main area of interest is physical bibliography: the history of printing, publishing, bookselling, typefounding, papermaking, bookbinding, paleography and codicology, textual editing and the history of the book. Through its annual conference, its quarterly Bulletin and its assistance in securing funding for large-scale bibliographical projects (such as the Academy Editions of Australian Literature and Australia's Book Heritage Resources Project), the BSANZ encourages serious and scholarly bibliographical research across a wide range of areas and historical periods.

This bibliography was made possible by a three-year grant from the Australian Research Council. The entries, edited by Kay Walsh and Joy Hooton, are the work of several researchers. Kay Walsh and Joy Hooton have provided the bulk of the entries; the other contributors are Patricia Barton, Janet Williams, Loes Baker and Philippa Wicks. Most of the research was conducted in the National Library of Australia, and the contributors acknowledge the valuable assistance of the staff of the Petherick Reading Room.
Autobiography has always been a prolific genre in Australia, and yet both cultural historians and literary critics have paid this form of literature scant attention. Overseas the obvious attractions of literary autobiography for the speculative theorist, such as the necessarily problematic, self-referential nature of the genre, and the coincidence of its theoretical issues with those of post-structuralism, led to its growth as a particularly fashionable field of critical debate from the early 1970s. Since then the field has widened to include so-called non-literary autobiography, so that we now find collections of essays on American autobiography, for instance, including overviews of decades or historical periods of life-writing as well as studies of sub-genres or groupings such as immigrant autobiography, African-American, Asian-American, Jewish-American, Native American autobiography, gay or lesbian autobiography, slave narratives, occupational or vocational narratives, or more broadly women's life-writing. Meanwhile in several countries, but particularly in the United States there has existed for some time a lively awareness of the importance of autobiography for a more thorough understanding of the diversity of the national culture, and this has stimulated in turn a proliferation of bibliographies, the first essential tools for the researcher. In France, for instance, Philippe Lejeune is compiling an annotated bibliography of all published nineteenth-century autobiographies, classified according to field of experience: farming lives, lives of workers and craftsmen, administrative lives, lives of teachers, lives of artists, religious lives, political lives, military lives, etc. In the United States, interest in the genre has led to a wide range of bibliographies; these include A bibliography of American autobiographies, compiled by Louis Kaplan and others (1962), Richard G. Lillard's American life in autobiography, a descriptive guide (1956), Russell C. Brignano's Black Americans in autobiography (1984), Patricia K. Addis' Through a woman's I (1983), and American autobiography 1945–1980 by Mary Louise Briscoe, Lynn Z. Bloom and Barbara Tobias (1982). British autobiography is reasonably well served by William Matthews' British autobiographies (1955, 1968), which includes 6500 entries, and by the as yet incomplete Autobiographies of the working class (1984) compiled by J. Burnett, D. Vincent and D. Mayall. Matthews also compiled the bibliography Canadian diaries and autobiographies (1950). Apart from some narrow listings in defined areas, and the 50 or so entries indexed by Matthews as having Australian content, no bibliographies of autobiographies exist in Australia. The present volume is intended to provide researchers with a comprehensive, annotated guide to published Australian autobiographical writing dealing with the period to 1850; a further volume is projected for the period 1851–1900.

Why are autobiographies important, given their intrinsic partiality and the range of more reliable, objective historical data? As quarries for historical facts, this particular group of early narratives has a varied usefulness, in some cases an extremely limited usefulness. Inaccuracy, either conscious or unconscious, personal bias, overt or implicit political, religious or commercial agenda and sometimes even
blatant plagiarism from authoritative documents, all often compounded by weaknesses of memory, make many of them fragile authorities. What they offer, however, is an insight into the varieties of knowing nineteenth-century Australia as its European settlers knew it. Autobiographies cast light on the time-bound perceptions of place, personalities, peoples and events; they initiate the reader into the actual, lived effects of structural features and structural change and into individual responses to those features and changes. They provide the reader with a more intimate, dramatic, detailed and emphatically more varied experience of early Australia than is accessible from contemporary documentary accounts or even historians' histories, however well written.

From the first, Australia was an occasion for autobiography. Not unlike the impact of the French Revolution on life-writing in France, which prior to that event had no peasant autobiography, the revolutionary event of coming to Australia, either voluntarily or involuntarily, inspired numerous individuals, who doubtless would never have become autobiographers had they stayed at home, with a compulsion to describe that experience. Often part of this compulsion was obviously the need to explain to relatives and friends left behind, the extraordinary differences of Australia from the native land and to maintain familial and friendly bonds by preserving and communicating the story of the self, removed from familiarity by distance. Sometimes in the case of black sheep, the motive was one of self-justification or at least redemption in the form of confession, or, in the case of those who saw themselves as unjustly condemned, one of protest. Occasionally the author wrote to cash in on a marketable commodity. Often a partial motive was to explore in retrospect the revolution in self-perception which Australia stimulated: unused to physical labour, or to the solitude and isolation which pioneering life often imposed, many autobiographers implicitly record their surprise at their own powers of survival or endurance. More often still, the act of writing the life surprises the author into a fresh awareness of the resilience of the younger self, of hardships overcome and losses endured.

Reflecting on French autobiography as social history as distinct from literary autobiography, Lejeune (in Philippe Lejeune on autobiography, 1989) has isolated three stimulating factors, all of which derive from the Revolution, 'the point at which traditional civilization cracks'. They are linked to: social mobility, i.e. the movement of rural workers to the city; deviance in various forms, i.e. criminal peasants, physically handicapped individuals, or those who received religious apparitions; and the management of a business, i.e. the new perception and presentation of the self as 'self-made'. Different as the two cultures are, early Australian autobiography reflects similar motivations. The experience of mobility from the mother country to the colony and frequently within Australia itself is one of the strongest reasons for writing. Deviance as a motive is most obvious in the case of convicts, political exiles, adventurers and religious fanatics, but in a wider sense many autobiographers see themselves as deviant: the amateur explorer, for instance, who tracks into unsettled country, the small settler who attempts to run cattle for the first time in hostile territory, the newly married woman who exchanges suburban comfort for a slab hut, or the clergyman who exchanges the moderate life of southern counties Anglicanism for the far-flung rural circuit, all of these often write because they see themselves as in some way exceptional, as departing from the
Many more write as self-made individuals, to celebrate their achievements or to record their misfortunes as pioneers, military officers, sportsmen or politicians; indeed, voluntary emigration is often presented as a decisive act of making the self while recovery from involuntary exile can offer the same consolations.

It is also useful to see these narratives not just as detached individual texts but also as complex social transactions. Barbara Hernstein Smith (On narrative, 1981) has defined narrative discourse as 'most minimally and most generally ... verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened'. Such an interpretation, which emphasises the way that every telling is produced and experienced under certain social conditions and constraints and ... always involves two parties, an audience as well as a narrator', both of whom must be individually motivated to participate in it, highlights both the contextuality of every autobiographical narrative and its individuality. Alerted to the multiplicity of functions that a narrative may perform, we are less likely to find 'any single fundamental political purpose or psychological (or transcendental) effect of narratives, whether it be to reflect reality or to supplement it, to reinforce ruling ideologies or to subvert them'.

Certainly, one of the most striking features of this early group of writings is their variety. These narrators are extremely mixed in terms of class, ethnic origin, gender, wealth, education, occupation and literary skill, although the premise of their conversation with the reader is almost invariably in terms of occupation. Only some women and a handful of men, most of whom played a multiplicity of roles, are content to present the self initially as an individual and not as a function, even though women write with a more real sense of relatedness. It seems that placing oneself within the socio-economic structure of the community is the first necessity of writing, a formal introduction as it were, setting the story's parameters, which may or may not finally constrain it. Thus we have accounts from amateur explorers, clergymen, military officers, seamen, whalers, merchants, convicts, teachers, squatters, small settlers, commandants, naturalists, political exiles, itinerant workers, criminals, sportsmen, evangelists, politicians and missionaries. Women, with some striking exceptions, place themselves within the community of the family, writing as wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers of squatters, missionaries, clergymen and politicians.

Individually, but especially as a group, these narratives form a remarkably rich cultural resource, providing multiple perspectives on the early European settlement of Australia and suggesting numerous possibilities for cultural historians and literary scholars. Only a few of the most striking aspects of the group can be mentioned here. If one of the motives for writing was the sense of having undergone experience out of the ordinary, several autobiographers seem to have led lives which might seem too fantastic even for Hollywood. Joseph Holt's A rum story falls into this category, describing his 'progress' from hero of the Wicklow rebellion to exile in New South Wales, where he had some success as a farmer, followed by unjust arrest and transportation to Norfolk Island, where he was first oppressed by Commandant Foveaux and then treated mildly by his successor, John Piper, before his return to New South Wales, where he was pardoned, finally departing for Ireland only to be wrecked on the Falkland Islands. So does Jorgen Jorgenson's narrative which describes his two visits to Australia, the first in the early 1800s as a
young midshipman accompanying Flinders’ survey of the south-eastern coastline, the second as a transported convict in 1825. In between these two visits he had commanded a privateer during the Anglo-Danish war, made himself head of the government of a separate Iceland before dismissal after nine weeks, and was imprisoned in Newgate for debt after acquiring an addiction to gambling during a previous term of imprisonment.

Extraordinary events are no guarantee of interest, however, and some of the most readable and poignant narratives are the simplest. As Albert Facey’s A fortunate life has demonstrated, the ordinary may have a special charm and a special power to win readers of later generations. Facey’s book won a response from 1980s readers which might not have been so widespread or generous in the 1940s, just as the American narrative, Black Elk speaks, relatively unnoticed in the 1930s, spoke with a new relevance to 1960s readers. Sarah Davenport’s semi-literate ‘Sceth of an emigrants life in Australiis’, written in 1841 but unpublished until 1984, is one of the most moving of these early voices, a remarkable testimony to the resilience of the human spirit. Similarly, many of the convict narratives, notwithstanding the usual submission to the ‘moral’ rhetoric of the period, are powerful witnesses of human endurance and, in some cases, humour.

It is generally assumed that only the wealthy indulged in autobiography, but a large proportion of these narratives are written by working-class people. Education, furthermore, is no guarantee of enlightenment; indeed often the poorly educated reveal more sympathy and understanding of both convicts and Aborigines and more empathy with the landscape, than the conventionally educated. Louisa Meredith, observant and articulate though she is, has one eye constantly trained on her English readers, who are likely to be appalled by colonial philistinism. James Demarr, on the other hand, who worked side by side with convicts and travelled extensively in the outback, is unblinkered by an association with established attitudes. Literary skill also seems to be a more random than predictable quality. If some self-consciously literary or ‘educated’ autobiographies have a dated air, others, written by unlikely individuals are vivid and even gripping. Foster Fyans, Captain in the British army and apologist for John Price, has a gift for witty satire; George Hamilton, who describes himself simply as a ‘colonist’, manages to make even droving cattle humorous and lively. Women, generally less prolific autobiographers, are well represented in this group, although admittedly this is partly a product of our definition of autobiography; official accounts, the exclusive preserve of male writers, and narratives which aim to be purely documentary such as the reports of explorers have been excluded as lying outside our broad definition of autobiography defined below. Although women, like convicts, generally insert themselves apologetically into the reading market, there are some striking exceptions. Elizabeth Davis and Eliza Davies, for example, are both unconventional women who display a strong sense of personal worth, a pride in their individual enterprise and a capacity for adventure which surpasses that of many of the male writers.

The definition of autobiography as a literary genre has been much debated, and still eludes critics of the field, who generally acknowledge that it is an unstable, complex and protean form of writing. Lejeune’s working definition that it is a retrospective prose narrative written with a focus on the author’s individual life and in
particular on the author's personality is, very roughly, the definition we have followed. Many of the narratives included here present themselves as accounts of Australia rather than accounts of the self, although the latter in fact figures large; others are more strictly memoirs in that they focus, at least ostensibly or initially, on the lives and personalities of others. Given the large number of prose narratives generated by early settlement, selection has been difficult and we have had to make numerous borderline decisions on inclusion or omission. In making these decisions we have followed the general rule that to qualify for inclusion a narrative must predominantly focus on the experience and responses of the self; Australia invariably looms large, but it is the personal response to the country that places the narrative within the category of autobiography as we have defined it. Charles John Baker's Sydney and Melbourne (1845), for example, is excluded on the grounds that Baker's main purpose is to communicate scientific and useful information for those contemplating emigration. In his preface Baker apologises for the necessity of inserting an account of his own 'doings and journeyings in the colony', but maintains that he has 'confined the relation of his own proceedings to circumstances either necessary to give connection to the work, or calculated to impart information not contained in other publications'. And although he refers to his residence in the colony as 'clouded by domestic misfortune', the extent or nature of this misfortune is never disclosed. Explorers' narratives are a more difficult case. As Paul Carter has commented in The road to Botany Bay (1987), the generic expectations of the explorers' reading public were firmly entrenched and distinguished between narratives of travel and autobiography. A hybrid form, the literature of travelling required the explorer on the one hand to give himself up, as an empirical scientist, to the appearance of phenomena, and on the other 'to adopt a distinct persona, whose reactions were quite as predictable as those of the hero in a romance'. For our purposes, the former restraint is more of an argument for exclusion than the latter, since the autobiographer can no more avoid adopting a persona than the novelist writing in the first person; the stance of objectivity, on the other hand, imposed by the demands of empirical science is, in our judgement, a powerful curb on self-exploration.

This volume includes published narratives to 1850, that is, those whose content largely precedes the discovery of gold. Obviously, the content of some narratives extends beyond 1850. We have attempted, however, to take the discovery of gold as a benchmark, confining this volume to those narratives which are concerned mainly with pre-gold rush Australia. It should be noted that the historical accuracy of these narratives is often suspect and that it is not the aim of this bibliography to correct or draw attention to the authors' historical errors or to show where they depart from contemporary historical wisdom. The convict narratives listed here, for instance, almost all stress extreme hardships and punishments, contrary to current research which suggests that only a small percentage of convicts suffered to this degree. Several reasons for this discrepancy suggest themselves: that sensational narratives or narratives which fulfilled the public myth of convict life gained publication more readily, that chance factors led to the publication of some and not other narratives, or that this particular group of writers, which includes a substantial group of political prisoners, were more likely to attract punishment than the mass of their fellows.
The entries

Entries are listed alphabetically by name of author, and given a sequential number for indexing purposes. The name of each author is given as shown on the title page, additional details where known are given in square brackets. Birth and death dates are provided where available, and 'port.' indicates the presence of a portrait. Where the author of a narrative is included in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (cited as *ADB*), a note is also provided at the end of the entry. The editions selected for listing are not necessarily first editions. Numerous narratives appeared first in serial form, ran into several editions, or were initially privately printed. Since we had limited resources, we selected the most accessible edition, noting the location (in square brackets) and date of the initial publication, where we knew them, but making no attempt to explore the bibliographical, editorial or authorial differences between editions. Two important titles were discovered after the bibliography was virtually complete and have been inserted in the appropriate place and assigned numbers 160a and 239a.

The majority of the narratives are held in the National Library of Australia; where this is not the case, a location is given. The date span at the end of each entry refers to the Australian content of the narrative only, although the overseas content will generally be obvious from the entry itself.

Indexes

In order to make the bibliography generally useful, we have provided indexes to personal names, places and subjects. Obviously, it was not possible to index all items in these categories, but we hope that the headings combine enough precision and breadth to assist a range of researchers. While in most cases the indexes will refer a reader to personal names, places and subjects mentioned in the summary of a narrative, some of the works listed contain such density of detail that, for reasons of space, this has not been possible. James Backhouse's *A narrative of a visit to the Australian colonies* (1843), for example, encompasses a number of significant topics which, while not referred to in the summary, are nevertheless indexed.

Sources

Traditional library classifications are of little use in retrieving autobiographies. Being a form rather than a subject, autobiographies are generally not grouped together on shelves at a common classification number, or listed under a single heading in a subject catalogue or national bibliography. Classed as biography, regional history, or even church history, or according to occupation, vocation, or author's field of interest, nineteenth-century autobiographies are often difficult to recover. Lejeune has approached the problem by scrutinising all the works
corresponding to the call number LN 27 at the Bibliothèque Nationale—that is, everything which might correspond to the term 'individual biography', of which autobiographical texts represent one to two per cent. Although the prospect for the retrieval of Australian biographies has improved with the introduction of the term 'biography' into the tracing notes used in cataloguing for the Australian National Bibliography and the Australian Bibliographic Network, making recently published biographies retrievable by computer search, historically the treatment of biography has varied considerably throughout Australian libraries, and even within institutions has altered according to cataloguing trends. An examination of the shelves of the National Library of Australia at the Dewey classification 920 has yielded only about five to seven per cent of our listing. However, nineteenth-century Australian bibliography is admirably served by John Ferguson's Bibliography of Australia (1941–69) and our initial search was an item by item examination of each entry in this source. For material published since 1900, a similar examination was made of the Annual Catalogue of Australian Publications (1937–61), the Australian National Bibliography (1961–91) and the retrospective Australian national bibliography 1901–1950 (1988) and, in a more selective fashion, of the other sources listed below.

General bibliographies and library catalogues


---, Australian National Bibliography. Canberra, National Library of Australia, 1961-


Petherick, Edward Augustus, 'Bibliography of Australia' (ms, 60 boxes, Petherick Reading Room, National Library of Australia)


Subject and regional bibliographies


Crowley, F.K., The records of Western Australia. Perth, University of Western Australia, 1953. 1094 pp.


Hogan, Terry et. al., Index to journal articles on Australian history. Armidale, NSW, University of New England, 1976. 203 pp. Further volumes by V. Crittenden, 1980–82. 4 vols


Miller, E. Morris, *Australian literature from its beginnings to 1935: a descriptive and bibliographical survey of books by Australian authors in poetry, drama, fiction, criticism and anthology...* Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1940. 2 vols


Monie, Joanna, *Victorian history and politics. European settlement to 1939; a survey of the literature*. Melbourne, Borchardt Library, La Trobe University, 1982. 2 vols


**General histories and cultural studies**


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<th>Volume 1: To 1850</th>
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<td><strong>1</strong>&lt;br&gt;ADAMS, JOHN W.&lt;br&gt;<em>My early days in the colony</em>&lt;br&gt;[Balaclava, SA, 1902]. 12 pp.&lt;br&gt;This brief narrative recording the author's pioneering experiences in South Australia includes a first-hand account of the establishment of the colony and the earliest settlement of Adelaide. John Adams sailed to South Australia in 1836 as an immigrant in HMS <em>Buffalo</em>, which also carried Governor Hindmarsh, William Light and Rev. C.B. Howard. He witnessed Hindmarsh's proclamation of the colony on 28 December 1836 and helped pull wagons of luggage from the first encampment at Buffalo Row to the site chosen for Adelaide by William Light, in the face, Adams claims, of opposition from Hindmarsh and some of the settlers. He recalls that amusement was the first reaction of the settlers to the sight of the Aborigines, but that mutual distrust soon led to hostilities initiated by injudicious behaviour on both sides. He later witnessed native society and customs, and their prowess with spears and waddies and in hunting when they gathered in groups as large as 500 at North Adelaide. Initially settling on what became the Adelaide Parklands, the colonists began to 'spread around Adelaide' and Adams established a farm on the South Road. He records the hardships caused by the lack of roads and scarcity of provisions, and the back-breaking work of grubbing and clearing endured by farming colonists, who found that farming skills learned in Europe often had little application in Australia. Responding to chronic shortages of flour, they 'blundered on for a year or two' experimenting with the cultivation of wheat, which was greatly assisted by the introduction of the reaping machine developed by his friend John Ridley.</td>
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| **2**<br>ANDERSON, JOSEPH<br>(1790–1877)<br>*Recollections of a peninsula veteran*<br>London, Edward Amold, 1913. 299 pp., port.<br>Anderson's *Recollections* deal with his career in the British army, which included a period from 1834 to 1839 as Commandant of Norfolk Island. Before accepting the commission as Commandant from Governor Bourke, Anderson expressed some trepidation for his family, in view of a recent mutiny, but on arrival was delighted with his quarters and their defence. He describes the climate and economy of the island, and expresses his satisfaction that the latter is entirely under his control: 'with all these advantages we lived most comfortably and almost for nothing.' He supervised the trial of the mutineers and subsequent public execution of 13 of the ringleaders. Although he is keen to emphasise the peacefulness of his regime, he conveys a clear impression of the uneasy control held by the authorities and the practice of using informers. Distressed to discover the absence of a resident chaplain of any denomination, Anderson appointed two convicts with appropriate experience as acting ministers for the Protestant and Roman Catholic convict community. He records two instances of prisoners attempting murder in order to bring about their own deaths and describes the punishments generally meted out. Corporal punishment, he maintains, was much reduced during his jurisdiction, amounting to about 75 cases a year and varying from 50 to 300 lashes. Meanwhile the prison population increased from 1200 to 1700. Anderson also separated 100 convicts who had previously been soldiers from the other convicts on the grounds of their moral superiority and possible usefulness in case of trouble. He describes the theatrical entertainments provided by the officers, soldiers and convicts, the picnics, parties,
Anley, Charlotte
The prisoners of Australia
London, J. Hatchard and Son, 1841. 192 pp.

On a visit to New South Wales in 1836 Anley, in the company of Samuel Marsden, visited female convicts at the Parramatta Female Factory on behalf of the London Committee of the British Ladies' Prison Visiting Association. She describes the conditions of the prisoners, to whom she preached, and their responses to her, and discusses the transportation system generally. She also describes Port Stephens, St Heliers and St Aubyns and her reactions to the Australian landscape and climate. Heavily overlaid with religious observations, the second half of the narrative consists of stories of female servants in England who have either found salvation or fallen from moral grace.

Date span: 1836

4
Archer, Thomas
(1823–1905)
Recollections of a rambling life
Yokohama, Japan Gazette, 1897. 286 pp.

Following his arrival in Sydney in 1838, Archer was employed by his relatives, the Walkers, on their stations in the Bathurst area, and as a clerk in their Sydney office. In 1841 Anderson sailed with his regiment for India, returning to Australia briefly in 1846 to purchase land in South Yarra, on which he built the mansion ‘Fairlie’. He presents himself as a simple man with ‘the heart of a soldier’, so devoted to his regiment that in 1848 the prospect of retirement after 43 years service was ‘most agonizing and I could scarcely endure it’. His autobiography concludes with expressions of thankfulness for subsequent years of good health and family happiness. He was a Member of the Legislative Council of Victoria from 1852 to 1856. Thomas Atkins and Thomas Cook (qq.v.) give different, negative pictures of Anderson’s regime at Norfolk Island.

Date span: 1834–1841, 1846, 1848
Note: See ADB, vol. 1
in some detail the setting up of family stations, the management of sheep and cattle, and expeditions of exploration into Central Queensland.

Date span: 1838–1852
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

5
ARTHUR, EDWARD
A journal of events from Melbourne, Port Philip, to Mount Schank, in the district of Adelaide, New Holland, a distance of 400 miles, undertaken in 1843...


Having driven a mob of 4000 sheep from Melbourne to South Australia, Edward and Fortesque Arthur spent some 15 months attempting to establish a sheep station on suitable land they found at Mount Schanck. Edward describes the difficulties they experienced, particularly with the Aborigines, whom they were unable to prevent from stealing their sheep.

Date span: 1843–1844

6
ATKINS, THOMAS (b.1808)
The wanderings of the clerical Eulyses, described in a narrative of ten years' residence in Tasmania and New South Wales, at Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay; in Calcutta, Madras, and Cape Town


Reverend Atkins, who had been educated for the Independent Ministry, journeyed to Sydney via Hobart in 1836, after he was appointed chaplain to the penal settlement at Norfolk Island. Atkins was appalled during the passage to the Island when the 70 convicts on board were kept permanently chained to the floor of a cabin 18 feet square. At Norfolk he was even more horrified and came into conflict with the civil surgeon, Patrick Harnett, and the Commandant, Joseph Anderson (q.v.). Atkins writes graphically of the living conditions of the prisoners, their sufferings and ill-treatment under the regime of Anderson, whom he describes as educated 'in the school of the late Emperor of all the Russias'. Although his stay at Norfolk was brief (November 1836–January 1837), Atkins gives a comprehensive and searching picture of life there. Returning to Sydney via Moreton Bay, he spent 15 months as a minister on the Lower Hawkesbury, before travelling to India in 1838 as a missionary. On his return to Sydney in 1841 he lived at Balmain until 1847, when he returned to India and thence to England. A man of violent enthusiasms and antipathies, who appears to have encountered frustrations in all his endeavours, Atkins writes trenchantly on such topics as land speculation, emigration, transportation and ecclesiastical affairs, and on such people as John Dunmore Lang, Solomon Wiseman and Bishop Broughton. In 1869 Atkins published an amended and expanded version of his Wanderings, titled Reminiscences of twelve years' residence in Tasmania and New South Wales, Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay.

Date span: 1836–1847
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

7
BACKHOUSE, JAMES
(1794–1869)
A narrative of a visit to the Australian colonies


Backhouse bases his Narrative on journals kept during an evangelical tour of Australia from 1831 to 1838, when he and his
companion George Washington Walker, travelled extensively, preaching the gospel, seeking out fellow Quakers, distributing religious tracts and educational material, investigating and reporting on conditions for convicts and Aborigines, promoting the cause of temperance, and interesting themselves and commenting on all aspects of life in Australia. Travelling mostly on foot and frequently over untracked areas, they visited established centres and isolated settlements. They explored Van Diemen’s Land and New South Wales most extensively, particularly the former, but also paid brief visits to the settlements at Moreton Bay, Port Phillip, Adelaide, Albany and Perth. Welcomed by the authorities, especially Governors Arthur, Franklin and Bourke, they were given access to Aboriginal and penal settlements and provide detailed accounts of the treatment and conditions of the convicts. Backhouse also demonstrates his knowledge of natural history, particularly in his descriptions of native flora and fauna. Virtually a Who’s Who of colonial society, the Narrative contains a great deal of carefully recorded detail about places visited and people encountered, as well as minor observations and comments which reflect the author’s personality. It also includes valuable first-hand accounts of the Aborigines, particularly those of Van Diemen’s Land, and incisive criticisms of European attitudes. Remarkably free of these prejudices, Backhouse writes respectfully and vividly about Aboriginal culture, occasionally even preferring Aboriginal values and skills to those of the Europeans. The Narrative includes several well-drawn sketches, three end-maps on which the journeys of the two men are marked, and several appendices. These last include reports to Governor Arthur on chain gangs, road parties and the general treatment of convicts, transcribed letters from prisoners at Norfolk Island, and reports to Governor Bourke on the state of New South Wales and the condition and treatment of the Aborigines.

Date span: 1831–1838
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

8

BAGOT, CHARLES HERVEY
(1788–1880)

A holograph memoir of Capt. Charles Hervey Bagot of the 87th Regiment

More than half of these memoirs deal with the author’s family and childhood in Ireland, his service as an officer of the 87th Regiment, and his life as a land agent in Ireland following his retirement from the army in 1819. In 1840, Charles Bagot and his wife and five children emigrated to South Australia, where he was commissioned to select land by special survey, obtaining property for his own family at Koonunga. He records, fairly briefly and formally, the discovery of copper ore by his son on the site of what was later the Kapunda copper mine, and his own development and management of the mine. He summarises the fortunes in Australia of each of his children, describes a trip to the eastern colonies in 1846 and a trip to England and Ireland in 1853, and outlines his participation in the Legislative Council of South Australia from 1844.

Date span: 1840–1850s
Note: See ADB, vol. 1
9
BARCLAY, ANDREW
(1759—1839)

Life of Captain Andrew Barclay of Cambock, near Launceston, Van Diemen's Land. Written from his own dictation at Cambock, February 19, 1836

This is a brief account of the life of an officer of the Royal Navy, who emigrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1817. He obtained a grant of land near Launceston where he built first the farmhouse Trafalgar then, in 1826, the 'much superior house', Cambock.

Date span: 1817—1836
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

10
BARRINGTON, GEORGE
(1755?—1804)

A voyage to New South Wales; with a description of the country; the manners, customs, religion, &c. of the natives in the vicinity of Botany Bay

An Irish-born pickpocket, Barrington acquired a reputation for style and eloquence which eventually approached a mythology. He was the subject of numerous contemporary articles, broadsides and pamphlets, and was the falsely claimed author of numerous publications, including Biographical annals of suicide (1803) and The history of New South Wales (1802). Transported in 1790, he arrived in New South Wales in August 1791 and won a conditional pardon in 1792 and became chief constable at Parramatta when his pardon was made absolute in 1796. A voyage to New South Wales supposedly describes his experiences on board a convict ship, during which he quelled a mutiny. The subsequent account of his life in the colony contains fewer personal
touches, restricting itself mainly to descriptions of the Aborigines, especially Bennelong and Colby, and to well-known incidents such as the spearing of Governor Phillip. Sections clearly draw on John Hunter's Journal (1793) and include events and personalities which predate Barrington's arrival, such as the above spearing and the death of Arabanoo. Although A voyage to New South Wales is written in a style which would have been natural to Barrington, it is most unlikely that he is the author.

Date span: 1790—1792
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

11
BARRINGTON, GEORGE
(1755?—1804)

A sequel to Barrington's voyage to New South Wales ...

Like Barrington's A voyage to New South Wales (1795), this narrative is written loosely around the life of George Barrington, but is more an account of events and conditions in the colony and at Norfolk Island which are clearly drawn from the narratives of Collins, King and Tench. It is most unlikely that Barrington is the author.

Date span: 1792—1796
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

12
BARRY, WILLIAM JACKSON
(b.1819)

Up and down; or, fifty years' colonial experiences in Australia, California, New Zealand, India, China, and the South Pacific

William Barry deserted the ship Red Rover in Sydney in 1828 at the age of 10. He was
befriended by a butcher, Smith, with whom he lived in Parramatta, attending school there and helping with deliveries. In the early 1830s he began making trips to cattle stations on behalf of Smith and his partner, the emancipist Samuel Terry. He participated in a fight with Aborigines on Bit Bit station where, he claims, 40 were killed, and refers to another incident at Johnston station on the Liverpool Plains, where 50 Aborigines were stockaded and slaughtered in reprisal for the murder of two white women. While on Emu station during this period he was held up by bushrangers Jack Donohue and Jackey Jackey. Barry accompanied Sir James Bremer's 1838 expedition to Port Essington and was shipwrecked and castaway during the return trip to Swan River. He was rescued and returned to Sydney, where he was commissioned by Ben Boyd to trade for horses in Malaya and India. Taking ship from India to China, Barry fought for the British at Canton in 1840. On his return to Sydney he became a whaler, serving on Ben Boyd's ships, first as a mate and then as a captain, making a trip of almost two years. He visited Swan River, where he met and married Hannah French, a captain's daughter, and managed his father-in-law's station inland from Perth, which was lost on the death of the captain. Barry returned to Sydney with his wife, who died soon afterwards, whereupon he left Australia for the Californian goldfields. He had numerous adventures in America before returning with a new wife to seek his fortune on the Victorian goldfields in 1855. Barry bought and operated an unsuccessful coaching business, became a butcher at Ballarat, and took an active share in a quartz mine at Brown's Diggings, 20 miles from Ballarat. Although good profits were made from the mine, the lease was disputed legally, culminating in a confrontation between the miners, led by Barry, and 250 troopers sent to evict them. Barry and his partners were offered compensation and the matter was settled peaceably. Barry began trading horses to New Zealand in the early 1860s and eventually settled there, returning to Australia only briefly in 1871 to pursue a claim on a property at Bathurst.

*Up and down* reads like an adventure story in which the hero, Barry, faces a series of largely disconnected adventures and triumphs over adversities due to his physical prowess, personality and intelligence, being occasionally beaten only by bad fortune. As the author wrote his autobiography in 1879 in an attempt to raise money, it is possible that at least some of his remarkable adventures were fabricated in order to make a lively, marketable story.

*Date span: 1829–1860*

**Barton, Robert Darvall (1842–1924)**

*Reminiscences of an Australian pioneer*

Sydney, Tyrrell's Limited, 1917. 288 pp., port.

Robert Darvall Barton was born on his father's station, Boree, and attended the King's School, Parramatta, as a boarder. He assisted on the family property from an early age and became manager after his father's death in the late 1850s. In 1867 he took over the management of Gurley station for J.D. Macansh and in 1871 purchased the lease of a property near Coonamble. In 1886 he purchased Burren station, but was forced off the property due to difficulties with land tenure, and bought Bidnam near Charleville in Queensland. He sold out of this in 1910 and purchased Headingly station, near Urandangie, which he also sold within five years and retired from the land. Barton's *Reminiscences* of his many years of hard work for, ultimately, little return, are enlivened by his recollections of bush characters, small adventures and humorous incidents. He describes his early life, recalling assigned
convict servants, pioneers, personalities and Chinese workers at Boree, droving experiences and encounters with bushrangers. He discusses his experiences with Aboriginal station workers and trackers, forecasts the eradication of the Aboriginal race, and gives a second-hand account of the murders of 19 members of the Wills party in central Queensland in 1861 by Aborigines and the bloody retribution which followed. Looking back over almost 50 years as a grazier, Barton discerns patterns and large cycles in such occurrences as droughts, floods, unusual harvests of pasture or crops, plagues of pests such as dingoes, mice, pigs and weeds, and seasons when native animals such as koalas and opossums abounded. He concludes that, with experience and understanding of the balances of nature, a good living can be made in the harsh conditions of outback New South Wales and Queensland. The greatest drawbacks to the man on the land are, he claims, the land laws, and he outlines his own many difficulties over land in both colonies and discusses, from the point of view of a squatter and landowner, aspects such as government leases, land commissions and commissioners, free selection and land dummying.

Although he had a lifelong interest in horses, the characteristics and training of which he discusses at length, Barton stocked his stations largely with sheep. The Reminiscences reflect the developing technology of the sheep and wool industry in the second half of the nineteenth century, marking such innovations as steam washing, which Barton introduced on Gurley around 1871, the freezing and exporting of meat, and the use of Wolsely shearing machines. Hotheaded and fiercely independent, Barton had come into conflict with the union movement as early as the 1870s, and experienced difficulties with the unionists as soon as shearing machines were introduced at Burren in 1888. Enraged when the shearers walked out of his sheds in 1892, Barton refused to employ union members henceforth, in spite of his acceptance of the Pastoralists Union Agreement, and entered a long battle with shearers’ and carriers’ unions, earning, he says, the title ‘the biggest, sanguinary scab in Australia’.

Date span: 1840s–1900

14
Bennett, George (1804–1893)
Wanderings in New South Wales, Batavia, Pedir Coast, Singapore and China; being the journal of a naturalist in those countries during 1832, 1833, and 1834

Bennett, an English medical practitioner and naturalist, gives an account of excursions from Sydney to the Yass Plains and surrounding country in 1832–33. He writes mainly for the botanist, zoologist and anthropologist, and describes in detail the fauna, flora and insect life he encountered. His response to both the Australian landscape and the Aborigines is markedly Eurocentric; he finds the former sombre and incapable of yielding any emotions of ‘pleasurable gratification’ for the emigrant, while he sees little to admire in Aboriginal culture. His narrative also includes comments on the convicts and their treatment, and on the roads and methods of transport. Comparing Sydney in 1832 to 1829, when he first visited it, he comments on the town’s architecture, living conditions and land-tenure system. A visit to the Theatre Royal inspires criticism of the unseemly behaviour of those in the pit, and of the actors who ‘seemed determined to “play the comedy” after a manner of their own, substituting passages of their own for those of the author, in defiance of all dramatic rules’. His narrative includes little personal information and does not relate to Australia after page 345 of volume 1.
This work won Bennett considerable recognition in England as a zoologist and botanist. He returned to Australia in 1836 and practised medicine in Sydney, and began a long association with the Australian Museum. In 1860 he published *Gatherings of a naturalist in Australasia*.

**Date span:** 1832–1833

**Note:** See *ADB*, vol. 1

15

**BENSON, GEORGE (B. 1810)**

*The horrors of transportation, contained in the life & sufferings of George Benson, the only son of respectable parents, of Rosemary Street, Bristol, where he now resides, who was transported in 1828, for 14 years, for housebreaking*

Bristol, Author, 1843. 8 pp.

This small pamphlet contains a few brief details of Benson's convict experience. He states that he fell into bad company as a young man, was convicted of robbery and transported to New South Wales in 1828. Writing to deter others from crime, Benson warns of the severity of transportation as a punishment, describing it as 'more horrible than death'. He outlines convict conditions and punishments, and describes work in the mercury mines where, he claims, convicts had a life expectancy of four years and committed murder to obtain an early release by execution.

**Date span:** 1828–1842

16

**BERRY, ALEXANDER (1781–1873)**

*Reminiscences of Alexander Berry*

Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1912. 194 pp., port.

Alexander Berry, a merchant, having arrived in Sydney in January 1808 with a trading ship, observed at first hand some of the circumstances surrounding the deposition of Governor William Bligh. He experienced some difficulties in trading, had several meetings with Bligh, and was present at the trial of John Macarthur. After taking a group of settlers from Norfolk Island to Hobart Town, Berry embarked on a series of adventures while trading in the Pacific and South America, arriving back in London in 1812. In 1819 Berry returned to Sydney with his partner, Edward Wollstonecraft, and set up a trading business in George Street. They built a small house which they called Crow's Nest on land granted to them on the North Shore and were also granted 10 000 acres of land on the Shoalhaven River by Governor Brisbane in exchange for an undertaking to provision 100 convicts there. Berry had convicts dig a canal which altered the mouth of the Shoalhaven River, and developed the grant agriculturally, sending produce for sale to his Sydney business and increasing the size of the estate to more than 40 000 acres by 1863. Berry's *Reminiscences*, though dealing in some detail with his first visit to Sydney in 1808, concentrate on his adventures elsewhere between then and 1812. In conclusion he recalls fairly briefly the beginnings of the Shoalhaven estate, refers to the difficulties he had with John Dunmore Lang and describes his life in old age at Crow's Nest.

**Date span:** 1808, 1819–1825

**Note:** See *ADB*, vol. 1
Blakers' autobiography, written in 1888–89 for his sister and friends in Germany, covers 15 adventurous years after his first arrival in Australia from Germany in 1849. After a brief period in Sydney, he took passage on a ship to America, but was diverted on the way and spent two years in the Pacific Islands, mainly in Hawaii. Returning to Australia in 1851, Blakers tried his luck at the diggings, first at Sofala, and then on the Meroo River, near Mudgee. He later worked in the Maitland, Port Stephens, Tamworth, Uralla, Armidale, Grafton and Warralda areas in a wide variety of occupations, including surveyor, timber-getter, sawyer, goldfields trooper, storekeeper and electoral officer. Undertaking numerous journeys in New South Wales, he encountered a variety of hazards and on several occasions barely escaped with his life. In 1864, after his left hand was severely injured in a fight with an Aborigine, he trained as a teacher and was still so employed at the time of writing. Blakers is reserved about some of his private life, especially about his first marriage in 1861, but gives a colourful picture of his youthful self. Presenting himself as both quick-witted and quick-tempered, with a prickly sense of honour and a firm sense of his own worth, he recounts numerous physical and verbal clashes which resulted from his refusal to be exploited or worsted by his enemies. Although he arrived in the colony without profession or skills, he revealed great adaptive powers and emerges as a man of courage, resource and principle.

His narrative is a vivid account of conditions in the colony in the 1850s and 1860s.

Date span: 1849–1864

**Old Melbourne memories**


*Old Melbourne memories* consists of sketches of the author's experiences as a young man in Melbourne and in Victoria's Western District, which first appeared in the *Australasian* in the 1870s and early 1880s. The first, 'A.D. 1840' deals with the arrival of his family in Melbourne from Sydney in 1841 and contains a description of central Melbourne at that time; another, 'The christening of Heidelberg', concerns their settlement at Heidelberg. The remainder relate to the years between 1843 and 1856 when Boldrewood was a squatter in the Port Fairy district, and deal with the establishment of his station, Squattlesea Mere, including the building of a house and yards, and with station work such as droving and mustering. Boldrewood describes the difficulties which he and other settlers experienced with Aborigines, who persisted in stealing cattle and sheep, and recounts the story as told to him by John Cox of a bloody reprisal against an Aboriginal party on Cox's Mount Napier property. He also describes the participation of mounted native police, who claimed to have effectively subdued the group by shooting all the leaders in an encounter in 1844. Very much an accepted member of the squating class, Boldrewood discusses the properties and pioneering families of the Port Fairy and Portland Bay area, describing in nostalgic terms the way of life of such families, and the companionship and enjoyment experienced on occasions such as steeplechases, kangaroo hunts and balls, during 'that joyous time'.

21
Boldrewood's novel, *Ups and downs* (1878), subsequently published as *The squatter's dream*, is similarly based on his squatting experiences and some stories in the collection, *In bad company* (q.v.), also have autobiographical content.

**Date span:** 1840–1867  
**Note:** See *ADB*, vol. 3

**19**  
**'Boldrewood, Rolf'**  
**(Thomas Alexander Browne, 1826–1915)**  

*In bad company and other stories*  

Many of the stories and sketches in this collection are autobiographical. 'Ancient Sydney', 'My school days' and 'Sydney fifty years ago' deal with Boldrewood's childhood in Sydney in the 1830s and describe his homes, first in Macquarie Place and then at Enmore, his schooling at the Sydney Academy and at Sydney College where he was a contemporary of many individuals who later became prominent in Australian society, and the way of life in what was still a relatively small settlement serviced by convicts. Other sketches relate to later experiences: for example, 'The first Port Fairy hunt' recalls a dingo hunt and ball which he attended as a young squatter in 1844; 'How I became a butcher' describes experiences on the Ballarat goldfields in 1851; and 'Fallen among thieves' deals with an encounter with the bushranger Bluecap and his gang in New South Wales in 1867. In 'How I began to write' Boldrewood discusses his career as a writer, describing how he first came to write sketches of his station experiences while laid up on a station near Narrandera in 1865, and how he later wrote fiction regularly and systematically, usually for publication in serial form.

**Date span:** 1830–1870  
**Note:** See *ADB*, vol. 3

**20**  
**Bonwick, James**  
**(1817–1906)**

*An octogenarian's reminiscences*  
London, James Nichols, 1902. 371 pp., ports

Bonwick begins his reminiscences with a detailed account of his years as a student and pupil-teacher, or monitor, at the Boro' Road School in London. He describes his emigration to Hobart Town in 1840 with his wife Esther, to take up an appointment of the British and Foreign School Society to teach in government schools. During his years in Hobart he taught in both public and private schools, employed convicts and taught their children, met Father Therry, George Washington Walker, with whom he joined in the temperance movement, and Henry Melville, whose mystic ideas, he claims, had a great influence on his intellectual development. Bonwick felt a profound sympathy for the Tasmanian Aborigines whom he saw as 'Children of Nature', grieving that 'civilised men from Christian lands ... were instrumental in the poor creatures' deepening degradation, their reception of new vices and sorrows, ultimately leading to their annihilation as a People'. In 1849 the Bonwicks moved to Adelaide and began a school, but in 1851 a 'wholesale exodus from South Australia' to Ballarat and Bendigo meant that they lost most of their pupils. As a result Bonwick decided to accompany some friends to the diggings at Mount Alexander and Bendigo. He gives a lively description of Melbourne during the gold rushes, explains methods of mining, such as cradling, puddling and sluicing, and comments on the Eureka Stockade riots. He had already published a number of school texts, and wrote and published the journal *The Australian Gold Digger's Monthly Magazine* in 1852–53, and from this time he became a prolific writer, publishing some 60 books on a wide range of subjects, including Australian history,
Bonwick began a boarding school at Kew, but in 1856 he became an Inspector of Schools for the Denominational Schools Board of Victoria, which required him to visit schools in the Ballarat area and Western District in a circuit covering some 1500 miles. Always of 'defective nervous power', he developed an illness which left him partially paralysed, was forced to take leave from 1859, and never returned to his position. He opened Hofwyl School, on Pestalozzian principles, at St Kilda in 1862, but as his health still failed to improve he left Australia with his wife in 1869. In England he searched for and transcribed early records relating to Australia, which were used as a basis for the History of New South Wales from the records, and the New South Wales Historical records.

Though written at the age of 85, and perhaps demonstrating in their rambling and disjointed nature a decline in his abilities as a writer, Bonwick's reminiscences are nevertheless colourful and informative. They reveal his religious commitment, his great intellectual curiosity and energy, his lifelong interest in public education, and a genuine humanitarianism, manifested particularly in his attitude to convicts and Aborigines.

Date span: 1840–1900
Note: See ADB, vol. 3

21

**Boodle, Richard George**

'Recollections of ministerial work in New South Wales' in *The emigrant and the heathen*

Edited by J.J. Halcombe

London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, [1874], pp. 1–184

An Anglican minister, Boodle arrived in Australia in 1848 with William Tyrrell, the first Church of England Bishop of Newcastle. He became the curate at Muswellbrook where he ministered to a district of between 2500 and 3000 square miles. He recounts his experiences of travelling throughout his widespread parish, visiting outlying farms and stations and tiny settlements in rotation and seeking out shepherds in their huts or with flocks. He describes the isolation and primitive living conditions of many families in the bush and his narrative contains much information about the way of life and work of country people. Boodle outlines the development of the Church of England in the diocese of Newcastle and more particularly in the towns of Muswellbrook, Merton, Merriwa and Cassilis, where church buildings were gradually erected and a congregation built up. He pays tribute to the work of such men as Edward Close, pioneer of Morpeth, who established a church there, and William W. Dove, his friend and colleague at nearby Jerry's Plains. Convinced that secular education would be a disaster, Boodle was instrumental in establishing a church school at Cassilis, which gained the support of all denominations. He made gentle efforts to bring Christianity to the few remaining Aborigines in his district, with little success. He grieves for the Aboriginal people, describing their harsh treatment by settlers, which led to their virtual eradication in some areas. In 1856, due to ill-health, Boodle moved to a curacy at Morpeth. He left New South Wales in 1861.

Date span: 1848–1861

22

**Boswell, Annabella A[C]D.**


*Some recollections of my early days written at different periods*


Written in Scotland and dedicated to her children, Annabella Boswell's *Recollections* recall a leisurely life among the elite of
colonial Australia. Born at Yarrows near Bathurst into the old and prosperous Innes family (originally of Caithness, Scotland) Boswell grew up under the guardianship of her wealthy uncle, Major Archibald Clunes Innes. The narrative commences with a background to the Innes family and traces the author’s early travels between various family properties and her uncle’s residence at Parramatta. She recalls his marriage to Margaret Macleay, daughter of the Colonial Secretary, Alexander Macleay, in 1829 and her subsequent close relationship with the Macleay family. In 1839, when the author was twelve years old, she travelled to Lake Innes House, the substantial convict-built homestead established by her uncle near Port Macquarie. From this point the narrative is interpolated with selected letters and entries from a journal commenced at the time. Seven months later, the visit ended with the death of the author’s father. With her widowed mother and her sister, Boswell settled in Bathurst and then Parramatta, finally returning to Lake Innes in 1843. In this affluent if isolated seaside home she spent the early years of her adolescence which she describes as some of her ‘happiest years’. She recreates the daily life of the household, describing the house and its situation, the family’s duties, clothes, entertainments (including an election party for Alexander Macleay), leisure activities and dealings with convict servants and Aborigines. In 1847 Boswell visited Sydney, socialising with prominent families such as the Dumaresqs at Double Bay and with Lady Fitz Roy, who sponsored Boswell’s debut shortly before her death in a carriage accident at Parramatta. At 21, Boswell became more conscious of her status in society as a ‘full grown child’, and her narrative reflects this change. She excludes the very personal, barely alluding, for example, to her courtship and marriage which took place some time after she left Lake Innes in 1848. Her account concludes with the story of her husband’s encounter with bushrangers in Victoria and with an appendix, presumably written by him, describing the great flood of the Lachlan in 1844. The narrative has been republished in edited form, several times. The 1987 edition includes colour plates of Australian wild flowers executed in watercolour by the author. Another volume of recollections, entitled Further recollections of my early days in Australia (q.v.), was published in 1911.  

Date span: 1826–1848

23


Further recollections of my early days in Australia

Further recollections takes up the author’s memories from 1848 at the conclusion of Some recollections of my early days (q.v.), when Boswell left Lake Innes. After returning to Sydney she spent some months with her Aunt Barbara, who had married George Macleay in 1843. From their property, Brownlow Hill, she visited James Macarthur at nearby Camden Park. Later she travelled, visiting old servants, governesses and friends. In 1849 she stayed with the Rankins at Saltram. She describes their vineyard and substantial cellars, a meeting with Captain John Piper and his daughters, and the life she later led at St Clair, a property near Singleton. There a comparatively dull existence was enlivened by interaction with the servants and with the local Aborigines, about whom she relates some colourful anecdotes. The account concludes at Parramatta, where the author’s mother moved into her own house after moving between friends and relations for over nine years. Further recollections completes the author’s portrait of the social interactions of some of the colony’s major families, and in
placing her own changing fortunes in context, reveals something of the effects of the end of transportation and the onset of the economic depression of the 1840s.

Date span: 1848-1855

24

The Boy's Own sea stories: being the adventures of a sailor in the navy, the merchant service, and on a whaling cruise


Written 'to give a plain, straightforward account of a seaman's life ... not as novelists imagine it to be ... but simply as it is', the narrative covers the adventures of an anonymous American seaman in the US Navy, the merchant service and on whaling ships, travelling to South America, the East Indies, India, Asia, Great Britain, the Pacific and the African coast. While he was in the merchant service the author visited Sydney and he gives a brief summary of his impressions of the city and of Australian 'Colonials'. He also encountered Australian seamen, whom he characterises as rough, orderly, taciturn, obstinate and easily offended. He was agreeably surprised by Sydney's pleasant situation, landscape, buildings and order (though he later comments that this was before the discovery of gold). He was struck by the strong influence of lower class English characteristics on the city and populace.

Date span: 1840s

25

BRADLEY, JOSEPH

(B.1809)

Adventures of a native of Australia when astray from his ship, the barque Lynx (a whaler), and his consequent cruise in a boat on the ocean. A true narrative by Joseph Bradley

Reissued and annotated by M.D. Cobcroft
First published, Parramatta, NSW, J.J. Beukers, c.1860

This narrative, described by Bradley as an 'abstract from my old Logs, with some little additions for [sic] memory, but all Facts', comprises descriptions of two separate voyages made 1831-32, off the coast of north-eastern Australia. On both of these, Bradley, a mariner on the whaling ship, the Lynx, became separated from the main vessel during whaling operations. On the first occasion, Bradley and a crew ('two darkies, a Newzealander, a Tahitian and three whitemen') were lost in a small boat in the vicinity of Moreton Bay, and suffered from hunger, thirst and exposure before reaching land after eight days. Forced to move on by the arrival of Aborigines, they sailed south along the coast and reached Port Macquarie on the 23rd day. They were reunited with the Lynx shortly afterwards.

Seven months into a second expedition, in May 1832, the Lynx was 'about sixty miles to the NW of Cotor Bank', chasing whales, when the weather unexpectedly changed to a gale and Bradley's boat lost sight of the ship. This time, having a compass, Bradley was able to sail towards the coast, and they sighted land on the third day. Keeping along the coast they travelled south, making hasty landings for water, and greatly fearing the Aborigines whom they frequently saw on shore. They picked up two white men, escaped convicts from the Moreton Bay Settlement who had been living among the
Aborigines for two or three years. Bradley quotes the stories of the convicts directly as told to him, relating the circumstances of their escapes and their lives with the Aborigines with much colourful detail and individuality of expression.

After 17 days the boat had made little progress due to calm weather and the men, who had hitherto attempted to keep their spirits up with songs and stories of their adventures, all recorded by Bradley in lively vernacular, were resigning themselves to die, when they were picked up by the Lynx, which had been searching for them. Bradley worked out that the small boat had travelled about 250 miles, sailing through the passage between Sandy Bay (later Fraser) Island and the mainland to the vicinity of Wide Bay. His experiences on that largely unknown coast complement those of Thomas Pamphlet, James Morrell and Eliza Fraser (qq.v.).

The first edition of this work includes a later narrative in which Bradley describes a voyage when, as captain of the Ariel, he accompanied Ben Boyd (on the yacht Wanderer) on his last voyage among the Pacific Islands in 1851. This narrative was published separately in 1991 as A nine months' cruise in the "Ariel" schooner.

Leaving Tasmania where he had lived since 1818, Brodribb took up his first grazing property in New South Wales on the Monaro in 1835. This was the first of many that he was to own, lease or manage in New South Wales and Victoria up to 1879. He was motivated to move by economic circumstances and by pressures exerted on squatters by changing conditions of land tenure, but also apparently by a pioneering urge to establish new stations on unsettled land. This urge was also demonstrated in the exploratory expedition which he led into Gippsland in the early 1840s, which discovered and named Port Albert, the La Trobe River and Lake Wellington, and which resulted in the formation of the Port Albert Company to take up land by special survey. After leaving the Monaro Brodribb managed a station on the future site of Gundagai, then formed his own station near Benalla, which he later sold because of economic reverses between 1843 and 1854. He then managed Coolrindon...
station near Cooma for William Bradley before moving to his own station, Wanganella, near Deniliquin in 1855. Brodribb retired temporarily from grazing between 1859 and 1863 during which time he lived in Melbourne, represented Brighton in the Legislative Assembly and visited England with his family. On his return he took up Moolbong station in the Lachlan district, but sold this in the 1870s when free selectors encroached. He sold his remaining rural properties at Yallock at a loss in 1879. He retired once more, this time to Double Bay in Sydney, was elected to the Legislative Assembly for the seat of Wentworth in 1880, and became a member of the Legislative Council in 1881.

Although he was a relatively successful grazier, Brodribb describes his working life as a constant battle against adverse conditions such as drought, fire and flood, sheep diseases such as scab and catarrh, depressed prices and difficulties with wool marketing. Foremost among the difficulties besetting squatters, however, he places the failure of the government to encourage and reward pioneer settlers by enacting land legislation favourable to them. Brodribb's preoccupation with land tenure is also reflected in his recollections of his political career and he incorporates copies of speeches, letters, pamphlets and newspaper items into his narrative. He was also active in fostering the emigration of English labourers to Australia, and includes a copy of a pamphlet which he wrote on the topic during his visit to England in 1862–63.

Brodribb is reticent about his personal life, apart from referring to his living conditions, the building of a new house, the fact that his wife accompanied him to a new station, or the birth of a child. He reveals his inner emotions only very rarely, notably when relating the death of three of his daughters from diphtheria, two in 1849 and the other in 1858 when five neighbouring cousins died of the same disease in one week. This is one of the few occasions when he allows a small human element to creep into what is essentially a public self-portrait.

Date span: 1834–1881
Note: See ADB, vol. 3

28

BROWN, MARGARET EMILY (1845–1907)

A Port Fairy childhood 1849/60. The memoirs of Margaret Emily Brown (Youngman)

These memoirs were written in 1907 at the request of the author’s children. They begin in England, with details of her parents, Mary Anne Brimyard Hughes and Arthur Youngman, and of how the latter, in declining health and fortunes, decided to try life in Australia. He sailed on the Vixen in 1848, with the agreement that his family would join him in two years if all went well. Youngman’s health improved and he found work on the Argus newspaper; meanwhile, unknown to him, his wife and family sailed a year early to join him in Melbourne. Margaret Brown recalls the voyage, on which the Youngman children, always carefully dressed, were made much of by the crew. Arriving in Melbourne, the family were dismayed to learn that Youngman had left to work at Belfast (later Port Fairy) on the Belfast Gazette. Joining him at the small community, Margaret Emily describes in lively anecdote the life there as well as the family’s house and activities. Life for the family was hard and their tasks included wood cutting, cultivating potatoes, baking bread, as well as helping Youngman at his printing office. Margaret Emily was educated first at a nearby school, where the teacher Mr Weston was ‘one of the few who remained in the place when the gold diggings broke out’. Her subsequent teachers were the eccentric elderly Irish Miss Meara...
and, a considerable improvement, Mrs Heatley and her two daughters. The pupils' battles with Mrs Ladd's rival school are vividly recalled. When the family's newspaper failed, partly because a journal supported by the squatters and Catholics started up, but also because Youngman had allowed his partner to take what small funds they had, Margaret Emily's mother opened a school. This prospered, and Margaret Emily also contributed to the family income by becoming 'morning governess' to two little girls, daughters of the manager of the Bank of Victoria. She then became resident governess to the six children at the sheep station, Polkemmet, teaching English, French and Music, and acting as general supervisor for £60 a year. To take up the position at Polkemmet, 14 miles from Horsham, Brown had an arduous journey by mail cart, open mail wagggon and coach, and vividly recalls the incidents on the way. Her narrative concludes with descriptions of her life with the Calders at Polkemmet and in the district. Her governessing duties were made unpleasant by intractable pupils—'like wrestling with fiends'. Community activities were varied and she describes a housewarming party given by Mr Alex Wilson at Vectis, picnics, drives and dances, and attendance at the Horsham Presbyterian church.

Date span: 1847–c.1863

29
BROWNING, COLIN ARROTT
(1791–1856)
The convict ship: a narrative of the results of scriptural instruction and moral discipline as these appeared on board the Earl Grey, during the voyage to Tasmania

In a personal narrative which supplements the author's earlier work, England's exiles (1842), on the subject of the treatment and instruction of convicts during transportation, Browning describes his voyage as surgeon and superintendent of convicts on the transport Earl Grey from Plymouth to Hobart Town in 1842–43. Browning's main interest was the instruction of the convicts in the Scriptures and their conversion to Christianity. He reports many instances of religious awakening, some prompted by a spectacular electrical storm at sea, and includes transcripts of confessions, expressions of repentance and professions of faith, which he claims were made to him by convicts.

Date span: 1842–1843
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

30
BROXUP, JOHN
Life of John Broxup, late convict, at Van Dieman's Land

Broxup gives a brief account of his life in York, and as a soldier and sailor up to 1829 when he was convicted of theft and sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen's Land. He describes his life as a convict, first on hulks at Sheerness and later in chain gangs near Launceston and at Bridgewater. He endured severe floggings and assignment to chain gangs for what he describes as trifling misdemeanors. He made one attempt to abscond but was captured and served out his sentence. He worked for four years in Hobart before returning to York around 1840. Broxup brings to the attention of his readers several instances of extreme cruelty and injustice towards convicts, including cases where convicts died as the result of floggings, and recounts a story of the wreck of the George the Third, which sank off the coast of Van Diemen's Land in 1835 with many convicts trapped in the holds, which the guards refused to open.

This pamphlet is characteristic of a genre of convict narratives in which the writer,
having returned destitute to his home, gives
an outline of his convict experiences, then
urges readers to take warning from his story
and avoid the drunkenness, gambling and
low company which led to his downfall.
Some passages in Broxup's narrative repeat
word for word passages in Samuel Cockney's
Life (q.v.), and may not relate to his own
experiences. Broxup was interviewed by
James Backhouse (q.v.) while in Van
Diemen's Land and appears to have been
influenced by him.

Date span: 1829–1840

31

Bull, John Wrathall
(1804–1886)

Early experiences of colonial life in
South Australia


Bull arrived in Adelaide with his wife and
children in 1838. He conducted a business in
Hindley Street and had a share in a sheep
station four miles north of Adelaide, before
moving with his family to settle on a wheat
property near Mount Barker. There he
invented a mechanical reaper, the credit for
which he claims was appropriated by John
Ridley. Bull attempts to write a history of the
colony from its earliest days until around
1845, basing his narrative on his own
experiences, the experiences of others 'taken
down from their lips', and from sources such
as diaries and newspaper articles. His
recollections of events in his own life are
detailed and lively; they include descriptions
of landing in Adelaide in 1838, attending a
ball given by Governor Hindmarsh at
Government House, witnessing an execution,
the burning of Government House, the
opening of the town of Gawler, journeying
with his family to Mount Barker, and his
farming experiences and inspiration for the
invention of his reaper. He also includes
gossipy reminiscences of acquaintances such
as Governors Hindmarsh and Gawler, the
Reverends C.B. Howard and T.Q. Stow,
Pastor Kavel and the German settlers at
Hahndorf, businessman Emanuel Solomon,
William Light, Osmond Gilles and other
public officials.

He deals briefly with matters such as the
administrations of each of the governors,
early political disputes, the financial disasters
of the 1840s, which he blames on Governor
Grey, the founding of the Legislative
Council, the exploration and settlement of
new country, and the mineral discoveries at
Kapunda and Burra. Much of his narrative,
however, concerns the sensational adventures
of police officers such as Alexander Tolmer
and H. Alford in pursuing 'Vandemonians',
former Tasmanian convicts, such as Morgan,
Stone, Foley, Curran, Hughes, Joseph
Storey and others, who became bushrangers
in South Australia. He also describes in
detail the treatment of Aborigines by
colonists, claiming that the initial injustice of
neglecting to recognise some land rights
resulted in much fighting between the two
races. He describes many murders committed
by Aborigines, including those of the
passengers and crew of the Maria in 1840,
but also relates many instances of cruelty to
Aborigines by Europeans. He uses transcripts
of the accounts of men such as Charles Sturt,
H. Inman, T. O'Halloran and James Hawker
(q.v.) to describe the opposition mounted by
Aborigines to parties travelling overland
from the east with stock to Adelaide, and the
violent reaction of the authorities, which
resulted in the slaughter of a large number of
Aborigines at Rufus Junction in 1841. A
revised edition of this work, entitled Early
experiences of life in South Australia, and an
extended colonial history, which incorporates
some additional material about the history of
South Australia, was published in 1884.

Date span: 1837–1845

Note: See ADB, vol. 1
During his long career as an officer in the British army, 80th Regiment, Major Thomas Bunbury was posted to New South Wales, embarking on a convict ship for Hobart Town and Sydney in August 1837. Although he had been promised the command of the penal settlement at Norfolk Island, he was delayed at Windsor until February 1839, due to difficulties with Governor Gipps over his appointment. Finally relieving Major Anderson on Norfolk Island, Bunbury set about remediying what he saw as deficiencies in the administration of the settlement and introduced a number of agricultural improvements, building a grain silo and beginning the manufacture of hemp from flax. Taking a firm attitude to discipline, he cut the rations of convicts on the sick list, compelling many of them back to work. He uncovered an illicit trade between soldiers and convicts, carried out in storage huts erected in the soldiers' gardens, called Irish Town, and ordered that the huts be destroyed. This prompted a small mutiny by the soldiers, which was easily put down, but as a consequence Bunbury was recalled to Sydney with his garrison, after less than a year as Commandant. He apparently survived the court martial inquiry into the mutiny without censure, and was shortly afterwards posted to New Zealand and later to India. He retired in 1858 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Bunbury's *Reminiscences* deal largely with the politics of his appointments and commands, and the personalities and social lives of himself and his fellow officers. A dogmatic professional officer, he appears to have been unmoved by the situation of convicts on Norfolk Island and during his voyage to New South Wales in 1837, and glosses over the details of punishments he issued as magistrate on the Island. His account complements that of Joseph Anderson (q.v.) and provides a contrasting perspective to contemporary convict accounts.

**Data span: 1837–1839**

### 33

**Bunce, Daniel (1813–1872)**

*Australasian reminiscences of twenty-three years' wanderings in Tasmania and the Australias; including travels with Dr. Leichhardt in north or tropical Australia*


Nothwithstanding the title, which implies that his *Reminiscences* relate his experiences throughout 23 years in Australia, Bunce's narrative deals almost entirely with observations made during expeditions in Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland. He mentions only in passing his emigration to Van Diemen's Land in 1833, the opening of his plant nursery at Denmark Hill, to which he imported British trees, his publication of Bunce's *manual of practical gardening*, and his move to Melbourne in 1839. He makes no mention at all of his family or of his later career as a botanist, during which he became director of the Geelong Botanical Gardens and published a number of botanical works.

On arrival in Hobart, Bunce travelled first to Mount Wellington and then to Launceston and New Norfolk, 'to obtain specimens and seed of the flora'. Although his first interest is botany, and he names and describes many specimens of flora, his account is by no means dry, as he is interested in all aspects of the country.
traversed. Although he claims to be 'altogether lame at description', he is at times lyrical about the magnificence of the scenery, comments eloquently on native fauna, such as the Tasmanian tiger, and provides some historical background where it is available, such as details of first settlements, historic incidents and origins of place-names.

When he moved to Victoria in 1839 he travelled to Western Port with a group of Aborigines to collect botanical specimens. In his account of this journey, Bunce makes many observations about the Aborigines, particularly their social structure, physical appearance, hunting, cooking and language. He is especially interested in the native women, describing them as 'astonishingly lovely' and commenting on their subservient social position, their clothing and toilet, gathering tasks and implements.

Bunce's account of his 1846-47 expedition with Ludwig Leichhardt in an attempt to cross the continent from the Darling Downs to the Swan River complements that of another participant, John Mann (q.v.). Bunce describes meeting Leichhardt in Sydney and travelling with him to Jimbour, where the expedition began. From the time of leaving on 7 December, to the time of turning back, on 18 June 1847, the narrative is in the form of a daily journal which has been expanded with retrospective comment. Once again his preoccupation is with the flora, but he also records details of the personalities of the men and their relationships, including those of the two Aboriginal members, Wommai (Wammai) and Brown, in whom he took a particular interest. Unlike Mann, he refrains from openly casting the blame for the failure of the expedition on Leichhardt's incompetence, although he does substantiate, without comment, some of the incidents for which Mann criticises Leichhardt.

After the return of the party, Bunce accompanied Leichhardt on his last journey due to a disagreement with him over the ownership of botanical specimens. During his journey overland back to Melbourne, Bunce records that he joined a party pursuing some Aborigines who had attacked Isaac's station on the Fitzroy Downs. He arrived back in Melbourne after an absence of three years.

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**BURGESS, Richard**

(1829-1866)

'Guilty wretch that I am': echoes of Australian bushrangers from the death row memoirs of Richard Burgess

Melbourne, Macmillan, 1984. 176 pp., index

First published as *Life of Richard Burgess*, Christchurch, NZ, 1866

Convicted of housebreaking in 1845, Richard Hill, alias Burgess, was transported in 1847 to Melbourne, where he was given a conditional pardon on arrival. The Ballarat and Bendigo goldfields produced a fertile ground for thieves, and he committed many robberies and at least two murders, before he was convicted of robbery in 1852. Burgess served his sentence in Melbourne Gaol, on the convict hulks *President* and *Success*, and in the new Pentridge Gaol. John Price was Inspector General of Penal Establishments during this time, and Burgess was on the *Success* at the time of Price's murder by convicts at Williamstown dockyard in 1857. In 1856 he participated in an unsuccessful breakout attempt with other bushrangers Harry Power [sic] and Captain Melville. After his release in 1861 he went to New Zealand, where he became a notorious bushranger, responsible, with his gang, for many goldfield murders, before being captured and executed in 1866.

Burgess had some education and the narrative is quite well expressed. He wrote his memoirs while awaiting execution, and
his descriptions of cold-blooded crimes are overlaid with religious sentiments and expressions of repentance.

35

BURN, DAVID (1799?-1875)

An excursion to Port Arthur in 1842

First published in the Tasmania Journal in 1842, this is a narrative of a five-day visit to the convict settlement at Port Arthur. Besides the main establishment at Port Arthur, Burn visited the boy's penitentiary at Point Puer, the Isle des Morts, Flinders Bay, Saltwater Creek, Cascade and Impression Bay. Burn praises the organisation and treatment of the convicts under Commandant Captain Booth, describing their appearance, accommodation and occupations. He sees and comments on a number of well-known convicts, including the writer, Henry Savery and Chartist John Frost (q.v.).

36

BUTTON, HENRY (1829-1914)

Memories of fifty years of courtship and wedded life 1847-1897

A record of his relationship with his wife, Emma, Henry Button's Memories includes copies of their courtship letters 1847-52 and extracts from Emma's spiritual diary kept 1855-60. Button describes their family life in Launceston, where he was a reporter and then proprietor of the Launceston Examiner. In 1909 he published a fuller autobiographical account, Flotsam and jetsam (q.v.).

37

BUTTON, HENRY (1829-1914)

Flotsam and jetsam: floating fragments of life in England and Tasmania
Launceston, Tas., A.W. Birchall & Sons, [1909]. 480 pp., index

One of 10 children, the author was born at Sudbury in Suffolk. In 1833 when he was four, some of his family emigrated to Van Diemen's Land, leaving him in the care of his grandmother. He followed them in 1837 on the Andromeda and gives a vivid description of the voyage. After arriving at Hobart Town in 1837, he travelled overland to Launceston, where he was reunited with his parents. Shocked by their primitive living conditions, he felt that his parents were strangers and had trouble recognising the 'meanly clad and fragile looking woman' as his mother. He writes graphically of the convict system, which he found deeply repellent, of some of the local characters of Launceston, and of his school experience, partly under the tutelage of Charles Price. He also describes the preaching and influence of John West, for whom he subsequently worked when he joined the staff of the Examiner. After working for a period in the family's tannery and brewery, he became an apprentice printer in 1845 and a reporter in 1849. He describes himself as tempted by the street life of young men during these years, but was rescued by his love for his future wife, Emma Glover. In 1852 he resigned as a reporter to try goldmining in Victoria; a brief but disastrous experience. Shortly after his marriage in 1852 he became manager of the Colonial Times in Hobart but after a year...
returned to Launceston to help his father. A hazardous seven-week voyage of exploration to the west coast is powerfully described. In 1854 he returned to the post of reporter for the Examiner and in 1858 became one of the two proprietors of the newspaper. After his marriage his account becomes more a discussion of public affairs, in which as an alderman he was closely involved, although he expresses great grief at the death of his wife in 1897, while memory of his own severe illness in 1888 inspires thoughts of death. His narrative includes entries from his journal in which he meditates on his wife's death and their life together.

Date span: 1833–1909
Note: See ADB, vol. 3

38

BYRNE, J.C.

Twelve years' wanderings in the British Colonies. From 1835 to 1847


Byrne, who also wrote an emigrant's guide which ran to multiple editions, discusses in this largely descriptive book the Australian colonies. He covers such topics as history, government, Aborigines, transportation and the convict system, cities and other major settlements, industries, society, employment and prospects for immigrants. Most of the work has no personal content, but pages 216–59 of volume 2 describe a journey from New South Wales to South Australia in 1839, when Byrne joined a party overlanding nearly 1000 head of cattle and other stock from Yass Plains to Adelaide. The journey was eventful as the party came into conflict with Aborigines on the Murrumbidgee and the Murray and on one occasion were attacked by about 100 of them near the Rufus Junction. Many Aborigines and three drovers were killed.

Byrne also became lost when looking for strayed horses, and he gives a vivid description of his three days' wandering without food or water.

Date span: 1839

39

CAMPBELL, JOHN
(D.1876)

The early settlement of Queensland and other articles, by John Campbell. With which is also printed 'The raid of the Aborigines' by the late Mr. William Wilks


Campbell's account of the settlement of the Darling Downs area in Queensland in the 1840s provides an insight into Aboriginal resistance to such intrusions. The country was at the time 'swarming with wild blacks', and the author describes his, in the main, friendly dealings with them. A tribe of some three or four hundred lived near his station at Kittah on the periphery of the settled area. He tells of his working arrangements with them and also relates anecdotes of his friendship with Multuggerah, or Moppy Moppy, who later became a great 'chief'. At the conclusion of his account the author expresses thanks that he had 'never pulled a trigger upon a black fellow'. Evidently other settlers held no such scruples with a succession of conflicts culminating in the Battle of One-tree Hill, in which squatters were driven back. Due to his friendship with the native people, the author was warned of their plan to starve settlers out of the area. They aimed to close up roads, stop drays and to spear commanders and stock. Conflict lasted for three weeks when the Aborigines, unable to stock up supplies for long-term warfare, decided to call a truce. The author, first settler in the outer district, names other settlers, and describes the difficulties they experienced, including the effects of drought.
and economic depression. A heroic poem, 'The raid of the Aborigines', which dramatises the incidents described by Campbell, and subsidiary anecdotes about colonial life conclude the publication.

Date span: 1840-1847
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

40
Carter, Samuel
(1833-1910)
Reminiscences of the early days of the Wimmera
Melbourne, 1911. 50 pp., port.
[La Trobe Library]

In 1838 Carter left Tasmania for Melbourne, where his father, Charles, had won a contract to lay a road to Port Melbourne and build a breakwater over the Yarra. This work and a subsequent contract to provide large quantities of wattle bark for shipping to England took four years, after which the family took up a station at North Brighton in the Wimmera for a Mr Darlot. There they encountered Aborigines who had never seen a European but it was not long before conflict broke out over sheep stealing. The family treated the leader of one tribe, Jim Crow, for a fractured knee, an incident which later saved their lives and ensured that they always had warning of attacks. When the family ran short of supplies, Samuel, who was then aged nine, accompanied his father on a 150-mile journey to Charlotte Plains. On the return journey they were surrounded by numerous hostile Aborigines about 30 miles from home but after Jim Crow intervened were allowed to escape. Nevertheless, the last 14 miles to the station were covered at breakneck speed, followed by large numbers of their foes. Later, as the region became more settled, Charles Carter took up his own station at Brimspring and ran cattle and sheep. Incidents that Samuel recalls of this period include a threatened attack during the father's absence when his mother dressed in her husband's clothes and brandished his gun to deter the Aborigines who were frightened of Charles Carter's shooting skill, a solitary 11-day walk to Melbourne which he completed to further some legal business, and a brush with Captain Melville, the bushranger. He also describes encounters between bushrangers and neighbouring squatters, the hunting habits, food and ceremonies of the Aborigines, incidents with wild bulls, and disputes between the squatters over land tenure. His own family prospered, buying two more stations in the area, while he himself became the Black Protector. He concludes his story with an account of a hermit who lived in the Black Ranges and recollections of Adam Lindsay Gordon.

Date span: 1838-1880s
Note: See ADB, vol. 3 under Charles Carter

41
Cash, Martin
(1808-1877)
The adventures of Martin Cash, comprising a faithful account of his exploits, while a bushranger under arms in Tasmania, in company with Kavanagh and Jones, in the year 1843
Edited by James Lester Burke

Cash records that he was transported to New South Wales in 1828 for shooting a rival in love. He was assigned to a station on the Hunter River, where he led a peaceful life as a shepherd and stock-keeper for about nine years, describing this period as 'a green spot in the desert' of his life. He was unjustly implicated in cattle stealing and ran away with a female companion. He worked briefly for a number of country masters (including explorer Charles Sturt) until 1837 when he and his companion fled to Van Diemen's Land. There he was again accused of a crime...
he did not commit, and sentenced to seven years at Port Arthur. He escaped and was recaptured a number of times before finally serving time in chains under Commandant Charles O'Hara Booth at Port Arthur. During this time he conceived a 'deep and concentrated hatred of that power which was undeservedly prosecuting me'. He and two companions, Lawrence Kavanagh and David Jones, finally effected a daring escape from the Port Arthur peninsula, and became bushrangers, committing a series of robberies on roads and of private houses and inns during 1843. Cash was captured while trying to visit his lover in Hobart Town and was sentenced to death, which was later commuted to transportation to Norfolk Island.

Cash describes the early period on Norfolk Island as reasonably comfortable due to the benign climate, the lush and fruitful vegetation, and the relatively lax rule of Commandant Major Childs; he was even able to make hats for sale and supplement his rations. He witnessed the convict mutiny in 1846, led by former Tasmanian bushranger, Jacky Jacky (William Westwood), which resulted in the hanging of 13 men, including his old comrade, Lawrence Kavanagh. John Price replaced Childs as Commandant of Norfolk Island at this time and instigated a regime of cruelty and terror which resulted in the brutalising of the convicts. Cash claims that he was singled out for persecution by Price, but resolutely refused to be goaded into any action which would endanger a remittance of his sentence, and by the time Norfolk Island was abandoned as a penal settlement in 1854 he had married and was acting as a supervisor at an outstation. In concluding his narrative, Cash states that he subsequently lived a peaceful life as a gardener in Hobart and a farmer at Glenorchy.

Cash's autobiography was taken down and edited by James Lester Burke, who in some instances appears to have altered details to make the narrative more interesting, and to present Cash in a favourable light, making him less culpable, more altruistic, and of better birth and education than was actually the case. He also embellished the text with literary phraseology, provided quotations from the poets as chapter headings and inserted the text of the ballad 'The adventures of Martin Cash', often attributed to Frank McNamara (Frank the Poet) who Cash knew at Port Arthur, but probably written by Burke himself. The result is an absorbing, well-told story, with the advantages of dramatic action and strong, sympathetic characterisation. Cash complies with many of the characteristics of the romantic hero, in that he is courageous, loyal and resourceful, although impetuous and blessed or cursed with an innocence which leads to a series of misfortunes, some brought about by treacherous companions. The epitome of the gentleman-bushranger, he resolves, with Kavanagh and Jones, never to 'resort to unnecessary violence, or offer insult to the other sex'. Cash's story is also a love story, and his faithful female companion, who refused to allow him to leave her behind in New South Wales, was the cause of his final arrest.

Notwithstanding this idealisation, the narrative contains a density of detail about people, places and events which is obviously drawn from genuine experience. Cash describes in precise detail settlers and farms in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, the houses, clothing and people he robbed, landscapes he traversed, convicts he encountered and the conditions and work he experienced. Later writers have drawn on his matter-of-fact, unsensational account of the convict system at Port Arthur and on Norfolk Island, of punishments (such as solitary confinement, the 'black gag', the stretcher, flogging and execution), of miserable living conditions, desperate, depraved convicts, and cruel overseers and commandants. Marcus Clarke drew on the autobiography extensively in writing For the term of his natural life. A 1991 edition, The
uncensored story of Martin Cash, compiled by Joan Dehle Emberg and Buck Thor Emberg, contains some hitherto unpublished passages, being a full transcription of Burke's manuscript in the Archives Office of Tasmania.

Date span: 1828–1855
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

42
CHAUNCY, PHILIP LAMOTHE SNELL (1816–1880)
Memories of Mrs. Poole and Mrs. Chauncy

This narrative, which was originally published in two parts as Memoirs of Mrs. Chauncy (1873) and Memoirs of Mrs. Poole (1876), consists of the author's recollections of his dead sister and wife, and his relationship with each of them; it also incidentally provides an outline of his own life during the years of his marriage. Chauncy followed his sister Theresa Poole to Adelaide in 1839, and married Susan Mitchell at Swan River in 1848. In 1853 the family moved to Victoria where he opened an unsuccessful business in Melbourne as a land surveyor and commission agent; Chauncy comments ironically, 'I soon discovered that the only thing I could do well was spend money'. He obtained an appointment as a surveyor on the McIvor goldfield, and surveyed the towns of Heathcote and Echuca, and conducted the first land sales at Echuca. In 1860 they moved to Dunolly, and in 1866 to Melbourne, where the family, which now included eight children, stayed while Chauncy fulfilled his duties as District Surveyor at Castlemaine. Susan Chauncy died in 1867 at the age of 39. The marriage appears to have been very happy, and Chauncy's wife accompanied him on surveying expeditions to remote areas even after she had small children. Chauncy portrays her in an idealistic and sometimes sentimental manner, emphasising her devotion to himself and their children, her abilities and piety, and dwelling on the circumstances of her last illness and death.

Date span: 1839–1867

43
[CHISHOLM, CAROLINE (1808–1877)]
Female immigration considered, in a brief account of the Sydney Immigrants’ Home
Sydney, James Tegg, 1842. 112 pp.

In describing her establishment of a Female Immigrants’ Home in Sydney in 1841, Caroline Chisholm reveals something of her activities and motivations at that time. She relates how she took possession of part of the immigrants' barracks and was obliged to sleep there herself, separated from her children. She presents a number of case studies of immigrant girls, and, with quiet humour, some anecdotes from her personal experiences in dealing with recent arrivals who needed to find work.

Date span: 1841
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

44
CHISHOLM, J.K.
'Reminiscences of the Sydney College' in Speeches and reminiscences
Sydney, Angus & Robertson, Ltd, 1907. pp. 102–24

J.K. Chisholm began attending Sydney College, which later became Sydney Grammar School, with his two younger brothers, under headmaster T.H. Braim, in 1843. These reminiscences of his time at the College were originally written for the school magazine and contain recollections of the teachers and curriculum at that time, of
schoolfellows such as Henry Dangar, John Lackey, and the sons of William Wentworth and Sir Alfred Stephen, and the sports and recreations they enjoyed. He describes the appearance of that part of Sydney and recalls the toysthop kept by Henry Parkes and his wife. He witnessed the hanging of the murderer John Knatchbull in 1844, and gives his impressions of Robert Lowe, Knatchbull’s defence lawyer.

**Date span: 1843-1847**

### 45

**Cockney, Samuel L.**

*The life of S. Cockney, a returned convict, containing a faithful account of his dreadful sufferings in Hobart Town Van Dieman’s Land, during ten years*


Sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen’s Land in 1837, Cockney describes a succession of cruel and greedy masters, punishments, and re-assignments throughout the settled areas of Van Diemen’s Land. In constant trouble for his reluctance to be subservient to his masters, he was punished by flogging, assignment to chain gangs and solitary confinement for a series of trivial breaches of discipline, and was eventually sentenced to two years of secondary punishment at Port Arthur for a crime he claims he did not commit. Soon after his release from Port Arthur, he gained his freedom, joined a whaling ship, and, in 1848, returned to his home in Manchester, England.

Some of this narrative repeats word for word sections of John Broxup’s *Life* (q.v.), and may not relate to Cockney’s own experiences. This is a longer and more detailed narrative than that of Broxup, however, conveying more of the personality of the writer and containing accounts which appear individual and authentic, such as those of his time at Port Arthur in a timber-carrying gang, or as an assigned servant of a carrier. Like Broxup, Cockney draws a moral conclusion to his narrative, exhorting his reader to avoid his example.

**Date span: 1837-1848**

### 46

**Coles, John Cowley (b.1822)**

*The life and Christian experience of John Cowley Coles giving the history of twenty-seven years of evangelistic work in the colony of Victoria, Australia, and elsewhere, principally in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Church... and an account of the social condition and mode of life of the diggers, in the early days of gold digging, in the same colony; written (at the request of many friends) by himself*

Melbourne, M.L. Hutchinson, 1893. 186 pp. [Mitchell Library]

Coles’ preface, dated March 1893, declares that the book was written to reveal God’s glory and disavows any present connection with the Salvation Army. Confining himself to a record of his spiritual life, Coles narrates his biography from his birth in 1822 in Surrey, to his emigration to Australia in 1843 after a quarrel with his father, to his work droving cattle and gold-digging. On the Talbot goldfields he was converted to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1865, after experiencing mystical visions. In about April 1866 he began preaching and received ‘the blessing of entire sanctification’ on 31 May 1866. In 1869 he received the first of his calls to full-time ministry and after following a number of occupations for some years, sold all his possessions in November 1875 and moved to Melbourne as the minister in the Lonsdale Street Church. Working with the
very poor, both there and at Queen’s Wharf, he was inspired with respect for the work of the Salvation Army. However, he fell ill due to overwork and in December 1876 followed what he felt to be God’s will and returned to England. He recovered and preached there, returning to Australia in August 1877 to preach on the Preston and Heidelberg circuit, before in January 1878 moving to Dromana. He led a mission to Melbourne’s poor in April 1879 and then began a period of evangelicalism, which he felt was not fully supported by the Wesleyan Church. In December 1883, after some time on the Port Albert circuit in South Gippsland and the Rutherglen circuit (where he administered the sacraments even though he was not ordained), he joined the Salvation Army. For the next few years he worked for the army at the Training Hall, Melbourne, throughout the Western District of Victoria and in Gippsland, as head of the Melbourne district, and finally in the Sandhurst district. Getting older and weaker, he sailed to England via South Australia in 1892. Coles’ narrative includes several accounts of remarkable conversions and spiritual experiences, and extracts from his journal. Although he concentrates mainly on his own and others’ religious experiences, he includes a description of his visit to Ned Kelly in gaol before his execution.

Date span: 1822–1892

47

CONNOR, JAMES

The recollections of James Connor, a returned convict; containing an account of his sufferings in, and ultimate escape from New South Wales

Transcribed by Y. Le Cupar-Fife, Scotland, [Fife Herald Office], 1845. 70 pp. [Mitchell Library]

The introduction states that this narrative had previously appeared in the Fife Herald. The author of the introduction allows that ‘The transcriber may have occasionally coloured the history, but not so much as to depart from the truth of the original notes’, and relates a somewhat involved story of the transcriber’s acquisition of Connor’s ‘notes’, on which this account claims to be based. There is no explanation of the discrepancy between the title’s location of Connor’s period of servitude (New South Wales) and his location according to the narrative (Van Diemen’s Land).

Sentenced to transportation to New South Wales from Dublin in 1825, Connor claims he landed in Hobart Town, where he was treated as a ‘slave’. While coxswain of a gig, he assisted on a pleasure cruise to Maria Island, helping rescue the party from an Aboriginal attack at East Bay Neck. Following a brief spell in charge of a sloop, he was falsely accused of a robbery and sentenced to 12 months in chains. He escaped, and underwent several adventures in the bush around Bull Bay, Bligh’s Point and Bruni Island, before being recaptured and returned to Hobart Town. He was sentenced to Macquarie Harbour, where he survived the dreadful conditions by acting as coxswain to the pilot. He and several companions escaped in January 1834 after the evacuation of the settlement in 1833, seizing a vessel and finally reaching Valdivia, Chile, in an open boat. He subsequently lived in America. A lively, reflective and sensitive
writer, Connor frankly expresses his homesickness and longing for liberty.

Date span: 1825–1834

48

Cook, Thomas

*The exile’s lamentations*

North Sydney, NSW, Library of Australian History, 1978. 131 pp., index

Thomas Cook, a lawyer’s clerk, was convicted of writing a threatening letter and transported to New South Wales on the *Surry* in 1831. He worked initially as a clerk of stores in Sydney but was dismissed from this position and placed on road gangs in the Blue Mountains. There he experienced brutal treatment, working in irons for 12 months and witnessing the corrupting influence of the convict overseers, many of whom encouraged homosexuality among the convicts. In 1835 he was sent to Port Macquarie among other ‘specials’, or educated convicts, but absconded, was recaptured and sentenced to Norfolk Island for life. On arrival, Cook laboured for three months at Longridge, then was made a clerk in the Royal Engineer’s Office. He became chief clerk and storekeeper, and ultimately a principal overseer. Cook found that the level of corruption, injustice, depravity and misery on Norfolk Island under Commandant Joseph Anderson (q.v.) surpassed any that he had hitherto witnessed. He claims that moderate men were forced into desperate action by inhumane treatment, relating details of the convict mutiny of 1834 as told to him by participants, and describing escape attempts against great odds, and murders committed for the sake of incurring the death sentence. When Alexander Maconochie became Commandant in 1840, he immediately introduced changes to the system of convict discipline, providing rewards for good behaviour, and allowing some dignity and responsibility to the convicts, who, Cook claims, responded with an enormous improvement in behaviour. In 1841, due to good behaviour, particularly his bravery during a boating accident in February 1840, Cook was permitted to return to Sydney, his narrative ending at this point. He absconded from Port Macquarie in 1843 and was not recaptured.

*The exile’s lamentations* was written sometime between 1841 and 1844 and reflects in its formal legalistic style the education and experience of the author. It forms a valuable record of a convict experience by a writer who, though probably biased in the matter of his own guilt and treatment, was able to consider the system intelligently and to write a frank and cohesive first-hand account of it.

Date span: 1831–1841

49

Cooper, Frederic de Brébant

*Wild adventures in Australia and New South Wales, beyond the boundaries, with sketches of life at the mining districts*


Cooper’s account of his experiences while wandering in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria in the 1840s and 1850s contains a number of dramatic adventures. His story of the wreck of the ship in which he was travelling near the mouth of the Brisbane River, when he heroically rescued a number of passengers seems unlikely to be accurate as do most of his adventures with Aborigines. Other details and low-key incidents, however, may have some basis in fact.

The author describes his participation in a retributive party while working as an overseer on a sheep station in the Brisbane area in the 1840s, when he and others pursued a group of Aborigines who had
speared a shepherd, killing many of them and continuing the pursuit until they had captured and executed King Billy, the leader. In a later series of incidents, while he was attempting to establish a new station on the Macintyre River and when he survived a siege on a hut, in which four of his companions were killed, he claims that he led a retributive mission, 'with hearts full of bitterness, determined to execute a vengeance that should be remembered while a savage was found in these districts', and attacked and slaughtered the Aborigines in their camp. While working as a cedar gatherer in the Wide Bay area Cooper injured his arm and spent an extended period in hospital in Sydney. He next worked as a shepherd on the Burnett River and then as an overseer of a cattle run on the Darling Downs. He is lyrical about the joys of stockriding and the excitement of overlanding with cattle. Careful to incorporate 'local colour' into his narrative, Cooper draws on the colonial idiom and inserts numerous descriptions of native animals and the unique beauty of the Australian landscape. In the 1850s he travelled to the Bendigo diggings with some companions, where they worked over old gullies and found a good amount of gold, although two of his friends were crushed in a cave-in. He discusses claim-jumpers on the fields and widespread unrest among the 60,000 miners at Bendigo due to licence fees; the miners' discontent threatened to develop into violence, but was settled peaceably after a reduction in the fee. His narrative concludes with his return to England and his promise to write further adventures if these find a ready market. He appends a vocabulary of the Aboriginal Neungir dialect to his narrative.

Cowper was born in Sydney, a son of the assistant colonial chaplain. He was sent to England at 16, and attended Oxford University before becoming an Anglican curate in 1833. On his return to Australia in 1836 he was appointed chaplain to the Australian Agricultural Company at Port Stephens, where he stayed until 1856. In 1858 he was made Dean and Archbishop of Sydney.

The first part of this book is devoted to an outline of the life of the author's father, William Cowper. The remainder is less a personal history than a narrative of the development of the Church of England in New South Wales. Cowper touches briefly on his childhood, education and major landmarks of his career.

Cox, Alfred

(C.1825)

Recollections: Australia, England, Ireland, Scotland, New Zealand

Christchurch, NZ, Whitcombe & Tombs (Limited), 1884. 272 pp.

Alfred Cox, youngest son of Captain William Cox of the New South Wales Corps, begins his recollections with a discussion of the early histories of New South Wales, the Corps, and of his father's role as a pioneer settler and builder of the first road over the Blue Mountains. He includes some more personal reminiscences of his father, mother and brothers, and their rural estates manned by large numbers of assigned convicts. He also
gives his impressions of Bishop Broughton, Rev. Samuel Marsden and the composer, William Vincent Wallace. Cox gained nothing from his father's estate due to the failure of the Bank of Australia; although he was awarded some rural property and town lots in a distribution by lottery, they proved worthless. Cox toured Britain for three years from the age of 18, married in 1849 and settled on a sheep station in the Canterbury area of New Zealand, where he became a Member of Parliament. Most of the Recollections relate to his experiences in New Zealand, and New Zealand government and politics.

Date span: 1844–1893

52

COX, CORNELIA AND ROSA

Life at Clarendon; incorporating the reminiscences of Cornelia and Rosa Cox and including some notes on the personalities and places mentioned in these reminiscences of the youngest daughters of James Cox


This publication incorporates two short essays written by the Cox sisters in their old age at the request of Rosa's granddaughter. The sisters recall their early life at Clarendon House in Tasmania as daughters of James Cox and his second wife, Eliza. The second son of William Cox of the New South Wales Corps, James Cox moved to Tasmania in 1819, receiving a grant of 6000 acres on which he built Clarendon and grazed his fine merino sheep, bought from John Macarthur in New South Wales. The authors found Clarendon an idyllic environment, providing every pleasure, although Cornelia reflects on how simple their expectations were in contrast to those of children today. She describes Clarendon as a 'large stone house with every convenience ... spacious grounds laid out in flower, fruit and vegetable gardens, extensive shrubberies and several acres of park where we had fallow deer, emu, kangaroos ... a lake with black swans and Cape [B]arren geese'. Both girls kept vegetable gardens and on visits to the family summerhouse, Marion Villa, near the mouth of the Tamar, their older sister Margaret painted watercolours, and collected and pressed seaweed, specimens of which survive today in the collection at South Kensington, England. Dress, travel, entertainments and education, reading and sports, visitors and local characters are all described in greater detail by the youngest sister, Rosa. The essays, though brief, provide charming portraits of the prosperous station life of the fortunate in Tasmania in the mid-nineteenth century.

Date span: 1840–1850

53

COZENS, CHARLES

Adventures of a guardsman


Educated for the church, Cozens ran away and joined the Royal Horse Guards in 1833. He was court-martialled for threatening a superior officer and sentenced to seven years transportation to New South Wales. He describes a period on board a hulk at Woolwich, where he worked in the laundry, and gives a detailed description of the layout and conditions on the ship Woodbridge which transported him to Port Jackson. On arrival in March 1840 he was accommodated at the Hyde Park Barracks which he describes, under Superintendent Timothy Lane, as a 'perfect accumulation of vice and infamy'. Cozens was appointed to the mounted border police in the Maneroo (Monaro) district and travelled with a dray to Cooma via Parramatta, Liverpool, Berrima and Goulburn. His narrative includes descriptions of landscape, native plants, animals and birds, and his impressions of the
Aborigines at Cooma, including black trackers. He discusses travelling in the bush, bivouacking and making damper, the availability of timber and the construction of a bush hut, and describes some experiences with bushrangers, recounting stories about Jack Donohue. Following a year in Cooma, Cozens returned to Sydney to become first clerk at Parramatta Gaol for two years, then clerk at Liverpool Hospital. He obtained a ticket-of-leave after he had been in the colony four years and went to Yass, where he stayed until his sentence expired, working for a period in the Yass Police Force and as a census taker in 1846. Throughout this period Cozens had maintained contact with his respectable, well-to-do family in England and they paid his passage home.

Adventures of a guardsman includes discussions of aspects of life in New South Wales which indicate that Cozens sympathised with the small settler and working man. He criticises the convict-assignment system as giving unwarranted economic and legal power to large property owners. Having assisted the Commissioner for Crown Lands while he was in Cooma, he was familiar with the privileges of squatters and applauds attempts by Governor Gipps to reform Crown Land legislation in 1844. Impressed by the work of Caroline Chisholm, who brought a party of immigrants to Yass while he was there, he discusses immigration in the context of employment and working conditions.

Date span: 1840–1847.

54

CRAWFORD, A[RCHIBALD] (b. 1833)

Eighty-five years in Australia
Sydney, John Sands, 1925. 189 pp.
[Mitchell Library]

Born in Campbelltown, Argyleshire, in 1833, Crawford left Scotland with his family for Australia in 1838. He had an older brother and six sisters at the time of emigrating, although more Australian-born siblings are mentioned later. Crawford recounts his family's pioneering experience, first working on other people's properties and eventually, despite many reverses of fortune and nature, purchasing, losing and re-settling various stations. Most of these properties were situated in the Monaro and Riverina districts. Beginning as labourers at Mt Elrington station near Braidwood, the family moved in sequence to Jinglemoney station, Collindong in the Monaro, Dry Plain and The Pick on Wombrook station, until finally his father bought a station in partnership with Charles McKeachnie. By this time Crawford was 12, had already worked as a shepherd and was presently assisting the family in dairying. He soon had to learn to drive the bullock team and made annual trips to Sydney with his father or brother to sell produce. Various members of the family married, had children or died, and the narrator suffered severely as the result of an unhappy love affair. He contemplated leaving home but stayed when he learned that his widowed sister, Kate, needed him.

In the 1850s Crawford decided to go gold prospecting to Victoria, but arriving in Bendigo and Beechworth without tools, went shearing instead. Returning home, he worked on the station and started droving cattle to Melbourne for sale. The following years saw him working with his family on different stations, falling in love, droving, dairying and meeting Adam Lindsay Gordon. In January 1857 he married and continued his itinerant work, buying a station and losing it. After his father died, his eldest brother refused to share the property, to the subsequent loss of the family and himself. Crawford's later experiences included work as manager of Urana station, 16 miles from Queanbeyan, as overseer at Urangelina, and as station manager near Moorool. His family followed him in most of these moves but in 1869 he eventually acquired his own land.
Increasingly involved in rural politics, he took part in the selecting disputes of the 1880s, dealt with the Land Board, started the Brookong Farmers Union and served in the Farmers and Settlers Association of New South Wales for many years, agitating for a national bank and a progressive land tax. Meanwhile drought, bushfire, livestock diseases, bad seasons, old age and the deaths of two of his sons took their toll. In writing this account at 91 years, he declares that he remembers his childhood best, which is borne out by the liveliness of this section of his narrative. Presenting himself as a wily individual who generally emerged the winner in business if not in love, Crawford also implicitly describes the importance of the extended family in pioneering Australia and the divisions which sometimes strained it.

Date span: 1833-1920

55
Crawford, James Coutts
Recollections of travel in New Zealand and Australia

Most of these recollections deal with travel in New Zealand, but they also include an account of an overland journey with cattle from Yass to Adelaide in 1839. Engaging an experienced overseer and seven men, Crawford set out from Sydney with two bullock teams and drays and collected over 700 cattle from a property near Yass. The party followed the Murrumbidgee and Murray rivers for much of the way, before turning west towards Adelaide. Despite an encounter with bushrangers outside Yass, anxieties about lack of water and some sightings of Aborigines, it appears to have been a relatively trouble free journey. Crawford sold his cattle in Adelaide and returned to Sydney by sea, leaving for New Zealand soon afterwards.

Date span: 1838-1839

56
[Cumberland, R.B.]
Stray leaves from the diary of an Indian officer, containing an account of the famous temple of Juggurnath, its daily ceremonies and annual festivals, and a residence in Australia
London, Whitfield, Green & Son, 1865. 300 pp., illus.

Cumberland introduces himself as ‘Mr Carlisle’ and illustrates his narrative with his own drawings. Mainly describing his years with the British army in India as well as Indian customs and temples, this account also includes short descriptions of two separate residences in Australia. The first was in 1846, when Cumberland sailed to Australia to recover from a temporary illness and associated deafness. For several months he stayed at Waverley near Sydney, where he enjoyed the bush despite snakes, fleas and flies, and divided his time between entertaining, visiting friends and driving occasionally into Sydney to visit the library. On one such excursion he met his future wife, then moved to Sydney for a time, married and embarked for India once more. Sailing to Calcutta via the Torres Strait, he briefly observed the islanders there and called at Booby Island.

After serving in the army for several more years, he resigned and tried life in Australia. The gold rush had made Sydney in 1852 very different from his nostalgic memory; costs had risen and larrikins, drunkenness and poor drainage outweighed the beauty of the landscape around Port Jackson. After visiting Hobart, which impressed him, he bought a small cottage eight miles from Sydney. The poverty of their land, and the threats from bush fires, pests and bushrangers resolved them to return first to Sydney and then to Fairlight. Poor prospects and difficulties with servants finally persuaded them to return to England.
Cumberland recommends the colony for labourers but concludes his humorous, self-deprecating account with the reflection that the colony was no place for such an idle man as himself.

Date span: 1846; 1852–60

57
CURR, EDWARD MICKLETHWAITE (1820–1889)

Recollections of squatting in Victoria then called the Port Phillip district (from 1841 to 1851)
Melbourne, George Robertson, 1883. 452 pp.

First visiting Melbourne in 1839, Curr took over the management of his father’s sheep runs in central Victoria in 1841, progressively taking up other land in the Goulburn Valley near the junction of the Goulburn and Murray rivers and developing what was a poor flock into a large and profitable investment by the time he left Victoria in 1851. He managed the Wolfscrag, Tongala, Lower Moira, Colbinalbin and Coragorag runs and, with his brother William, the Corop run. Curr’s Recollections deal with pastoral life in Victoria largely before squatters became prosperous, when they were accommodated in makeshift huts, assisted by ex-convict labourers and faced unfamiliar conditions and hostile Aborigines. He gives remarkably expressive accounts of daily life on the station, when loneliness and boredom were far more constant enemies than the Aborigines, of the rigours of travelling alone in the bush and of eccentric neighbours. A hilariously high spot is the description of a troop of the mounted police, sent out to ‘restore quiet to the disaffected district’ after Aborigines had stolen some sheep. Exceptionally interested and informative on the customs of the local Aborigines, the Bangarang people, Curr is also unusually sympathetic to their culture, concluding that ‘the blackfellow in his wild state suffered less and enjoyed life more than the majority of civilized men’. He is also sensitive to the changes wrought by the squatters on the Goulburn River valley in a short space of time, and meditates on the contrasting effects of the black and white races on vegetation and ecology. One of the strengths of his account is his ironic awareness of the limitations of Eurocentric attitudes. He later published a four-volume work on the Aborigines, The Australian race (1886–87).

Date span: 1839–1851
Note: See ADB, vol. 3

58
DARWIN, CHARLES [ROBERT] (1809–1882)

Journal of researches into the natural history and geology of the countries visited during the voyage of H.M.S. Beagle round the world
NY, Harper & Brothers, 1846. 2 vols, 351 pp., 312 pp., index
First published in London in 1839

Darwin’s narrative takes the form of a journal, but was written in retrospect. His observations relating to his 1836 visit to New South Wales, Van Diemen’s Land and Western Australia occur in one 28-page chapter in volume 2. Therein Darwin describes the natural features and large settlements he saw during his land travel, including Sydney, Bathurst and Hobart. He comments at some length on the Aborigines (noting their skill in hunting and their rapidly declining numbers) and on the state of society, in particular the position of the convicts. He qualifies his account by drawing attention to the shortness of his stay.

Date span: 1836
Note: See ADB, vol. 1
Sarah Davenport emigrated to New South Wales in 1841 with her husband and four children, in the hope that they would find an easier life than they had in England, where Sarah had to work hard to keep the family, as her husband, a cabinet-maker, was subject to 'the sick headach'. Her narrative of their journey and of their first decade in Australia indicates that conditions in their new country were still those of great hardship. Sarah continued to carry much of the burden of supporting the family; moving frequently in a vain attempt to escape from poverty, they were often the victims of the rapacious behaviour of other, more cunning settlers and of the uncertainties of fate.

The ship the family first embarked on was wrecked before leaving English waters; during their voyage on the second, one of Sarah's children died as the result of scalding, and she suffered a miscarriage. After a period in Sydney, where they found rents to be high and wages low, the family resolved to 'go up the bush', where they had relatives, setting out in January 1843 by bullock wagon, and travelling through Liverpool, Berrima and Yass to the Albury district. Sarah, who bore a daughter soon after their arrival, struggled to provide for her children, who were often without shoes, adequate clothing or food. In 1845 a nearby river flooded while her husband was away and Sarah's house was submerged. She and her children lived in a bark 'gunia' (hut) and came close to starvation. In August 1846 the family moved to Melbourne, where they hoped to better their conditions and obtain schooling for their children. Sarah took in washing and her husband obtained some work. At the onset of the gold rushes, the family headed for the goldfields at Ballarat, then followed the rush to the Mount Alexander fields, where the narrative ends, with Sarah, undaunted by the rough company and conditions, helping the men by prospecting and washing for gold.

Sarah Davenport was not overwhelmed by adversity, and despite her humble, even desperate circumstances, kept a high opinion of her integrity, stating that she refused to be influenced by the low moral standards of many people she encountered, who urged her to beg, steal, or take to prostitution and sly grog selling to improve her position. Published with the spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors of the original manuscript, Davenport’s narrative recounts the often harrowing events in her life in a candid, matter-of-fact manner, without apparent embellishment or exaggeration.

Date span: 1841-1852

In 1844, during a long sea voyage, G.F Davidson commenced these recollections intending them as a travelogue for friends but soon revised them as an entrepreneur’s guide to the British Empire. Seven chapters dealing with New South Wales are included in this account which describes some Asian countries under English and Dutch colonial domination. The author gives an account of the topography, climate, customs, the relations between native populations and colonists, and the standard of living that the latter might expect in each colony. Against this background, he gauges the merits of a
settler's life in New South Wales, commenting critically on the economic management of the colony, and proffering stratagems to alleviate such problems as the labour shortage and the slowness of sea mail. Arriving from Singapore in 1836, Davidson was astonished to find Sydney 'a regular English town ... with its inns and everything conducted on English principle', but he also noted its more negative features, principally the brutality of the local police and the prevalence of public drunkenness. He soon left for Maitland where he spent the next three years on a property on the Paterson River. In Davidson's view any industrious small farmer setting up in this area was assured of success. Local crops, land and stock prices are discussed and the author expresses his preference for assigned convict workers, since their master was granted greater power to ensure diligence and sobriety. Travelogue style, he recommends the best accommodation in the area, gives anecdotes about bushrangers, and describes the local fauna and the customs of the Aborigines. As a man of a 'respectable' class, he was concerned to keep his distance from the emancipists and, in his concluding Australian chapter, warns potential immigrants to be on guard against the apparently respectable. His account reflects his image of himself as a man of authority but reveals little of a personal nature. He left Sydney for Borneo in 1838, accompanied by his family, and cured of the ill health which had first brought him to the country.

Date span: 1836–1838

In her 'unvarnished story of a life of many vicissitudes', Eliza Davies details a life full of sorrow and rejection, but one which was inspired by religious faith and her commitment to the Baptist Church and later the American Bible Union. Born in Paisley, Scotland, she suffered the early death of her father and rejection by her mother, who appears frequently in this narrative as a shadowy but malign presence. Davies gives a spirited description of her childhood in Scotland, including a journey to Ireland when she barely escaped drowning, an experience she regards as evidence of her distinction: 'I was quite a lion, or at least a cub.' When she was 12 the family moved to Glasgow, but Davies left home in her teens after her mother attempted to engage her to a much older, wealthy man. She had a powerful experience of conversion, became a member of a Baptist congregation and in 1838 decided to accompany some friends to New South Wales since she was now totally estranged from her mother. She gives a vivid description of the outward journey which included many dramatic mishaps; particularly effective is her account of entering the Heads when the captain miscalculated and the ship was nearly wrecked.

Shocked by the 'depraved' population of Sydney and by her own treatment in Sydney Hospital after she fell seriously ill, she agreed to accompany Charles Sturt and his wife and family, with whom she had become acquainted, to Adelaide. Davies implies equality with the Sturts but it is likely she was engaged as a nursemaid. The sea voyage aboard the John Pirie to Adelaide proved even more hazardous than the journey from
Scotland, but Davies as always was equal to the situation if others became hopeless or hysterical. She gives some impression of Adelaide and its personalities in the 1830s, although her narrative focuses mainly on her own vicissitudes. She agreed to accompany Sturt on his 1839 expedition into the interior, during which Henry Bryan lost his life and Governor Gawler barely escaped death. Davies, sometimes accompanied by Julia Gawler, the Governor’s daughter, encountered other near disasters of her own. Her dramatic powers come into their own in her descriptions of the hazards of heat, thirst, fatigue and potentially hostile Aborigines. As so often in her story, her difficulties were exacerbated by the attentions of importunate suitors, one of whom was Charles Sturt’s brother, Evelyn.

On returning to Adelaide, Davies describes herself as manipulated by Mrs Sturt into marrying Davies, a tinsmith, who proved to be a violent monster after only a few weeks of marriage. Fortunately he soon left on a business venture to New Zealand and during his absence she applied successfully to her church for protection from him. Her mother, who unaccountably arrived in the colony at this time, took her husband’s part. In order to escape this situation Eliza sailed again for New South Wales and worked for a time as a nursery governess in Sydney. This section of her story concentrates mainly on her pursuit by a Dutch sea captain, a pursuit again favoured by her mother who followed her to Sydney. Subsequently in 1846, when her mother entered into a third marriage with a man Eliza intensely disliked, she became totally alienated from her mother and left for England with her employers.

In Scotland she became a follower of the American Baptist preacher, Alexander Campbell, became involved in his temporary difficulties which included his spending a period in gaol, and followed him to Bethany, West Virginia, where she became a member of his household for a time. Later she was appointed an Associate Principal at a school for orphans in Kentucky. During this period she received news that her mother had died and at the same time suffered a severe illness herself. In 1857 she decided to return to Australia in response to a pleading letter from her sister in Sydney, arriving there in February 1858.

The reunion with her sister and her family was disastrously disappointing for unspecified reasons but she quenched her sorrow with a visit to the Illawarra region in the service of the American Bible Union. In August 1858 she established a school near Kiama and gives graphic descriptions of the primitive living conditions of the local inhabitants, which anticipate Franklin’s treatment of the M’Swats of My brilliant career. In 1861 she left for Adelaide via Melbourne, on board the Miama, on another storm-tossed journey which took 20 days and resulted in the dismasting of the ship. Before leaving she received another of her numerous proposals of marriage, this time from an old friend whom she rejected on the grounds that he had lost his wife too recently.

On arrival in Adelaide she was kindly received by George Fife Angas and other old friends, but was almost disabled to discover that her husband, Davies, was still alive. Vowing unstinted service to God if He would remove ‘the curse of my life’, she won a divorce with great difficulty. Her liberation was made more emphatic a few days later when Davies suddenly died.

She returned once more to Sydney, visited North Sydney, and determined to open a school there since the people were, she considered, ‘low, ignorant, vicious and drunken, living by stealing’. She opened the school in 1862 and subsequently organised the building of both school and teacher’s residence, generally gathering the building materials herself. Although encountering some opposition from the local people, she received support from the Governor of New South Wales; the school was later taken over by the National Board of Education, which
continued to engage her as the teacher. Incidents that she describes in this section of her narrative include bushfires, an earthquake, the attempts of local enemies to remove her from her position, a severe illness, the pursuit of an escaped murderer, the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to Sydney and his shooting, her own visits to the Blue Mountains, and her success in converting some navvies to Christianity. In Sydney she met her sister again and rehabilitated one of her nieces, who lived with her for a time at North Sydney.

In February 1870 Davies decided to give up her position and sailed for Adelaide, where she opened a school for poor children of all denominations. Later called the Bowden Public School, it was financed by George Fife Angas. She recounts her successes as a teacher, the gratitude she received from Angas, as well as students and parents, and the results of her charitable interest in the welfare of people confined to the Adelaide Lunatic Asylum. In 1874 she resigned from her position due to ill health and left for America via Sydney. Revisiting her school in North Sydney, she was gratified to find her work remembered and prospering. Her narrative concludes with her arrival in America and her reunion with old friends at Lexington.

Date span: 1838–1874

62

DAVIS, ELIZABETH

The autobiography of Elizabeth Davis, a Balaclava nurse, daughter of Dafydd Cadwaladyr

Edited by Jane Williams

London, Hurst and Blackett, 1857. 2 voix, 308 pp., 298 pp., port.

The editor of this narrative explains that her intention is to convey the 'genuine sense' rather than the 'literal precision' of Davis' recollections, which are unsupported by written records, memoranda or letters. Davis, who roughly estimates her birth date as 1794, gives a lively account of her childhood in Wales as one of the 16 children of Dafydd Cadwaladyr, a Calvinistic Methodist, who appears to have been a profound formative influence. Davis is in fact a self-adopted surname, derived from her father’s first name. Her mother died when she was five and, resentful of her elder sister’s tyranny, she ran away at nine to live with the family of a Mr Lloyd, a wealthy gentleman and her father’s landlord. At 14 she left the Lloyds to see more of the world and settled for a time in Liverpool. There she made a name for herself with the bold capture of a burglar, a feat she later repeated. On a later occasion she beat a man who attempted to rape her. After going into service with a wealthy family, she accompanied them to France in 1814 and describes an occasion when she attended a ball at St Cloud, dressed as a man. She became engaged, half-unwillingly, to an older man, a sea captain, who was drowned before the wedding could take place, and thereafter received several proposals which she resolutely refused. Her accounts of her resistance to the idea of marriage are particularly revealing of her self-perception.

Davis’ later travels took her to the West Indies, China and India, and in the 1820s and early 1830s she was employed as maid to the Captain’s wife on board the ship Denmark Hill, which traded between Sydney, Hobart Town and Eastern ports. During long periods in Australian ports, she frequently travelled inland. Davis’ later life included a period in the Crimea as a nurse where she met Florence Nightingale, of whom she gives a pejorative account. A fiercely independent and original personality, Davis recounts numerous critical incidents in which her natural address saved the situation. Trained in endurance and social service as a child, she describes herself as having a high opinion of her own goodness and as being especially proud of her honesty.

Date span: 1820s–1830s
In this anonymously published work the author, identified as Annie Maria Baxter, recounts that she accompanied her husband, Andrew Baxter (a British officer in the 50th Regiment), to Van Diemen’s Land in 1834 on board the convict transport, Augusta Jessie. A gregarious, high-spirited individual, she greatly enjoyed her four years in Launceston. However, her life changed dramatically after her husband resigned his commission in 1839 and took up land near Kempsey, establishing a station, Yesabah. Although Baxter gives a graphic picture of pioneering’s hardships and isolation, she also revels retrospectively in the physical activities and unconventional freedoms of the life. Her courage and resource are even more obvious in her accounts of a two-month camping journey to Yambuck, the Baxters’ new station in the Port Fairy district of Victoria, and the difficulties she encountered there. Memories of the past is much less frank than her journal (excerpted in A face in the glass (1992) by Lucy Frost), but Annie Baxter’s distinctive personality is clearly visible. Keenly interested in human types, however odd, and equipped with an acerbic sense of humour, she wittily dissects the social scene. At the same time, her increasing disillusionment with Andrew Baxter frequently emerges in melancholy asides or expressions of sympathy with other abused women, whether Aboriginal or European. ‘After all, which of us is a free agent?’ she reflects, contemplating the life of the convicts. She describes numerous female friendships but clearly prefers the fellowship and freedoms of male society and is engagingly frank about her preference: ‘I liked two things very much, namely, attention and admiration.’

Date span: 1834–1848

Note: See ADB, vol. 1

These reminiscences of life on the Richmond River, first published in the Lismore Northern Star in 1918, were written at the dictation of Ann Dawe, but in the third person. Ann King arrived in Australia with her family in 1844 when she was 10. Her father was engaged to work at Back Creek on the Richmond River and the family travelled there from Grafton by bullock wagon in a journey of two weeks. In the early 1850s Ann married Thomas Hollingworth, a bootmaker, and they lived at Wyangerie, Coraki and finally Lismore, where they selected land. Following the death of Hollingworth, Ann, who had borne 10 children, married H. Dawe. Although the brevity of these recollections allows only the broadest outline of her long life, she adds colour and life to her narrative by including a few experiences in more detail, such as the family’s reaction to the threat of attack by Aborigines, her wedding day in Grafton and the removal of her cedar house from Coraki to Lismore by raft.

Date span: 1844–1860s
In 1824 Dawson accepted the post of chief agent in New South Wales of the newly-formed Australian Agricultural Company, and arrived in Sydney in November 1825 with a party of 30 adults and 40 children and a flock of 600 sheep. Assisted by his nephew, John Dawson, he established a pastoral settlement in the Port Stephens area. In 1828 he was suspended from office by the company’s local committee and later dismissed following an adverse report from James Macarthur. Clearly a victim of the Macarthurs in his work for the settlement, Dawson later received a grant of land in New South Wales as some recompense for the injustice he suffered. In The present state of Australia Dawson is only incidentally concerned to justify himself and writes with the avowed intention of educating the British public about Australian conditions. Some of his narrative, directed at the prospective immigrant, describes climatic and physical conditions, soil types, native plants, the treatment and behaviour of convicts, and his discoveries in the Stroud, Gloucester and Manning districts. The major part of his account consists of detailed, sympathetic descriptions of the Aborigines and their customs. Appalled by the ignorant or brutal behaviour of the Europeans to this ‘harmless race’, Dawson is determined to correct the prevailing impression of the Aborigines as a degraded people. Although little of his personal life emerges from the narrative, he indirectly reveals himself as a man of enlightened opinions and strong personality.

Date span: 1824–1828
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

An officer of the British army’s 99th Regiment, De Winton travelled to Sydney in 1843 as a member of the guard on the convict ship Constant. He was stationed initially at Parramatta, where he found his duties light and his social life full, observing that in the Australian colonies, ‘officers were always counted in the first set of society’. He spent a brief period in command of a detachment of the 99th at Port Macquarie, before accompanying Captain Day on an expedition to establish a penal settlement at Port Curtis in 1847. De Winton and 20 of his men camped on the future site of Gladstone in Queensland and were attacked by Aborigines while in their tents. The contingent was ordered to return to Sydney after a few weeks and De Winton was posted to Moreton Bay, where the conditions were primitive but where he enjoyed contact with station owners on the Darling Downs and the Logan.

In August 1848 De Winton was posted to Norfolk Island. He denies the accuracy of Marcus Clarke’s grim portrayal of conditions on the Island under Commandant John Price, and claims that justice was well administered and that discipline and morale among the convicts were good. He describes Norfolk as a ‘terrestrial paradise for free residents’, as the ‘great disturbing influences of society had no place’. His defence of his friend Price encompasses a description of his murder by convicts at Williamstown in 1857.

De Winton was a visiting magistrate in Hobart Town in 1850, and he comments on
Lieutenant Andrew Clarke and the issues of abolition and self-government during this time. He was on Norfolk Island again between 1851 and 1853, when ill health compelled his return to England. Although he continued in the army, he did not return to Australia.

De Winton's *Reminiscences* dwell on the lighter side of the life of a junior officer in Australia in the 1840s, containing accounts of barrack room pranks, regimental traditions and personalities. Although he was in charge of convicts for virtually all of his time in Australia, he includes very little about convict conditions. Notwithstanding his uncritical support of the establishment, De Winton demonstrates mildly liberal, if patronising, attitudes to such issues as the rights and treatment of Aborigines and convicts.

**Date span:** 1843–1853

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**67**

**[Delaforce, William]**

*The life and experiences of an ex-convict in Port Macquarie by 'Woomera'*

Port Macquarie, NSW, [1900]. 91 pp., port.

Delaforce was 16 years old when he was convicted (unjustly he claims) of theft and transported to New South Wales on the *Hoogly* in 1834. He worked briefly on the emancipist Samuel Terry's Mount Pleasant station, where he developed sandy blight (acute conjunctivitis), a painful condition which required 10 months hospitalisation at Windsor. He was then sent to Port Macquarie, where he joined the iron gang, working with and under the supervision of 'specials' or educated convicts. He records that he and other members of the gangs were frequently flogged, starved and cheated by overseers. In 1838 Delaforce was assigned to Lake Innes station where he dug drains, gardened and acted as milkman, but was unjustly accused of robbing the store and returned to the chain gang. His sentence expired in 1843, but Delaforce continued to live and work in Port Macquarie up to the time of the publication of his pamphlet.

In his very lucidly written narrative Delaforce indicates that in spite of the cruel treatment and injustice inflicted on convicts at Port Macquarie, they sometimes got the better of the establishment. He recounts many occasions when he feigned illness, stole poultry and vegetables, and participated in light-hearted schemes and tricks simply to tease the overseers and constables or to work a rough scheme of justice among the convicts themselves. He describes in an amusing manner some of the 'specials' he met, finding them even greater rogues than the common convicts. He also describes Aborigines who lived in and around the settlement, some of whom were hanged for murdering Europeans and, in closing, describes the arrival of the survivors of the wreck of the *Rosetta Joseph* in Port Macquarie in 1850 and the wreck of Boyd's yacht, *Wanderer*, on the bar at Port Macquarie in 1851.

**Date span:** 1834–1843

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**68**

**Delessert, Eugène**

*Souvenirs d'un voyage à Sydney (Nouvelle Hollandé), fait pendant l'année 1845*

Paris, A. Franck, 1847. 240 pp. In French

Delessert left Le Havre in August 1844, embarking on the *Persian* under Captain C. Mallard RN at Portsmouth. He describes the voyage and arrival at Port Jackson in December. His lively account of his months in Sydney in 1845 includes descriptions of the harbour, the Domain and the Botanic Gardens, streets, clubs, principal buildings, fruit and vegetable markets, climate, population, transport, merchants and
agricultural societies. He dined with Sir George Gipps and associated closely with the French consul, Mr Faramond. He describes the celebrations on 26 January, the anniversary of the foundation of the colony, and devotes two chapters to an account of the settlement’s early history. He also gives extensive descriptions of a hunting expedition to Parramatta, a bush fire and a visit to John Macarthur’s farm at Camden, and some account of his involvement in a court case over mismanagement of stores on the Persian. The narrative closes with two chapters on the Aborigines, describing their appearance, food, weapons, hunting practices, beliefs, customs and language. An observant traveller, Delessert conveys a distinctive response to New South Wales.

Delessert also included an account of his impressions of New South Wales in his Voyages dans les océans Atlantique et Pacifique (Paris, 1848).

Date span: 1845

69

DEMARR, JAMES
Adventures in Australia fifty years ago being a record of an emigrant’s wanderings through the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland during the years 1839-1844


Demarr arrived in New South Wales in 1839 on the immigrant ship Heber, having escaped from the drudgery of farm life in Yorkshire and the ‘austere rule’ of his father. He intended to gain experience working in Australia, with a view to investing at a later stage. He describes the inadequacy of the emigrants’ guides, which he relied on for provisioning, and gives a graphic description of the hardships of the voyage and the character of his fellow passengers. He travelled extensively in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland over the next five years, working as a storekeeper in Queanbeyan, as a stockman on a cattle station in the Snowy Mountains, as a shepherd in New England, and as a drover overlanding cattle from Sydney to Port Phillip. Demarr writes vividly of the hospitality, transitory friendships and isolation of the bush, of the economic and social conditions of outback Australia, and of the terrors of travelling alone. In Queensland he was unable to prove he was a free immigrant and was briefly detained as an escaped convict. A man of independent attitudes, he is contemptuous of the operation of British law and the transportation system. He expresses great sympathy for the convicts, with whom he often worked, and the Aborigines, concluding that ‘what we call civilization has been no boon to the black natives of Australia, and to their mind must be associated with gunpowder, poison, hunger, disease and extermination’. Demarr set sail from Sydney for South America and England in 1844.

Date span: 1839-1844

70

DENISON, WILLIAM [THOMAS] (1804-1871)
Varieties of vice-regal life


Denison was Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania between 1846 and 1855, and Governor of New South Wales and Governor-General from 1855 to 1861, when he became Governor of Madras. Only the first volume of Varieties of vice-regal life refers to his life in Australia. It consists of transcripts of his letters to relatives and friends and to a lesser extent, officials, in England, and extracts from letters written in journal form by his wife Caroline, addressed to her family. Denison justifies the use of the
letters to form a record of his life by stating, in his preface, that they give ‘a truthfulness which can never be attributed to mere reminiscences’ and that they can provide different viewpoints of circumstances and events. The letters are largely allowed to speak for themselves, but are linked by some retrospective comment by way of explanation or summary.

The narrative gives the perspectives of both William and Caroline Denison on the great social and administrative changes which came about during Denison’s period of office in Tasmania and New South Wales, and on the many political conflicts with which he became embroiled. They discuss at length the convict system, punishments and reform, describing difficulties with Irish political prisoners such as William Smith O’Brien and Thomas Meagher, and visits to penal settlements such as Port Arthur and Point Puer, and to the Anson hulk for female convicts. They discuss the anti-transportation issue which divided Van Diemen’s Land society, and Denison’s difficulties with appointments to the Legislative Councils of both Tasmania and New South Wales, and the Supreme Court of Tasmania. They refer to the introduction of representative government, electoral and constitutional matters, education, orphan and infants schools and the role of the church in education, the effect of the Victorian gold discoveries on Tasmania and the need to send troops to settle unrest on the goldfields, and to events such as the Crimean War, the wreck of the Dunbar, the conferring of the first degrees at Sydney University and the separation of Queensland from New South Wales.

Denison’s frequent references to bridges, roads and railways reflect his training as an engineer; his long narrative of his visits to Norfolk Island in 1857 and 1859, in order to oversee the resettlement of the Pitcairn Islanders, is indicative of his particular interest in this subject. Due to the unofficial nature of most of the letters, however, they also record informal occasions, unconventional reactions and intimate thoughts and feelings. Caroline Denison’s narratives, in particular, while containing her impressions of colonial society at grand balls and receptions and of gatherings of Aborigines mustered to impress the Governor, also refer frequently to her family life, her pride in her husband and anxiety on his behalf, and her attendance at family gatherings, afternoon teas and children’s parties.

Date span: 1846–1861
Note: See ADB, vol. 4

71
Derricourt, William (alias Day, b.1819)
Old convict days
Edited by Louis Becke

First published as a series titled ‘Old convict times to gold-digging days’ in the Sydney Evening News in 1891, this narrative was virtually unchanged by Louis Becke for this edition. William Derricourt, or Day, describes his childhood in the English Midlands, where he lived by his wits from an early age, and was exposed to the brutality of bull baiting and cockfighting. He was duped into receiving a stolen waistcoat, arrested and sentenced to 10 years transportation. He worked in the Justitia hulk at Woolwich before being transported to Van Diemen’s Land on the Asia in 1839. He was placed in the convict barracks at Hobart Town under William Gunn, but after repeated attempts to escape was sent to Port Arthur. There he worked in irons, carrying timber for the construction of the Lady Franklin, and ‘crushed down, worked like a beast of burden, and oppressed more than human nature could endure’ under Commandant Charles O’Hara Booth, he attempted unsuccessfully to escape again. He came to be
considered an ‘incorrigible’, and bore sentences of four years in chains, extended periods of solitary confinement and floggings, without becoming a ‘sandstone’ or ‘soft crawler’, as he refers to submissive convicts. Derricourt was moved to the coal mines, where he hauled coal to the surface in trucks, developing a physical strength which earned him the fear and respect of other convicts. Completing his four years in irons, he was employed as a charcoal-burner for the mines, which allowed him to trap native game for food and trade. He then worked on convict stations at Lovely Banks, Jerusalem, Jericho and Saltwater River, before being assigned to a succession of masters on farms, where he did fencing, stump-grubbing, bullock-driving and general farm work, and obtained a ticket-of-leave and finally, a pardon. He made his way to South Australia, where he was hired to ‘ride to mail’ between Wellington, on the Murray, and Mount Gambier. His route traversed country inhabited by a number of Aborigines and he witnessed their rituals such as burials, participated in an Aboriginal war, and observed the effect of white settlement on their lifestyle. Deciding to head for the goldfields, he set out for Victoria along the Tatiara River, which was dry, and was overtaken by a bushfire which he survived by sheltering in a hole covered by the carcass of his horse. Narrowly escaping death from thirst, he succeeded in reaching Victoria, passing himself off as a ‘new chum’ at stations on the way, and amazing station hands by his horse-breaking and bullock-driving prowess. He took ship to Sydney and made his way to Sofala, where he quickly became proficient at ‘cradling’ and fossicking before returning to Sydney within a month to marry a girl he had seen there on his way through. He brought his wife back to Sofala, where he built a solid log hut, and began dealing in mining tools, opened a blacksmith shop, and acted as the local undertaker, soon expanding his business to Tambaroora. After losing a good deal of money playing cards and billiards, he left Sofala for the Ironbark diggings, and discovered gold on Burrendong Mountain, precipitating a rush there. He was induced to join a friend in robbing a mail coach near Bathurst and, although the hold up was successful, he was betrayed by his companion, arrested, convicted, and served five years imprisonment with hard labour on Cockatoo Island. There he worked in the machine shop, becoming overseer of an engineering gang, which he controlled by fear. While on Cockatoo Island he slept in a ward with the bushrangers Frank Gardiner and Jack Peisley, and killed a man, but was acquitted of manslaughter. On his release he returned to Sofala and took up mining, blacksmithing and gunsmithing once more. At the close of the narrative, he was living on a 20–30 acre block at Sofala, where he had built a number of water races and was sluicing for gold. His adult daughter had come to live with him and he includes a narrative of her experiences while working as a nursemaid near Braidwood, when she had some contact with the Clarke bushranging gang, and she and the baby became lost for a short time in the bush.

This is a remarkable narrative on many counts, not least of which is the breadth of experience covered, in three colonies, over a period of some 40 years, as convict and emancipist. In addition, some episodes and locations, such as the engineering shop on Cockatoo Island, and mining at Sofala are described with considerable detail. Research has generally substantiated Derricourt’s story, although some details have been shown to be fabrications. His portrayal of his physical prowess and cunning seems likely to be exaggerated, although he is disarmingly honest about some unattractive aspects of his personality, such as his propensity for violence and the bullying nature which made him a successful overseer who turned informer when it suited him. Paradoxically, the narrative contains
many references to instances when he protected and befriended women, including runaways in England, female convicts and women on the goldfields.

In his introduction, Becke states that the story is 'set forth as nearly as possible in his [Derricourt's] own words'; Derricourt, by his own statement, being unable to read or write. Despite Becke's references to the 'rugged, honest' style and the 'hard, bald and prosaic' details of the narrative, Old convict days is evidently the work of an experienced and able writer, in that it is clearly expressed, vividly realised and well constructed.

Date span: 1839–1870s

72
DUCHARME, LEON (LEANDRE)
Journal of a political exile in Australia
Translated from the original, with introduction and notes by George Mackaness
Sydney, George Mackaness, 1944. 79 pp.
First published in French, Montreal, 1845

Ducharmé was among the French Canadian rebels transported to New South Wales on the Buffalo in 1839–40. He and his fellow exiles were sent to a penal settlement at Longbottom on arrival, and stayed there for some 20 months, working in road gangs. Ducharmé was then assigned to Alexander George Dumas, a clerk in the office of the Principal Superintendent of Convicts, and following the granting of his ticket-of-leave, worked for himself. He was pardoned in 1844 and returned to Canada via London. His account corroborates much of what is contained in the Notes of fellow exile François Xavier Prieur (q.v.), but is not as personal or as detailed. Apparently written up from a journal and occasionally reverting to journal form, it deals thoroughly with the voyage on the Buffalo and conditions at Longbottom, where the Canadians were eventually able to work the system to suit themselves. It deals only cursorily with the author's time as an assigned and ticket-of-leave convict. At the close of his narrative, Ducharmé includes a general description of the colony of New South Wales, including climatic conditions, agriculture and resources, commerce, wildlife and Aborigines, describing the last as 'the most stupid and most disgusting race of men in the world'.

Date span: 1839–1844

73
DUNHILL, SNOWDEN
The life of Snowden Dunhill, written by himself

This is largely a description of the author's life as a thief and a rogue in England prior to transportation to New South Wales in the 1820s. A Yorkshire farm labourer, Dunhill was initiated into petty theft, gambling and cockfighting early in life. His wife was a further corrupting influence, and the demands of a growing family provided him with motives for crime on a large scale. Dunhill became a notorious, prosperous thief and following a conviction for theft in 1812, spent six years in the hulks. While he was there his wife and children were also convicted; his wife and two sons being transported to Australia. Dunhill himself was finally transported to Botany Bay, where he worked in road gangs. The narrative ends here, having touched only briefly on the voyage of transportation and his experiences in New South Wales. Although Dunhill expresses a moral purpose in his narrative, ostensibly to deter others from similar misdeeds, he enthusiastically recounts his daring criminal deeds and appears not to repent his crimes but merely to regret his conviction and punishment. In the preface he states that a fellow convict, a 'highly educated and literary young man', assisted him in writing his Life and this may to some extent account for the superficial moral tone,
as well as the formal, consciously literary style of the narrative.

Date span: 1820s

74

EARP, G[EORGE] B[UTLER]

What we did in Australia: being the practical experience of three clerks, in the stockyard and at the gold fields

This book outlines the experiences in Australia of the author and his two friends, who left positions as clerks in England and travelled to Adelaide in 1847. They hired themselves out as labourers and shepherds on a station near Adelaide, where they stayed for two years, learning, with difficulty, skills such as droving and cattle branding and aspects of sheep husbandry. At the end of this period, the three leased a station on their own account, and Earp set out to find a run for their increasing cattle herd. They obtained a share of a lease of a large station somewhere 'between the Murray and the Murrumbidgee' and moved their cattle there, establishing stockyards and huts with the help of Aborigines and ex-convicts. They made good profits during their first year but found, as news of the Victorian gold discoveries spread in 1851, that they were unable to keep their station-workers. In particular, it became impossible to protect sheep from dingoes without the help of shepherds. Relinquishing their station, they took their cattle to Melbourne for sale and went to the Mount Alexander gold-diggings, where they mined first of all at Golden Point, then at Forest Creek. They found a good amount of gold and at the close of the narrative in August 1852 were considering becoming gold dealers.

This book seems intended to convince the reader that the working man in England has no hope of advancement, and that, for those who are sober and have perseverance, emigration is the best solution. Australia is presented as a land of opportunity and the narrative contains much information about the countryside, vegetation, wildlife, economic conditions in the country and city, and prospects at the goldfields. Although the adventures of the three young men are to a certain extent incidental to this purpose, some of their experiences, such as their first attempts at horse riding and mustering and branding cattle, or forcing a herd across a river are entertainingly described. Earp's impressions of the goldfields at Mount Alexander and of Melbourne in the 1850s, inundated with diggers celebrating their luck, are also vividly written.

Date span: 1847-1852

75

EASTWICK, ROBERT WILLIAM (1772—1865)

A master mariner. Being the life and adventures of Captain Robert William Eastwick
London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1891. 352 pp., ports

Captain Eastwick's Australian experiences occupy only one chapter in a full autobiography which is so packed with incident that, the writer claims, it can only be 'a mere summary of the Hardships, Trials and Losses [he] sustained'. Sailing into Port Jackson in 1804 in the ship Betsy, Eastwick found that, although the settlement was desperate for the goods he had brought, trading was difficult due to monopolies held by the government and the Campbell Company, the scarcity of legal tender and an absence of established commercial customs. Many people in official positions wished to take goods from him for resale, such as Surgeon Thomas Jamison, whom he was obliged to take to court, and Commissary John Palmer, who had to be compelled to pay by Governor King. Eastwick describes
incidents with convicts during his stay in Port Jackson, such as his meeting with a convict servant woman who turned out to be the sister of a British officer of his acquaintance in India, and witnessing preparations for an execution where reprieves were issued at the last moment, to the chagrin of one of the condemned. Eastwick was in the colony during the rebellion at Castle Hill and gives some background to the rebels and their uprising, describing the atmosphere and reactions in Sydney. On leaving, he was commissioned to take some of the convicts implicated in the rebellion to Norfolk Island, including the Irish general, Joseph Holt. Impressed by Holt’s dignity and courage, he records that he interceded on his behalf with Commandant Foveaux.

Date span: 1804

76

EASY, HENRY

Horrors of transportation: or the danger of keeping bad company


Writing at the request of a Rev. Dr Cope, to warn of ‘the evil and danger of keeping bad company’, Easy maintains that he was innocent of the crime for which he was transported for 14 years to Van Diemen’s Land in 1829. He also denies any misbehaviour towards the master to whom he was assigned at New Norfolk, claiming that his master provoked him into striking him so that he would not be granted a ticket-of-leave and, having had him flogged, held the threat of further punishment over him. Easy absconded, but returned voluntarily and was sentenced to a chain gang where he suffered severely from the chains and the heavy work. He was flogged several times, and ‘ruined in body’ and weary of life, escaped again, intending to become a bushranger, even though aware that he was likely to be caught and hanged. He was recaptured almost immediately, but news of his pardon (granted for his original crime) was brought as he was awaiting trial, his innocence having been proven in his absence. Easy stayed in Van Diemen’s Land a further 14 years, and saved enough to establish himself in business in England, where he returned in 1846. He found, however, that in spite of his pardon, he carried the stigma of a returned convict.

Exceptionally bitter on account of his belief in his innocence and moral superiority, Easy uses his experiences to demonstrate that the penal system, far from encouraging convicts to reform, actually drives them into crime. He pleads for compassion in the treatment of convicts, stating that ‘a convict, no matter whether he may have deserved his sentence ... is still a man, and not to be treated like a brute’.

Date span: 1829–1846

77

EDGAR, LUCY ANNA

Among the black boys; being the history of an attempt at civilising some young aborigines of Australia


When she was a child, Lucy Edgar lived from 1845–51 at the Aboriginal Institution three miles from Melbourne at Merri Creek, where her father was Superintendent. Her recollections of this time focus on the Aboriginal boys who had been brought to the Institution by the Black Protector from various regions of Victoria and the efforts of her parents to convert them to Christianity and discover ‘how far they were capable of training [them]’. Two small boys, Tommy and Harry, with their mother, Kitty (the widow of Bungeeleenee, who had been detained for the suspected abduction of a white woman and who had died in custody) were added to the original six at the Institution. The program ran smoothly for a brief period, the boys
making progress in reading, writing and arithmetic and working about the Institution, notably building a bridge across Merri Creek, which was later swept away in the floods of 1850. When one of the boys was murdered by Aborigines of the Melbourne region, however, the remaining inmates, fearful of the hostility shown to them by the local tribespeople and nostalgic for their own country, gradually left. The Institution was closed when only Harry and Tommy remained. Lucy Edgar moved to Hobart Town with her parents and the two boys were taken by John Hinkins, who continues their history in his *Life amongst the native race* (q.v.).

In her mild-toned, entertaining narrative, Lucy Edgar discusses each of the boys in affectionate detail, recalling many amusing incidents and conversations. While displaying a condescending attitude in that she attributes an innate laziness to the Aborigines, and somewhat patronisingly discusses the traditions and religious beliefs of both the 'civilized' and 'wild' natives, she is by no means rigidly moralistic. She also implies that efforts made for the religious conversion of the Aborigines were not oppressive, notwithstanding the religious nature of the Institution.

**Date span: 1848-1851**

**78**

**ELLIOTT, SIZAR**

(1814-1901)

*Fifty years of colonial life*

Melbourne, [1887]. 76 pp.

Elliott emigrated to Van Diemen's Land from Canada in 1835. After a period in Launceston he moved to Sydney where he set up a grocery shop in George Street, providing supplies to shipping companies. He became involved in a number of small industries, in particular meat canning, and sold colonial wine as early as 1844. Following a period spent gold-digging at the Turon and Sofala, he then established a business in Melbourne selling goldfields equipment and supplies. He became a prominent ironmonger, was elected Councillor for Melbourne, and established a small vineyard at Brighton, where he produced his own wine. In later years he was instrumental in raising money for the establishment and funding of Alfred Hospital. As Elliott has packed details of a long and active life into a short space, the narrative is sketchy in places with little personal detail.

**Date span: 1835-1876**

Note: See *ADB*, vol. 4

**79**

**EMIGRANT, AN**

*A short account of the settlement of Swan River, Western Australia from the year 1834 to the year 1841. By an emigrant. Written for the perusal of capitalists, but more particularly addressed to young men in Great Britain, who possess small means, and to mechanics and labourers*


Written to attract colonists to Australia, part 1 supplies necessary practical information, such as details of climate and soil. Part 2 recounts the writer's experience when, having worked briefly in Van Diemen's Land and judging society there immoral, he settled at Swan River in 1835. He describes the settlement there, trade, the treatment of Aborigines and the establishment of towns. He compares the merits of the dispersive mode of colonisation in Western Australia with the concentrated pattern in South Australia, and warns of some of the social dangers of life in the west. The narrative is largely factual but laced with interesting personal judgements.

**Date span: 1834-1841**
Anna Oster emigrated to South Australia as a child in 1847 with a group of German Lutherans, members of the congregation of her father, Pastor Philipp Jacob Oster. Her father died during the voyage, but the family settled among their own people at Lobenthal, where they lived initially at the parsonage, the children attending the Lutheran school. Anna gives a moving description of the family’s extreme poverty at this time and her mother’s consequent nervous breakdown. In 1861 Anna married Rudolph Ey, a teacher, who was ordained as a Lutheran minister in 1868. During their 43 years of marriage, the couple lived at Hahndorf, Blumberg, Carlsruhe and Rosenthal, finally returning to Lobenthal, where Rudolph died in 1904. Anna bore 13 children, seven of whom survived to adulthood. As the daughter, wife and mother of Lutheran pastors, Ey’s life story is closely entwined with the early history of the Lutheran Church in the Barossa Valley and Yorke Peninsula of South Australia. Her memoirs chronicle the establishment of church buildings, the lives of pastors, and the conflicts within congregations on issues such as worldliness and church schools. The narrative stays strictly within Ey’s personal experience, however, and is more truly an account of her own life than a history of the church. Ey interprets her life in terms of family; recording their homes, moves between parsonages, the ministerial duties of her husband, brother and son, the births and confirmations of each of her children, their marriages, vocations and children. Originally written in German and translated for publication by a granddaughter, the simple narrative divulges Anna’s inner feelings most fully in relation to the frequent illnesses and deaths of her loved ones. The mood of the memoirs is one of present and foreshadowed sorrow in which the narrator’s only comfort is her religious faith.

Date span: 1847–1900

In his Autobiographical narrative, which covers his emigration to Australia in 1833 and his first years as a squatter and overlander, Eyre ascribes to himself a sense of destiny and moral purpose which motivated his great expeditions of exploration through South and Western Australia in 1840–41. He describes his voyage from England on the Ellen in 1832–33 in detail, commenting on the interactions between passengers forced into each other’s company for a lengthy period. He made some good friends on the journey, including Lucia Abell and John Morphy, as well as some useful acquaintances, and on arrival in Sydney was immediately accepted into ‘the highest and best society’; he was determined, he declares, ‘to deserve by my conduct the position ceded to me and never descend to second-rate associates’. Failing to obtain a government appointment, he spent a year on William Bell’s sheep station in the Hunter River district, gaining experience in station management, and he vividly outlines procedures such as washing, shearing and woolpressing. He also describes the anxieties and privations of a sheep farmer’s life, his
enjoyment of the society of other settlers on the Hunter, his experiences of convict labour, and gives his opinion of the convict system in general, applauding transportation as a means of convict reform. In 1834 he took up a station, Woodlands, on the Molonglo Plains, and drove a flock of 3000 sheep there from the Limestone Plains in what he describes as a 'long and horrifying journey'. His sheep contracting first scab and then catarrh, he left Woodlands for financial reasons, and in 1837 began a series of overland expeditions with sheep and cattle from the Liverpool Plains and Sydney to Melbourne and Adelaide, which proved more lucrative than sheep farming. Desiring, however, 'to distinguish [himself] in a more honourable and disinterested way than by the mere acquisition of wealth', he became determined to engage in expeditions of exploration to benefit the colony at large, and in 1839 undertook an expedition north from Adelaide in an attempt to find an overland route to the west. In this latter part of his narrative, which is less reflective and personal than the earlier part, Eyre indicates that he adopted a firm and fair attitude to the Aborigines who congregated in large numbers at some points along the Murray, and refrained from retaliating when one of his men was speared. He deals with his later expeditions in the publication Journal of expeditions of discovery into Central Australia and overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound in the years 1840-1 (1845).

Date span: 1832–1839
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

FAIRFAX, JAMES [READING]  
(1834–1919)

'Some recollections of old Sydney' in Royal Australian Historical Society Journal  
V, 1 (1919), pp. 1–37

These recollections, which deal only in passing with the author's personal life, contain descriptions of Sydney from around 1838. They concentrate particularly on the harbour and shipping, the National Gallery and the arts, early politics, newspapers and newspaper offices.

Date span: 1838–1850
Note: See ADB, vol. 8

FALBE, EMMELINE MARIA DE  
(NÉE MACARTHUR, 1828–1911)

'Memoirs' in My dear Miss Macarthur  
By Jane de Falbe

Emmeline Macarthur, daughter of Hannibal Macarthur and granddaughter of Philip Gidley King, lived during her childhood in the family mansion Vineyard (later Subiaco), on the Parramatta River. As a member of a powerful family with influential connections in government, military and squatting circles, she led a privileged life as a child and young woman, and recalls her eminent grandparents and parents, mansions staffed by convict and ex-convict servants, constant visits by Royal Navy officers, and grand social occasions, culminating in her wedding in 1848 to George Leslie, a squatter. As her mother was a chronic invalid, and Emmeline took charge of the household from the age of 15, her narrative also contains more mundane recollections such as details of shopping and family activities. Emmeline and George moved
to the Leslie family station, Canning Downs, on the Darling Downs, where they lived between 1848 and 1852. By this time the station was more or less established and no longer so remote from civilisation; conceding that she 'never for a moment knew what it was to “rough it”', Emmeline describes her garden, servants, frequent visitors and her piano, although she also recalls being bitten by a snake, the necessity for home doctoring, poor roads and communications, floods, and at least one violent conflict with Aborigines during their stay. In 1852 the Leslies returned to Sydney when George was elected to the Legislative Assembly. Shortly afterwards his poor health caused their return to England, where, she says, 'No-one except one who has been taught to love England as “home” can imagine with what sensations I set foot on shore.' They returned to Australia in 1854 only to settle their affairs. George died in England in 1860, and Emmeline married Captain Vigant de Falbe in 1865.

These memoirs, which deal with her life only into her mid-twenties, were written by Madame de Falbe when she was in her eighties, and this may account for their rather fragmentary, disjointed nature. They present a picture not only of a bright social life, peopled by many of the founders and leaders of the colony, but of a warm family life, both before and after the author's marriage. The recollections, extracts of which were published in the Bulletin (10, 17 March 1954) and in Pioneer women: pioneer land (1987) by Susanna De Vries-Evans, are published here with supplementary text by Jane de Falbe.

Date span: 1830s–1854

Bessie Fenton travelled from India via Mauritius to settle in Van Diemen's Land with her husband, Michael Fenton, in 1829. She had been in India since 1826, arriving as the young bride of Captain Niel Campbell, a British army officer. Campbell died suddenly in 1827 and in the following year Bessie married Fenton, Campbell's fellow-officer. Fenton sold his commission and preceded his wife to Van Diemen's Land; Bessie delaying some months in Mauritius where her first child was born. The Fentons set up house in Macquarie Street, Hobart Town, before purchasing a property at New Norfolk. They travelled by buggy to their farm, which they named Fenton Forest, and where Bessie set about making the family comfortable, cleaning and furnishing the stone house and establishing a dairy with the help of convict servants, while her husband established a sheep farm. Although Bessie Fenton's narrative takes the form of a journal or diary, written at frequent, sometimes daily intervals during the years 1826 to 1830, many of the entries are in fact lengthy, retrospective narratives and the work as a whole shows evidence of re-shaping. The narrative is addressed to a friend at home in England and, in attempting to show that reader 'a familiar picture of the everyday occurrences, manners and habits of life of persons undistinguished either by wealth or fame', contains a good deal of domestic detail. The main thrust of the narrative, however, is provided by the author's emotional life during a period of great stress. It reveals her profound grief and shock on the death of her...
first husband, followed by a year of misery while moving aimlessly around India, culminating in the reluctant, emotionless marriage to Fenton. An improvement in her spirits is perceptible after the birth of her daughter, and by the abrupt close of the narrative in 1830 Bessie has given indications of a growing affection for her husband, expressing optimism about her pioneering life as well as a sensitive appreciation of the natural beauty of Van Diemen’s Land.

Date span: 1829–1830
Note: For Michael Fenton, see ADB, vol. 1

85

FENTON, JAMES

Bush life in Tasmania fifty years ago. An account of pioneer work in Devon—the natives—murder of the first settler—bushrangers—visit to J.P. Fawkner—Melbourne in the early days—gold-digging times—great prosperity on the coast—history of the coal mines, etc., etc., etc.


This is an account of the author’s pioneering experiences in Devon, Tasmania, from the time he began farming near Port Sorell in 1838. He became the first white settler on the Forth River in 1840, when he selected for purchase a block of marsh land, which he drained and planted with potatoes. He describes his early days on the Forth, working with convict labour, cultivating and marketing potatoes, and establishing beehives. He made frequent excursions into unexplored country and cut tracks used by later travellers. By 1846 he was shipping potatoes to Port Phillip, and records that he visited Melbourne in the 1840s, staying first with the Rev. Alexander Morison, and then with John Pascoe Fawkner, whose father he had known in Tasmania.

In 1852 Fenton went to Victoria with the intention of going to the diggings, but, on perceiving the scarcity of building materials in Melbourne and anticipating a huge demand as people came back from the goldfields, he returned to Devon and arranged for the gathering and preparation of split timber for shipping to Melbourne. In all, he claims to have sold 500,000 palings in Victoria, an enterprise which made him a rich man.

Along with his pioneering reminiscences, Fenton includes much history of the settlement and development of Devon. He discusses other early settlers, such as Captain Bartholomew Boyle Thomas, who was murdered by Aborigines in 1831 near Port Sorell, prompting, Fenton claims, a fear among the settlers which was not quelled until all the Aborigines were removed by 1834; Nathaniel Lipscomb Kentish, who gave Fenton a first-hand account of his discovery of the Kentish Plains; and Rev. William Waterford, the first Congregational minister at the Forth. He outlines the establishment of churches, the building of bridges and roads, opening of post offices, the settlement of the towns of Torquay, Formby and Latrobe, and the discovery of coal on the Mersey. Fenton also wrote A history of Tasmania from its discovery in 1642 to the present time (1884).

Date span: 1838–1850s
Note: See ADB, vol. 4
### 86
**FORBES, DAVID**

*Reminiscences of the early days of the present colony of Queensland which is now to form one of the states of the Australian Commonwealth*


The text of a paper read before the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia in December 1900, this narrative describes the settlement of the Darling Downs. David Forbes, the son of Sir Francis Forbes, the first chief justice of New South Wales and himself a district court judge, helped to establish a run, Clifton station, in partnership with his brother Francis on the Darling Downs in 1843. He describes his first journey to the station in flooded conditions and the death of a fellow traveller who, determined to reach his own station but unable to swim, insisted on crossing the flooded Condamine River on his own. Forbes describes the settlers in the region and their stations, of which the most established and popular was Patrick Leslie's, and the difficulties of the early years of sheep farming. On his own at Clifton for nearly a year, he was later joined by his brother and a cousin and the three combined to buy two more stations. Forbes describes meeting Ludwig Leichhardt in 1844 before he set out on his first journey of exploration, and an incident when bushrangers held up some squatters overnight on their station. The years 1844-46 were good for wool-growers and in 1845-46 Forbes visited Sydney, presumably to marry. A bad season in 1849 was made worse by the loss of workers to the Californian gold rush, and by his brother's death at San Francisco from yellow fever. Depressed by this event Forbes sold out in 1850 and did not return to the Downs until 1898. Forbes credits his brother Francis with the discovery of a cure for sheep scab, and of deposits of gold and tin on the Downs.

**Date span:** 1843–1850

### 87
**FRASER, ELIZA**

*Narrative of the capture, sufferings, and miraculous escape of Mrs. Eliza Fraser...*


Following the wreck of the *Stirling Castle* in May 1837, Eliza Fraser and other survivors were taken captive by Aborigines on Sandy Bay (later renamed Fraser) Island. In her account of the six weeks or so of her captivity, Mrs Fraser describes her sufferings at the hands of the Aboriginal women, who, she claims, used her as a slave and nursemaid, and beat and starved her. She records seeing her husband, Captain James Fraser, speared to death and the Chief Mate, Mr Brown, burned alive. According to her narrative, she was rescued by a search party from Moreton Bay, led by the convict John Graham, just as she was about to be raped by an Aboriginal elder.

Left an impoverished widow with three children, Eliza Fraser no doubt found it necessary to tap whatever public sympathy could be aroused by her sensational story. Her short narrative, which in outline accords with other well-documented accounts, has apparently been modified to meet the expectations of her audience. Her timely rescue, for example, seems to be a fiction used for dramatic effect. She does not refer to the fact that, after four days in a longboat after leaving the wreck, she bore a child, which died. Her descriptions of the Aborigines, meanwhile, referred to as the 'most disgusting and filthy of the human race', comply with conventional attitudes. The narrative has also been adjusted for the American market, with the use of terms such as 'Indians', 'squaws' and 'cabins'. Eliza
Fraser’s adventures, in all their highly-coloured variations, have become part of Australian folklore and the inspiration for a number of creative works, notably Patrick White’s novel *A fringe of leaves* (1976), a series of paintings by Sidney Nolan, and the feature film *Eliza Fraser*.

Date span: 1837

**88**

**FREYCINET, ROSE DE**


The narrator sailed with her husband, Captain Louis de Freycinet on his voyage round the world in the ship *l’Uranie* in 1817–20. She was entertained by Captain Piper, the Fields (probably Barron Field and his wife Jane), Governor Macquarie and his wife, Mr Wylde, John Macarthur, Mrs Hannibal Macarthur and Mrs King, the wife of Philip Gidley King. Rose de Freycinet comments on the houses and physical aspects of Sydney, and registers her appreciation of the kindness shown her by the women she encountered. On their departure the de Freycinets were presented with animals and birds by Captain Piper, John Macarthur and Governor Macquarie. When their ship was well out at sea they discovered 10 convict stowaways who were kept on as extra deckhands.

Date span: 1819

**89**

**FROST, JOHN**

(1784–1877)

*The horrors of convict life. Two lectures by John Frost*


John Frost was a Chartist who had led an armed attack on Newport in 1839, for which he received a sentence of death, later commuted to transportation for life. He and his two Chartist companions, Zephaniah Williams and William Jones, arrived in Van Diemen’s Land in 1840.

In his narrative, printed from notes of speeches made after his return to England, Frost describes some of his experiences as a convict during the first three-and-a-half years of his sentence. He was made a police clerk in the office of Commandant Booth at Port Arthur, but after 12 months was removed from his office and placed in a labour gang for between two and three years, due, he claims, to the contents of a letter he had written his wife. While he was police clerk at Port Arthur, Frost read through thousands of cases of breach of discipline by convicts, and bitterly denounces the cruelty and injustice with which convicts were treated in Van Diemen’s Land. He cites cases where trifling offences were punished by flogging, isolation or sentences to chain gangs, and where convicts, transported for trivial crimes or even innocent, were goaded into desperate acts and reconvicted. He attributes the tyranny of magistrates, overseers, masters and governors alike, to the unlimited power, without responsibility, held by those in authority, and does not fail to link this power with that of the ruling establishment in England. Frost reserves his fiercest condemnation, however, for the practice of homosexual acts which, he asserts, was widespread among convicts, particularly in establishments such as Point Puer, and was largely overlooked by the authorities. Considering homosexuality to be
a depravity from which a man could not recover, he argues for the cessation of transportation, which he sees as encouraging this evil. Frost was conditionally pardoned in 1854 and left Van Diemen’s Land for America. He also published *A letter to the people of Great Britain and Ireland on transportation* (1857), which is similar in content to this pamphlet, but has a different emphasis.

Date span: 1840–1844
Note: See *ADB*, vol. 1

90

**Frost, Thomas**

(1825–1910)

*Memoirs of Thomas Frost*

Edited by Geoffrey H. Manning

Thomas Frost emigrated to South Australia in 1839 on the *Asia*. At first he worked for his uncle as a builder, but finding it hard to make an adequate living, he tried, while still in his teens, a variety of occupations in Adelaide, such as road worker, lime-burner and stevedore. He and his brothers also took work in the country, as stockmen, dairymen and gum pickers, and as miners at the Burra Mine. In 1847 they returned to England aboard the cargo ship *Brittania*, Thomas acting as ship’s cook during the voyage. Finding conditions at home to be even more depressed than in South Australia, Thomas returned to Adelaide in 1849, this time travelling as a steward on the *Stratheden*, a chartered vessel. In 1851 he joined a party which travelled overland to the Forest Creek diggings, but had limited success there or at Bendigo, where he had soon moved. On his return to Adelaide, Frost entered into partnership as a building contractor and in subsequent years erected many public buildings in Adelaide, ending his career as a well-known Adelaide architect.

Frost was a careful observer, and his *Memoirs*, which were written in the 1890s, contain clear, well-expressed descriptions of conditions in South Australia until about 1853. In addition, he gives a very good account of his voyage on the immigrant ship *Asia*, and his journey to and work on the Victorian diggings. Frost was a member of the Congregational Church and his narrative reflects his religious beliefs, as well as his honest and steadfast nature.

Date span: 1839–1852

91

**Fyans, Foster**

(1790–1870)

*Memoirs recorded at Geelong, Victoria, Australia*

Edited by P.L. Brown
Geelong, Vic., *Geelong Advertiser* Pty Ltd, 1986. 287 pp., index

A Captain in the British army who had seen action in the Peninsular and Burma wars, Foster Fyans was posted to Sydney in 1832. Soon after his arrival he was appointed Captain of the Guard at Norfolk Island, acting for some of the time as Commandant when he was required to quell a convict uprising. His next posting was to the Moreton Bay penal settlement, where he was Commandant from 1835 to 1837, when he resigned his commission to take up the position of Police Magistrate at Geelong in Victoria. In 1840 he became Commissioner for Crown Lands in the Portland Bay district, and thereafter travelled constantly hearing disputes and issuing licences. He bought land at Balyang, near Geelong, where he wrote his recollections in the 1850s, following his retirement.

Fyan’s *Memoirs* are written in a racy, unconventional style, often moving into the present tense and reporting conversations verbatim. The editor of this edition warns that they are not always factually correct, and that incidents may have been added to
make them more exciting; they are certainly very lively and humorous. His recollections of Norfolk Island contain many details about conditions on the Island for soldiers and convicts, stories of convicts who confided in him and observations on others who did not, such as John Knatchbull. He also recounts murders, escape attempts and punishments, and provides cruel but witty pen portraits of Commandants James Thomas Morisset and Joseph Anderson. Equally entertaining is his account of the visit to Moreton Bay by the Quakers James Backhouse and George Washington Walker in 1836. Fyans was also at Moreton Bay at the time of the rescue of Eliza Fraser by John Graham. His narrative for the period at Port Phillip concentrates on the founding of Geelong and his policing duties with regard to the Aborigines of Portland Bay. These included the pursuit and apprehension of Aborigines who had robbed or killed Europeans, and who were tried and executed in some cases. Although he was obliged to assist in the establishment of the Aboriginal Protectorate at Portland Bay, putting his friend John Cox off land designated for that purpose, he is savagely critical of Protector Charles Sievewright, and the protectorate system in general, stating that 'in no one instance did the Protectorate benefit the cause ... destroying if possible the morals of the Aborigines by keeping them in herds of hundreds, in idleness and vice from year to year, lavishing public funds to an enormous amount'. The memoirs close abruptly in 1842, excluding reference to Fyans' experiences as a grazier at Bell-bird Balyang.

**Date span:** 1832–1842

**Note:** See *ADB*, vol. 1

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**92**

**GARDINER, JOSEPH**

*Twenty-five years on the stage. The career of an Australian actor: his experiences and vices and virtues*  

On arrival in Adelaide in 1848 as an immigrant, Joseph Gardiner was offered employment first as a singer and then as an actor, initially by George Coppin. Having attained some success, he and his wife played with theatrical companies in Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat, Hobart, Brisbane and other centres, and toured remote areas of New South Wales with their own show, performing vaudeville acts. At one stage they were marooned in Bourke for seven months. After about 25 years as an actor, Gardiner returned from a tour virtually destitute. He was persuaded to sign a temperance pledge, and soon after experienced a religious awakening. He gave up his career as an actor, believing the theatre to be a degrading influence, and became a travelling salesman, selling, among other things, 'Gardiners Furniture Polish'. Although his narrative is overlaid with reflections related to his religious conversion, Gardiner provides an entertaining description of his life as an actor in Australia, and an interesting insight into conditions at that time, particularly on the goldfields and in Melbourne in the 1850s.

**Date span:** 1848–1875

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**93**

**GATES, WILLIAM**

*Recollections of life in Van Diemen's Land*  

A citizen of the United States who joined the Canadian patriot cause in 1838, William Gates was captured at Prescott, convicted and transported to Van Diemen's Land on the *Buffalo*. On arrival, all the Canadian...
rebels were placed in road gangs in the Hobart area, where they suffered badly from the heavy work and harsh conditions, several of their number dying as a result. Still in government service, they were moved to stations at Lovely Banks and Green Ponds, before helping to build a bridge over the Derwent at Bridgewater. At this stage the rebels were split into smaller groups, Gates being sent to Jericho, where, his health deteriorating, he worked in the carpenter’s shop before being moved to Jerusalem. Following the granting of a ticket-of-leave in 1842, Gates became a farm labourer in the Oatlands district for a settler named Tabart and shortly thereafter became an overseer, responsible for supervising the management of the sheep and shearing and wool sales. When Tabart refused to increase his wages he moved to a wheat property as overseer. During his stay on this property it was held up by the bushranger Martin Cash and his gang and on more than one occasion Gates was called out to search for Cash and the bushrangers Conway and Jeffs. Gates received a pardon in 1845, but unable to pay for a passage home, he travelled with a comrade to Victoria where they worked as shearsers and shepherds. They eventually obtained a passage from Sydney on a whaler, arriving home in 1848.

While following the broad outline of the published narratives of other Canadian rebels, such as Heustis, Marsh, Snow and Wright (qq.v.), and like them, providing detailed information about convict conditions and other aspects of life in Van Diemen’s Land, Gates’ Recollections are more expressive of the author’s thoughts and feelings during his ordeals as a convict. For example, he expresses indignation at being forced to attend Anglican services in Hobart Town, and at the prospect of an American being flogged, and horror at witnessing the flogging of a 13-year-old boy at Hobart Town. His description of his exultation at receiving his pardon in 1845 is another emotional highpoint of the narrative.

Date span: 1839–1848
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

94
Giles, Thomas
‘Old time memories’ in Family life in South Australia fifty-three years ago
By Jane Isabella Watts

This narrative by Thomas Giles is published as an appendix to the reminiscences of his sister, Jane Isabella Watts (q.v.). Giles discusses incidents in the early history of the colony of South Australia, such as the first public execution in 1838, and the arrival of the first overlanders, Joseph Hawdon and Charles Bonney. Giles was sent to the Lake Albert area in 1843 to suppose some sheep for the South Australian Company, and recalls the uneasy relationship between the settlers and the Aborigines, some of whom were working for them as shearsers and stockmen, while others were still living in their natural state; resentful of the European intrusion, the Aborigines frequently stole sheep. Although he had to call police from Adelaide, led by H. Alford and Alexander Tolmer, he was relieved that conciliation was reached without loss of life. This was not the case later, when he took up country for pastoralist George Anstey in 1847 on the Yorke Peninsula, where Aborigines were shot while stealing sheep, and several white shearsers were killed by Aborigines. Giles gives lively accounts of trapping dingoes and hunting kangaroos with dogs at Lake Albert in 1839.

Date span: 1839–c.1847
GOODRIDGE, CHARLES M.
Narrative of a voyage to the South Seas ... to which is added, a further narrative of eight years' residence in Van Diemen's Land

Goodridge was a seaman on the Prince of Wales cutter, which was wrecked off the Crozet Islands in 1821. Goodridge was cast away on an uninhabited island where he lived with other members of the crew for two years, until picked up by an American schooner and taken, eventually, to Hobart Town. He lived in Van Diemen's Land from 1823 to 1831. During this time he worked as a ferryman on the Derwent River, at first for wages on ferries owned by James Austen and John Earle, and then as the lessee of vessels on his own account. He built up a good business, particularly in transporting livestock across the river, and, prior to his return to England in 1831, operated both the Compton and Roseneath ferries, at opposite sides of the river.

Following page 101, the book consists of an emigrant's guide to Van Diemen's Land, with descriptions and statistics of the colony up to 1831, as well as a directory of the main streets of Hobart Town, naming the owners or inhabitants of each lot.

Date span: 1823–1831

Hahn, Dirk Meinertz (1804–1860)
‘Extracts from the reminiscences of Captain Dirk Meinertz Hahn, 1838–1839’ in South Australiana III, 2 (1964), pp. 97–134

Hahn's recollections of his voyage to South Australia and his experiences there have been extracted from his lengthy manuscript entitled 'The most notable events of my life', and translated from German by F.J.H. Blaess and L.A. Triebel. A copy of the full, German version is held in the State Library of South Australia.

Danish-born Hahn was captain of the ship Zebra which was chartered in 1838 to carry 199 Lutherans 'who were emigrating from Prussia for the sake of their faith' to South Australia. Although the prospect of carrying the emigrants initially struck him 'like a cold shower', Hahn records that he came to admire his passengers for their faith and general solidarity during the 129-day voyage, which was not without difficulties due to inadequate accommodation and the inevitable bickering which boredom fostered, and illnesses which resulted in a number of deaths. On arrival, the immigrants were urged to take the lease of land adjacent to that of the Germans who had arrived with Pastor Kavel on the Prince George, and who had taken up a lease from George Fife Angas at Klemzig. This they were reluctant to do as they felt the land on offer
was barren and insufficient to support the 38 families involved, and they asked Hahn (who considered it 'my highest duty') to help them. Hahn asked several wealthy landowners, including South Australian treasurer Osmond Gilles, for suitable land for his immigrants, without success. However, in January 1838 he was invited to accompany an excursion to Mount Barker, led by W.H. Dutton, who hoped that he would take a glowing account of the rich land there back to Europe. Hahn was 'enchanted by the paradisical appearance' of the country and pleaded with the owners, Dutton, Macfarlane and Finnis, to allow the Zebra passengers to settle there. A contract was worked out and 150 acres leased to them, which they named Hahndorf in recognition of Hahn's efforts on their behalf. Hahn records that when he sailed from South Australia on 12 February he was given an emotional farewell and 'the men amongst my emigrants followed us in a long procession' along the dock.

The 'Extracts' contain general notes on South Australia, including a glowing account of its fertility and mineral wealth. They also contain Hahn's impressions of the Aborigines which, although in some respects observant, are nonetheless shaped by European prejudices, and he perceives them as physically ugly, idle, savage and so lacking in intelligence that they 'can never be trained to be useful creatures in the world'.

Date span: 1838–1839

98

[HAMILTON, GEORGE (C.1812–1883)]

Experiences of a colonist forty years ago, and a journey from Port Phillip to South Australia in 1839. By an Old Hand

Adelaide, Frearson and Brother, 1879. 60 pp., illus.

The first part of this narrative is written in the third person, and is an account of an overland journey in the 1830s from somewhere on the Murray River to Port Phillip with a mob of 3000 sheep. Assisted with varying degrees of efficiency and good spirit by assigned convicts, Hamilton encountered numerous difficulties and vicissitudes which he describes with wit and verve. The emotional highs and lows of the experience, including discovering that he had been given up for dead by a Victorian newspaper, are dramatically described, as are the characters of the men in his employ. The second part of his narrative is in the first person and describes an overland journey with cattle from Port Phillip to South Australia in 1839. This journey was complicated by mutinous men and hostile Aborigines, difficulties Hamilton graphically and sometimes humorously describes. A literary and philosophical writer, he frequently draws on general axioms to illustrate his experience, punctures Arcadian notions about the bush and droving, or undercuts the romantic authors from whom he quotes. His description of a stampede of cattle as 'listening to the footsteps of your property as it runs away from you', or of a creek bed as 'dry as a drunkard's throat the morning after a debauch' are typical of his wry humour.

Date span: c.1832–1839

99

[HAMILTON, JAMES CHARLES (1836–1927)]

Pioneering days in Western Victoria: a narrative of early station life

[Melbourne, 1923]. 54 pp., roneod

Arriving in Melbourne as a child in 1841, James Hamilton lived with his family on Long Hills station near Kilmore in Victoria, before moving in 1846 to stations Bringalbert and Ozenkadnook, west of the Glenelg, which had been taken up by his uncle, T.L. Gibson.
James and his brothers ran the stations while in their early teens, following the death of their father in an accident in 1850. They built up a knowledge of sheep farming by trial and error, and became prosperous during the 1850s, although at the time of writing the author had lost his properties. This simple account of pioneering experiences deals largely with the period when, as a boy and youth, Hamilton helped his family to settle on new stations, worked as a shepherd on Bringalbert and Ozenkadnook, carted wool to Portland and drove sheep to Melbourne for sale. During this time he rode throughout the countryside with his brothers, hunting, and mustering cattle and horses. In the context of the history of the Hamilton family, the narrative chronicles changes during the period in Western Victoria, including the economic highs and lows of squatting, developments in methods of sheep farming, the effect of the gold rushes, the activities of bushrangers such as Daniel Morgan and Captain Melville, the advent of coaching services, the development of the town of Apsley, and communal activities such as race meetings, religious services and agricultural shows. It contains much information about other pioneer families and their properties in the Wimmera and includes a chapter on the local Aborigines, describing a massacre at Naracoorte in 1845, the employment of Aborigines on stations, and their customs, particularly methods of burial.

Date span: 1841-1860

100

[HARRIS, ALEXANDER (1805-1874)]

Settlers and convicts, or, recollections of sixteen years' labour in the Australian backwoods. By an Emigrant Mechanic


Published anonymously, as the work of an 'emigrant mechanic', this account is based loosely on Harris' experiences in Australia and is predated by an article in The People's Journal (8 August 1846), titled 'Life in New South Wales'. Maintaining that he had a good knowledge of house-carpentering and had completed an apprenticeship, Harris claims that he emigrated to better himself. He gives a remarkably detailed description of Sydney's general social scene in the 1820s to 1840s, which includes an account of his befriending a prostitute and caring for her in her last days. He claims that he worked first as a carpenter at Five Islands (Illawarra), then as cedar-getter and sawyer in the Hawkesbury district. Harris dwells on the traveller's experience of the bush code of hospitality but is indignant about the government practice of summarily arresting unidentified travellers as suspected bushrangers or escaped convicts. Gaol himself on suspicion for four days in appalling conditions, he reflects on 'how exceedingly unfit a military education renders even gentlemen for positions of judicial trust'. After completing his work as a Sawyer he spent some time in Sydney before, on the impulse of a moment, accepting an offer of a passage up river to the Lane Cove area. This single event had momentous consequences, he reflects, leading to his passionate love of books and his meeting 'the only woman I should ever have fallen in with whose character could have permanently attached me'. Unable at first to get further work as a Sawyer, due to the code of solidarity among the ex-convicts, he ultimately formed an association with a young Australian, R—, whose sister he was eventually to marry. His long association with R— prompts reflections on the Australian code of mateship and on what he sees as the distinctive qualities of the emerging Australian type. After several years of partnership in timber-getting with R—, Harris claims he bought a herd of cattle from a man unjustly accused of cattleduffing. He and R— thereafter searched for a suitable
run for their respective herds, finally settling in the Goulburn/Crookwell area. Some of his descriptions of establishing a cattle station are clearly intended as advice for the intending emigrant, but his vivid accounts of being lost in the bush or of being dependent on the meagre hospitality of miserly shepherds or the goodwill of Aborigines, have a more personal note. He devotes a good deal of space to an account of being pursued by police following a warrant taken out against him by another cattle farmer, and his ultimate triumph over his adversary. Sympathetic towards the convicts and poor free settlers whom he sees as tyrannised by the squattocracy, Harris also reflects at length on the fate of the Aborigines and recounts several instances of conflict. If he is realistic about the chances of conciliating them, which could only be achieved 'by giving up their country', he is frank about the impossibility of such a scheme, concluding that the Protectorate schemes created more harm than good and that 'something that is more prompt and effective than their own spear and less dilatory than our law' was required. He sees the missionary enterprise as particularly ill-advised since 'there seems something ... intrinsically absurd in the nation which is robbing another of its land and its means of subsistence soliciting that other to adopt its religion'. He concludes his narrative with general comments on land legislation, the indiscriminate arrest of persons without a warrant, the Hired Servants Act and the treatment of free immigrant labourers by the magistrates' courts, the proper treatment of the Aborigines, the iniquities of the ultra penal settlements and on the general moral laxity of the Australian population. Claiming that he was forced to leave Australia for the good of his health, Harris (apparently forgetful that he has earlier described himself as married for not more than eight years) describes the regretful parting of his wife and himself from their two sons, left behind to manage their property. The obvious fiction of his marriage and parenthood is complemented by less obvious fictions; as his later narrative, *The secrets of Alexander Harris* (q.v.), reveals, Harris never worked as a carpenter or completed an apprenticeship, having been forced to flee Britain following his desertion from the army. *Settlers and convicts*, nevertheless, is an informative account of the life of small settlers, sawyers, convicts, stockmen and shepherds in New South Wales in the period.

**Date span:** 1825–1840

**Note:** See *ADB*, vol. 1

101

HARRIS, ALEXANDER

(1805–1874)

*A converted atheist’s testimony to the truth of Christianity, being the autobiography of Alex. Harris*


[Mitchell Library]

Originally published anonymously as *Testimony to the truth; or, the autobiography of an atheist.*

London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1848

This autobiography differs from Harris' subsequent and preceding narratives (see his *Settlers and convicts* and *The secrets of Alexander Harris*) in that it concentrates almost exclusively on his spiritual experience, although he includes many of the same incidents. After giving a very brief account of his life in London before embarking for Australia, Harris describes his intemperate habits in Sydney. Initiated into drinking spirits, he soon found he was consuming a pint and a half of neat spirits a day. He accordingly went up country to avoid the temptation and considers that his life of 'forest occupations' and enforced solitude preserved him. Meanwhile certain dire cases of alcohol addiction had a cautionary effect. He describes six out of a series of 11 'striking deliverances in imminent hazards of life', similar to those in the *Secrets*, which convinced him that God was watching over
him. His sense of the fragility of life was further enhanced by the death of a pioneering friend in an accident, which he helplessly witnessed, and the death of an Aboriginal woman. A visit by two Quaker missionaries had a strong effect, helping him to surmount episodes of deep depression. As in the *Secrets* a severe illness had a powerful impact on his religious growth. Harris includes a more detailed description of his love for Elizabeth Atkinson, her rejection of him because of his atheism, his re-discovery of her on returning from England, their marriage and her early death from consumption. Much less directed towards observation of external particulars, this narrative has long stretches of religious exposition 'proving' the existence of the Christian God and the afterlife.

Date span: 1825–1840s
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

**102**

**HARRIS, ALEXANDER**

(1805—1874)

*The secrets of Alexander Harris. A frank autobiography by the author of Settlers and convicts*

With an introduction by Grant Carr-Harris and a preface by Alec H. Chisholm

Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1961. 245 pp., port.

First published as a series of articles titled 'Religio Christi' in the *Saturday Evening Post* (March–October 1858), this autobiography is a later re-working of the same experience that is the subject of *Settlers and convicts* (q.v.), although many of the details are changed to correspond more closely with the real facts and the emphasis is on the author's religious awakening. In addition, Grant Carr-Harris, the author's grandson, has omitted certain moralising, repetitive passages contained in the original narrative.

Harris describes his youthful restlessness, which finally resulted in his desertion from the Horse Guards and flight to Australia. He ascribes some of his problems to his unusually reclusive childhood, the early death of his mother, the dominating character of his father and his apparent loss of the girl he loved, Elizabeth Atkinson (E.A.). In Sydney he was unable to retain employment, often because of intemperance, and fearing that he might drift into hopeless alcoholism went up country to Windsor, where he worked for a time as a tutor. After a difference with one of his employer's assigned convicts he left this position and spent some time wandering in the Bathurst Plains area. Unable to get work, he became determined to try life as a labourer and subsequently worked at timber-getting, lime-burning and shell-getting. A period as clerk of the Illawarra magistrate's court enabled him to put into practice his bias towards the convicts, until both he and the magistrate were dismissed for laxity. A serious illness focused his mind on his spiritual development, and after a period studying theology while working as a shepherd, he emerged with firm evangelical convictions. Harris maintains that during his time in Australia he had never written home but on receiving letters from his family in 1840, he discovered that his old love was still unmarried and he returned immediately to England. There he was reconciled with his father and young sister, and discovered to his distress that E.A. was in the last stages of consumption. The two were nevertheless married, although Elizabeth died soon afterwards.

Harris' familiarity with the Rocks area in Sydney and his wandering life in New South Wales gave him ample opportunity to observe assigned and ticket-of-leave convicts. Strongly critical of the convicts' treatment, he is also impatient with the dominance of the squating class in Australia, seeing the real class distinction as between the squatters
and the rest, rather than between bond and free. As in *Settlers and convicts*, Harris expands on some of the evils of colonial administration and develops his idea of the new Australian type. An exceptionally detailed, observant account of life in New South Wales, this autobiography is also unusually frank about the author’s inner life.

**Date span:** 1825–1840  
**Note:** See ADB, vol. 1

103  
*The story of an athlete: a picture of the past*  
Melbourne, Alexander McCubbin, 1923. 135 pp., port.

Commencing with an account of his family’s participation in the first colonising sweep into Victoria with the ‘Overlanders of [18]37’, this account is a combination of the pioneering memoir and the autobiography of personal achievement, tracing the author’s career as a champion amateur sportsman. Eventually acclaimed as ‘father’ of Australian Rules Football, H.C.A. Harrison began life, he points out, the same year that the founding of Melbourne was officially recognised, and so his birth was synonymous with that of the city which first took ‘Rules’ as its own. Born in Picton, the son of an English sea captain, he accompanied his parents in infancy to newly-opened Port Phillip, where his father took land on the Plenty River. He tells the story of the family’s journey, of three months duration, through the homelands of the resisting Aboriginal inhabitants and later describes his friendly dealings with them as a child at the family selection at the Plenty and then at Swan Water, near present-day St Arnaud. He also recounts his experiences on the goldfields as a boy, the tension over gold licences, and the effects the gold rushes had on his education. In 1853 he became a customs officer and expanded his involvement in sport, becoming champion amateur sprinter of Victoria in 1858. In the 1860s Harrison ran a sequence of races against his premier opponent, Lambton Mount, in Melbourne and Ballarat—events attended by thousands of spectators. Harrison ran his last race in 1867, having held the championship for eight years. Meanwhile his interest in cricket and football had blossomed under the influence of his newly-arrived English cousin, Thomas W. Wills (who in 1866 organised and trained the first Aboriginal cricket team to tour England). Harrison and Wills formulated rules (which he lists in chapter VII) for the Australian football game on Wills’ premise that English football was ‘unsuitable for grown men engaged in making a livelihood’. In the same year, 1858, the first Australian Football Club was formed in Melbourne, with all suburbs following by 1865. Harrison’s account goes on to document the formation of various clubs and early inter-colonial matches before giving a similar synopsis of the local history of cricket. In conclusion, his autobiography returns to the personal, providing details of his marriage and family history before closing full circle with a cycle trip to Sydney when, at 62, he traced the much-changed path he had traversed in a dray as a baby. The volume includes photographs of athletes and officials of the day.

**Date span:** 1837–1923  
**Note:** See ADB, vol. 4
HASLAM, JOHN

Convict-ships. A narrative of a voyage to New South Wales, in the year 1816, in the ship Mariner, describing the nature of the accommodations, stores, diet, &c., together with an account of the medical treatment and religious superintendence of these unfortunate persons


A surgeon in the Royal Navy, Haslam was appointed to the ship Mariner conveying convicts to New South Wales. The ship carried 146 convicts, 28 of whom were less than 20 years old. Haslam describes the prisoners' accommodation, the ship's provisions and hygienic arrangements. Regarding himself as also charged with the convicts' moral health, Haslam attempted to show them the rewards of virtue. Readings from the Bible and Sabbath services and even his attempt to learn their underworld argot proved ineffectual against their 'falsehood', moral insensibility and licentiousness. All landed at Port Jackson fit for Governor's work. A simple, straightforward and quite personal account of the voyage, Haslam's narrative has a distinctive humanity.

Date span: 1816

HAWKER, JAMES COLLINS (1821—1901)

Early experiences in South Australia

Adelaide, E.S. Wigg & Son, 1899. 84 pp.

The son of a British admiral, Hawker travelled to South Australia in 1838 under the guardianship of Governor Gawler. After a period assisting the Governor's private secretary, he was employed by the government as a surveyor and supervised parties working from Glenelg to Brighton on the Onkaparinga River and surveyed a road to Yankalilla. In 1841 he and his two brothers purchased a large number of sheep and formed a station near the present site of Truro. They later moved to a site on the Hutt River, and finally established a station at Bungaree. These reminiscences deal with the author's life only until 1841, and a later narrative, Early experiences in South Australia:
Second series (1901) (q.v.), continues his reminiscences to 1843.

Writing originally for a series of articles for South Australian newspapers, Hawker describes life in early Adelaide, commenting on conditions such as the state of roads, prices and shortages of commodities such as flour, sugar and tea, the siting and erection of public buildings, and the beginnings of entertainments such as theatre and race meetings. His stories about the crimes and pursuit of Tasmanian convicts in South Australia appear to draw on the same sources as those of John Wrathall Bull (q.v.), and like Bull he describes the Aboriginal harassment of settlers in the Port Lincoln area and of overlanders travelling up the Murray. His account of the bloody conflicts with Aborigines at Rufus Junction and Lake Victoria in 1841, however, are based on his personal experience as a member, in both cases, of large retributive parties.

A well-educated young man of good social standing, Hawker recalls the Gawler family, the original and new Government House, Governor Grey, John McDouall Stuart, and many prominent officials and early pastoralists. He assisted John Gould during his ornithological work in South Australia in 1839 and was acquainted with Surveyors-General such as G.S. Kingston, Charles Sturt and William Light, describing the work, resignation and death of Light, whom he revered. In addition, Hawker was familiar with the arduous, isolated work of surveyors in the field and his narrative contains information about surveying and its conditions.

Date span: 1838–1841.
Note: See ADB, vol. 4.
depended colony; he personally undertook, briefly, the charge of an 'emigrant working party' surveying roads and building small bridges.

Towards the end of 1842, Hawker began a pig farm at Moorundie, near the property of his friend, Edward Eyre. His reminiscences finish here, although Hawker and his brothers had a long involvement in the pastoral industry of South Australia.

Date span: 1842-1843
Note: See ADB, vol. 4

108
HAYDON, G[EO][RGE] H[ENRY]
(1822-1891)

Five years' experience in Australia Felix, comprising a short account of its early settlement and its present position, with many particulars interesting to intending emigrants

Having lived at Port Phillip for five years from 1840, the artist and writer George Haydon returned to England and published this largely descriptive work, which became well known as an authoritative account of the colony of Victoria. It covers features such as history, landscape, vegetation, native birds and animals, and those aspects likely to interest intending migrants such as soil and climate, rivers, major settlements, land regulations and economic conditions. Haydon deals sensitively with the Victorian Aborigines, defending their culture, abilities and rights. He criticises the system of Aboriginal Protectorates, maintaining that the Protectors were haughty and tyrannical and, as a result, actually detrimental to the Aboriginal people, and that the Chief Protector, G.A. Robinson, was ill-qualified and incompetent. Although most of this work makes little reference to the author's personal experiences, it contains a narrative of a journey which he made from Westernport to Port Albert, Gippsland, in search of a stock route in 1844. Haydon and six native police, a white sergeant, three convicts and G.A. Robinson, forced a bullock-drawn dray through dense bush and across rivers to make a track. They made slow progress and exhausted their provisions but were rescued by another exploration party, and arrived in the town of Victoria after about a month of travelling.

Date span: 1844
Note: See ADB, vol. 4

109
HAYGARTH, HENRY WILLIAM

Recollections of bush life in Australia, during a residence of eight years in the interior

Haygarth spent eight years on a station 230 miles south west of Sydney in the 1840s. His object in writing his Recollections, as stated in the introduction, is to describe 'clearly and dispassionately ... the mode of life which a young colonist must embrace', so deterring any unfitted for the life from emigrating. The general tone of the narrative, however, is of encouragement rather than warning, and he conveys a feeling of nostalgia for a romantic way of life which he has left behind. Haygarth emphasises the strangeness of the bush to English eyes, and its threatening and dangerous aspects, but he is also alive to the beauty of the landscape. He reveals little about his personal life and circumstances, but uses incidents from his own experience in Australia to illustrate the life of a typical squatter. For example, he describes his first journey to his station and the hospitality which he received at country inns, the appearance of the station buildings and his method of erecting a slab hut, a raid on the station by the bushranger Buchan Charlie, a muster of wild cattle, a visit by local
Aborigines and their dance, and a visit to a friend’s outstation at Omio. Haygarth explains the management of sheep, cattle and horses on remote stations in detail. He discusses the society to be found in such situations, commenting on the egalitarianism, bush hospitality, the role of women, the labouring classes, drunkenness, emancipists and overlanders. He attempts to define an Australian physical type, and comments on the evolution of Australian language, frequently using and explaining Australian terms.

Date span: 1840s

110  
HENDERSON, JOHN

Excursions and adventures in New South Wales; with pictures of squatting and of life in the bush; an account of the climate, productions, and natural history of the colony, and of the manners and customs of the natives, with advice to emigrants, &c.


Henderson, a former officer of the British army in India, arrived in New South Wales in the 1830s with the intention of settling in the country as a grazier. Basing himself in Sydney, he travelled extensively throughout New South Wales to Illawarra, Shoalhaven, the Liverpool Plains, Goulburn, the Hunter and the MacLeay River districts, observing all aspects of the country from the point of view of the intending settler. He describes the ‘monotony and cheerlessness of the Bush’, and comments unfavourably on everything, from vegetation, the Aborigines, urban conditions, roads, climate and wildlife, to colonial society. Henderson finally chose a station inland from Kempsey on the MacLeay River and travelled there from Maitland, through New England and across unoccupied country with a herd of cattle. He established his station twice as his first site was a bad choice, rebuilding his house and yards and planting crops of maize and wheat. Drawing on his own experiences to illustrate the difficulties of the ‘monotonous and toilsome life of the settler’, Henderson describes droughts, fires, floods, poor soil, disloyal employees and isolation, all of which threatened to defeat him. He was on uneasy terms with the local Aborigines and records several incidents in which both settlers and Aborigines were killed, although he does not appear to have participated in physical conflict himself. He comments on the difficulties of applying European laws to Aborigines, having witnessed in Sydney the hanging of seven men for the murder of Aborigines at Myall Creek in 1838. He records careful observations of the MacLeay Aborigines, devoting several chapters to their appearance, habits, customs and beliefs, abilities and languages.

Completing his very practical and detailed advice to intending settlers, Henderson moves on to a description of New South Wales for the interest of the general reader. He methodically describes the general appearance of the country’s vegetation, geology, native animals, birds, reptiles, insects and fish. He then discusses the state of the colony, the economic depression and widespread bankruptcies and their causes, the poor administration of land, particularly in relation to the squatter, who, he claims had no firm tenure and no representation, and the inadequacies of the Commissioners for Crown Lands and the border police. A second edition of this work, with a prefatory chapter on the history and development of the goldfields was published in 1854.

Date span: 1830s-1840s
As the title page of her narrative tells, Jane Henty was 'the first white woman in Victoria'. This brief account of her life in Australia opens with her emigration from England to Fremantle with her family at the age of 16, following her father, an East India Company captain who was 'much pleased' with the colony. Four years later, in 1836, Jane married Stephen George Henty, to whom her mother had brought a letter of introduction from England. The account, written at the age of 84, is largely concerned with her life after this point. Her tone conveys the impression of a lively, courageous woman, only lightly conscious even in retrospect of such dangers and hardships her story sketches. After making an eventful voyage to Tasmania to meet her husband's family, she and Stephen joined two of his brothers, Edward 'the Pioneer' and Frank, at Edward's homestead at Portland Bay. These Henty men had been the first European settlers in Victoria. Her husband's desire to explore the area took him from home for weeks at a time, 'until he had gone all through the interior'. He thus established the first station properties in the colony, and became the 'first white man who stood on the border of the Blue Lake at Mount Gambier'. Clearly proud of her husband, Mrs Henty tells little of his journeys, except to note that despite 'many narrow escapes', he 'never killed a native, which was a comfort to him'. What she does relate suggests the idyllic simplicity of a boyhood country ramble: '[he] cut a track through 15 miles of forest land with two men and a dray, and arrived on the banks of the River Wannon about sundown, grass up to his shoulders. Exclaiming "this is Paradise", he lay down and slept till sunrise.'

Her good-natured tone becomes joyful in recounting the birth of her son Richmond (q.v.), 'the first white man [born] in the Colony'. Her story suggests a congenial and orderly family and domestic life, with regular prayers for the whole household (to encourage the servants' attendance, she provided plum cake and rum).

**Date span:** 1832–1902

**Note:** See ADB, vol. 1, on the Henty family

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Richmond Henty was the son of Stephen Henty, who settled in 1836 at Portland Bay in Victoria, where Richmond was born, 'the first white native of this first settlement'. His recollections of childhood include an account of whaling at Portland, his schooling at Portland, Belfast (later Port Fairy), and Franklin village near Launceston, and his friendship with many of the Portland Bay Aborigines, whose passing he mourns 40 years later. At 16 he was sent to England to complete his education, but poor health caused him to abandon his studies, although he matriculated, and returned to Australia, making a lengthy tour of the Middle East on the way. On his return a cattle station was purchased for him at Walla Walla in the Riverina district and he describes an idyllic bachelor life on this and other family properties during the 1850s. During the 1860s his family's fortunes began to decline, partly due to a long drought, but also due to losses on properties on the Glenelg River, caused by mismanagement. Henty nevertheless prospered, renting his father's estates, Warrayure and Tarrinton stations in the Western District, where he produced fine wool. Meanwhile, he continued to enjoy frequent visits to Melbourne, where he
hunted and attended race meetings and balls. He also entertained touring members of the royalty such as the Duke of Edinburgh in 1867, and hosted vice-regal visits. He records a trip to the goldfields at Woods Point, where he bought into the All Nations mine near Gaffney's Creek. These light-hearted, anecdotal reminiscences reflect the author's pride in the achievements of the Henty family, which secured for him a privileged childhood and youth in an unspoiled country.

Date span: 1837–1870s

113

HEUSTIS, DANIEL D.

A narrative of the adventures and sufferings of Captain Daniel D. Heustis and his companions, in Canada and Van Dieman's Land, during a long captivity; with travels in California, and voyages at sea.

Boston, Redding & Co., 1847. 168 pp., port.

Heustis was an American butcher in his thirties who was given the rank of Captain in the Canadian patriot forces in 1838. More than half of his Narrative is a justification and history of the rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada in the 1830s, and an account of his own involvement, which led to his arrest, trial, conviction and transportation to Van Diemen's Land in 1839. In company with his fellow rebels, Heustis worked initially in quarries and road gangs in the Hobart area, then moved to Lovely Banks and Green Pond stations, and to Bridgewater. He was in the party which moved to Brown River station after Bridgewater and, on obtaining his ticket-of-leave, took up share-farming in the Oatlands area. When it became apparent that the farm could not support all its workers, Heustis took casual labour winnowing and cradling wheat, fencing and dam-building in the Campbelltown area; he was also called out with other ticket-of-leave holders to hunt bushrangers. After his pardon was granted, he persuaded the captain of the American whaler, Steiglitz, to take aboard as many of the pardoned exiles as could be assembled in three days, so obtaining passages for 27 of them.

A little older than other Canadian exiles such as Gates, Wright, Miller and Snow (q.q.v.), Heustis was evidently an independent and resourceful man who bore up well under adversity. While containing detailed and graphic descriptions of the sufferings of convicts in Van Diemen's Land, his account is less emotive than that of, for example, William Gates, and is quite formal in style. Claiming that his dislike of English tyranny was reinforced by meeting the Chartist, John Frost in Van Diemen's Land, Heustis closes his narrative with a condemnation of transportation and of British criminal law.

Date span: 1839–1844

114

HINKINS, JOHN T.

Life amongst the native race: with extracts from a diary.
Melbourne, Author, 1884. 80 pp.

Hinkins relates details of his life in Victoria from 1844 in the context of his experiences with Aboriginal people. A widower with two children, he first settled at Port Albert, where he carried on a shoemaking business, before becoming manager of a sheep station at Gunbower on the Lower Murray, taking his five-year-old daughter with him. Hinkins and his daughter were the only Europeans permanently resident on the station, which employed Aboriginal labour and was frequented by large numbers of Aborigines. These people had had little contact with whites, and Hinkins relates their amazement at the appearance of his daughter, and their affectionate treatment of her. He records that he treated the Aborigines with kindness and humanity, nursing them when they were ill, and accepting reciprocal doctoring when he
became ill. He shows interest in and respect for their social behaviour, customs and culture, and criticises other Europeans for failing to treat them as human beings. As a militant Christian, however, he saw them as existing in a state of 'heathen darkness' and attempted, without much success, to bring them to the 'light and liberty of the Gospel'. When he moved to a station on the Hopkins River near Geelong in 1847, he found many of the Aboriginal people there to be addicted to alcohol, and in other ways, in his opinion, 'contaminated' by contact with Europeans. Anxious to regain custody of his son, and concerned for his children's education, Hinkins moved to Melbourne, where he married and, in 1849, became master of the Collingwood Church of England School, later transferring to Pentridge (Coburg). At this time he was given charge of two Aboriginal boys, Harry and Thomas Bungeeleenee, from the disbanded Merri Creek Institution, whose early history is given in Lucy Edgar's Among the black boys (q.v.). The family moved to Moonee Ponds, where Hinkins opened a school in 1855. From this point his narrative concentrates on the characters, education and progress of the boys until their deaths in 1856 and 1865, his concern being to demonstrate that Aborigines are as capable of learning as other races. He rejoices in the knowledge of the scriptures demonstrated by Harry and Thomas, and that they died Christians.

Date span: 1844–1865

115

HOLROYD, HENRY
(1829—1911)

Henry Holroyd South Australian pioneer: his autobiography
[Mitchell Library]

Born in Leeds, Yorkshire, Holroyd decided to emigrate to South Australia in 1849 after losing his employment. Arriving in Adelaide he joined a party of surveyors setting out for the Mount Gambier area, which proved a rigorous introduction to the Australian bush. On his return he worked as a clerk in the office of the Gazette and Mining Journal. Office work was unexciting, however, and in 1851 he set out for the Victorian diggings with two mates. He gives a lively account of the diggings at Forest Creek, which he describes as surprisingly law-abiding, even though his horses were stolen on two occasions. Holroyd's claim proved fruitful and some of his gold was transported back to South Australia by a police troop headed by Alex Tolmer. Although discouraged by the slow work and wet weather, he and his friends nevertheless moved on to the Eaglehawk diggings, where their luck ran out. After a successful attempt to sell supplies at the diggings, including sly grog, Holroyd returned to Adelaide by ship, encountering fierce storms. He took up the firewood trade but his fortunes took a turn for the better when he was appointed an Inspector of Mounted Police. Posted to the Port Lincoln district in 1855, he found most of his duties concerned pacification or capture of Aborigines. His job would have been impossible, he claims, had not the Aborigines themselves cooperated in tracking down the wanted men. He describes the execution of four Aborigines convicted of killing a shepherd, and his own hazardous exploits of tracking down men accused of murder. He also describes something of the gay social life of an inspector of police back in Adelaide. An unusual duty fell to his lot when a number of young women immigrants, housed in a 'home' at government expense pending their obtaining suitable situations, rioted rather than accept employment. Holroyd writes warmly of his friends and relationships and is sensitive to the hazards of outback life, describing the loss of two children in the bush, and the suicide of a well-educated woman who found the life of an isolated station wife intolerable. After accompanying
the Commissioner, Major P.E. Warburton, on a long tour of the northern police stations, he was appointed to Port Lincoln as a Justice of the Peace, a Special and a Stipendiary Magistrate, as well as police officer, a combination of offices he found impossible. In 1867 he resigned from the police and began life as a sheep farmer and horse breeder, eventually losing everything so that at 65 he was poorer than at 25. A philosophical narrative with an engaging style, Holroyd’s is an interesting illustration of the diversity of colonial life.

Date span: 1849–1894

116

HOLT, JOSEPH
(1756–1826)

A rum story. The adventures of Joseph Holt; thirteen years in New South Wales (1800–12)
Edited by Peter O'Shaughnessy
208 pp., index, port.

‘General’ of the United Irishmen, and hero of the Wicklow rebellion of 1798, Holt was exiled to New South Wales without trial in 1799. He and his wife and son were brought to Sydney on the Minerva, his wife bearing another son on the voyage. On arrival he became manager of Brush Farm for William Cox, who had been a passenger on the Minerva. Due to his skill as a farmer and manager, Holt was able to increase Cox’s holdings very rapidly and also to acquire some land for his family, notably Mount Hester at Parramatta. Holt was regarded with suspicion by the authorities, however, and was twice unjustly arrested before being transported to Norfolk Island in May 1804 as a direct result of the Castle Hill rebellion, although he was innocent of any involvement. He was forced to labour as a convict by Commandant Joseph Foveaux, but was released by Captain John Piper when he relieved Foveaux in September 1804, and he occupied himself during the remainder of his 19 months on the Island with fishing. On his way back to New South Wales, Holt stayed for a brief period at Hobart Town, where Lieutenant-Governor Collins consulted him about agricultural matters, sheep husbandry and the suitability of land for agricultural development. He had more trouble with the authorities after he returned to his farm when his illicit whisky still was discovered, but was given a conditional pardon by Colonel Paterson in 1809. After this was confirmed by Macquarie in 1812, Holt and his wife embarked on the Isabella, which was subsequently wrecked on the Falkland Islands. Although Holt and the other passengers were rescued in 1813, he and his wife did not reach Ireland until 1814.

Holt’s memoirs are informative about a number of aspects of life, at more than one level of society in New South Wales. As an experienced farmer, he relates his experiences with livestock, various crops, and buying and selling produce, stock and land, and details his management of a large force of convict labourers. He experienced brutal treatment on Norfolk Island under Foveaux and observed great cruelty to convicts. He gives a graphic description of a vicious flogging of Irishmen suspected of plotting insurrection, which Governor King forced him to witness in 1800. Holt met and comments on many well known men in New South Wales, such as Maurice Margarot, Richard Atkins, George Barrington, John Macarthur, Samuel Marsden, Governors King, Hunter and Macquarie, Captain John Piper and Joseph Foveaux. He discusses events such as the Castle Hill uprising and the Rum Rebellion and issues such as the administration of justice, the dominance and corruption of British army officers in the colony and the effects of trade monopolies such as the one in spirits granted by Macquarie in exchange for the construction of a hospital.
Holt's recollections were first published in London in 1838 in a version edited by T. Crofton Croker, which included Holt's account of his activities in the Irish rebellion of 1798. Croker, however, considerably altered the original manuscript, rendering Holt better educated, more genteel and discreet than was actually the case. The editor of this 1988 edition claims to have interfered very little with the original, allowing Holt to reveal himself as a farmer of only moderate education, who expresses himself in an earthy, direct manner, is capable of vivid description, particularly of personal appearances and has good, if vituperative, powers of characterisation. Proud of his history as a leader, and vain about his personal appearance, Holt sees himself as the hero of every encounter, verbal or otherwise, and is touchy about his status in the colony, taking offence at any implication that his rights are less than those of any free settler. Yet he reveals a keen sense of humour and strong family feeling, which ultimately overrides even his commitment to the Irish cause.

Date span: 1799–1812
Note: See ADB, vol. 1

Hood, John

Australia and the East: being a journal narrative of a voyage to New South Wales in an emigrant ship: with a residence of some months in Sydney and the bush...

In a narrative based on a journal but clearly retrospectively shaped, Hood describes a visit to New South Wales in 1841-42 to acquaint himself with the fortunes of his eldest son, James, who had a sheep station at Connobolas. He was accompanied by his youngest son, Alexander, who subsequently remained in Australia. Hood describes well his journey in the immigrant ship, Lady Kennaway, and dwells on the fears, irritations, sorrows and small pleasures of shipboard life. His response to Sydney, which is that of a concerned father who respects the ambitions of his sons but whose loyalty is firmly tethered to his native Scotland, is consciously slanted from an outsider's perspective. He gives detailed descriptions of the town's architecture and physical aspect, as well as a more individual account of the general populace. After a reunion with his son in Sydney, which was a mixed experience due to the latter's apparent abandonment of gentlemanly standards of dress, he set off for Connobolas. At first delighted with the landscape, he soon grew tired of the monotony of the bush, describing it on one occasion as 'dusty and dark and painful' in its effect on the emotions. On another he compares it unfavourably with Scotland, dwelling on its historical absences. He describes his son's primitive establishment at Connobolas in vivid detail, and recounts some of the critical experiences he and others had in the 'wilderness'. These include several instances of individuals becoming lost, of horse-stealing, sheep-stealing, and encounters with bushrangers and escaped convicts. On the whole, Hood found Australia an uncomfortable and threatening place but concludes that he rejoices to have made the voyage, having fulfilled a duty to discover his sons' circumstances at first hand. The latter part of his narrative, which deals with his return journey to Sydney and stay there while waiting for a ship, concentrates more on general information for prospective emigrants. Chapters 9 and 10 are an extended discussion of conditions in the colony and its future prospects, its economy, government, class structure, crime, education, religion, banking and legal systems, and the press.

Date span: 1841–1842
118
HORNSBY, M. ('THE VET')
*Old time echoes of Tasmania. By 'the Vet'*
Launceston, Tas., *Daily Telegraph*, 1896. 231 pp., port.

This is a collection of colloquial anecdotes, many of which relate to Hornsby's own experiences as a policeman and resident of Hobart Town in the 1840s and 1850s. They deal largely with crime and vice, involving convicts and ex-convicts, drunkards, bushrangers, and policemen in Van Diemen's Land in the latter days of the transportation system.

Date span: 1840s-1850s

119
HOWITT, RICHARD
(1799—1870)
*Impressions of Australia Felix, during four years' residence in that colony; notes of a voyage round the world; Australian poems, &c.*

Howitt's narrative is written partly in the form of a journal and partly as retrospective narrative. It includes letters to Mary and William Howitt in England, extracts from the journals of explorers, and poems. The entries begin in August 1839 when Howitt and his younger brother, Godfrey, left England for Australia. Howitt gives expressive if flowery descriptions of the voyage out, but little information on his fellow passengers. An encounter with a convict in Tasmania is dramatically described, as are the difficulties of farming in Victoria. After living some time in tents at Williamstown, Howitt purchased a 95-acre block on the Yarra, where he and his friends built a house and cleared the land. Howitt debates whether Australia Felix is paradise or hell, although his own farming experience is described as a series of 'unpropitious and calamitous circumstances' from first to last. He describes journeys on foot to Western Port and Cape Schanck in 1843, and the Geelong area in 1844. An exceptionally literary and philosophical writer, Howitt debates the British claim to Australia and the benefits of imperialism in general. He gives vivid accounts of the Aborigines, expressing great sympathy for the women: 'more slavish, abject creatures there cannot be in any land.' In the latter part of his narrative he becomes more conscious of his responsibility as informant for intending emigrants and includes information on economic and farming conditions. Howitt left for England in 1844.

Date span: 1839-1844

120
HUGHES, [ALICE] MRS F.
*My childhood in Australia. A story for my children*

These are memories of early childhood during the 1840s on a sheep station on the Murray River, near Wellington, South Australia. Since her father was often absent on the business of the large station, the author's memories centre around her mother, who helped to plaster and lime their slab house, cleared stones and planted a garden, fought back a bushfire and frequently rescued her small children from such dangers as snakes, wild bulls and the river. The children helped with chores such as feeding and yarding animals, making candles, carrying water to the house from the river and washing on the river bank, but still found time to roam fairly freely and experience the delights of the unspoiled country along the Murray and its marshlands, which teemed with birds. Describing the 'half-civilised' Aborigines who worked in a desultory fashion on the
station, Mrs Hughes records her fascination with their natural way of life, their customs such as corroborees, and their knowledge of native animals and vegetable food sources. The recollections end when Alice and her brother Henry were sent to Adelaide by coach to begin school. As My childhood in Australia was written for the author's children in England, it is simply, sometimes naively, expressed and contains details likely to interest younger readers, highlighting those aspects of life which would contrast with their own, such as the construction and layout of the station buildings and the heat at Christmas-time. It is nevertheless an evocative account of an extraordinary bush childhood and a warm family life. The combination of adult retrospection and nostalgia is caught in the author's comment that 'life must have been lonely and eventful for our elders, but for us children it was happiness itself'.

Date span: 1840s

121
HULL, HUGH MUNRO (1818—1882)
Clerk of the House; the reminiscences of Hugh Munro Hull

Hugh Munro Hull arrived in Van Diemen's Land, where his father was Commissary, as an infant. The family lived in Hobart Town, then Launceston, until 1831, when they moved to their land grant near Glenorchy, which they named Tolosa. Hull was educated at James Thomson's school in Hobart Town, then joined his father as a clerk in the Commissariat Office. In 1834 he was given an appointment in the Governor's office by Sir George Arthur, and subsequently served Franklin and Denison. He rose steadily in the government service, spending some years as Police Magistrate at Hamilton and Bothwell, and ultimately became Clerk of the Tasmanian House of Assembly in 1864. He published a number of statistical and descriptive works on Tasmania.

Clerk of the House contains several pieces of autobiographical writing by Hull, the longest being 'Reminiscences' (pp. 1—58), written in 1864. In this and an earlier piece, 'Sketch of my history' (pp. 105—12), he gives a warm account of his childhood and education, his early working life, his courtship and marriage to his first wife, the birth of his first two children and his struggle to keep the family together after his wife's death in 1852. The 'Reminiscences' are apparently written up from a daily diary, and for later years have less human interest, becoming largely a chronological catalogue of promotions, increases in salary, and, after his second marriage in 1854, the birth of each of 12 children.

Date span: 1820s—1864
Note: See ADB, vol. 4

122
HUSSEY, HENRY (1825—1903)
More than half a century of colonial life and Christian experience
Adelaide, Hussey & Gillingham, 1897. 504 pp.

Henry Hussey arrived in Adelaide with his parents in 1839. He assisted in a small family shop before beginning a career in printing as a printer's devil with the Adelaide Independent in 1841. In subsequent years he became a printer and publisher in his own right, publishing both the Adelaide Observer and South Australian Register at one time, and editing and publishing a number of religious pamphlets, periodicals and newspapers. Hussey became increasingly dedicated to religious causes, and, following a visit to the United States in 1854, left the Church of England, where he had taught Sunday school for a number of years, and became an
independent, non-denominational preacher who advocated the baptism of all adult believers. In the early 1860s he wrote a history of South Australia, and in 1865 became private secretary to George Fife Angas. Meanwhile, he continued his religious work, becoming pastor at Bentham Street church, and preaching throughout South Australia and in other Australian colonies.

Although this is a full autobiography, covering Hussey's life from birth to old age, it is particularly detailed for the period of his migration to Adelaide, his years there as a youth, and later as a young man who was closely involved with many of Adelaide's earliest printing ventures. His account of his life after the 1850s reflects his preoccupation with church activities, and includes some discussion of religious doctrine, as well as a description of his work for Angas.

Date span: 1839–1895
Note: See ADB, vol. 4

123
IKIN, HENRY
(1816–1900)
*Henry Ikin (1816–1900): an autobiography*
Edited by R. Wesley Hartley and Grahame Thom
[Lyons, ACT, G. Thom], 1988. 37 pp., index

Ikin was born in Hobart Town in 1816, the son of a builder and grandson of a member of the 102nd Regiment who arrived in Sydney with Governor Phillip. Written in the 1890s, his narrative contains an outline of his family and working life, describing his work as a carpenter and cabinet-maker in Hobart and Sydney and his 30 years as an officer of the New South Wales Customs Department. His main preoccupation, however, is with his experiences in various church groups and his activities as a Christian. Ikin belonged at some time to the Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Primitive and Wesleyan Methodist churches. He was interested in education, taught in Sunday schools and agitated for the teaching of religion in public schools. In the final section of his narrative, he is preoccupied with the issue of the establishment of Salvation Army schools in Australia. He was a proponent of non-sectarianism, and describes his activities on behalf of the poor in Tasmania, such as his part in the establishment of a home for the destitute and a school for the children of the poor.

Date span: 1830–1900

124
JACKMAN, WILLIAM
*The Australian captive; or, an authentic narrative of fifteen years in the life of William Jackman*
Edited by Rev. I. Chamberlayne
Auburn, USA, Derby and Miller, 1853. 392 pp., ports

Jackman arrived in Australia in 1835 as a member of the crew on the convict ship John Berry. His account of his adventures during six years in Australia or in Australian waters, indicates that, due to his rebellious and cocksure nature, he was in constant conflict with authority. The dramatic turns of events, in which he invariably figures as triumphant protagonist, suggest that the narrative is at least exaggerated.

Having deserted his ship soon after arrival, Jackman made his way to Launceston. His desertion was advertised in the Launceston Gazette, and he spent almost a year as a fugitive in Van Diemen's Land, finding it difficult to obtain work without a pass and being frequently accosted by constables. He joined a ship in December 1836 but deserted again almost immediately, was arrested and sentenced to three months on the treadmill in Launceston Gaol. Careful to maintain a distinction between himself and transported convicts, Jackman describes his experiences in the gaol, including the planning of a revolt in which 55 prisoners
smashed the treadmill. Following his release, Jackman sailed on a whaling ship which fished the waters around King George Sound. The ship was wrecked off the South Australian coast and Jackman was cast ashore on Nuyts Archipelago, where he was taken captive by a large tribe of Aborigines. During the 19 months he spent with them he proved his prowess as a hunter and became an accepted member of the group, participating in wars and ceremonies, and taking a wife. He was eventually taken off the island, against the will of the Aborigines, by an American whaling ship.

Jackman describes many aspects of life on the island in detail; covering kangaroo hunting, implements and weapons, medicine and healing, food, training of young men, religious beliefs, burials, cannibalism, wars and the treatment of prisoners, social behaviour and the position of Aboriginal women. While some of these details may have resulted from first-hand observation, others appear to be fanciful.

Jackman sailed to China on the whaler, but returned to King George Sound in 1840, and joined a government surveying party. When far inland, the party exhausted its provisions and Jackman and a companion were dispatched to the settlement for fresh supplies. As their compasses would not function due to nearby iron-ore deposits, they became lost and had to eat one of their horses, but eventually found their way back to King George Sound. Jackman left Australia and subsequently had adventures in the Pacific Islands and in South American waters, where he was involved in the slave trade and in some South American wars. He did not return to Australia.

In his preface, the editor, Rev. I. Chamberlayne, states that he has altered William Jackman’s ‘original matter-of-fact memoranda’ in order to ‘civilize’ descriptions, and to elucidate them with statistical, reflective and philosophical material. The style of the narrative is not that of a rough, uneducated seaman. Chamberlayne claims, however, not to have altered the facts, which he is unable to verify but believes to be true.

Data span: 1835–1842

125

JOHNSON, SOPHIA
(B.1813)

Surprising misfortunes of Sophia Johnson, written by herself

This curious little pamphlet may fall into the category of popular romantic or sensational fiction, although it is written in a plain, matter-of-fact style. When Sophia Johnson expressed her desire to marry a young cabinet-maker, her mother consented to the match but her father objected because of the man’s lack of property. She was sent from her home in Chester to London to stay with an uncle, and her protracted absence led her lover to take to drink and crime. He was arrested in June 1830 for robbery and sentenced to seven years transportation. Informed of his fate by a loyal chambermaid, Sophia ran away, taking £100 belonging to her uncle. She embarked on an emigrant ship bound for New South Wales after disguising herself as man but was wrecked en route and cast up on a deserted island. Rescued by a Dutch merchant vessel she was taken to Amsterdam where she remained for two years, working for a Dutch family before obtaining another passage for New South Wales. Reunited with her lover, she married him after his period of servitude was completed and the couple returned to England where they settled again at Chester. Her narrative concludes with a ballad celebrating her adventures.

Data span: 1830–1837.
A shred of autobiography
Adelaide, Sullivans Cove, 1981. 96 pp., index, port.

The autobiography of the Danish-born seaman and adventurer Jorgen Jorgenson was originally published in two parts in the Hobart Town Almanack of January 1835 and April 1838. In it, Jorgenson describes two contrasting periods of his life in Australia; the first as a young midshipman who participated in exploratory voyages around the Australian coast, and was present at early attempts to settle Port Phillip and Van Diemen's Land, and the second as a convict transported in 1825 to Van Diemen's Land, where he still lived at the time of writing.

Jorgenson states that he joined the Lady Nelson, frigate to Matthew Flinders' Investigator, for a voyage to Australia in 1801 to survey the south-eastern coastline. During voyages of the Lady Nelson in Australian waters at this time, King Island was discovered and named, and Port Phillip, Western Port, Port Dalrymple and the Derwent surveyed. The Lady Nelson accompanied the Investigator to the Northumberland Islands, took Captain Bowen with settlers to the Derwent, and conveyed settlers to the new settlement at Newcastle. As Jorgenson also witnessed the abandonment of David Collins' attempt to settle at Port Phillip, and accompanied the first settlement at Hobart Town, his narrative provides a first-hand account of several landmark events in the settlement of Australia.

Jorgenson returned to Copenhagen in 1806 and commanded a privateer during the Anglo-Danish War. In June 1809, while in command of a British ship, he made himself head of the government of a separate Iceland, an event remarkable enough to colour any subsequent description of his life, although he was relieved of his office by the English after nine weeks. He was imprisoned in England, and there, he claims, acquired an addiction to gambling. After years of dissipation he was imprisoned in Newgate Gaol for 20 months for indebtedness. Released on condition that he leave England, he became caught up in gambling and overstayed his permit, was arrested, and sentenced to transportation for life, passing another three years in Newgate before his sentence took effect. He was placed first on the Justitia hulk at Plymouth, then transferred to the transport Woodman.

During the voyage to Van Diemen's Land Jorgenson acted as a hospital orderly, and did not find the treatment of convicts harsh. Sailing into Sullivan's Cove, he was amazed by the development of Hobart Town, and overwhelmed with emotion at the realisation of the contrast in his position to that of 24 years earlier. Jorgenson was assigned to the Van Diemen's Land Company under Edward Curr, and describes a number of arduous journeys of exploration which he led, on foot, to the western coast. In 1827 he received a ticket-of-leave and was employed in the Oatlands district as a constable, claiming that during this period he arrested many cattle stealers and bushrangers, and, working in relative freedom in the open air in beautiful surroundings, 'scarcely was ever more happy'. From 1829 Jorgenson was engaged in the government campaign against the Aborigines, and led roving parties around Oatlands in a largely futile attempt to capture them. He gives a history of the relations between the Tasmanian Aborigines and settlers up to that time, which, while recognising that they had not always been justly treated, emphasises depredations committed by the Aborigines. He describes the arrangements leading up to Governor Arthur's levée en masse of 1830, and the operation of the Black Line (a human dragnet formed across the Island in an attempt to force all the remaining Aborigines into a confined space) of which he was a
member and organiser. Praising all aspects of Arthur’s administration, he claims that, in demonstrating the government’s power, the Black Line persuaded the Aborigines to surrender themselves to G.A. Robinson.

Jorgenson was a fluent writer who attempted at various times to make a living by his writing, and his autobiography, together with his many other publications on a wide range of topics, reflects his broad education and intellectual ability. He moves from the particulars of his own life to broader issues such as trade, British justice, crime and transportation, and seeks to inform the reader about convict conditions, setting out details of convict life in a systematic manner. Despite an avowed moral purpose, the autobiography reveals an apparent lack of moral values, and an instability of character which prevented him from making the best of his talents; as he ruefully concludes, ‘all human wisdom is vanity, if not regulated by prudence’.

Jorgen Jorgenson’s story captured the imagination of later writers such as Marcus Clarke, Frank Clune, P.R. Stephensen and William Hay. J.P. Hogan published a heavily expurgated and edited version of the autobiography, titled The convict king, in 1891.

Date span: 1803-1835
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

127
Joubert, Jules [François De Sales] (1824-1907)
Shavings & scrapes from many parts

From the time of his first arrival in Sydney in 1839, to the time of writing his memoirs some 50 years later, Jules Joubert was involved in numerous adventures and entrepreneurial schemes in Australia and elsewhere.

In Shavings & scrapes he outlines, among other things, his experiences as a building contractor on the Victorian diggings, owner of a general store at Sawpit Creek, developer and speculator in land and houses (which he built) at Hunters Hill in New South Wales, initiator of the modern Agricultural Show in Sydney, and originator and planner of the 1879 Sydney Exhibition, and later exhibitions in Perth, Christchurch and Dunedin in New Zealand, and Calcutta. The reminiscences, which are an exuberant apologia for his business reverses, make no reference to Joubert’s tragic and volatile personal life.

Date span: 1839-1860s
Note: See ADB, vol. 4

128
Joyce, Alfred (1821-1901)
A homestead history: being the reminiscences and letters of Alfred Joyce
Introduction and notes by G.F. James
Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1942. 200 pp., index

This book is in two parts, the first comprising reminiscences of the life of Alfred Joyce in Victoria during the decade 1843-1853, and the second comprising a selection of his letters written between 1851 and 1864. Having completed an apprenticeship in London as a mechanical engineer, Joyce emigrated to Australia on the London, which his father partly owned, and joined his brother in Melbourne in 1843, to find Port Phillip in the grip of an economic depression. The brothers bought a sheep station on the Loddon River, which they named Plaistow, and which they built up over the following 10 years into a prosperous property with substantial farm buildings and a large flock of fine wool sheep. In 1851 the brothers purchased another nearby station, Norwood, where Alfred lived for over 30 years,
although the reminiscences close in 1853 at the end of what he considers to be the purely pastoral era. A practical man, Joyce writes methodically and in detail about the experiences of the brothers as 'new chums' in Melbourne and on the Loddon. He describes the building of a slab and shingle hut at Plaistow, his daily duties as a hutkeeper, and the beginnings of the Plaistow flock, the shearing, lambing and first marketing of their modest produce. He records the development of their knowledge of sheep husbandry, the adoption of innovations such as washing and dipping, and the use of the swing gate. Joyce found wide use for his engineering training and implemented his own designs for water and wind-driven flour mills.

Writing in 1896 with knowledge of the intervening changes, Joyce gives his impressions of Melbourne on his arrival and chronicles changes which he observed on intermittent visits during the period covered by his narrative. He records the gradual introduction into rural areas of facilities such as post offices, inns, stores, churches and medical services. He also discusses the effects of land legislation on settlement, the beginnings of independent government in Victoria, labour and immigration, and touches briefly on the changes brought about by the gold rushes. He devotes a chapter to a description of the Aborigines of the Loddon, which includes an account of an Aboriginal burial and a discussion of the Aboriginal Protectorate at Jim Crow. He also describes an encounter with the bushranger Captain Melville.

Date span: 1843–1853
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

Kelly, Ebenezer Beriah

Ebenezer Beriah Kelly: an autobiography

Kelly was an American sailor who in 1798–99 was a member of the crew of the Hillsborough, carrying convicts from England to Botany Bay. During the 10-month journey, the convicts attempted to take over the ship and succeeded in removing their irons. Their plans were discovered and they were forced on deck and punished; Kelly states that 'we were eight days flogging, ironing and packing them again'. Many convicts died on the voyage from disease. After arriving in Australia, Kelly worked briefly at Parramatta and Sydney. He claims that he 'saw much of the convicts, and learned a great deal about their labors and suffering', but gives almost no illustrations save the mention of a murder by ex-convicts. He left Sydney on an American ship, on which 21 convicts contrived to escape. His autobiography describes many more of his adventures, such as his stint in the British navy and experiences at Trafalgar, and his later capture by pirates and reduction to slavery, but none of these relate to Australia.

Date span: 1798–1799

Ker, J. Hunter

Glimpses of life in Victoria by a resident

Glimpses of life in Victoria is divided into two parts; the first, titled 'Victoria as it was', deals with impressions of Victoria from the time of the author's arrival in 1839 and incidentally includes an account of his own life in the colony; the second, 'Victoria as it is', has no autobiographical content but is a descriptive account of the contemporary
colony, covering such matters as major cities and towns, mining, social conditions, life in the country, and charitable institutions. Ker was a Scotsman who arrived in Port Phillip on one of the first immigrant ships sailing directly there from Great Britain. He took up the lease of a station at Heidelberg, but on the introduction of special surveys in 1841, his land was selected by others and he was forced to leave. The depression of the 1840s further damaged his fortunes and he managed a farm on the Yarra, before visiting Britain for two years, returning to Australia in 1849. He then settled on the Loddon, where he had established a large sheep station by the time gold was discovered in Victoria. Ker encouraged the search for gold on and near his station and profited when it was found at nearby Mount Korong by buying and selling gold and selling produce on the diggings. The 'glimpses' consist of a number of fluently written vignettes, stories and descriptions of scenes which are presented as characteristic of Victoria. Many of these reproduce the standard fare offered to an English audience, such as bushranging stories, an account of a mother and children lost in the bush for nine days, a cattle muster, a flood on the Yarra, sundowners, a wild white man and descriptions of native birds and animals. Others are vivid first-hand narrations which have a more lasting impression, such as Ker's accounts of a night spent at the home of a neighbouring settler at Heidelberg, which includes a description of the layout and furnishing of the house and the manners of his hosts, of the visit of a clergyman to the Loddon sheep station, and of the great bushfires of Black Thursday, 6 February 1851. Ker deals in some detail with the gold rushes, graphically describing a scene of drunkenness and disorder at an inn on the road to the Castlemaine diggings, scenes of Bendigo and Dunolly during the rush, and Melbourne in the early 1850s crowded with diggers and immigrants. He also describes the Aborigines at Heidelberg and on the Loddon, discussing the history of their relations with Europeans and giving a long account of an Aboriginal funeral which he witnessed on the Loddon.

Date span: 1839–1850s

131

KING, CHARLES ADOLPHUS

Life of Charles Adolphus King, who, having broken his country's laws, was transported for fourteen years, to New South Wales ...


Following a life of dissipation and debauchery as a young man in London, Charles King (whose real name was Charles Dolphus) was convicted of burglary in 1835 and sentenced to 14 years transportation. He was placed on a hulk, then transported to New South Wales, where he was initially housed in convict barracks, and worked in a road gang. He was then assigned as a domestic servant in Sydney, and lived in relative comfort for 18 months until reassigned to a master who sent him to the country as a shepherd and hutkeeper. For sheltering an escaped convict he was sentenced to a chain gang, where, he states, 'my life was that of wretchedness; flogging and hunger were the order of the day'. He escaped from the gang and experienced a brief period of freedom on a ship in the bay before being recaptured, flogged and sent into the country. He escaped again, this time getting away 'in a tank of water, sitting on a bucket', on a ship which sailed to the South Sea Islands, where he lived with the natives for four months. He returned to England but was arrested in 1841 and charged with being at large before the expiration of his sentence. Due to the public sympathy generated by his trial, he was permitted to serve out his sentence in England.
King claims that he became penitent and religious while in gaol in England, and his narrative contains the warnings and pious imprecations which are conventional in returned-convict narratives. However, King exploits the entertainment value of his descriptions of low life in London and Sydney, discussing at some length the pernicious effects of prostitution, and describing Sydney’s slums, docks, taverns and brothels, and the convicts and emancipists, corrupt police, sailors and whores who frequented them. While parts of his story seem unlikely to be true, such as his romantic interlude on a South Sea island with the daughter of a chief, other events have been verified, and his account of his life and emotions while on the convict hulk and transport, in the Sydney barracks, on road gangs and in domestic service, show a convincing knowledge of the details of convict life and of the convict system. As King claims to have had virtually no formal education, he seems unlikely to have written this formal, correctly expressed narrative unaided.

Date span: 1835–1849

132
King, George
(1813–1899)
Reminiscences by the Rev. Geo. King, LL.D.
Sydney, Edward Lee, 1887. 16 pp.
[Mitchell Library]

Opening with a charming account of his childhood and school days at Portora in Ireland, King records his happy family life and smooth progression to Dublin University. He was ordained in September 1836 and fulfilled duties in Northern Ireland until his wife’s health caused them to emigrate to Western Australia. Taking up an appointment with the Gospel Propagation Society, King quickly arranged for the construction of Western Australia’s first churches and began the first mission to the Aborigines, which included setting up a school, teaching the young people a trade and providing them with work on a mission farm. Although King describes himself as disheartened on first encountering Aborigines, he was cheered by the success of the mission, declaring that ‘however low in intellect may be the uncared-for aboriginal in the bush, his civilization and spiritual enlightenment are quite practicable, provided he be separated from the darkening influences of his wandering tribe, and educated as we would one of our own children’. In illustration of his own liberalism, he includes an account of his recovery of a Papist, lost in the bush. In 1848 King resigned and left in 1849 for Sydney, where he became Rector of the Cathedral Church and parish. He oversaw the completion of the cathedral, formerly languishing, and attempted to start a mission to the New South Wales Aborigines, without success due largely to Bishop Barker’s refusal to appoint a Presbyterian minister to head it. King was also one of the founders of St Paul’s College at Sydney University. In 1887 failing health compelled King to relinquish his ministerial work. The childhood reminiscences of the early part of the narrative soon give way to Church earnestness, particularly in the Sydney section which is no longer in the first person and may have been completed by another hand.

Date span: 1841–1850s
Note: See ADB, vol. 5

133
Kirby, James
Old times in the bush of Australia: trials and experiences of early bush life in Victoria, during the forties

James Kirby arrived in Australia as a child in 1839 and lived at Merri Creek, near Melbourne, at Fausely, a station established
by his father. In 1845 he and his brother joined a cattle-droving party in search of new country. They found suitable land near Swan Hill, which Kirby describes in lyrical detail, and established friendly relations with the local Aborigines, the majority of whom had never seen a white man. Kirby describes the difficulties of finding one's way in a confusing landscape and gives a dramatic account of two lost men, whom the settlers saved after they were near death from starvation. For the first six months all went well but then the settlers were visited by the Black Protector, who instructed them to kill a bullock for the Aborigines as a gesture of good will. When their expectations of more bullocks were not met by the settlers, the Aborigines began to kill the cattle and sheep. The situation deteriorated drastically when Andrew Beveridge, one of their number, was killed and Kirby himself was only saved from death on one occasion because the Aborigines remembered his previous donation of an emu his dogs had hunted down. Eventually the situation developed into a state of war, with the whites besieged in their hut. Kirby, who was ultimately selected for the dangerous mission of riding 25 miles to get help, gives a blow-by-blow account of the battle. The three Aborigines accused of Beveridge's murder were taken with great difficulty to Melbourne, where two were tried and hanged and the third returned to his people. Back at the Swan Hill station, however, the Aborigines proved intransigent and more killings of shepherds occurred so that eventually the settlement had to be abandoned.

The latter part of Kirby's reminiscences consists of humorous or dramatically-related yarns illustrating life in the bush. Responding to his reader as if he were a familiar acquaintance, Kirby reflects on convicts, bushrangers, bush pubs, confidence tricks, the love-life of squatters, the effects of extreme isolation on women, the impact of the gold rushes and murders, both detected and undetected.

Date span: 1839–1850s

134

[KIRKLAND, KATHERINE (1808–1892) ('MRS THOMPSON')]

Life in the bush. By a lady

Mrs Kirkland begins her narrative of her two years in Victoria with a description of her disembarkation, with her husband and daughter and several servants at Port Henry, about eight miles from Corio, in 1839. They brought a range of stock, including bullocks, horses, sheep, goats and pigs, as well as poultry, rabbits and cats, which they landed with some difficulty. The family travelled by spring-cart and dray to their station at Trewalla, Mrs Kirkland claiming to be the first woman to go 'so far up the country'. Looking at Victoria through the eyes of an English lady, she describes the trees as 'dark and ugly' and the country as 'scrubby and barren'. Insisting on genteel standards in her own home, she records that she was 'disgusted and astonished at the dirty and uncomfortable way in which the settlers lived'. She found servants in Australia to be lazy and rebellious, and missed the company of other 'ladies'; the other women in the district being, without question, her social inferiors. She felt threatened by the presence of Aborigines, whom she describes as 'very ugly and dirty', and in recounting stories of their theft of stock, shows no sympathy for their displacement by European settlers. Summing up her experience, Mrs Kirkland advises intending settlers that 'the great thing is to get over the first feeling of surprise and disgust'.

By her own account, however, Katherine Kirkland coped with good humour with the primitive conditions at Trewalla, where they
lived at first in a three-room slab hut without doors or windows. She took an active part in establishing the station, managing a dairy, poultry and pigs, and offered hospitality to neighbouring settlers, to whom she proudly served native game. When she was forced to travel to Melbourne for the birth of her second child, she brought him back to the station at two months, spending 11 days on the return journey.

In 1841 the family moved to a farm close to Melbourne, where they lived in tents. Mrs Kirkland gives a graphic description of her fight against a large bushfire which threatened the camp, when she and a servant girl burnt a firebreak around the tents. The fire was their 'crowning misfortune'; Mrs Kirkland became ill with asthma, and in April 1841 the family moved into Melbourne. During the brief period that the family lived in Melbourne, Mrs Kirkland made plans to open a school, and accommodated some female immigrants who, having arrived at a time of surplus domestic servants and a reduction in wages, were unable to find positions. Her health failed to improve, and in September she returned with her children to her mother in England, hoping to come back one day to Port Phillip.

Date span: 1839–1841
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

135
KNATCHBULL, JOHN
(1792?–1844)
‘Life of John Knatchbull written by himself 23rd January–13th February 1844 in Darlinghurst Gaol’ in John Knatchbull from quarterdeck to gallows
By Colin Roderick
Sydney, Angus & Robertson Ltd, 1963. pp. 29–131

Knatchbull wrote his autobiography while in Darlinghurst Gaol in 1834, following his conviction for the murder of a Mrs Jamieson. It is a carelessly written narrative in parts, consistent with being jotted down during a short period with no reference to other sources. Knatchbull attempts to enlist the sympathy of the reader by claiming that he was the victim of conspiracies and persecutions and innocent of all the crimes attributed to him. The narrative is obviously the work of an educated man with a sharp mind and a good memory for detail, although many of the events narrated vary in detail from accounts compiled from documentary evidence by others. Although it contains some graphic descriptions of inhuman treatment of convicts, which Knatchbull experienced and witnessed, he mainly focuses on his personal justification and grievances. He describes his early life as the son of an English baronet and his career as an officer in the Royal Navy, during which he served in ships which took part in the wars against France, and claims to have been present at Trafalgar. He gives a vague account of the crime for which he was transported to New South Wales in 1824 to serve a sentence of 14 years, claiming that he was the victim of his brother's malice. In New South Wales he carried mail between Mount York and Bathurst for two years, then worked as a constable to a sympathetic Police Magistrate. In 1831 he was convicted of forging a cheque and spent nine months on the hulk Phoenix, before embarking on the brig Governor Phillip for Norfolk Island to serve a sentence of seven years. During the voyage a plot by convicts to poison the crew was uncovered and Knatchbull was suspected of participating, possibly leading the conspiracy, although he was later cleared of the charge. He claims he was brutally treated in reprisal, strung up on the mainstay for five days, and harassed and imprisoned by Commandant Morisset on arrival. He was again suspected of complicity in the Norfolk Island convict mutiny of 1834 and persecuted by subsequent Commandants Fyans and...
Anderson, but was not finally one of the 13 convicted and executed. He was ill during much of his time on Norfolk Island, losing the use of his right leg for two years, and spent a long time in hospital, where he records he was treated gently by Doctors Gamack and Harnett. On his return to Sydney in 1839, he was dismayed to find that he was required to serve the balance of his sentence, his seven years on Norfolk Island counting as additional time. He regards this as further evidence of persecution and puts forward legal arguments in support of his case. He also claims that Governor Gipps withheld remittances sent to him by his family in England.

Knatchbull outlines a period which he spent on his return in Hyde Park Barracks under the notorious Timothy Lane, then a period as a ‘special’ at Port Macquarie where he worked in road gangs, as a coxswain on river punts and as a river trader. He later obtained Gipps’ permission to work on vessels trading out of Sydney. He gives a long explanation of his conduct on the evening of the murder of Mrs Jamieson, of which he claims to be innocent. He also dwells on his courtship of a Sydney widow who stood by him during his trial, and relates that he was visited in Darlinghurst by a Mrs Latham, who brought about his religious conversion. The narrative relating to his last days, some of which is in journal form, gives evidence of a degree of penitence and acceptance of his fate, and includes his confession to the murder at the close. He was executed on 13 February 1844. The murder of Mrs Jamieson and his subsequent trial, conviction and hanging excited enormous interest in Sydney, partly due to the sensationally brutal nature of the crime and partly due to exaggerated accounts in the press of Knatchbull’s evil past and to the defence raised by his counsel, Robert Lowe, who unsuccessfully pleaded moral insanity, the first such plea in a British court.

**Note:** See *ADB*, vol. 2

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**The golden south; memories of Australian home life from 1843 to 1888 by ‘Lyth’**


Although the subtitle of Lambert’s *Golden south* emphasises ‘home life’, her narrative also documents the changes that occurred in transport, building and cultural life in New South Wales during her 40-year residence in Australia. Arriving in Sydney with her parents in 1843, Lambert writes of her initial disappointment that Sydney was not ‘foreign’ enough for her tastes, being English in a way which quite delighted her mother. She describes the physical features of the young town and its outdoor activities. She records significant social events such as the annual Australia Day Regatta and the first International Exhibition, and something of the street life, including the chain gangs and the Saturday market. After attending a girls’ boarding school at Liverpool, Lambert returned to her parents’ Elizabeth Street home, leaving soon after to take a position as governess at Newtown, then a thinly populated forest area dotted with mansions. She observes that a governess’ life in Australia in the 1840s was ‘an ideal one’ and illustrates this by relating her experiences in various affluent households from urban Glebe and Double Bay to country towns and stations at Morpeth, Mulgoa, Mudgee and Singleton. Although she felt lonely and isolated on entering each new household, she largely avoided the insecurity of the profession, having family and friends who were able to accommodate her in times of need. She spent some time on her brother’s property at Wellington and gives an account of her life there, commenting on the Chinese and Aboriginal servants (and their abuse of opium and alcohol), churchgoing, local dealings with bushrangers and her enjoyment...
The bushman; or, life in a new country

Landor, a lawyer, emigrated to Western Australia in 1841 because of ill health. He was accompanied by his two brothers, who established a sheep property near York, although Landor remained in Perth. An exceptionally able writer, Landor gives vivid, often humorous descriptions of the voyage out, which included a mutiny. His account of life in Australia includes a great deal of general information on the colony’s history, climate, economy, crops and living conditions, but is enlivened by numerous reminiscences of humorous or dramatic incidents and accounts of colourful fellow-colonists. Particularly dramatic accounts include his near-drowning at sea when single-handedly sailing a small craft, of being lost in outback Western Australia, of hunting expeditions and of accompanying Governor Hutt on a journey to Australind in 1842.

Landor is critical of what he describes as the spirit of Yankeeism in the colony and concludes that ‘the tendency of colonization is to deteriorate’. He gives a sophisticated analysis of the dubious legal powers of the British colonists over the Aborigines but is pessimistic about the latter’s adaptation to European ‘civilization’ and sees the settler as inevitably turning from refined philanthropist to coarse-minded settler when faced with the actual practices of the Aborigines.

First elected to the Legislative Council of New South Wales for the Port Phillip district in 1843, John Dunmore Lang lists what he considers to be the more important issues with which he was associated in the Parliament up to 1869, including education, separation of Victoria and Queensland from the colony of New South Wales, suffrage and constitutional matters, land laws and selection, and the role of government in church affairs. He provides a brief explanation of each measure, justifying his actions in each case, and attacking some enemies, particularly W.C. Wentworth and Governor Fitz Roy. Lang deals with his life prior to his election in Reminiscences of my life and times (1901) (q.v.)

Date span: 1843–1847
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

138
LANG, JOHN DUNMORE
(1799–1878)

Brief sketch of my parliamentary life & times

First elected to the Legislative Council of New South Wales for the Port Phillip district in 1843, John Dunmore Lang lists what he considers to be the more important issues with which he was associated in the Parliament up to 1869, including education, separation of Victoria and Queensland from the colony of New South Wales, suffrage and constitutional matters, land laws and selection, and the role of government in church affairs. He provides a brief explanation of each measure, justifying his actions in each case, and attacking some enemies, particularly W.C. Wentworth and Governor Fitz Roy. Lang deals with his life prior to his election in Reminiscences of my life and times (1901) (q.v.)

Date span: 1843–1869
Note: See ADB, vol. 2
This unfinished autobiography by Presbyterian minister and politician John Dunmore Lang deals with his childhood and education in Scotland, his emigration to Sydney in 1822 and his life there until the time of his election to the Legislative Council of New South Wales in 1843.

Always concerned to justify himself and gain due credit for his actions, Lang outlines his strenuous activities on behalf of the Presbyterian Church during his first 20 years in Australia, describing his role in the establishment of a congregation, church buildings and schools, and his efforts to attract clergymen and funds for the Church during periodic visits to Britain. He describes as one of his greatest achievements for the colony his successful arrangements to bring out Scottish emigrants, first, in 1831, when he chartered a ship to carry mechanics 'of the first class', who were contracted to build the Australian College in Sydney, and later, in 1836, when he recruited Highland bounty emigrants, 4000 of whom arrived within three years, settling mainly in the Hunter, Manning and Clarence river districts. Lang argues his case in the many disagreements which divided the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales, personally attacking some of his own ministerial recruits, particularly John McGarvie, who succeeded in retaining the support of a large faction of Presbyterians after Lang established a rival synod in 1837; this dispute ultimately resulted in Lang's alienation from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The narrative also reflects his involvement in conflicts outside the Church, such as his argument with the government over what he saw as a Church of England monopoly of public education, his opposition to the degenerate influence of emancipists, which caused him to establish the Colonist in 1835 'to put down the "Convict Press"', his various convictions for libel, and his distrust and disparagement of Roman Catholicism; he claims that this last was a motivation for his nomination for the Legislative Council in 1843, in opposition to the Catholic Edward Curr. He touches briefly on his first days in parliament, a major concern being the separation of the Port Phillip district from the colony of New South Wales; he deals with his career in the New South Wales parliament in his pamphlet Brief sketch of my parliamentary life and times (1870) (q.v.). Many of Lang's other writings contain autobiographical passages, and extracts from some of these were published in John Dunmore Lang: chiefly autobiographical 1799–1878 (1951).

Date span: 1822–1843
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

140

LEIGH, W.H.

Reconnoitering voyages and travels, with adventures in the new colonies of South Australia; a particular description of the town of Adelaide, and Kangaroo Island; and an account of the present state of Sydney and parts adjacent ... during the years 1836, 1837, 1838


This narrative, which is closely based on journals and in parts reverts to journal form, is illustrated by the author's own drawings. Leigh accompanied as surgeon a group of contracted emigrants who sailed to South Australia in 1836 to join the South Australian Company's settlement on Kangaroo Island. During the voyage, he supervised the health and comfort of the emigrants on the crowded ship, and explored the ports of Tristan
d’Acunha and Cape Town. On arrival at Kingscote he and the other settlers were bitterly disappointed to find that the housing they had been promised did not exist, and that they had to clear a space and erect tents in the sandy soil. Harassed by fleas and rats, and suffering the hostility of earlier settlers, Leigh claims that there was ‘not one man or woman that does not most bitterly rue the day they left England’. Leigh found Kangaroo Island to be barren and dry, and Kingscote ill-sited and devoid of native game. His litany of complaints against the South Australian Company is tempered by wry humour and observations of native animals, reptiles and birds. Leigh made an expedition inland, and joined a whaling expedition to Encounter Bay. During a trip to the mainland, he visited Adelaide and Glenelg, and bases a long and informative account of the South Australian Aborigines on observations made during this visit of their appearance, social structure, customs and beliefs, food and hunting, and reactions to European settlement. In summary, he says, ‘they are superstitious, courageous, revengeful, jealous, cunning—great thieves and liars—idle—susceptible of friendship, capable of feeling sorrow, and excellent mimics’. He also describes them as ‘the lowest in intellect of human creation’.

After six months on Kangaroo Island, Leigh obtained a long-awaited passage to Sydney. While in New South Wales he visited the Botanic Gardens and the Domain, attended a race meeting at Parramatta and visited Windsor. He sat in at hearings of Magistrates’ Courts, and comments on convict labour, assignment and punishments. Leigh left Sydney at the end of October 1837, and travelled to India, South Africa and St Helena before returning to England.

**Letters from Victorian pioneers**

Edited by Thomas Francis Bride

Melbourne, Public Library of Victoria, 1898.

325 pp., index

In 1853 Governor La Trobe sent a circular letter to a number of pioneer settlers, requesting information about their settlement in Victoria. Fifty-eight replies, varying in length from one to around 50 pages, were published in this compilation, which was edited by the Librarian of the Public Library of Victoria. Most of the writers had come to Victoria from Van Diemen’s Land and many
settled in the Western District, although there are accounts from settlers further afield. Their letters deal with their search for stations, which often involved exploratory trips into unknown country, definition of and disputes over boundaries, establishment of flocks of sheep, and in a few cases, cattle herds. Most relate experiences with Aborigines, demonstrating a wide range of attitudes to them, and several describe massacres and other atrocities.

Date span: 1836–1853

143

LINGARD, JOSEPH
A narrative of the journey to and from New South Wales, including a seven years' residence in that country

Sentenced to transportation for seven years in 1835, Lingard spent a year on the hulk Justitia where he worked in a laundry, and was on one occasion confined in the 'Black Hole' for two weeks. He describes conditions for convicts on the Prince George, on which he embarked in 1846, detailing food, accommodation and punishment. Lingard claims that about 100 convicts died during the voyage or shortly after arrival; he was among 27 carried to the hospital, suffering from scurvy. He describes the Sydney Barracks, where he lived for a month while working on the roads, and a 27-day journey, on foot, to a station at Monaro ('Manara') where he had been assigned to Captain Camel. He became a trusted servant on the station, where he worked as storekeeper and cook. During this time he was frequently visited in his kitchen by Aborigines, in whom he took a friendly interest, and he gives an account of their daily lives and customs which is derived from their conversations and from his own observations. After three years Lingard was sent to a new station at Cambelong on the Malonga (Molonglo) River, where he stayed until his sentence expired. He then equipped himself as a hunter and hunted in the Snowy River area and around Twofold Bay. He describes a trek through dense bushland with a companion, from Monaro to a station at Mallacoota, where he had been invited to shoot birds for their skins. He was not intimidated by the bush, but records his astonishment at the size of the trees and the density of the vegetation in that area.

Although Lingard's narrative, which contains a number of patriotic and nostalgic verse quotations, and religious references, may have been written down by someone else, it is without the pious warnings often contained in the narratives of returned convicts. While he conveys very clearly his sufferings as a convict, particularly during the terrible journey on the Prince George, he also communicates his enjoyment of life, even as an assigned convict, his resolute and independent character, his sensitivity to and appreciation of nature, and his sympathy for other human beings.

Date span: 1835–1844

144

[LLOYD, E.]
A visit to the Antipodes: with some reminiscences of a sojourn in Australia. By a squatter

The first part of this narrative consists of a journal kept by the author during a voyage from England to South Australia in 1843. The remainder deals with his impressions of the colony during the year or so that he was there, some of which he spent on his station 60 miles from Adelaide. Of the station, he says 'A more dreary place could not be imagined', but he also finds nothing to praise in Adelaide, which he describes as 'half-ruinous' and 'an intention without
realisation', the houses 'the perfection of desolation and wretchedness', and the people 'tanned and dried-up looking'. He characterises the Aborigines as 'a simple race. Small things amuse, excite, please them', and concludes that the small vocabulary of their language indicates a restricted intellectual ability. Lloyd gives a short history of South Australia and attempts to analyse the economic crisis which existed at the time of his visit, and to assess future prospects for settlers. He was in Adelaide during Sturt's departure on an expedition of exploration in 1844 and gives a colourful description of that event. He also includes a lively description of hunting kangaroos and opossum.

Date span: 1843-1844

145

LLOYD, GEORGE THOMAS

Thirty-three years in Tasmania and Victoria being the actual experience of the author interspersed with historic jottings, narratives, and counsel to emigrants


In 1820, when he was nine, Lloyd accompanied his uncle Charles Jeffreys, a British naval officer, to Tasmania. The family established a farm in the Sorell area, but the venture was not successful and his uncle died early. Lloyd intersperses his personal recollections with the history of Tasmania and Victoria, general advice to intending emigrants, and observations on transportation and the colonists' policy towards the Aborigines. Incidents which have a more personal tone and are vividly described include an occasion when his uncle combined with Charles Rowcroft in the apprehension of a thief, his own part in a hazardous expedition of exploration and land selection into the Tasmanian bush, encounters with hostile Aborigines, bushrangers and escaped convicts, the loss of a close friend by drowning, and his participation in the attempted capture of a bushranger. He also took part in Governor Arthur's Black Line, and includes an account of G.A. Robinson's activities. In 1835 Lloyd sold his farm and moved to Victoria where he established a sheep station at Lake Colac. His humorous accounts of early days in the Geelongs area, which dwell incidentally on the camaraderie among the pioneer sheep farmers, are immediate and convincing, although some of his accounts of events at second-hand, such as the death of Joseph Gellibrand and the activities of Mark Jeffries, combine fact and fiction. Although Lloyd laments the decline of the Aboriginal race and the excesses of the convict system, he is a convinced imperialist, and includes a map of British possessions. In his last chapter he meditates on what Australia has to offer in distinction to England and on the folly of returning 'home' and expecting the same respect and friendship as encountered in Australia.

Date span: 1819-1853

146

LOVELESS, GEORGE

(1797-1874)

The victims of whiggery, being a statement of the persecutions experienced by the Dorchester Labourers...


George Loveless was a leader of the agricultural labourers from Dorchester, England, known as the Tolpuddle martyrs, who were transported to Australia in 1834 as a result of union activities, ostensibly for administering unlawful oaths. As he became ill after sentencing, George Loveless was not transported to New South Wales with his brother James Loveless, Thomas and John
Stanfield, James Brine and James Hammett, who narrate their experiences in *A narrative of the sufferings of Jas. Loveless* (1838) (q.v.).

Writing at the request of the Dorchester Committee, to provide 'an authentic statement of the persecutions of the Dorchester labourers ... as a memento of Whig hypocrisy and tyranny', and notwithstanding his intention to 'simply narrate the facts, just as they took place', *The victims of whiggery* is in fact a passionate plea to the working classes of England; Loveless calls on them to unite against the 'iron hand of your land and money-mongering taskmasters', for, he claims, 'nothing will ever be done to relieve the distress of the working classes, unless they take it into their own hands'. He describes how a reduction in wages for labourers at Tolpuddle had prompted the formation of the 'Friendly society', in an attempt 'to preserve ourselves, our wives, and our children, from utter degradation and starvation'. He stresses the moderation and peaceful intent of their activities, and the injustice and bias with which he was convicted, implying that his membership of a dissenting church (he was a Wesleyan lay preacher) had some bearing on his persecution.

Loveless was confined on the York hulk at Plymouth for six weeks, then transported to Van Diemen's Land on the *William Metcalfe*. Of all his sufferings as a convict, he found the conditions on the transport hardest to bear, as he was crowded among 'such monsters as I never expected to see, and whose conduct I am not capable of describing'; since six men were allocated a sleeping space 5ft 6in square, 'for nearly ten weeks out of fourteen I was not able to lie down at length to take rest'. He was interrogated on arrival by Thomas Mason, who seemed determined that he should confess to a conspiracy, but following an interview with Governor Arthur was placed on the government domain farm at New Town as a stockman and shepherd; here he was moderately treated by the authorities, the one charge brought against him being treated with justice and dismissed by the magistrate, William Gunn. He obtained a ticket-of-leave in 1836 and worked for a master near Richmond until, as a result of agitation by supporters in England, he and the other 'martyrs' were pardoned. He returned to England in 1837.

Having narrated his own experiences, Loveless continues with a discussion of the 'cruelties, miseries and wretchedness connected with the present system of transportation'. He recounts experiences of other convicts, trapped on overcrowded ships and drowned, as in the case of the wreck of the *George the Third* in 1835, or assigned to cruel masters and mistreated, with no recourse to justice. He sees the convict system as an extension of the tyranny of the 'rich and the great', many convicts being, he claims, forced into crime as they are 'unable to support families by honest industry'. Although he admits a grudging admiration for the natural beauty and agricultural possibilities of Van Diemen's Land, Loveless feels that it is the 'wrong end of the world', and expresses a dread of the 'gloomy horrors' and 'dreadful shade' of the bush, claiming that 'the trees are without fruit, the birds without song, and the flowers without smell'.

Date span: 1834–1837
Note: See *ADB*, vol. 2

147

MACALISTER, CHARLES (1830–1908)

*Old pioneering days in the sunny south*

Goulburn, NSW, Chas. MacAlister Book Publication Committee, 1907. 396 pp., index, port.

Charles MacAlister came to Australia as a three-year-old in 1833. His family settled in the Goulburn area, initially at Strathaird station, at that time manned by convicts. While still a boy, 'Charlie' became a bullock
driver, carrying goods from rural areas to Sydney. He later supplied the goldfields, including the Turon, Majors Creek, Beechworth, Kiama, Lambing Flat and Forbes fields, and, following his marriage in 1858, kept hotels in the Goulburn area. He also became a cattle dealer, making trading and droving trips throughout New South Wales and into Queensland.

*Old pioneering days* is a rich source of information about life in country New South Wales between 1840 and 1875. MacAlister recounts, in lively detail, many anecdotes of his active and exciting life. Among other things, he describes convict conditions during early days at Strathaird, incidents in his career as a bullocky, visits to the goldfields, encounters with bushrangers (particularly Frank Gardiner), and cattle trading and droving trips. He supplements this with a mass of descriptive and historical detail, including descriptions of incidents at which he was not present, such as the Eureka and Lambing Flat riots, bushranging and overlanding stories, his own and other people's memories of 'leading men of old times', and bush ballads, some of his own composition.

Date span: 1840–1875

148

[McConnel, Mary]

*Memories of days long gone by.* By the wife of an Australian pioneer


Written as a record for the author’s descendants, McConnel’s *Memories* are simply written and deal mainly with the period of her life outside her children’s memory when, as a young wife, she accompanied her husband to his stations in the Moreton Bay area. Having married in Scotland in 1848, the young couple travelled to Brisbane in the *Chasely*, one of John Dunmore Lang’s emigrant ships. They lived in Brisbane for a time, then spent some years on their stations Toogoolawah at Bulimba, and Cressbrook, 90 miles from Brisbane, during which time two children were born. After the author suffered a serious illness, the family returned to Britain in 1854. Five more children were born there and they travelled extensively on the continent before returning to Queensland in 1862. They lived at Cressbrook until the 1870s when they moved to Wilton Manor near Brisbane.

These are quite personal memoirs, recording, for example, the author’s emotion when forced to leave her parents in Scotland, perhaps forever. She describes her reactions to the strangeness of Brisbane and the Queensland landscape, her longing for her own family, and her joy at the arrival of her brother in 1852. She also describes many domestic details of life in the 1840s, such as conditions in hotels on the road to Cressbrook in 1849, the layout of her cottage in Brisbane, of the house at Cressbrook and the new house which was built at Toogoolawah, and details such as furnishings, or lack of them, and the beginnings of gardens. The McConnels occupied a privileged social position and the author appears to have been protected to a certain extent from the physical hardships of pioneering life by relative affluence, servants, the society of other squatting families, and a considerate husband. The McConnels, as employers and landowners, saw their role as that of benign but firm patrons, taking responsibility for the moral and economic welfare of their dependants. They encouraged the immigration of Scottish settlers on and near their stations and at Wilton Manor, financing their land purchases and establishing schools as they were needed. Devout Presbyterians, they fostered the establishment of churches at Toogoolawah, Cressbrook, and nearby Esk, and conducted Sunday schools and prayer meetings. Mary McConnel took a concerned but condescending attitude to the station Aborigines, attempting to ‘civilise’ some of
the children by taking them away from their parents and even taking a native boy to England in 1854. She was distressed when he showed an inclination to go back to his people on his return to Queensland in 1862, and ultimately escaped from a ship which was to take him back to England. The Memories deal with the author's later years only in a sketchy fashion, noting her involvement in raising money for a children's hospital in Brisbane, the marriages of her children, and, in more detail, her experiences during a shipwreck off the coast of Africa in 1871. Mary McConnel's daughter, Mary MacLeod Banks, wrote recollections of her childhood at Cressbrook in the 1860s, titled Memories of pioneer days in Queensland (1931).

Date span: 1848-1870s
Note: for David McConnel, see ADB, vol. 5

149

MCCRAE, GEORGE GORDON
(1833—1927)

Recollections of Melbourne & Port Phillip Bay in the early forties

These recollections, in four parts, were written in 1909, 1911 and 1912, and first published in the Victorian Historical Magazine in 1911 and 1912.

Part one begins in 1840 when McCrae, aged seven, left London with his mother (Georgiana McCrae) and brothers to join his father, who was already established in Melbourne as a solicitor. McCrae recounts the voyage out on the Argyre, including the taking aboard of 200 bounty emigrants, and the experience of a fierce gale in the Bay of Biscay. On arrival the family first stayed with Dr Farquhar McCrae, whose house 'facing Great Bourke Street', McCrae describes. He documents the first house of his family in more detail, also giving lively comments on the neighbours, the surrounding area, and the recreations possible there at this time (snipe shooting, canoeing). McCrae then moves further afield, recalling such features as the daily steamer on the Yarra; the workings of the observatory on Flagstaff Hill; the form of public executions (one of which he witnessed); and the appearance, customs and implements of the local Aboriginal people.

In Part two McCrae recalls Melbourne life in general: the visit of Governor Gipps; the Sunday 'church parade' of the 26th Regiment; the street sounds of bullock drays and drivers, and auctioneers’ bells and shouts; the first theatre and other entertainments; the frequent occurrence of testimonial dinners; and the building of the family's out-of-town house on the right bank of the Yarra.

In Part three, McCrae describes the family's removal by bullock dray to their new property, Mayfield, mentioning various features including the garden layout and location of their village (then called New Town, but, notes McCrae, overlapping what became Collingwood, Fitzroy and possibly Carlton). Visitors to Mayfield included Ben Boyd and marine painter, Oswald Walters Brierly, who was then attached to Boyd's yacht, the Wanderer, and who encouraged McCrae's own interest in marine painting. McCrae describes the area on the Merri Creek where William Thomas, 'the chief protector of the aborigines', had his station in the midst of the 'protectorate natives'.

In Part four, McCrae describes the Port Phillip Bay of the 1840s, especially the area on the eastern shores called Arthur's Seat, which his father had taken up as a cattle station and residence. He notes the difficulties of transporting supplies from Melbourne, either by bullock dray or by sea on the variety of schooners, ketches and cutters used by the lime-burners. He recalls seeing the remains of Colonel Collins' first camp at Port Phillip of 1803, which he later abandoned for that at Risdon. McCrae describes his father's house of stringy bark timber at Arthur's Seat, the Jamieson
brothers, and the other station and smallholders in the surrounding district, and the first public house at Brighton. He surveys the customs, ceremonies and beliefs of the coastal Aborigines, who differed in these respects, he observes, from the 'people of the Goulburn and other tribes'. He remembers them as quick to learn and hard working, but adds that 'of those 200 and more people not one survives at the present day' [1909].

McCrae's style is fluent, lively and anecdotal. He is aware of his general readership yet does not exclude the personal details that add individuality to his descriptions. Indeed, though looking back at the significance of many of the changes he reports, he writes only of what has interested or affected him. Though his narratives are not systematic or even methodical, they are valuable as reports of one well-educated man's memories of his particular experiences and observations.

Date span: 1840–1911
Note: See ADB, vol. 5

150
MACDERMOTT, MARSHALL
A brief sketch of the long and varied career of Marshall MacDermott, Esq., J.P., of Adelaide, South Australia
Adelaide, 1874. 53 pp.

Marshall MacDermott's account of his career is an outline of the major events in his working life, with little or no reference to his personal life. He begins with a description of his service as an officer in the British army from 1808 to his retirement in 1829. He then emigrated to Western Australia with his wife, and purchased 5000 acres on the Swan River. He accompanied Sir James Stirling on an expedition to the Williams River, where he took up more land, and formed and managed a local bank, which was later amalgamated with the Bank of Australasia. In 1846, following the closure of the Bank of Australasia in Western Australia, he moved to South Australia as manager of the Adelaide branch. In Adelaide he was instrumental in the establishment of St Peters Collegiate School, and became a Member of the Legislative Council in 1855, and a Member of the Legislative Assembly in 1857.

Date span: 1830–1857

151
MCDONALD, DAVID
(1823—c.1910)
In days of old
First published in the Bombala Times in 1917

David McDonald arrived in Australia with his family from Scotland. With other Highland families his had been prompted to emigrate by a visiting New South Wales government official, who promised opportunities for people who were 'thriftv' and of 'good moral character'. He seems to have been struck by the violence of his new country: he remembers how, on the day his party landed in Sydney, seven men were hanged for the Myall Creek massacre, and how, as a messenger boy, he was unnerved by the convict gangs and their overseers. In 1839 his family moved to a property south of Sydney to work as shepherds, taking the place of two convicts who had been hanged, controversially, for alleged murder. His own family was soon robbed of 'everything we possessed' by armed men from nearby stations (they later returned the goods in gratitude for the humanity shown by the McDonalds in refusing to testify against them). The author became acquainted with the local Aborigines, and relates his memories of their culture with respect and affection, including the dramatic sight of a tribal 'Doctor' diverting an approaching thunderstorm. In spite of the rural
depression of the time, his family were able in 1846 to buy, with two other Scots families, a ‘moderate squatting station’, where the families lived separately, but worked cooperatively. This ‘commune’, with the author’s father as acknowledged head, broke up after several comfortable years because of differences of outlook. The real energy of the narrative begins with the advent of ‘gold fever’, which, because of the labour shortage it created, made the colonies a ‘Paradise of the working man’. The author vividly describes life on the diggings at Eaglehawk, with its crime, camaraderie, and dreams of fortune, with entire police forces and ships’ crews abandoning their jobs overnight to look for gold. A journey on foot to Melbourne brought him into contact with a mysterious and powerful network of highwaymen. Melbourne itself was crowded and frenetic, and he later compares it unfavourably with Sydney as ‘a rude social element’. He returned to try his luck at the Ballarat diggings just before the Eureka Stockade, and gives a sympathetic yet detached account of events there, including comment on the public feeling surrounding the trial of the diggers (‘These infatuated yet deeply provoked men’). Much of the rest of his narrative deals, in lively detail, with periods spent as shearer or overseer on properties in Gippsland or the Monaro, or on journeys through New South Wales and Victoria. He conveys a sense of the landscape and natural life of these areas, noting the ‘delightful sport’ of hunting native animals. He describes some of the tensions between settlers and Aborigines in Gippsland and the Snowy Mountains, resulting in murders on both sides, which made it ‘a dangerous undertaking’ for Europeans to travel through the countryside. He tells of the hazards of a journey alone to find and clear a new stock route through unexplored territory. In reflecting on the changing wildlife he had witnessed over the years, he notes, in passing, the ‘decay of the black’ who had hunted it. He discusses the effects of the Robertson Land Act of 1861, and some of the corrupt practices that forced poor selectors to return to the towns. McDonald himself eventually bought land in Victoria, only to be forced by drought to Sydney, where he felt a ‘lonely and insignificant waif’. He ends his story expressing his ‘dearest wish’ for the federation of the colonies.

Date span: 1838–c.1895

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MACGREGOR, JANIE

‘Report of an Australian life: the life of Janie MacGregor as told to her daughter Mary Jane Brown’ in
No place for a nervous lady
By Lucy Frost

Janie MacGregor’s recollections, remembered and told by her daughter, Mary Jane Brown, were written down by her granddaughter. They deal with her experiences as a young wife and immigrant in the 1840s, when she accompanied her husband to a sheep and cattle station ‘far up in the bush’ at Clyde Hill, where he had been appointed overseer. She describes the seven-week journey by dray to the station, where she was asked to cook for all hands. Puritanical and feisty, she and her husband refused to work on Sundays; she was also shocked by the language and behaviour of the stockmen, whose playing-cards she surreptitiously burned. Janie recalls her initial difficulties with the station Aborigines, who did not work to her satisfaction, which caused troubles between them and her husband and the station owner. These differences were later resolved, and she regrets that so many of the Aborigines died, after the diggings opened, as a result of alcoholism.

Date span: 1840s
In recalling his impression of Governor Macquarie, MacKellar briefly describes his childhood at Windsor in New South Wales. His father was a soldier of Macquarie’s regiment and his mother worked at Old Government House, Windsor.

Date span: 1820–1825

Born in Glasgow, Mackenzie was apprenticed to a brassfounder at 12, but fell into bad company, ultimately becoming a thief. His deterioration broke his mother’s heart and after her death he served a series of prison terms, each increasing in severity. When convicted of stealing plate and clothes, he was sentenced to 14 years transportation. He spent two months in gaol, a year in the hulks, and nine months aboard ship on the voyage to Port Jackson. He was first assigned, but returned to crown labour because of theft, and after stealing the Superintendent’s watch was flogged and sent to the coal mines. There he fell very ill and promised God to reform if he survived. This he did and at the end of his term took ship to England, where he claims to have worked honestly ever after. This brief narrative is a mixture of the sentimental and the matter of fact. Most of the action takes place in England and only a small amount is set in Australia.

Date span: 1810s

These brief recollections were ‘secured by F.A. Fitzpatrick’; they are presumably based on an oral narrative and reproduced more or less in McMaugh’s own words. McMaugh relates that she emigrated to New South Wales in 1849 with her mother in order to marry Jack Vaughan, who had established a station in the Upper Macleay district and whom she scarcely knew. She travelled alone to Kempsey, where she and Vaughan were married, before setting out on horseback for their station. She vividly recalls her feelings of novelty and disorientation at seeing convicts labouring in Sydney and Port Macquarie, at encountering stockmen in a hotel at Kempsey, at entering her new home, prepared for her by an Aboriginal woman, and at the sight of native animals and the lush vegetation through which they travelled on her first journey to Myall station. An account by another station owner’s wife of an Aboriginal attack in which she fought by her husband’s side inspired Mary McMaugh with some trepidation about her future life and contributed to her persistent dread of the
Aborigines. She tells how her husband was treacherously attacked and was lucky to survive and how he then ‘showed them no mercy and became such a terror to them that they feared him exceedingly’. Often alone on the station with two babies and an old station hand, she greatly feared visits by Aborigines and felt her fears were justified when they murdered cedar-getters at a nearby camp. Many Aborigines were killed in retaliation and for many years thereafter were rarely seen, but Mary recalls a much later incident in which one of their stockmen was murdered without apparent reason.

The narrative contains some lively passages, such as a description of a race meeting at Kempsey, and Jack Vaughan’s capture of the Aboriginal renegade, Blue Shirt. The author’s memories centre, however, on the many adversities which she faced on the isolated station, such as drought and floods and the burning of her home while her husband was away, when she recalls ‘my heart for the first time in my life failed me, and ... I ... wept bitterly’. She describes her husband’s death after a fall from a horse, leaving her with nine children, as a cruel blow. She ran the station with her children until such time as it was sold and the proceeds divided. Contrasting her departure with her arrival many years before, she recalls her grief at the loss of her country home, compounded by the deaths of two sons ‘in a far distant land’. Simply expressed, this is an intimate story of a woman who, though ill-prepared and fearful by her own admission, met the hardships of pioneering life with courage.

Date span: 1849–1870s

156
Maconochie, Alexander
(1787–1860)
‘Captain Maconochie, R.N., K.H.’ in *Our exemplars, poor and rich; or, biographical sketches of men and women who have, by an extraordinary use of their opportunities, benefited their fellow-creatures*.

Edited by Matthew Davenport Hill
London, Cassell, Petter & Galpin, [1880]. 2nd edn, pp. 213–41
First published London, 1861

This narrative is partly biographical, composed from Maconochie’s writings and from eyewitness accounts, and partly autobiographical, including an account of his life written shortly before his death. After a naval career, Maconochie came to Van Diemen’s Land as secretary to Sir John Franklin, and made himself unpopular with his reports on prison management there and his suggestions for reform. In 1840 the New South Wales Governor, Sir George Gipps, was instructed by the British government to place him in charge of Norfolk Island. Under his system prisoners were treated with respect, and mutual responsibility was the underlying principle. Although successful in many ways, he was recalled in February 1844 and the old system was reinstituted. Maconochie returned to England in August 1844 where he persisted in attempts to promote his system.

Date span: 1840–1844
Note: See ADB, vol. 2
MacPherson, Allan

Mount Abundance: or, the experiences of a pioneer squatter in Australia thirty years ago


Allan MacPherson left his station, Keera, in the Gwydir district in July 1847 with 8–10,000 sheep, around 200 cattle, four drays and 40 bullocks, and about 20 men for Mount Abundance in Queensland, a journey of 360 miles which took four months. He and his men established a station with relative ease, in spite of floods which prevented MacPherson from bringing in supplies from Keera. In the following year, however, the Aborigines of the area began a series of concerted attacks on this and other stations, during which several men were killed and much stock lost. MacPherson’s efforts to rally his men and restock the station resulted in more deaths, Aboriginal and European, and he was forced to abandon Mount Abundance as a sheep station in March 1849, losing 10,000 sheep and lambs and bringing out his wool with enormous difficulty. Writing 30 years after the narrated events, MacPherson draws very heavily on his diaries, from which he quotes extensively. His wife also published an autobiographical narrative, entitled My experiences in Australia (1860), which refers to a later period of their lives.

Data span: 1847–1849

Mahony, Eliza Sarah (1824–1914)

‘The first settlers at Gawler’ in Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia

South Australian Branch, XXVIII (1926–27), pp. 53–82

Mrs Mahony recorded her story 60 years after emigrating from Ireland in 1838 with her family and younger brothers. Her father, John Reid, a merchant and shipowner, had suffered financially in the Irish depression, and had been persuaded to emigrate by his brother, who had gone to Sydney years earlier with his regiment. The family arrived in Holdfast Bay, South Australia, in January 1839. Mrs Mahony vividly describes these first days; her first sight of Adelaide, then a landscape of tents and ‘splendid gumtrees’, was ‘really very beautiful’. She tells of how, on discovering that their already-purchased land had not yet been surveyed, Colonel George Gawler offered her father and a friend the choice of any land in the district, and how, with the help of William Light, they chose land at the Para River. The land they settled was ‘park-like and beautiful’. She admired the varieties of native plants for both their beauty and utility, and notes: ‘On our land we never allowed a gumtree to be cut down except to build bridges.’ The surrounding township, settled within weeks, they named Gawler. Much of the rest of the narrative provides details of domestic life, living conditions, and attempts to farm the land. She describes the simple but ‘most comfortable’ wattle-and-daub house built with the help of ticket-of-leave men, whose reliability she commends. Their Irish servants, however, finding life too difficult, returned to Adelaide, leaving them with a single, inexperienced male cook. Meat was scarce, so they sometimes ate parrots and cockatoos, and the Aborigines gave them birds’ eggs. She describes attempts to make bricks from local clay, planting failures and successes, and the buying of stock and expensive horses. They were at first ‘very much afraid’ of the Aborigines, ‘though they were very quiet’; later they tried to have the Aborigines wear clothes and work for them. She tells briefly of a group of young white men ‘punishing’ Aborigines on the Murray for stealing sheep: ‘they never attacked another party.’ The family were regularly sent two London newspapers, as well as Irish ones. She describes the Christmas visit
to her family of Colonel Gawler and his daughter, Captain and Mrs Charles Sturt, and John Gould the zoologist. She relates the fortunes of friends and local figures. Copper was discovered in the region by a young family friend, C.S. Bagot, which led to the establishment of Australia's first copper mine at Kapunda. Mrs Mahony laments the hardships faced by so many settlers in the region, who were forced to return 'penniless' to England, leaving their 'shepherds and servants' to become rich eventually. By 1852, her father's inexperience of farming, crop failure, and economic pressures had forced her own family to sell most of its land and stock. Some of her brothers went to Victoria to find gold; others drove cattle from Queensland. Two of them, after 40 years work on the Darling, were bought out by the bank. The author notes her marriage to Dr Mahony of Gawler, and gives only a brief resume of her life after this. A short addendum, rather more emotional (dated 1903), muses on the lives of various family members, ponders the changes in Adelaide and pledges to commemorate her family, the Reids, with a plaque in St George's Church, Gawler.

'Mrs Mahony's scrapbook', an article in the Proceedings ... (XXIX, 1927–28, pp. 30–45), gives more information about Mrs Mahony's story. It includes reminiscences by her brother, Ross Reid, of some of the same experiences.

Date span: 1838–1900

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MANN, JOHN F[REDERICK] (1819–1907)

Eight months with Dr. Leichhardt, in the years 1846–47


Mann accompanied Ludwig Leichhardt on an expedition which was projected to travel from the Darling Downs to the Western Australian coast, concluding at Swan River in 1846–47. The party, which, besides Mann and Leichhardt, consisted of Hovendon Hely, James Perry, Henry Boecking, Daniel Bunce, Mr Turnbull and two Aborigines, Brown and Tommy (or Wammai), was beset by illness and difficulties with stock and pack mules, and returned to Jimbour after travelling only about 500 miles in six months.

Mann's account of the expedition, written more than 30 years later, was prompted by discussion in the press of a letter written by Leichhardt to relatives in Germany, in which he blamed the failure of the expedition on his men, whom he described as inexperienced bushmen, effeminate, pecuniary and selfish. Considering himself and the others to have been 'grossly slandered', Mann writes a 'condensed epitome' of his diary of the expedition, with the intention of demonstrating the injustice of Leichhardt's statements. Mann lays the blame for the failure of the expedition on the fact that, having fallen ill with fever, probably malaria, the men had difficulty in recovering without appropriate medicine. The failure to carry adequate medical supplies is shown to be one example of Leichhardt's many errors of judgement. He is portrayed as irrational, depressed and greedy, and unfit to lead any expedition; 'deficient in almost every requirement for such an important post. He possessed neither patience, temper, or ingenuity; the organ of locality was apparently absent, as well as any mechanical conception.' Mann's narrative appears to some extent to be based on that of Daniel Bunce (q.v.), which was published in 1857.

Date span: 1846–1847
Note: See ADB, vol. 5
Robert Marsh, a New York baker who was among the Canadian rebels captured after the fighting at Windsor, Canada, was transported to Van Diemen's Land on the Buffalo in 1839-40. Like Gates, Wright, Snow and Heustis (qq.v.), Marsh worked initially on road gangs in the Hobart area before being sent, still in government service, to stations at Lovely Banks and Green Ponds. When, in response to escape attempts, the Canadians were divided into small groups, Marsh was returned to the Hobart Town barracks, working again on the roads, and was later sent by ship to Saltwater Creek station, which was being established some 80 miles along the coast from Hobart. Marsh was in poor health and suffered severely while working in timber-carrying and water gangs, which required him to spend all day up to his knees in water. He contends that throughout his convict service, his complaints and pleas for light work due to ill health frequently led to victimisation by overseers rather than improved conditions.

On obtaining his ticket-of-leave, Marsh share-farmed for a period at Oatlands, but was involved in an attempt to be taken off the coast by an American whaler, and after discovery of the plan, was restricted with four others to the Bothwell district. He and his companions wandered the countryside unable to find work, and in a destitute condition. Eventually they were permitted to change their passes to the Norfolk district which was no better, then to the Brighton district where they found a deserted mansion to live in, although they still had no means of obtaining a livelihood. Marsh obtained a pardon in 1844 and left Van Diemen's Land on the whaler Steiglitz.

Marsh expresses himself in a colloquial manner, often using the present tense, and presenting amusing caricatures of persons in authority, such as Governor Franklin. Apparently a practical man, his descriptions of such matters as the construction of convict huts, the layout of the Hobart Town tench (barracks) and the organisation of work gangs are clear and detailed. Unlike some others of the Canadian exiles who published accounts of their experiences, Marsh expresses some sympathy for English felons with whom he associated, observing that many of these, particularly the children and young women, were convicted with as little justice as himself. He also records several occasions when, in desperate need of food and shelter, he and others were refused assistance by settlers and government officials but were treated generously by convicts. He devotes a good deal of space to criticisms of English rule and to expressions of liberal beliefs and patriotism for the USA and Canada.

Date span: 1839-1845

160A

MARTIN, JAMES

Escape from Botany Bay, 1791: being 'Memorandoms' by James Martin

Introduction and notes by Victor Crittenden

First published in 1937, this narrative in the style of a deposition or confession was partly written and partly dictated by First Fleet convict James Martin, and describes his experiences following his escape from Port Jackson in March 1791. Martin first outlines his conviction for theft in Exeter, his sentencing to transportation to Botany Bay for seven years, and his journey there on the Charlotte transport. He then describes his
escape, with nine others including William and Mary Bryant and their two small children, in an open six-oar boat, prepared with provisions, sails, a compass, quadrant and chart. Martin's bald description of their epic journey to the north provides a simple, unemotional but effective record of the bravery and endurance of the escapees. Limping along the coast in the leaking boat (touching at the future site of Newcastle, where they found coal) they were frequently drenched and expecting the boat to break up in the surf, desperate for food and water, and driven off the shore by natives. They landed on a Barrier Reef island where they feasted on turtle, then rounded the Cape and sailed for Timor, which appears always to have been their intended destination. At Timor they passed themselves off as shipwreck survivors and were treated hospitably by the Dutch governor, until, Martin claims, Bryant quarrelled with his wife and revealed their true origins. They were then imprisoned, and picked up by Captain Edwards of the Pandora, who had recently been wrecked in Torres Strait while carrying Bounty mutineers to England, and conveyed on a Dutch ship to Batavia, where William Bryant and his son died. From there the remaining escapees were sent to the Cape of Good Hope, where they were collected by HMS Gorgon and taken to England. Others of the party died during these voyages, and Martin, probably composing his narrative after committal to Newgate Gaol, concludes by listing the five survivors. The escape and recapture of the convicts was celebrated in the British press as a heroic effort to gain freedom; James Boswell became interested in Mary Bryant and secured first her freedom, then that of the other survivors.

Date span: 1791

Mellish was transported to Botany Bay in about 1810. After 10 years in the colony, some of which were spent as an assigned convict in the country, he left legitimately as a servant on a ship. He helped six men to stow away, however, stealing to provide for them, and was discovered, imprisoned on the ship, and released in Cape Town. He obtained a passage to England on another ship and was convicted again in England, and committed to a Midlands gaol, where he addresses his recollections to the wife of the gaoler.

Mellish gives a methodical account of the treatment of transportees from the time of leaving the hulks in England, describing their clothing, provisions and accommodation on convict ships and after arrival in New South Wales, and outlining methods of allocating convicts in relation to their trades and sentences. He discusses conditions in rural areas, ticket-of-leave men, female convicts, the Parramatta Female Factory and arrangements for free settlers. He also gives his impressions of the Aborigines and of native wildlife. Mellish reveals little about his own feelings during this period. This narrative has been published without apparent alteration to the original manuscript and reproduces the author's vernacular, spelling errors and punctuation.

Date span: c.1810–c.1820
Melville, the griffin of the narrative, writes in the third person, disguising his own name and those of his companions and the ships he sailed on, but otherwise giving a factual account of his experiences when he was employed as a draughtsman on the survey ships HMS *Fly* and *Bramble* under the command of Captain F.P. Blackwood from 1842 to 1846. He gives numerous accounts of the camaraderie on board ship and the efforts of the midshipmen to escape boredom during long periods of sailing. Arriving in August 1842 in Hobart Town, they were entertained by Sir John and Lady Franklin, whom they accompanied on a cruise to Port Arthur. On a subsequent visit to Tasmania Melville met Captain Charles O'Hara Booth, whom he sketched, and recounts how he became lost in the bush with only a convict as companion. The *Fly*'s circumnavigation of Australia brought them into frequent, often hostile contact with Aborigines; at Cape Direction the coxswain was fatally speared and at Lizard Island some Aborigines were shot after hostilities broke out. Later at Cape York, Melville's curiosity led him to disturb some burial mounds, with near fatal results for himself. At other stopping places, however, the crew established friendly relations with the Aborigines. When, after numerous adventures along the coastline of Australia and in the islands of the Torres Strait, their ship returned to Sydney, Melville took a six-week trip up country. He met Hannibal Macarthur, who accompanied him on part of his way, and other members of the Macarthur family. His hazardous return journey from Dapto to Sydney, which is well described, was only just accomplished before his ship set sail for England, this time with ex-Governor Hutt of South Australia aboard. An observant and witty writer, Melville gives numerous descriptions of inaccessible regions of Australia. His *Sketches in Australia and the adjacent islands* (c.1849), consists of drawings of many of the places he visited on these voyages.

Date span: 1842-1846

163

**Meredith, [Louisa Anne], Mrs Charles (1812-1895)**

*Notes and sketches of New South Wales, during a residence in that colony from 1839 to 1844*


In June 1839, Louisa Meredith left England with her husband, Charles, on board the *Letitia* for New South Wales. She gives a memorable description of the poignancy of leave-taking and of the difficulties of the voyage. The Merediths spent some time in Sydney, where Louisa was an acute observer of the social scene. A journey to Bathurst to inspect her husband's sheep stations provided her with the opportunity to observe native plants and animals and to record the difficulties of travelling. In 1840 the Merediths settled at Homebush, a property on the Parramatta River, and their life there is described in some detail. Largely derisory of colonial society, Louisa complains that the women are mainly preoccupied with domestic trivia and the men 'have their whole souls ... felted up in wools, fleeces, flocks, and stock.' Intended for the English reader, *Notes and sketches* is a lively, informed and observant record. In October 1840 the family left for Van Diemen's Land.

Date span: 1839-1840

Note: See ADB, vol. 5
The preface to *My home in Tasmania* describes Meredith's determination to inject more of her identity into this, her second autobiographical narrative, in order to enhance its interest. She gives a vivid description of the family's voyage from Sydney to Van Diemen's Land in a ship, which was poorly equipped and badly sailed, and includes an account of an incident when they were saved from disaster by the skill of one of the passengers. She was disappointed by what she considered to be the philistinism of respectable Hobart society, but was in favour of transportation as a system for rehabilitating convicts. Meredith's description of the family's journey from Hobart to Great Swan Port in 1840, and of their settling into a house at Spring Vale in 1842, includes detailed descriptions of native plants, birds and animals. Encountering severe financial difficulties, the family, which now included two children, moved in 1844 to Port Sorell, where Charles Meredith was Police Magistrate. After a period in another new home, Poynton at Port Sorell, the family spent an interlude at Hobart as guests of Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, before returning to Swan Port in 1848. Meredith's observations of colonial society are incisive and even radical, but her observations of Aboriginal culture are conventional, based on her husband's accounts of conflict which present the Aborigines as the aggressors.

Date span: 1840–1848
Note: See *ADB*, vol. 5

A young American lawyer, Miller was arrested for his part in the rebellion in Upper Canada in 1838. He stood trial in Canada and was then sent to London, where he was held in Newgate, and tried again, convicted and sentenced to transportation. He was placed on the York hulk at Plymouth, and worked on the docks with ordinary criminals, then transported to Van Diemen's Land on the Canton, receiving the status and conditions of a political prisoner during the voyage. On arrival in January 1840 he opted to join the Canadian exiles transported on the Buffalo, at Sandy Bay and Lovely Banks.
stations, and so was forced to work in road gangs under miserable conditions. In August 1840 Miller and a companion Joseph Steward escaped from Lovely Banks, but were soon recaptured, tried and sentenced to two years penal service at Port Arthur. Initially Miller and Steward suffered so severely when placed on timber-carrying gangs at Port Arthur that their health broke down within four weeks and they expected to die. They were placed on lighter duties, however, and Miller became clerk of the school and church, and from September 1842 tutor to the family of the assistant commissary, General T.J. Lempriere. He also gave evening classes for the convicts. In October 1844 Miller was pardoned and entered the office of his friend, former Attorney-General Edward McDowell, as a clerk. He lived in Hobart Town and became acquainted with a number of high officials there and personally petitioned Governor Eardley-Wilmot on several occasions. He left Australia for London in September 1845.

On occasions Miller's story loses momentum, as, for example, when he recounts the details of his legal trials in Canada and England, but for the rest he writes dramatically of his experiences, incorporating a deal of lively dialogue. The living and working conditions of convicts on hulks in England, on convict ships, on work gangs in Hobart and nearby convict stations and at Port Arthur, are described in graphic detail. He describes being forced to work on a treadmill and, although never flogged himself, gives accounts of daily floggings at Port Arthur. He witnessed corruption and injustice among officials and convicts and was particularly horrified by the moral degeneracy at Port Arthur, which he describes as 'a sink of sin and horrible iniquity'. Surprisingly, Miller's narrative is not gloomy but is enlivened by a number of comic incidents, such as his attempts to improve his appearance before meeting Governor Stirling on arrival on the Canton, when he put his leg through his breeches in the dark, or the occasion when a companion became wedged in a chimney while trying to escape and his friends, convulsed with laughter, were unable to help him. Reflecting to some degree a different experience to that related in the accounts of other Canadian exiles, such as Gates, Wright, Heustis and Snow (qq.v.), Miller's Notes are valuable for their depth of detail and for the breadth of convict experience covered.

Date span: 1839–1845

167
MITCHIE, ARCHIBALD (1813–1899)
A voyage from Sydney to South Australia and back again ...
Sydney, [1848]. 23 pp.

This is a light account of a journey by sea from Sydney to Adelaide in 1847, taken to improve the author's health. Mitchie concentrates mainly on the discomforts of the ship, but describes Adelaide and a visit to copper mines.

Date span: 1847

168
MOODIE, WILLIAM (1840–1914)
William Moodie; a pioneer of Western Victoria
Edited with notes by Joan Austin Palmer

Moodie arrived in Victoria as an infant in 1841. In 1850 he journeyed with his parents to his uncle's sheep station, Wando Vale, in the vicinity of Casterton. He was sent to school in Portland for two years from 1851, then helped his father at Wando Dale, also in the Casterton district. He finally purchased the station for himself in 1863 and acquired further properties in New South Wales and
Queensland. Although Moodie was involved in the pastoral industry until his death, these reminiscences deal only with his life in the 1850s and 1860s. Moodie recalls details of the pioneering experiences of his family on their stations, such as their slab hut, the building of yards and brush fences, early efforts to eradicate scab infestation in sheep, the role of his mother as bush nurse to the district, and his periodic long journeys to Portland to school, one of which was undertaken during the bushfires of 6 February 1851. He narrates incidents characteristic of station life, such as encounters with snakes, hunting kangaroo, and stories about station workers, Aborigines and swagmen. He is proud of his reputation with horses and recollects a number of his exploits in jumping obstacles, yarding wild horses and riding buckjumpers.

The narrative is informative about the development of the Casterton area, naming all the large properties between the Glenelg and Wannon rivers, and giving a little information about each. He discusses the development of the towns of Casterton and Coleraine, and the gradual introduction of facilities such as coach, telegraph and postal services. He also describes his involvement with the Glenelg and Wannon councils, to which he was repeatedly elected from the 1860s. An entrenched member of the squating class, Moodie has a poor opinion of the land legislation of the 1860s, seeing it as an attempt to reduce land holdings, and gives examples of injustices and abuses under its provisions.

Date span: 1841–1860s


Experiences of a convict was largely written in Cambridge County Gaol in 1858 while the author awaited transportation to Australia for a second time. A sketchy narrative covering his experiences from 1858 was added at the time of publication.

The son of a wealthy English landowner and banker, Mortlock was sentenced to 21 years transportation in 1844 for an assault on his uncle, who he considered had cheated him of his inheritance. He spent 18 weeks on the hulk Leviathan at Portsmouth, then embarked on the Mailand transport, acting as schoolmaster during the voyage. He spent the first two years of his sentence on Norfolk Island where, under Commandant Childs, he was given the relatively soft billets of cook and tutor. His main complaint was hunger which, he claims, prompted a convict uprising soon after he left the island in 1846. In Van Diemen’s Land he progressed through the probationary stages of passholder and ticket-of-leave holder, ultimately winning a conditional pardon in 1855, his only period of additional punishment being four months labour on the roads for absconding. Struggling to support himself, he was employed at various times as a constable at Hobart Town and New Norfolk, a teacher at Launceston and Port Arthur (where he encountered Irish nationalist prisoner William Smith O’Brien), a clerk at Launceston, a barman at an inn at Port Cygnet, and a professional billiards player in Hobart Town. He obtained a hawker’s licence in 1854 and walked extensively through the scattered settlements between Launceston and Hobart Town, traversing densely-wooded, mountainous
country, and becoming an accomplished bushman. He writes lyrically about the beauty of the wilderness of Norfolk Island and Tasmania, and records that he preferred the independence and solitude of the life of a hawker in the bush to the more lucrative employment offered to him in towns. In 1855 he visited Sydney and walked to Bathurst and through the Turon goldfields and the Hunter region.

Mortlock returned to England in 1857 and renewed his agitations for justice. He was arrested for being illegally in England and transported to Western Australia in 1859 on the Sultana. He spent 16 months on Rottnest Island, then lived off his savings in Fremantle before making his way to Hobart in 1863. He once again became a hawker until the expiry of his sentence in 1864, when he returned to England. His *Experiences* were published in five parts in 1864-65, each part being financed by the sale of the previous part, apparently in an attempt to embarrass his uncles and other relatives.

Dealing with his life in three different Australian penal settlements over a number of years, Mortlock’s narrative is remarkable for the breadth of convict experience which it encompasses. His account of his life in Australia is lively and informative and besides documenting convict conditions contains vivid landscape descriptions, informed comment on the convict system and on colonial government, and many references to other educated convicts, free settlers and officials. Expressing himself in a witty, intelligent and literary manner, Mortlock demonstrates generosity and common sense in every aspect of his life except in the matter of his father’s will. His obsession with the loss of his inheritance dominates the section of the book dealing with his life in England, which includes lengthy and bitter recriminations, letters and long transcripts of judgments, and other legal documents.

**Date span:** 1844–1865

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**MORTON, WILLIAM LOCKHART**

(1820–1898)

*Adventures of a pioneer*

Edited by J.O. Randell


290 pp., index, port.

Arriving in Melbourne from Scotland in 1841, the author managed sheep stations in various parts of Victoria before purchasing Salisbury Plains station on the Loddon River. He felt his life there in the early 1850s to be disrupted by the activity on the nearby Bendigo and Koorong goldfields, and moved his family to Melbourne in 1854. In 1859 he led an expedition to northern Queensland in search of pastoral land, and made other extensive exploratory journeys in Victoria and New South Wales, which opened up land for settlement. Due, he claims, to incompetent and corrupt land administration, his attempts to take up some of this land on the Lachlan River were unsuccessful, and he had to satisfy himself with some blocks in the ‘dry back country’ of New South Wales, which he had inspected in a series of treks with minimal equipment and assistance. He attempted, with his sons, to settle on these, first, in 1877, at Rankin’s Hill, near Cobar, and later at Torowoto Swamp, in 1882. In both cases he was defeated by drought, and two of his sons died of rheumatic fever.

*Adventures of a pioneer* was first published as a series of 20 articles in the journal *Once a Month*, between July 1884 and June 1886, and re-ordered chronologically for this edition. It is an articulate, discursive account of pioneering experiences, which also makes reference to Victorian politics and land administration. Morton makes informed comment on sheep farming methods and, having trained as an engineer, frequently discusses machinery and equipment, describing in particular the evolution and development of his own inventions, which included a sheep dip and the swing gate. In his accounts of his exploratory journeys he
meticulously records geographic and geological features, and is an intelligent, careful observer of native flora and fauna. Parts of the narrative are quite lively and graphic, as in the account of his chase and capture of Frank Gardiner in 1850, his visits to observe the Forest Creek and Eaglehawk goldfields, his journey on a steam riverboat carrying wool from Wilcannia down the Darling and Murray to South Australia in 1871, or his description of methods used by the Aborigines to bring about rain at Salisbury Downs. Writing at a time of defeat and personal tragedy, however, Morton nurses a sense of grievance at the reversals he suffered throughout his life. He is censorious of many people he encountered, convinced, for example, that he had been 'repelled' from the lush Western District of Victoria soon after his arrival, and records that he did not go there again for 37 years. He expresses disappointment at his failure to obtain land in areas which he had explored, or to gain sufficient credit for his inventions, and in closing, describes his life as 'a dark picture, full of regrets'.

Date span: 1841–1890
Note: See ADB, vol. 5

171
MUNDY, GODFREY CHARLES
(1804?–1860)
Our Antipodes: or, residence and rambles in the Australasian colonies with a glimpse of the goldfields

Lieutenant-Colonel Mundy came to Sydney in 1846 as Deputy Adjutant-General of the military forces in Australia. Stationed in Sydney until 1851, he accompanied Governor Fitz Roy on a tour of the Bathurst area in 1846, and to Port Macquarie in 1847. He also accompanied a tour of inspection of Van Diemen’s Land and Port Phillip in 1850–51, and visited the Ophir and Turon goldfields.

Based on diaries kept while in Australia, and occasionally reverting to journal form, Our Antipodes is a lively, discursive examination of Australian society from the point of view of a member of the establishment. Among many other things, Mundy describes convicts, ex-convicts and penal settlements, sheep stations and the lives of squatters, Aborigines, social life in Sydney, Hobart and Bathurst, and the goldfields and miners. He discusses issues such as immigration and transportation, and the prospects of the colonies, particularly in view of the gold discoveries.

Date span: 1846–1851
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

172
MURRAY, MRS D’ARCY WENTWORTH LATHROP
The late stabbing case in Tasmania. Truth; or, seventeen years of marriage life
Launceston, Tas., Author, 1866. 34 pp.
[Mitchell Library]

Written as a defence ‘to the cruel and slanderous statements promulgated by her husband, to protect herself and her children’, Mrs Murray’s account of her marriage from April 1849 to around 1865 refutes the imputations of adultery made by Murray during his trial for the assault and wounding of a Mr Gwynne. Mrs Murray describes her husband’s financial instability, violent behaviour and infidelities, culminating in the seduction of a maid in their own home, and the family’s repeated separations and reunions and moves between Hobart and Melbourne. The narrative is at times somewhat vague and unclear.

Date span: 1849–1866
MURRELLS, JAMES
(1824—1865)

Narrative of James Murrells’
(‘Jemmy Morrill’) seventeen years’
exile among the wild blacks of
North Queensland ...

First published in 1863, Murrells’ narrative has been ‘rewritten’ by Edmund Gregory who also appends an introduction, biographical details and information about the Aborigines of north Queensland.

James Murrells was a sailor on the Peruvian, which was wrecked off the Queensland coast in 1846. Murrells and 20 others drifted on a raft for 42 days before the seven remaining survivors reached land at Cape Cleveland. Murrells was taken into an Aboriginal tribe and lived with them for 17 years, until signs of white civilisation began to be seen in the vicinity, and he was eventually able to reach a settlement. The narrative, which is simple and clearly written, demonstrates an understanding of an Aboriginal point of view.

Date span: 1846–1863
Note: See ADB, vol. 2 under Morrill

MUSGRAVE, SARAH
(1830—1931)

The wayback
Parramatta, NSW, Cumberland Argus, 1926. 95 pp.

Sarah White was born on Burrangong station in New South Wales, which was founded by her uncle, James White, in 1826, near the site of the present town of Young. Her father was lost and died in the bush in 1834. Her mother remarried when Sarah was seven and moved to Victoria, leaving her on the station with her uncle. Sarah worked as a shepherd and station hand rather than at conventional women’s work, to the point that, on marrying Denis Regan and becoming mistress of The Bland station in 1852, her husband had to teach her to cook. Sarah moved back to Burrangong around 1858, when Denis was made manager there. Denis died following an accident in 1863, and two years later Sarah married a selector, Thomas Musgrave, and continued to live with him at Burrangong.

Sarah Musgrave’s story is inextricably bound up with the history of pioneering at Young and The Bland. She describes the foundation of early stations by the Whites, the Regans, and others, drawing attention to pioneering women such as her mother and her mother-in-law, Harriet Regan, and paying tribute to the exploratory work of her brother-in-law, John Regan.

Her simply written narrative contains many dramatic episodes. She recalls the bushrangers Scotchie and Witton bailing up Burrangong when she was four years old, seeing Frank Gardiner on several occasions, and talking with Johnny Gilbert when he visited Burrangong with O’Meally in the 1860s. She relates the violent confrontations of other settlers with the Aborigines, and her own experiences with them, describes the 1860 gold rush to Lambing Flat (which was a Burrangong run), and gives an account of floods on the Murrumbidgee in 1844 and at The Bland in 1852, and the terrible drought of 1849–1852.

Date span: 1830s–1870
A narrative of the sufferings of Jas. Loveless, Jas. Brine, and Thomas John Standfield, four of the Dorchester labourers; displaying the horrors of transportation, written by themselves; with a brief description of New South Wales, by George Loveless


This pamphlet consists of statements by three of the five labourers from Dorchester, England, known as the Tolpuddle martyrs, who were transported to Australia in 1834 as a result of union activities, ostensibly for administering unlawful oaths. Another, George Loveless, was sent to Van Diemen’s Land, and he published a pamphlet dealing with his experiences there titled The victims of whiggery (1837) (q.v.).

John Standfield narrates his experiences from his committal to the York hulk from Dorchester Castle on 27 March 1834, and the voyage to Sydney, to his assignment as a labourer on Mr Jones’ farm near Maitland. He also describes the sufferings of his father, Thomas Standfield, as a convict shepherd, the difficulty of controlling sheep and the violent punishments if any were lost. Ordered back to Sydney in January 1836, the Standfields were informed they had been granted conditional pardons, but were required to spend another 12 months on a sheep station near Maitland. The narrative details the cruelty and uncooperative attitude of the authorities who did not advise them of their free pardon, delaying their departure for England until September 1837. None of this appears to have broken the author’s independent spirit which is clearly revealed in his statement.

The statement of James Loveless (pp. 9–10) begins with his landing at Sydney on 4 September 1834 and subsequent assignment to Strathallan, 300 miles from Sydney. He remained there until ordered back to Sydney in February 1836 to receive news of his conditional pardon. He refused to stay and bring his family out to the colony and was ordered to work on the farm of the Superintendent, Mr Brennen, until permitted to return to England in September 1837.

James Brine’s statement (pp. 11–12) describes his assignment to Dr Mitchell and his dispatch to Robert Scott’s farm at Glindon on the Hunter River. Robbed of his bedding on the way by a bushranger, he was also very badly treated by his master because of his union activities in England. He was ordered back to Sydney in 1835 and held without examination. An attempt was made to send him to Norfolk Island but eventually he joined James Loveless at Brennen’s farm, where he remained until their departure from the colony.

The pamphlet concludes with a description of the temperature, climate, food, plants, etc. of New South Wales, the Aborigines and their beliefs and customs, the treatment and discipline of the convicts, and the corruption of the colony’s officials, written by George Loveless, although he had not been in that colony.

Date span: 1834–1837

Newland, Simpson (1835–1925)

Memoirs of Simpson Newland C.M.G. sometime Treasurer of South Australia


One of the eight children of William Ridgway Newland, a Congregational minister and prominent pioneer, the narrator was brought to South Australia in 1839. The family settled at Yelkie at Encounter Bay, where they lived in tents for the first two years. Newland describes the early difficulties of pioneering life, his father’s remarkable personality and
role as leader of the settlement, his mother’s work as a teacher and the roles and destinies of his elder stepbrothers. He gives accounts of whaling at Granite Island and Port Elliott and a nostalgic picture of the Encounter Bay landscape. A frail child, he nevertheless eventually became a skilled stockman, and he takes pride in his achievements as a bushman and his feats of sailing and swimming. Deploring the impact of European settlement on the Aborigines and the inappropriate policies of the government, he gives a detailed account of the customs and habits of the ‘now extinct’ Encounter Bay tribe. He concludes that hostile encounters between tribes were ‘more matters of display and defiance, rather than deadly combats’, unlike more serious encounters between whites and blacks, one of which involved his brother-in-law, Henry Field. The Murray fascinated him from the first and as an initial step in his lifelong ambition to open up new country he rented his father’s property for a period, releasing his father for preaching duties. In 1862 he made a 700-mile journey to Marra station on the Upper Darling, which he jointly owned with Henry Field and where he was to live for about 15 years as overseer and manager. In 1864 he received news of the death of his father, closely followed by that of his mother, and encountered great hazards in attempting to reach Marra during the flood of the Darling that year. The extensive accounts of the Aborigines of the Upper Darling, which figure in this section of his story, include descriptions of inter-tribal relationships, marital customs, personalities, systems of justice, hunting, medical and funeral practices, initiation rituals, languages, traditions and beliefs. The decision to take up a new run on the Upper Paroo, which he called Talyealye, challenged his overlanding skills even more and he describes numerous incidents and hazards, including several brushes with bushrangers, travelling long distances without water and a near-murderous encounter with a man whose wife had deserted him.

In 1872 Newland married and Field sold his interest in the business to Alexander Hay. The next four years, which brought a widening social circle, were among his happiest, and concluded with his settlement with his wife and three sons in Adelaide at his beautiful property, Undelcarra. Continuing to manage the stations on the Darling and Paroo, he frequently made long overlanding trips with occasional hazardous consequences. Elected to Parliament in 1881, he attempted to promote development of the South Australian river system at every opportunity. This more impersonal section of his narrative deals with the various legislative issues he supported before leaving Parliament in 1887, his experience as Treasurer 1885–86, and his work as chairman of a commission to consider the development of a transcontinental railway from South Australia to Pine Creek in the Northern Territory. From 1889 he made various trips to England to recuperate his health, find a publisher for his novel, *Paving the way* (1893), or to win capital for the railway. The success of *Paving the way* led him to try his hand at another novel, *Blood tracks of the bush* (1900), short stories and articles and a descriptive account of the Northern Territory. His ultimate failure to initiate the railway, due to a change of government in South Australia in 1905 was, next to his failure to win interest for the development of the Murray, his greatest disappointment. The last section of his narrative deals with his work for the Royal Geographic Society of South Australia, the River Murray League and the Zoological and Acclimatization Society. Concluding his story in his old age, Newland laments the passing of two of his five sons, as well as many of his friends and contemporaries. His final admission of a ‘strange loneliness’ is at odds with his general avoidance of intimate or family matters.

Date span: 1839–1925
Note: See ADB, vol. 11
177

NEWLAND, SIMPSON
(1835–1925)

Old-time memories. A band of pioneers
Adelaide, 1895. 13 pp.
First published in the South Australian Register (1895)

A celebration of the life of his father, William Ridgway Newland, and an anticipation of the account of his family’s settlement at Encounter Bay in 1838 in his Memoirs (1926, q.v.) Newland’s Old-time memories includes some of his own first memories after arriving in Australia at the age of four.

Date span: 1839–1864
Note: See ADB, vol. 11

178

NICOL, JOHN
(1755–1835)

The life and adventures of John Nicol, mariner
Edinburgh, William Blackwood, 1822. 216 pp., port.

Nicol’s story was taken ‘from his own mouth’ by another as nearly as possible in his own words. Born in Scotland, he served an apprenticeship as a cooper, then joined the Royal Navy for a period of seven years, during which time he saw active service in Canada during the American War of Independence. He sailed successively in a whaler fishing Greenland waters, a trader to the West Indies and as a cooper and steward on the King George which undertook a voyage of trade and exploration around the world in 1785. Nicol has excellent recall of detail and an ear for language which makes his descriptions of people in places such as Canada, China and the Sandwich Islands quite vivid. He comments that while in Hawaii he met a chief who had participated in the murder of Captain Cook. In 1789–90 Nicol was steward on the Lady Juliana which transported female convicts to New South Wales. He takes a compassionate view of the convicts, seeing the women, mainly streetwalkers, as unfortunate rather than wicked. His account of the year-long voyage reveals that the women were allowed considerable freedom to ply their trade among accompanying ships and in ports, and that every man on board, including himself, took ‘a wife from amongst the convicts, they nothing loath’. The women were well provisioned and the only disciplinary problems were drunkenness and rowdiness, for which one woman was placed in a wooden jacket made from a flour barrel and later flogged. Many children were born during the voyage, including 20 in Rio de Janeiro; John Nicol also fathered a son, by convict Sarah Whitelaw. He recalls his grief at parting from Sarah and his child at the end of the voyage when he was forced to return to England on the Lady Juliana and Sarah to remain in Port Jackson as a convict. His efforts to return to Sarah on whalers and trading ships were finally frustrated when he was press-ganged into the Royal Navy. He never returned to Australia or saw Sarah again. Nicol served another seven years in the Royal Navy and participated in the French wars. He was paid off and returned to Scotland, but his ability to earn a living was restricted by his constant efforts to avoid another impressment. Frail and almost destitute, he narrates his story in the hope of obtaining a pension.

Date span: 1789–1790

179

NICOLL, GEORGE R.
Fifty years’ travels in Australia, Japan, America, etc., 1848–1898

In a lively, personal narrative printed for private circulation, the author describes his life from 1848, when he first travelled to New South Wales from Scotland. He stayed briefly in Sydney before heading for the
California goldfields where, tired of waiting in San Francisco for 'the snow to melt off the Goldfields', he joined a ship heading for Sydney. Through mismanagement, the ship was wrecked on the Fijian islands, where he lived before being taken off by the Bramble, which was searching for escaped convicts, and returned to Sydney. Always restless and hoping to find a fortune somewhere new, Nicolls travelled constantly from this time, often accompanied by his wife and children, from Burwood in Sydney, where they kept a general store, to goldfields at Bathurst, the Turon, Mount Alexander, the Snowy Mountains and the Ovens, to Shoalhaven, where they had a farm, to a cottage in Noura (Nowra), and home to Scotland and back at least three times. His descriptions of life at the goldfields are graphic and informative, and deal in some detail with cradling on the Turon, and living conditions such as accommodation, food, water and other supplies, and crime on the Mount Alexander diggings, where he was accompanied by his family. Nicoll prospered finally and at one time owned schooners trading on rivers and along the south coast of New South Wales. From the 1860s he began travelling for pleasure, touring Europe, the Middle and Far East and the USA, and at this point the narrative becomes virtually a description of foreign places visited, with little detail of Australian experiences beyond some comments on the economic depression of the 1890s.

Date span: 1849-1860s, 1890s

O'CONNELL, JAMES F. (B.1808)

A residence of eleven years in New Holland and the Caroline Islands
Boston, B.B. Mussey, 1836. 265 pp.

The son of an Irish circus performer, O'Connell states that he ran away to sea at 10, and sailed to New South Wales as a cabin boy on the ship Phoenix, carrying female convicts, in about 1820. He left the ship on arrival and stayed in the colony until 1826. During that time he worked in Sydney for 12 months for the emancipist butcher Charles Smith, took ship in a whaler which was wrecked on the coast north of Port Macquarie, and lived with Aborigines for eight months, before finding his way to the settlement. He also accompanied John Oxley on a six-month surveying expedition inland, the most significant result of which was, from O'Connor's point of view, the discovery of two escaped convicts and their families living self-sufficiently on farms they had established. He left Sydney on a whaler which once again was wrecked, and was castaway on Ponape Island, where he lived among the natives for five years. More than half of his narrative deals with this period.

The title page states that the work has been 'edited from his own narration', and there is evidence of a good deal of editorial intervention, both in the style of the narrative and in the inclusion of passages concerning the agriculture, climate, native plants and animals, and descriptions of Sydney streets, buildings and institutions which are probably taken from other published sources. In his 1972 edition of the work, Saul H. Reisenberg casts doubt on the veracity of much of the narrative, concluding that it is a mixture of fact and fiction, and that O'Connell was possibly a convict who spent some time in New South Wales. The author certainly demonstrates an intimate knowledge of the convict system, including stages of convict service such as assignment and ticket-of-leave, convict work, overseas, punishments and the pursuit of absconders. He is familiar with conditions for female convicts, and vividly describes the embarkation of female convicts on the Phoenix, observing that 'they wore the outward seeming of careless indifference or thoughtless merriment', and, in similar detail, describes the arrival in Port.
Jackson, where the ship was met by Bungaree and by relatives and friends whose 'flash language', shouted up to the ship from boats, he reproduces. He describes the workings of the Parramatta Female Factory, reconstructs a parade of female convicts before prospective husbands, and continues with a description of a typical wedding party and the conditions most likely to be encountered by the bride in the 'bush'. He gives the background of Charles Smith, Samuel Terry, Mrs Hayes, Thomas Cooper, and other emancipists who had prospered in the colony, and describes theatre performances in Sydney and Emu Plains, when convict performers were forcibly taken from the stage at curfew time.

There appears to be no doubt that O'Connell spent a lengthy period on Ponape, during which time he was tattooed in the traditional manner; he later became famous as a circus artist in America.

Date span: 1820–1826

181

PAGE, THOMAS

The horrors of transportation: containing the life, and sufferings of Thomas Page ...


Born in 1818, Thomas Page was convicted of rape in 1829 and sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen's Land for 21 years. He spent a month on a hulk at Plymouth before being transported on the Hopeless. After his arrival he worked in a road gang for a year, then spent three-and-a-half years in a chain gang at Port Arthur. He was then assigned as an agricultural labourer at Port Jackson, pulling ploughs with a team of convicts, but was returned to the barracks for alleged misbehaviour and sent to Port Macquarie, where he worked in road and timber gangs. He once escaped but was recaptured and sentenced to 28 days of solitary confinement, in darkness and heavily chained. Fifteen years after his conviction, the woman who had accused him of rape was herself transported and then claimed that he was innocent. Page was returned from Port Macquarie to Hobart Town, where he was exonerated. He returned to England in 1845 and, finding the members of his family dead or destitute, published this account of his experiences in an attempt to raise money. Although the brevity of this pamphlet allows for only the barest outline of Page's remarkable experiences, it contains some very clear descriptions of some aspects of convict conditions, such as the method of chaining iron gangs and rations issued to road gangs. Page also discusses the difference between government and assigned convicts in the context of the privileges granted to educated convicts.

Date span: 1829–1845

182

PALMER, THOMAS FYSHE
(1747–1802)

A narrative of the sufferings of T.F. Palmer, and W. Skirving, during a voyage to New South Wales, 1794, on board the Surprise transport


Palmer, a Unitarian minister, was convicted of sedition for publishing a pamphlet on parliamentary reform. He joined other 'Scottish Martyrs', Thomas Muir, William Skirving and Maurice Margarot on the Surprise for transportation to New South Wales in 1794. During the voyage Palmer and Skirving were accused by the captain, Patrick Campbell, with the support of Margarot, of plotting a mutiny and were confined to a cabin and denied access to their own provisions. The Governor did not proceed with the case against them on their arrival in Port Jackson and Palmer's rights
as a political prisoner were restored to him. His narrative of the voyage, to which he appends statements by members of the accompanying detachment of the New South Wales Corps, is written in an indignant attempt to refute the accusations and to describe the ill-treatment to which he was subjected. It is revealing of conditions on transports for political prisoners, soldiers and common convicts.

Date span: 1794
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

183

Pamphlet, Thomas (1789?–1838)

‘Narrative of Thomas Pamphlet, aged thirty-four years, who was with two other men wrecked on the coast of New Holland in April, 1823, and lived among the natives for seven months. Taken down by John Uniacke, Esq.’ in Geographical memoirs on New South Wales; by various hands: containing ... the discovery of Moreton Bay River, with the adventures for seven months there of two shipwrecked men ... Edited by Barron Field
London, John Murray, 1825. pp. 87–129

In this narrative, recounted to John Uniacke, Thomas Pamphlet and fellow-survivor, John Finnegan (who continues the account at one point when Pamphlet is sick), tell how they and two others, Parsons and Thompson, had left Sydney in an open boat to bring cedar from the Five Islands, 50 miles to the south of Port Jackson, but were driven out to sea by a gale. Without water, they suffered for 21 days, during which one of them, an ex-convict, John Thompson, died. Thirst forced them to make a difficult landing over reefs, despite their fear of the natives visible on shore. Without clothes and with only flour, they survived precariously, imagining they were far south of Port Jackson when in reality they were in the Moreton Bay district. Pamphlet describes their encounters with the Aborigines in detail, speaking of their own suspicion and fear and the Aborigines’ kindly treatment of them. With the help of a donated Aboriginal canoe, the three reached the mainland, where they were again treated well by the Aboriginal people on whom they depended during many hardships, while they made repeated attempts to return to Sydney. Finally, Oxley’s cutter was sighted in the bay, and Pamphlet and his companions were taken aboard, having spent almost eight months with ‘these hospitable natives of Moreton Bay’.

Within John Uniacke’s own ‘Narrative of Mr Oxley’s expedition to survey Port Curtis and Moreton Bay, with a view to form convict establishments there, in pursuance of the recommendations of the commissioner of inquiry’, are two related narratives, both also taken down by Uniacke. The first is ‘An account of a fight among the natives of Moreton Bay, witnessed by John Finnegan’; the second is ‘Account of a fight witnessed by Thomas Pamphlet’. Like the ‘Narrative of Thomas Pamphlet’, these are first-person accounts, but not substantially different in style from each other. It would appear that, though Uniacke scrupulously recorded factual content for all three narratives, he was much less concerned with noting the personal mannerisms of his speakers. Of the additional narratives, Finnegan’s gives many details of Aboriginal inter-tribal fighting customs, and is also notable for its record in this context of Aboriginal attitudes towards the European visitor; Pamphlet’s is a detailed account of the form of a one-to-one combat between Aborigines of different peoples. Pamphlet and Finnegan guided
Oxley to the mouth of the Brisbane River, and so were instrumental in the discovery of a site for the future Moreton Bay settlement.

Date span: 1823
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

184
PARKER, MARY ANN
A voyage round the world in the Gorgon man of war...

In 1791 Mary Ann Parker accompanied her husband, Captain John Parker, on a voyage in HMS Gorgon, carrying Philip Gidley King and Mrs King, and some members of the New South Wales Corps to New South Wales. She describes social activities in ports visited during the voyage, including Teneriffe, St Jago and Cape Town. On arrival in Port Jackson she records her reactions to the native vegetation and wildlife, and describes excursions to Parramatta, and her impressions of the Aborigines. When she returned to England on the Gorgon in 1792, she gave birth to a baby almost immediately after arrival. One of her children had died in her absence, and her husband died soon after their return.

Date span: 1791-1792

185
PARKES, HENRY
(1815–1896)
Fifty years in the making of Australian history
London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892. 2 vols, 355 pp., 444 pp., index

In this long work which he describes as 'not a history nor yet an autobiography', Parkes aims to describe and explain his role in public life, so that most of the narrative deals with his political career. However, as he observes, 'it has not been found possible ... to suppress my personality', and a clear impression of his powerful character emerges.

Parkes arrived in Sydney as a young man with his wife and newly-born child in 1839. He claims that he took an interest in politics in England before his emigration, having heard speakers such as Daniel O’Connell, and was first drawn into New South Wales politics by anti-transportation and universal suffrage issues. Although without much formal education, he became part of a circle of writers and journalists which included Charles Harpur and the editor of the Weekly Register, William Augustine Duncan, and in 1849 established the Empire, his importing business having failed to prosper. He was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Council in 1854 and to the first Legislative Assembly in 1856. His narrative outlines the many vicissitudes of his political life from this time until his final resignation in 1891, covering a number of periods as premier, minister, government back-bencher and in opposition, and intervals out of parliament altogether when he made his living as a journalist, as an emigration lecturer in England in 1861, and as a lobbyist for a steamship company. Until 1858 he also ran the Empire, working, he says, 'with an astonishing amount of zeal', until the paper failed, leaving 'nothing but the gleanings of bitterness and regret'.

Parkes discusses many government issues with which he was involved, and reproduces speeches and letters to supplement his narrative. He deals in detail with his role in immigration, defence, electoral and constitutional matters, land legislation, Chinese immigration, Kanaka labour, railways and public works. He expresses particular pride in his contribution to education reform, beginning with his Public Schools Act of 1866, which attempted to bring both national and denominational schools under the control of a Council of Education. He outlines his role in the
federation movement and gives his opinion on early labour movements and the maritime strike of 1890. Generous consideration is given to the work of such colleagues and acquaintances as Sir John Robertson, Sir James Martin, W.B. Dalley, Edward Wilson of the Argus, and Governor Sir Hercules Robinson. Parkes describes his triumphant trips to the USA and Britain in 1881, and his reactions to events such as the attempt to assassinate the Duke of Edinburgh by O’Farrell in 1868, the release of Frank Gardiner in 1874, which was instrumental in bringing down his government, and the dispatch of the Australian contingent to the Sudan in 1885. In summing up his 40 years of public life, Parkes claims as his greatest attributes his energy, perseverance and an ‘unchanging love of my fellow creature’.

Date span: 1839–1890
Note: See ADB, vol. 5

186
Pasco, Crawford [Atchison Denman]  
(1818–1898)

A roving commission; naval reminiscences

This is an account of the author’s career in the Royal Navy, from the time of his appointment, as a midshipman in 1830, until his retirement due to ill health, as a Commander, in 1852. Pasco had an active, eventful career, part of which was spent in Australian waters.

Pasco was with the Royal Navy contingent which attempted to establish a settlement at Port Essington in 1838. From there he joined HMS Beagle for a surveying voyage on which the Adelaide and Victoria rivers were discovered, and the port of Darwin named. The Beagle then explored the Houtman Abrolhos, finding relics of the Batavia, and visited Champion Bay (Geraldton) and King George Sound. Pasco took command of the cutter Vansittart in Hobart Town in 1840, in order to carry out hydrographic surveys on the Tasmanian coast, and during this period visited the Bay of Fires, Port Arthur and the Bass Strait islands. He left Australian waters in 1843, but returned to settle in Melbourne in 1852, travelling on the first steam voyage from England to Australia, on the steamship Chusan. Pasco discusses all the Australian places which he visited, and includes accounts of his experiences with Aborigines, in the Northern Territory and in Western Australia, and with part-Aboriginal families engaged in sealing and mutton-birding on the islands of Bass Strait.

Date span: 1838–1843; 1852
Note: See ADB, vol. 5

187
Pearce, Villiers

The life of Villiers Pearce ...

Pearce begins his narrative with an account of his respectable connections and his career as a Royal Navy midshipman, planter in the West Indies, and newspaper reporter in London, before he decided to emigrate with his wife and young family to New South Wales in 1829. He describes Sydney society in 1829, when, he claims, the immigrant population was ‘poor and overlooked’ and ‘most of the money was in the hands of the Old Lags’. As the family was unable to live on his salary as a clerk in the Sydney Post Office, he took a similar position at Bong Bong, but resigned after six months ‘owing to the great disadvantages I had to contend with’ (namely a lack of respectable society and comforts). He was offered a position as superintendent of a station near Bathurst belonging to Robert Wardell, who was related to his wife, and the family travelled there across the Blue Mountains by dray,
observing convicts (‘half-naked, sunburnt, emaciated beings’) on the way. Due to a dispute with Wardell, the family soon returned to Sydney, where Pearce obtained employment with the Sydney Herald, but was convicted of libelling Wardell and imprisoned in Sydney Gaol for eight months. Following his release, Pearce took his family back to England, where he struggled to make a living as a reporter. In 1846 he was arrested for forgery: ‘in a distracted state of mind I committed the offence, for a starving family, for which I have suffered so severely.’ He records that he spent more than three years on the hulks at Woolwich, working on the docks and in hospital hulks, before being transported in 1849. He obtained a ticket-of-leave on arrival and worked for a period on the Hobart Town Guardian but was only intermittently employed, describing himself at other times as ‘a wandering outcast in the Bush’. Pearce absconded and spent three years wandering in Australia and elsewhere, was shipwrecked and cast away several times, and tried his luck on the Mount Alexander diggings, where he was robbed by bushrangers. He returned to England in 1853 where he found his wife almost destitute, and was arrested soon afterwards, charged with being at large in England before the expiration of his sentence. Describing himself as in ‘a weakly state of health, with a helpless family, quite destitute for want of employment’, Pearce made a plea for lenience in a statement before the Bench. The statement was reproduced in the press and aroused great public interest and sympathy. Pearce was pardoned and a subscription raised to send him and his family to America, but they did not prosper there and soon returned to England where, discouraged and in poor health, Pearce wrote these memoirs, based on his statement to the court several years earlier.

Date span: 1829–1834; 1849–1853

188

[PHILLIPS, JOHN]

Reminiscences of Australian early life by a pioneer
London, A.P. Marsden, 1893. 245 pp., illus.

Phillips left England in 1840, disembarking at Port Phillip. Just after he arrived there was a hostile encounter between 200 Aborigines and the inhabitants of Melbourne, which resulted in a large number of Aborigines being eventually put across the Yarra River. Gellibrand, one of their leaders was later taken to Port Arthur, where he was shot trying to escape. Phillips’ early experiences illustrate the exploitation that a new chum was likely to endure and the harsh treatment of convicts, whom Phillips pitied and in some instances helped. After two years of working for others, he established his own sheep farm on the Edward River, with a flock of 500 old ewes. He employed a knowledgeable ex-convict as shepherd and writes amusingly of their 14-year relationship when the roles of master and servant were often reversed. After he entered into a partnership with another young man, they established a station near the present town of Deniliquin. Phillips’ descriptions of the years on this station and a later one closer to Albury, include accounts of the customs of the local Aborigines, the eradication of dingoes and the consequent infestation of kangaroos, the visit of a clergyman and subsequent wholesale baptisms of bush children in which Phillips was ‘rung in’ as godfather, a journey of exploration, the impact of the gold rushes and a disastrous recourse to law following boundary disputes with neighbouring settlers. During the gold rush he survived by selling beef to the Bendigo diggings and by instituting labour-saving contrivances on the station. He also describes the impact of the Free Selection Act and his own ingenious devices for preserving a portion of his run. Phillips, who was also a magistrate, regards free selection as responsible for the increase in lawlessness in
the bush and includes several accounts of bushranging crimes, bank hold ups and horse-stealing. Narrowly escaping murder at the hands of a convicted bank robber, he was also unknowingly accompanied on a ride by the notorious bushranger 'Thunderbolt', subsequently visiting him prior to his execution. He was present on the scene just after Daniel Morgan was killed by one of his neighbours, and sketched the dead bushranger's face, sending his drawing to the Illustrated London News. In 1853 Phillips returned to England where his reports of the discovery of gold caused great excitement. An exceptionally expressive writer, Phillips also communicates an impression of himself as humane, sensitive and unpretentious.

Date span: 1840–1853

189

Pidgeon, Nathaniel
(1803–1879)

The life, experience, & journal of Nathaniel Pidgeon ... an open-air preacher and city missionary, ... being a continuation of the work up to January 1st 1864

Sydney, Author, 1864. 2nd edn, 104 pp., port.
First published Sydney, Smith and Gardiner, 1857

Pidgeon commences with recollections of his childhood in Ireland and traces the events which led him to his 'calling' as a Wesleyan lay preacher and, eventually, to the position of City Missionary in Sydney. Following the failure of his cabinet-making business, Pidgeon emigrated to Australia with his extended family. He briefly describes the voyage and its hardships, and his subsequent efforts to support himself as a journeyman on his arrival in Sydney in May 1841. While financial success continued to elude him, he gained greater confidence in his ability to preach. He describes his successes at a number of city locations and in Maitland, where he had been sent by his employer. On his return he conducted large open-air meetings in Sydney and Newcastle and, in 1850, was appointed Sydney City Missionary. After his appointment his account continues as journal extracts describing his experiences in the refuges, asylums, brothels and private houses of Sydney. At the same time he continued to preach against 'Popery, Puseyism, Beardyism and Mormonism' in the city's streets and meeting-houses. In 1857 withdrawal of church funds meant Pidgeon was forced to resign, but with public support he was able to continue his activities independently. His autobiography provides a history of the development of dissenting church movements in early Sydney and is a rich source of information about both the acceptance of and resistance to such movements. The narrative is, however, unrelentingly self-righteous and finishes at no significant point. The edition described here is identical to that published in Sydney in 1857 up to that date, but concludes with additional journal extracts documenting the author's experiences up to 1864.

Date span: 1841–1864
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

190

Platt, Joseph

The horrors of transportation as related by Joseph Platt, who was transported for fourteen years! With an account of the hardships he endured, and his return to England


In this brief narrative, Platt, who was transported to New South Wales in 1834, portrays himself as the helpless victim of a vicious system. He was assigned to a Sydney pastry cook, who compelled him to witness 21 executions in his first week as a warning against bad behaviour. Platt states that in the two-and-a-half years he was with this master he was brought before a magistrate many
times and given a total of 550 lashes, 14 days solitary confinement and four months on the treadmill. He absconded but was recaptured and sentenced to three years working in irons, which he served on Norfolk Island. He outlines the daily routine for convicts on the Island from the time of rising at 4 am, giving details of sleeping and washing facilities, food, musters, evening school and work gangs. On his return to Sydney, Platt was assigned to a master at Campbelltown, who badly mistreated him and sent him to a farm in the Manero (Monaro) district. He was eventually provoked into striking this master and running away. He spent five weeks in the bush before being taken in by the Knamage Aborigines, a healthy vigorous tribe of 940 people, with whom he lived for four-and-a-half years. During his time with the Aborigines, Platt claims to have travelled as far afield as the Murray and Cape York, but lived mainly in the Murrumbidgee area. He was recaptured by mounted police near Yass and returned to Sydney, where he was given a ticket-of-leave six months later. He became free in 1848 and shipped back to England as a cook. Platt’s narrative is competently written and contains a poem written by him about his convict experiences.

Date span: 1834–1849

191

[Porter, James]

A narrative of the sufferings and adventures of certain of the ten convicts; who piratically seized the brig ‘Frederick’ at Macquarie Harbour, in Van Diemen’s Land … in Hobart Town Almanack and Van Diemen’s Land Annual for 1838

pp. 3–33

This narrative was written in Hobart Town gaol in November 1837, while the author awaited execution for his part in a convict mutiny. It relates that, in January 1834, after the abandonment of the penal establishment at Macquarie Harbour, James Porter and nine other convicts remained behind with a small number of other crew members to sail the brig Frederick around to Hobart Town. On the second day out, the convicts took over the brig by force, putting the captain and other crew members ashore with provisions. They headed for South America and although their captain was prostrate with seasickness for much of the journey and their knowledge of their geographic position was vague, they avoided the sight of land for over six weeks and eventually reached the coast of Chile. They abandoned the brig for a longboat on 26 February and reached a settlement on 4 March, then proceeded to their intended destination, Valdivia. The governor there took them under his protection, three of them leaving with his permission and the remainder living as free men until May 1835, when a new governor arrived who put restrictions on their liberty. Three of the convicts absconded in a whaleboat, and the remaining four, including Porter, were arrested, imprisoned and handed over to the English. They were taken to England, then shipped back to Van Diemen’s Land on the Sarah, arriving in March 1837. They were tried for piracy, found guilty and sentenced to death.

The narrative is a formally expressed, rather bald statement of events, which reveals little of the personality or emotions of the author. Porter attempts to play down his own part in the mutiny and emphasises the mild behaviour and humanity shown by all the convicts. Porter in fact was not hanged but was transported to Norfolk Island, where he wrote a fuller version of his memoirs, which are unpublished but held in typescript in the Dixson Library.

Date span: 1834–1837
Xavier Prieur, a French-Canadian storekeeper from Lower Canada, bases his narrative on notes kept during his seven years as a rebel and convict, beginning with his participation in the Canadian rebellion in 1838, and his capture, imprisonment, trial and conviction. He gives a touching account of the period which some of the French Canadians spent in Montreal under sentence of death, which was carried out in some cases, and of the departure of the remaining prisoners on the Buffalo after commutation of their sentences to transportation. On arrival in Sydney in 1840, Prieur and his fellow exiles were sent to Longbottom penal settlement, where they spent 20 months working in quarries and on the roads, at first under guard and then relatively independently. Prieur was then assigned to a Sydney confectioner and worked as a gardener for a sympathetic family on the Parramatta River before obtaining a ticket-of-leave. He joined some compatriots at a sawmill and made timber lathes in partnership with Léandre Ducharmé (q.v.), and then worked as a baker at Irish Town on the Sydney road. He was awarded a pardon in 1844 but found economic conditions so poor and work so hard to obtain that he could not raise his passage home. He spent a further frustrating two years in Sydney before being taken to England by a French merchant, and travelling from there to New York, Quebec and Montreal, where he was reunited with his parents.

Throughout his narrative, which is frequently charged with emotion and outrage, Prieur stresses the support which he and his compatriots received from their religion and the Catholic Church. Archbishop Polding and Monsignor John Brady met them on their arrival and continued to offer pastoral care while they were in the colony. Prieur gives quite specific details about the conditions of his imprisonment, providing for example a diagram of the Buffalo and a list of meals, as well as a thorough description of the barracks, food, clothing and other arrangements at Longbottom. The Notes demonstrate clearly the difference in status of each stage of a convict’s sentence from government service, to assignment, to ticket-of-leave, and reveal the difficulties many suffered in the economic recession of the 1840s.

Date span: 1839–1846
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

R—s, William
(B. 1786)

The fell tyrant, or, the suffering convict, showing the horrid and dreadful suffering of the convicts of Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay, our two penal settlements in NSW: With the life of the author, William R—s

London, J. Ward, 1836. 48 pp., illus.

R—s’ pamphlet was avowedly written to deter those contemplating crimes for which they might be transported. R—s was a British subject, born in Antigua in 1786, who returned to England after his mother’s death. He became a London merchant but high living and consequent debts were a constant handicap in his career, which included a stint as secretary to the Admiral of the Royal Navy in the East Indies. Marriage to an impoverished lady in 1808 produced seven children, four of whom survived, and a rift with his father, who disapproved of the
marriage. R—s' business declined but he nevertheless took a mistress, who was a further burden on his inadequate means. After conviction of misappropriation of a client's funds, he was transported for seven years and served his sentence at Moreton Bay from 20 March 1827 to 15 February 1833. Though given a relatively easy position, he was horrified at the cruelty and hardships which caused many convicts to seek ways to die. R—s describes the notorious commandant, Captain Logan, and his infamous officials who, with the exception of Rev. Vincent, the Anglican minister, made their sufferings even worse. Other officials he mentions are Constable Mackintosh and Lieutenants Owens, Barnbrigge and Bell, Superintendent Spicer, Mr Parker, Surgeon Cooper and the scourger, Mr Bishop. In the course of his story, R—s cites several instances of severe cruelty, comments on the treatment of female convicts and conditions at Norfolk Island and makes suggestions for reform.

Date span: 1827–1836

194

RANDALL, [ELIZA] MRS DAVID
Mrs David Randall's reminiscences
Edited by Geo. C. Morpighth
Adelaide, Pioneers' Association of SA, 1939. 18 pp.

These are brief reminiscences of the life of Eliza Randall, who, with her husband David, her parents and 40 servants, emigrated to South Australia in the early 1840s on the advice of George Fife Angas. The family was affluent and of a high social standing, and Mrs Randall describes visits to friends, servants, gardens and houses in which they lived, in Adelaide and on their station at Mount Crawford.

Date span: 1840s–1870s

195

REED, HENRY
(1806–1880)
Incidents in an eventful life

Station owner and merchant Henry Reed, who arrived in Launceston in 1827, restricts his narrative to incidents relating to his evangelistic and charitable work. He describes his religious awakening after a series of narrow escapes from death, and a great deal of spiritual suffering. Dedicating himself to good works, he made a trip to Port Phillip at the request of John Batman, to 'devise some means for preserving the natives from destruction'. He worked with convicts in Van Diemen's Land, and describes spending the night prior to their executions with convicts in their cells at Launceston.

Date span: 1826–c.1850
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

196

REID, DAVID
(1820–1906)
Reminiscences of David Reid; as given to J.C.H. Ogler

Having arrived in Australia as a child, David Reid first attended the Australian College in Sydney, boarding with John Dunmore Lang, then the King's School, Parramatta. He managed a station for his father near Cooma, before taking up a station in 1838 in unsettled country on the Ovens River, moving in 1843 to Yackandandah. Gold was discovered on his run at Spring Creek, which later became Beechworth, and although he profited by becoming a gold dealer, the influx of miners and their stock ruined his property for pastoral purposes and he sold his stations in 1853, becoming a stock trader. He later bought other stations, including Barnawartha, near Albury, and Thelangerin,
near Hay, but by 1865 was forced to sell at a loss and took up a vineyard selection in the Rutherglen area, where he lived at the time of his narrative.

The Reminiscences were narrated by David Reid to J.C.H. Ogier, who has written them down in the third person, though apparently with little alteration, as they often lapse into the first person. They follow the broad chronology of Reid's life, but concentrate in great detail, often graphic and entertaining, on some incidents, while skating very briefly over others. Aspects covered in some detail include his time at the King's School, Parramatta; his arduous overland journey of 1838 from the Monaro to the Ovens River; and battles with Aborigines during his early days of settlement (including his views on the Faithfull massacre of 1838, when at least 10 members of a droving party were killed by Aborigines on the site of the present city of Benalla); the building and operation of a water mill for grinding flour on the Yackandandah creek; the Gundagai flood of 1852, and the appearance of the town when he visited it soon after; a period as a digger on the Mount Alexander diggings; and the hostility of diggers on the Ovens fields towards gold commissioners.

Date span: 1830–1900
Note: See ADB, vol. 6

197

REILLY, BERNARD

A true history of Bernard Reilly, a returned convict ...


In rhyming couplets, Reilly tells how he fell into bad company as a young man. He was convicted of a crime and sentenced to 14 years transportation to Van Diemen's Land, where he served his sentence with great suffering, before returning to his family in Ireland.

Date span: 1824–1838

198


In the early 1920s the Council of the Royal Australian Historical Society collected a number of records, including reminiscences, of pioneers and early settlers, a selection of which was published in the Society's Journal in 1923. The reminiscences, which relate mainly to New South Wales, vary in length and detail, and deal with the experiences of both men and women. The narrative of C.A. Henderson, for example, deals with his recollections of development along the Parramatta Road by the 1860s; in 'Recollections of Sydney' John C. Waterman describes the residents and the city of Sydney when he lived there between 1841 and 1853; Thomas Ormond O'Brien contributes memories of Bondi from 1851; Mary Jane Cain, daughter of an Irishman and an Aborigine, recalls Coonabarabran in the 1860s; Celia Ann Rose recalls her family's settlement at Moruya and Broulee in the 1830s; Mrs James Mann recalls the hotel kept by her parents at Myrtle Creek in the 1840s; and Kathleen Graham recalls her childhood on stations on the Murray and the Campaspe, where she observed the customs of the station Aborigines, including burials and, she claims, infanticide. Susan Bundarra Young narrates that her father, Edward George Clerk, settled at Clerkness, Bundarra, in 1836, and recalls a number of episodes with bushrangers, including being held up by Thunderbolt at Ollera in 1867. Extracts from the memoirs of Alice Sophia Moggridge include an account by Horatio Spencer Wills of his shipwreck on a South Sea Island, where he was castaway and lived among the natives for two years.

Date span: 1840s–1860s
A well-informed lady of good social standing who writes fluently and clearly, Jane Roberts describes a journey during 1829-31 from England to Hobart Town and back on an immigrant ship, which, on the outward journey, touched at Madeira, Bahai and the Cape of Good Hope, and deposited settlers at Swan River.

Roberts found the journey an ordeal, due to the dangers and privations which she suffered, but also due, she says, to 'many other deeper cares and sorrows passed over in silence'. Living ashore in tents on the sand at Swan River for seven weeks, during the heat of February and March, without adequate food or water, and fearing the visits of inquisitive Aborigines (during which the women and children were locked away in a converted horse box), it is not surprising that she formed a negative view of the settlement and warns her readers in England of the small chance of success in this 'dreary waste'.

She recounts stories of disappointment, failure and desperation among the permanent settlers, living in tents or at Fremantle in prefabricated houses, many of them waiting for the discovery of good land in order to take up land grants; she also describes the Tranby people, a group of dissenters whom she met in church in Fremantle and who planned to form a cooperative settlement. She formed a slightly more favourable opinion of Van Diemen's Land, where the landscape and climate were more to her liking, and the abundance of assigned convict servants useful, and where she attended a ball and dinner at Government House. Although she had intended to settle in Hobart Town, she says that 'a severe

affliction obliged my return', and she stayed with the ship on its homeward voyage through the Torres Strait, travelling to Timor, Singapore, Rangoon, Calcutta, Madras, St Helena and Ascension, and thence to England, the round trip taking almost exactly two years.

Date span: 1829-1830

James Ross, a schoolmaster, arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1822 and settled with his young family on a grant of 1000 acres on the Shannon River. His farming efforts were unsuccessful and within a few years he was back in Hobart Town, where he opened a school, and tutored the children of Lieutenant-Governor Arthur. In 1825 he was appointed joint editor of the Hobart Town Gazette, becoming sole editor in 1827, and in 1829 began publishing the Hobart Town Almanack, in which these reminiscences appeared in 1836.

The settler in Van Diemen's Land deals with Ross' period as a settler on the Shannon River. He describes his impressions of Hobart Town on arrival, his arduous journey to the Shannon with his family by bullock dray, and their efforts to establish their farm. Interspersed with literary allusions and discursive asides, the narrative ranges from an amusing account of difficulties with an assigned convict, to descriptive passages on the beauty of the countryside and wildlife, to information for intending immigrants, such as a list of desirable equipment, a step-by-step account of building a slab house, and advice on how to treat the Aborigines. Ross also described his experiences in Van Diemen's Land in the Penny Magazine (London) 31 March, 5 May and 12 May
Russell left England in 1838 on an immigrant ship, which landed settlers near Adelaide, then proceeded to Van Diemen's Land. He travelled to Port Phillip and Sydney, before returning to England via New Zealand and South America. Writing to correct 'numerous interested statements frequently published, more calculated to mislead than impart information', he describes each of the colonies visited, outlining the physical features of Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart, and discussing economic and agricultural conditions. He includes advice to passengers of immigrant ships, and some 'practical hints from old settlers' on setting up on the land, and recounts his impressions of convicts, emancipists and Aborigines, whom he observed living in or on the outskirts of the settlements. He gives a colourful description of land sales which he attended in Melbourne, and, although he did not travel far inland, describes a visit to a sheep station in the Westernport district.

Date span: 1838–1839

George Russell's narrative was dictated to his daughters in the 1880s, and is published with explanatory notes and copies of other Russell family documents interspersed through the text. It deals with his life from his childhood in Clunie, Scotland, up to the time of narration, but is most detailed in its treatment of the period 1830s to the 1850s, when he was a pioneer settler in the Geelong area.

Russell arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1831, and joined his brother on Dennistoun, the property owned by Patrick Wood near Bothwell, before taking up the leases of some small farms on the Clyde River. He comments on the convict system in Van Diemen's Land at that time, seeing it as advantageous to both settlers and convicts. He also discusses the treatment of the Tasmanian Aborigines, especially during the 'Black War', and recounts that he witnessed the surrender of a party of 60 or 70 Aborigines to G.A. Robinson in 1832.

In 1836 Russell sailed to Port Phillip where he took up land on behalf of the Clyde Company (partly owned by his family) in the Geelong district. He describes Melbourne of 1836, which consisted of three or four wattle and daub huts and 12–15 tents, the Port Phillip Aborigines and William Buckley, who had lived with them for 30 years, as well as other intending settlers, such as Joseph Tice Gellibrand and G.B.L. Hesse, the Learmonth and Yuille families, and many others. Russell managed the Clyde Company properties until 1856, when they were sold and the company dissolved. He purchased the homestead...
Golfhill, 20 miles from Geelong, from the company, and progressively increased his holdings, eventually owning 28,000 acres on the Golfhill estate alone. He prospered from the production of wool and was able to dismantle the old brick homestead, which he had built in 1845, and build a stone mansion in 1876. He made a trip to Europe in 1850-53, when he married, and another, with his children, in 1872-75, and toured extensively during each trip. While recording the broad outline of his life, Russell’s narrative does not deal with everyday occurrences or details of farm management, but chronicles the development of the Geelong district and beyond, noting, on a yearly basis, the arrival of new settlers, initially from Van Diemen’s Land and then also overland from New South Wales and directly from Britain; land legislation and sales and the progressive move inland; the beginnings of businesses such as shops, banks and hotels; the arrival of Presbyterian ministers; and the organisation of race meetings and dingo hunts.

Date span: 1831-1876
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

203
RYAN, JAMES TOBIAS
(1818-1899)
Reminiscences of Australia

Ryan was born at South creek, near Windsor in 1818, the grandson of first-fleet convicts. Writing of himself largely as Toby, Ryan occasionally slips into the first person and gives a somewhat disjointed account of his life due to his tendency to divert into anecdotal sidelines. Involved in a fracas with police in 1834, he was forced to leave the family farm and spent two years as an itinerant worker, sawing, clearing, threshing, milking, breaking horses and droving. In 1840 he moved to Penrith and opened a butcher’s shop. He includes an account of an unhappy love affair, that appears to have been of great emotional significance notwithstanding his marriage to ‘an excellent wife [who] raised him a large family’. Ryan came to know a diversity of people, both respectable and nefarious, due to his custom of travelling to purchase stock and his keen interest in horse racing, and he gives a rich picture of the sporting and racing fraternity of his day. He claims to have had various encounters with bushrangers (including Jack Donohue), to have owned the pistols used in the Sir Thomas Mitchell—Stuart Donaldson duel, to have associated with Edward Hargraves, and to have been working near the scene when the Myall Creek massacre took place. Including several passages of homely philosophy, Ryan also gives a distinct impression of a vigorous personality. In 1860-72 he represented Nepean in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly.

Date span: 1818-1860s
Note: See ADB, vol. 6

204
SALVADO, ROSENGO
(1814-1900)
The Salvado memoirs: historical memoirs of Australia and particularly of the Benedictine Mission of New Norcia and of the habits and customs of the Australian natives
Translated and edited by E.J. Storman
Nedlands, WA, University of Western Australia Press, 1977. 300 pp., index
First published in Italian in 1851

Arriving in Western Australia in 1846, the Benedictine monk Rosendo Salvado travelled to the Victoria Plains, well beyond the settled areas, in order to set up a mission for the Aborigines. He and his companion, Father Serra, founded the New Norcia Mission and Monastery, and attempted to persuade the local Yuet people to abandon their nomadic
existence and settle permanently close to the mission. In 1849 Salvado was required to return to Europe to raise money for the mission, and although he returned to Western Australia in 1853, was detained in Perth on other duties until 1857, when he once again took over at New Norcia, being made Life Abbot in 1867.

Salvado's Memoirs deal with his missionary life only up to the time of his return to Europe in 1849. Thus they cover his journey to Perth, and the foundation and early days of the mission at New Norcia. They reveal Salvado's great religious faith and his humility and humanity, particularly in his attitude to the Aborigines, whom he treated with love and respect. He made a comprehensive study of the customs and beliefs of the Yuet people, and collected a vocabulary of the two native languages of the New Norcia district, and these are appended to the Memoirs.

Date span: 1846–1849
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

205
SANDERS, JANE
(B. 1830)
The settlement of George Sanders and his family at Echunga Creek, 1839–40
Edited by C.S. Sanders

These brief reminiscences deal largely with the pioneering experiences of a young family of Quakers who arrived in South Australia in 1839, when the author, the only girl among five children, was nine years old. Jane Sanders recalls the voyage out on the Delhi, a period in Adelaide, and a journey of three days on a dray to their land at Echunga, where they lived initially in tents. She describes the gradual establishment of the cattle and wheat farm, the erection of first a slab hut, then a stone house, the growth of settlement around Echunga, and the dispersal of the older boys, first to the Victorian goldfields in 1852, and then to their own homes and farms.

Date span: 1839–1864

206
[Savery, Henry]
(1791–1842)
Quintus Servinton. A tale founded upon incidents of real occurrence
Hobart Town, Henry Melville, 1830. 3 vols, 364 pp., 358 pp., 345 pp.

The anonymous Quintus Servinton is the first novel published in Australia and the fictionalised autobiography of Henry Savery, transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1825. The novel reproduces the main events in Savery's life until 1829, including his birth into a distinguished family, his over-ambitious business activities and entanglement in illegal practices, his attempt to escape to America which was frustrated at the last minute, his attempted suicide, imprisonment and sentencing to death for forgery, his eleventh-hour reprieve and transportation (in the novel, to New South Wales). Servinton's wife, Emily, follows him to the colony, as did Savery's wife, Eliza, and comes under the malign influence of Alverney Malmers (Algernon Montagu in real life), separating briefly from her husband. The novel departs from history in that Emily is reconciled with Servinton after his second suicide attempt and ultimately secures his pardon, which is followed by their mutual retirement to congenial Devonshire.

Savery's Eliza, appalled to discover that he had misrepresented his position in the colony and was currently threatened with imprisonment for debt, returned to England less than three months after her arrival in 1828, and notwithstanding her husband's second suicide attempt. Savery finally died at
Port Arthur after another conviction for forgery. Less informative about colonial life than Savery’s sketches, *The hermit in Van Diemen’s Land* (1829), the novel includes representations of Governor Arthur and John Dunmore Lang.

Date span: 1791–1829
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

207

SCHULZE, W.

Reise und Lebensbilder aus Neuholland, Neuseeland und Californien

In German

The author of this narrative, a German traveller, was in South Australia only from February to July 1849, but recounts an astonishing variety of experiences during this time. Soon after his arrival in Adelaide, he joined an expedition of 18 men which travelled some 480 miles north-north-east of Adelaide to a point, he surmises, further inland than previously reached by Europeans. Schulze comments on the country and the fauna which he observed, including anteaters, emus, kangaroos, termites and platypuses (which he shot at Lake Victoria). He records a number of skirmishes with Aborigines, which resulted in the wounding of two of the party, and the loss of stock, and one major battle with some 100 Aborigines which left two natives dead. The party returned via the Murray River and Fort Wellington, where the author’s close friend, Dulcharow, died from dysentery and fever. Early in April, Schulze was hired to work at a whaling station owned by Mr Penny at Encounter Bay, where he chased and harpooned whales, and extracted whale oil, a task he found so unpleasant that he returned to Adelaide within two weeks. Travelling towards Meckersfield with the view of purchasing an inn there, he was injured when his buggy rolled over, and was carried to Adelaide for treatment and to convalesce. By the end of May he was back in Encounter Bay where he formed a romantic attachment to Fanny Tanezin, who worked in a beauty shop there. He began travelling the countryside as an agent for the owner of the shop, Mr Schleicher, selling fashion goods, and later farm produce, from a wagon. Becoming bored with the colony, he sold his assets to purchase a passage to California, and left South Australia with a German friend at the beginning of July.

While warning that nature in New Holland is unlike the rest of the world and demands adaptation, Schulze recommends the country to would-be immigrants and feels that it is capable of carrying European animals and plant life. He encountered many German people in South Australia, and comments that a German immigrant with 500–1000 Prussian thalers could lay the foundation for a pleasant future there.

Date span: 1849

208

[Semple, James George]

‘Major J.G. Semple Lisle’

The life of Major J.G. Semple Lisle; containing a faithful narrative of his alternate vicissitudes of splendor and misfortune

London, W. Stewart, 1799. 382 pp., port.

Semple was convicted of theft and embarked on the store ship *Lady Shore* for Botany Bay in 1797. As the ship approached Rio de Janeiro, the soldiers on board from the New South Wales Corps took over the ship and put their officers (led by Ensign Minchin), members of the crew, and others including Semple, off the ship in a boat. The boat succeeded in reaching Rio de Janeiro and Semple returned to England, but was arrested and placed in Bridewell Prison, where he wrote this account of his life from the time of his birth.
As Semple was a self-confessed confidence trickster given to self-aggrandisement, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction in his story of his life up to the time of the mutiny. His account, however, of the journey and mutiny on the *Lady Shore* is corroborated by other participants, and is interesting for his comments on the officers and men of the New South Wales Corps. Semple claims that he observed mutinous behaviour among the soldiers before the ship left England, and advised authorities such as Major Grose who took no action. He describes the soldiers of the Corps as 'a mixture of foreigners and criminals, enlisted from jails, and induced to enter for fear of worse consequences, the due recompense of their crimes'. He describes the officers as 'inadequate to their duty', claiming that they did not attempt to enforce discipline prior to the mutiny and, in spite of his attempts to rally them, put up virtually no resistance to the mutiny itself. Semple was transported a second time, and died during the voyage.

Date span: 1797

209

SHAW, WILLIAM

*Golden dreams and waking realities; being the adventures of a gold-seeker in California and the Pacific Islands*


The author, a seaman, sailed for India as a midshipman in 1845, but resigned from the navy and emigrated to Adelaide in 1848. Unable to find a suitable occupation he decided to try his luck in the Californian gold rush. His adventures *en route* and in California, which are vividly described, take up the major part of his narrative, although he spent some time in Australia after leaving America and before returning to England. His Australian impressions are recorded at greater length in his descriptive work, *The land of promise* (1854).

Date span: 1848–1850

210

SMITH, MRS JAMES

*The Booandik tribe of South Australian Aborigines: a sketch of their habits, customs, legends and language*


Mrs Smith worked with the Booandik people of the south-east of South Australia for more than 35 years, as a missionary and teacher. In her sympathetic account of the customs, legends and beliefs, personalities and recent history of these people, Mrs Smith incorporates personal details of her contact with them. In particular, she describes her arrival with her husband at Rivoli Bay in 1845, and her growing friendship with the Aborigines, who invited her to attend at births and travelled with her on foot in the bush, and who, in some cases, seemed to accept her teaching of the Christian faith.

In 1854 the Smiths moved to Mount Gambier, where Mr Smith died in 1860. A subscription was raised for an Aborigines' Home and School, which Mrs Smith superintended until 1867.

Date span: 1845–1867

211

SNOW, SAMUEL

*The exile's return: or a narrative of Samuel Snow, who was banished to Van Diemen's Land, for participating in the patriot war in upper Canada, in 1838*

Cleveland, 1849. 2nd edn, 32 pp.

American citizen Samuel Snow was transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1839 for
his part in the Canadian rebellion during 1838. Admitting that 'the details of my ... residence in the penal colony, are but faintly delineated' by his narrative, Snow expresses the hope that accounts by other exiles will provide the reader with more information. In fact, Snow's experience was very similar to that described more fully in the work of Heustis, Marsh, Gates and Wright (qq.v.). Like them, he worked on the Hobart Town roads after arrival on the Buffalo, before being moved to Lovely Banks and then Green Ponds stations. Snow was one of the party of rebels who took up share-farming in the Oatlands area after obtaining his ticket-of-leave. Following his pardon, he obtained a passage on the whaler, Steiglitz, in January 1845. Besides providing information about convict conditions, The exile's return contains a discussion of bushranging in Van Diemen's Land, criticisms of Governors Arthur and Franklin, and a graphic description of harpooning a whale, which Snow witnessed in New Zealand waters during his journey home.

Date span: 1839–1845

212

Spence, Catherine Helen (1825–1910)

An autobiography


Catherine Helen Spence's autobiography is as much a celebration of the advances of the author's adopted home of South Australia, as it is of her life as a public speaker, writer and activist. Born in Melrose, Scotland, Spence first recalls life there, commenting on costs of living and social habits. After her father's ruin, the family left for Australia in the Palmyra. Conditions aboard were not good, but their fellow passengers included many who were to become prominent figures in Australia and New Zealand. Arriving in drought-ridden Adelaide in 1839, Spence records her dismay at the harshness of her new homeland and tells of the hardships her family faced as they struggled to establish themselves. She remedied her need for intellectual stimulation by contributing to the local newspaper and recalls how the onset of the gold rush in Victoria furthered her career as a journalist and inspired the writing of her first novel, Clara Morison. She also gives some background to the writing and publication of her other novels, remarking that it was only in Gathered in that she felt satisfied that her characters 'stood out distinctly and real'. Spence thought herself more competent in writing pamphlets, essays and articles, some literary, but most in support of electoral reform. Her major pamphlet, A plea for pure democracy, drew considerable interest in America and England where, in the mid-1860s, she became acquainted with Thomas Hare and with John Stuart Mill. Mill, however, was most impressed with Spence as vindicator of his belief in the equality of women. Although not formally affiliated with the women's suffrage movement Spence was glad to be its incidental advocate, and recounts how, in her efforts to promote proportional representation, she became the first woman candidate to stand for the South Australian parliament, defying convention by speaking publicly in Australia and America. She also published and spoke on various child welfare issues and was active in labour and legal spheres, becoming the first woman to be appointed to the Advisory Board of the South Australian Education Department and later to the Destitute Board at the age of 72. Proud of the achievements of South Australia in initiating reforms, many of which she had personally seen through, Spence cites the state's multiple achievements. Her broad interest in social and political issues combined with her literary talents acquainted her with such notables as George Eliot, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Oliver Wendell Holmes, in addition to local figures such as Frederick Sinnett and Catherine Martin. As Spence died in 1910 before the completion of her
autobiography, the final chapters, dealing with her life after 1887, were completed by her friend and fellow philanthropist Jeanne F. Young. Continuing in the first person, this last section of the work lacks Spence's own verve, but succeeds in detailing her prolific achievements in her later years.

Date span: 1839–1910
Note: See ADB, vol. 6

213
[STANGER, SOPHIA]
A journey from Sydney over the Blue Mountains to Bathurst forty years ago
Bathurst, NSW, 1882. 27 pp.

Stanger's narrative is in the form of a letter, dated 15 July 1841, from the author to her English mother. In the letter she describes a journey from Sydney to Bathurst, accompanied by a maid, her husband and her five small children (she was the mother of triplets). She tells of the hardships and cold they endured, their anxiety about their diminishing provisions, the beauties of the landscape and the kindness of the convicts. The inconveniences of travelling by horse-drawn and later bullock-drawn dray on almost impassable roads are graphically presented.

Date span: 1841

214
STAWELL, MARY F.E.
(1830–1921)
My recollections
London, 1911. 264 pp., index

In 1842 William Pomeroy Greene and his family, which included the author, Mary Greene, emigrated from Ireland to Port Phillip on their chartered ship, the Sarah. The Greenes built a large house, Woodlands, about 14 miles out of Melbourne, where they lived in considerable comfort and style, associating with Victorian pastoral families, such as the Brownes, and other members of the Victorian establishment. Following her marriage to William Stawell, Victoria's Attorney-General, in 1856, Mary lived in St Kilda, then moved to Kew on the Yarra, where their mansion, D'Estaville, was completed in 1859, and where she and William raised 10 children. In 1873 they travelled to England to settle their boys in schools, and Mary did not return to Australia until 1877. The author supplements her account of her life up to the time of her marriage with copies of letters written by her parents to relatives in England, which give an idyllic picture of her family's settlement in Victoria. For the later period, she includes copies of letters written to her by her husband, while away on judicial duties, and while she was in England with their children in the 1870s. These reflect their family life and his involvement in Victorian politics. Despite her connections and her husband's eminence, Mary Stawell's Recollections concentrate on her family, dwelling on events such as the deaths of her father and husband, and the marriages and achievements of her children.

Date span: 1842–1889
Note: For William Stawell see ADB, vol. 6

215
STEPHEN, ALFRED
(1802–1894)
Jottings from memory by an Australian great grandfather:
First portion—1802 to 1818.
Birth and schoolboy days;
with some account of his people, and life in the West Indies.
Second portion—1818 to 1824.
Student-days and call to the Bar

This narrative, written for his family, deals with Stephen's life in the West Indies and England before his appointment to Van
Diemen’s Land as Solicitor-General in 1825. Interesting for its account of the Stephen family and especially his father, John Stephen (Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales 1825–1832), it has otherwise no Australian content.

Date span: 1802–1824
Note: See ADB, vol. 6

216
STEWART, ALEXANDER
(1809–1895)
Reminiscences of Illawarra
Compiled and edited by Michael Organ
Woonona, NSW, Illawarra Historical Publications, 1987. 51 pp., index
First published in the Illawarra Mercury, 17 April–18 August 1894, in 24 parts

According to his 1895 obituary, Alexander Stewart’s reminiscences were taken down, from his own dictation, by a Mr John Brown MP, then ‘the junior local historian’ of the Illawarra district. They cover the establishment and development of the Wollongong region from 1828, when Stewart arrived in New South Wales as a convict (a fact never alluded to directly in his anecdotes). Stewart remembers details of early residents and also of the land, described as initially ‘primaeval forest’, and how it was used (grazing, cedar-cutting). He chronicles outstanding events, including shoot-outs with the local bushranger, a gathering of over 100 Aborigines to settle a dispute, the arrival of the 10 British soldier-pensioners called ‘the veterans’, the celebrated legal case of the two convict women who pushed their master to his death off a verandah, and the visit of the first steamship, the Sophia Jane. Stewart also covers in detail topics relating to community development: the post offices, the convict-built road system, the building of the harbour, private and government land purchase and surveying (with details of the complete history of some allotments), and the establishment and building of the various churches and hotels.

These semi-formal reminiscences, offering a remarkably detailed record of the early days of the Illawarra community, are nevertheless presented from a personal, sometimes rather pungently expressed or simply biased, point of view. The role of John Brown may have been editorial to some degree, for his prompt-questions to Stewart form part of the text. The 1987 edition of the Reminiscences also contains contemporary letters to the Mercury responding to various points in Stewart’s articles. These help to extend knowledge of both the man and the events of which he speaks.

Date span: 1828–1894

217
STONE, EDWARD [ALBERT]
(1844–1920)
Some old-time memories
Edited by Frank Henty
Prahran, Vic., Fraser & Morphet, 1918. 45 pp.

A Lieutenant-Governor of Western Australia, Stone outlines the early history of Perth, briefly describing his childhood there, before he was sent to England for schooling at the age of 11. He then recalls his return, when he became an articled clerk and began to participate in social events and sports, such as roller-skating, rowing and kangaroo hunting. He discusses his participation in the Reform League and on the Perth City Council, and touches very briefly on his later parliamentary and judicial positions.

Date span: 1848–1870
Note: See ADB, vol. 12
In his preface Graham claims that this is the autobiography of Struilby, which fell into his hands. Written partly in the third person and partly in the first, it includes reminiscences by Struilby's wife and appears to have been elicited by Graham, who was probably an interested friend, and who subsequently arranged the narrative, supplying the interlinking third person passages. Graham also probably provided the story's moralistic rationale, which makes it to some degree an account of a young man's growth to maturity and religious feeling.

Struilby was a young Irishman who was sent out to Australia by his family after a violent encounter with the local estate manager. He left home in 1832, accompanied by Jerrold Lock, an older man and family friend, who later played a sinister part in his history. Struilby describes the voyage out during which they encountered fierce storms and lost their captain, who was an alcoholic. Struilby and Lock soon differed after the latter's manipulative personality became obvious: 'It was true I was a soft fish, that kept my shell wide open; but he put in his finger too far, and got nipt', comments Struilby in his usual graphic style. After landing in Hobart in 1833, he explored Tasmania in company with some fellow passengers, travelling 240 miles in seven days and becoming very despondent about his prospects. However he soon secured a job clearing land, for which he was well prepared by his previous experience on his father's farm, and later became a farm manager, supervising the work of the 12 labourers who were all convicts. Giving up this position because he refused to flog the convicts, he rented another farm with another free immigrant and was moderately successful. He describes the condition of the convicts, the birds and animals of Tasmania, the depredations caused by bushrangers and their frequent capture by ticket-of-leave convicts, and the sad state of the Tasmanian Aborigines after they had been rounded up by G.A. Robinson. After two years he decided to rejoin Jerrold Lock in New South Wales, but first lost the major part of the money he had made so far after a loan to a fellow immigrant was not repaid.

In March 1835 he left Sydney for the station Barcoo Narang on the Bathurst Plains, where Lock was a minor partner. Gulled by Lock's apparent friendliness, he became disillusioned when he was left to manage a difficult situation on his own while unarmed after a convict servant robbed the store. Lock had secured a 1/5th share in the station, employing Struilby on a casual basis, and planned to make the partnership unworkable so that he might secure his share and set up on his own. Implicating Struilby in some of the disputes he had with neighbours and relying on his pugilistic skills in some tight situations, he also deliberately alienated James Ash, the nephew of one of the owners, who came to work there. Ash and Struilby became close friends and this part of his narrative describes some of their hunting expeditions in company with the local Aborigines. Sympathetic to the black culture, although he feared that it was doomed, Struilby describes the tribe's hunting and fishing practices, family and marriage customs, medical practices, religious beliefs and tribal battles. He even acted as 'army surgeon' after one particularly fierce battle. Unfortunately, Lock's manipulations proved successful and he secured a payment of £550 from the other partners, giving Struilby £10 and subsequently gaining a large payment for damages in a legal action after another projected partnership fell through.
Meanwhile Struilby’s implication in Lock’s schemes led to his unjust imprisonment in Bathurst Gaol on charges of desertion of his duties and horse-stealing. He describes his experiences in gaol and his impressions of the other inmates. A visit from Lock resulted in some sympathy and the ‘gift’ of 15/-, leaving Struilby determined never to be dependent on others again. He also determined not to write home until he had made good, a decision which later caused him great remorse. After seven weeks his case was investigated, due to the good offices of another man who had suffered unjust imprisonment, and he was released. After some misfortunes, during which he was reduced to virtual indigence and investigated as a possible escaped convict, he secured work at a station 120 miles south-west of Bathurst owned by an ex-convict. He expresses great contempt for his employer, Jim Black: ‘I hated his entrapping ways, so like the devil’s, and I hated his infidelity and profanity ... He appeared to have no joy but gathering pelf; his soul and body seemed a rickle of dry bones.’ After moving to another more congenial station at Carowder, he met his future wife, the 16-year-old Selina Price, who was 10 years younger than himself but an exceptionally resourceful and energetic girl. Struilby’s happiness after their marriage was increased after he was sponsored towards the purchase of some cattle by a Jewish friend. In 1842 he took up a distant station for Jim Black on the Murray between the Mitta Mitta and Ovens rivers, north-west of the Great Dividing Range in an area where the Aborigines had been very hostile to white settlement. Although they successfully forestalled major trouble, the murder of an Aboriginal boy, Bobindi, whom they had adopted, was a major catastrophe and determined them to leave the area. Struilby later avenged his murder by killing two men whom he believed to be the assassins. Selina Struilby adds here her memories of encounters with bushrangers, including her successful deflection of the Scathey and Witton gang.

After returning from the Murray, Struilby bought his own station, Mow Poke, near Goulburn in 1843. The even tenor of their life here was disrupted by a letter from his mother, implying her belief that he had become a criminal. His family had received only one letter from him in seven years but had heard from Lock, recently returned to Ireland, of their son’s incarceration in Bathurst Gaol. Struilby wrote home to explain the situation but his mother died soon afterwards. The narrative concludes with a description of Struilby’s disastrous expedition into the interior, accompanied by John Duncan and his stockman, which cost Duncan his life.

Date span: 1832–1840s

219

SUTTOR, GEORGE
(1774–1859)

Memoirs of George Suttor
Edited with notes and commentary by George Mackaness
Sydney, George Mackaness, 1948. 80 pp., port.

The son of a Chelsea gardener and horticulturist, Suttor obtained the patronage of Sir Joseph Banks for his emigration to New South Wales in 1800. He was employed during the voyage to supervise a number of plants being sent to the colony, and in return was granted, among other benefits, 200 acres of land, which he took up at Baulkham Hills, in about 1802. He developed his farm as an orange grove, but was imprisoned in Sydney Gaol for six months in 1808 for refusing to oppose Governor Bligh, and was obliged to travel to England in 1810–12 to testify on Bligh’s behalf.

In 1822 he and his family took stock across the Blue Mountains to establish Brucedale, near Bathurst. At the time of a later visit with his wife to Europe and England in 1839–44, Suttor owned...
considerable property and was in comfortable semi-retirement. His wife died in Europe in 1844, but Suttor returned to New South Wales where he lived until his death in 1859.

Suttor’s memoirs dwell on the period of his life when, as a young man, he was preparing to marry and travel to Sydney. He describes early Sydney and Parramatta and his first farming efforts in some detail. He recounts his experience of the Rum Rebellion and gives his opinion of King, Bligh and Macquarie as governors. The memoirs for later years are sketchy, particularly following his wife’s death.

Date span: 1800–c.1850
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

TEBBUTT, JOHN
(1834–1916)

Astronomical memoirs
Sydney, Frederick W. White, 1908. 132 pp.

In these memoirs John Tebbutt outlines the settlement of the Tebbutt family on the Hawkesbury, and his own education and first interest in astronomy. He then describes, year by year from around 1858, his astronomical observations, for which he attained an international reputation as an outstanding amateur astronomer; his most famous observations being his discovery of comets, named for him, in 1861 and 1881. He also chronicles the gradual development of his private observatory, on his property at the Peninsula, Windsor.

Date span: 1840–1904
Note: See ADB, vol. 6

TELFER, WILLIAM
(1841–c.1925)

The Wallabadah manuscript, the early history of the northern districts of New South Wales
Introduction and notes by Roger Milliss
Kensington, NSW, New South Wales University Press, 1980. 253 pp., index

These reminiscences are believed to have been written by William Telfer, who was born at Callala, New South Wales, in 1841, his father being a station manager for the Australian Agricultural Company. He apparently had little formal education, and his manuscript has been published with the many spelling and punctuation errors of the original. Much of the narrative deals with matters outside Telfer’s direct experience, such as the early settlement of the Liverpool Plains, confrontations between Aborigines and settlers, and stories about well-known characters of the bush and goldfields. There are, however, some personal recollections, for example of the bark school he attended at Tamworth in the 1840s, of his experiences at the Hanging Rock diggings in 1853, and of stock drives throughout New South Wales and into Queensland. The narrative is rambling and disjointed, but contains a great deal of information which fortunately is accessible through the index.

Date span: 1840s–1860s

THERRY, ROGER
(1800–1874)

Reminiscences of thirty years’ residence in New South Wales and Victoria

Born in Ireland, Therry was called to the English Bar in 1827 and appointed commissioner of the Courts of Requests in
New South Wales in 1829. He was subsequently Attorney-General (1841-43), resident judge of Port Phillip (1844-46) and judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales (1846-59). His reminiscences, published in February 1863, proved so popular in England they were followed by a second edition in April, but the book’s many factual errors and mis-datings came under strong attack in Sydney, making it essentially unsaleable there. Although Therry’s memory is often defective, he is a forthright, perceptive observer with first-hand knowledge of many of the leading personalities of New South Wales from the 1830s to 1850s. Particularly valuable as a record of the judicial and legal system, the treatment and behaviour of convicts, and colonial crime, the Reminiscences include numerous descriptions of cases in which Therry was involved. His keen interest in Irish-Catholicism is reflected in his discussion of religious life, education and emigration. Therry’s account of Governor Bourke’s period of office and his involvement in his feud with the notoriously brutal landowner and magistrate James Mudie betrays a personal bias, but otherwise his narrative is balanced and free of rancour. Concentrating primarily on his professional life, Therry is also concerned with the broad history of early settlement. Other topics include the achievements of the early governors, the political system and events, the changing social conditions of Sydney and Melbourne, the effects of the gold rush, sheep farming and the life of the squattocracy, bushranging and cattle-duffing, the customs of the Aborigines and their persecution by settlers. Although Therry reveals a sympathetic, humane personality, he is nevertheless a man of his time in his conclusions on the benefits of transportation and of flogging in certain extreme cases, and that the likely passing of the Aborigines is not to be excessively lamented since they are ‘the lowest race at present known to exist in the world’.

Date span: 1829-1859
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

223

THRELKELD, LANCELOT EDWARD
(1788-1859)

‘Reminiscences of the Aborigines of New South Wales’ in Australian reminiscences of papers of L.E. Threlkeld, missionary to the Aborigines, 1824-1859
Edited by Niel Gunson
Canberra, ACT, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1974. 2 vols, pp. 41-71

First published as a series of articles in the Christian Herald between February 1853 and April 1855, Threlkeld’s ‘Reminiscences’ are episodic, and prefaced by quotations from Scripture intended to illustrate each article. The narrative is largely a description of the Aborigines of the Lake Macquarie area as he found them during the first years of his mission there on behalf of the London Missionary Society in 1824–1826, but it is also an account of his experiences and motivations at that time. He felt that it was necessary for him to be ‘among the natives as much as possible’, and lived closely with the Aborigines, accompanying the men on fishing and hunting trips, instructing them in agriculture, and accommodating many of them in his house and its surrounds. He makes careful observations of their way of life, describing their foods, implements, music, dance and art, and social customs. He records details of their religious beliefs, myths, sacred places and attitudes to death as communicated to him by tribal members. Seeing language as essential to the communication of Christian beliefs, he includes information about the language of
the Lake Macquarie people which formed the basis of his best-known publication, *An Australian grammar ... of the language, as spoken by the Aborigines of the Hunter's River* (1834). Threlkeld is at pains to demonstrate that Aborigines have the same intellectual powers as Europeans. Always sympathetic to the Aboriginal viewpoint, he relates accounts of cruelties inflicted on them as told to him by Aboriginal people. He witnessed at first hand, on the mission, their aggravation by whites, particularly convicts and other men who made raids to steal Aboriginal women, which was 'calculated to drive the Aborigines to madness, who retaliating upon the unfortunate unprotected settler, created a bitter animosity.'

In terms of converts to Christianity Threlkeld's mission was a failure and he left the Lake Macquarie district, a controversial and largely discredited figure, in 1841. Later scholars however have recognised his outstanding contribution to Aboriginal studies.

Date span: 1824–1826
Note: See *ADB*, vol. 2

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**224**

**TOLMER, ALEXANDER**

**(1815–1890)**

*Reminiscences of an adventurous and chequered career at home and at the Antipodes*  

Alexander Tolmer, a former cavalryman who had seen action in Portugal, emigrated to South Australia in 1836. He was appointed Inspector of Mounted Police soon after his arrival and became Commissioner of Police in 1852. He was relieved of his office in controversial circumstances in 1853, but stayed in the police force until 1856. Tolmer's Australian reminiscences relate almost exclusively to his career in the police force.

He describes his participation in a number of successful exploits, which included capturing many bushrangers, cattle stealers and other criminals; accompanying Edward Eyre on an expedition to Port Lincoln in 1842; intervening in confrontations between settlers and Aborigines; and leading retributive parties against Aborigines on several occasions, such as that following the murders of the passengers and crew of the *Maria* on the Coorong in 1840. He also gives details of his successful scheme to provide a gold escort from the Mount Alexander diggings to Adelaide in 1852–53. He dwells on the injustice of his demotion in 1853, presenting much evidence in the form of letters and newspaper reports.

Date span: 1836–c.1866
Note: See *ADB*, vol. 6

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**225**

**TOOSEY, JAMES DENTON**

**(1801–1883)**

*Brief dottings of my Life*  
Launceston, Tas., 1882. 88 pp., port.

Following the failure of his family’s fortunes in England, Toosey went to Van Diemen’s Land in 1825 to help manage a property, the Cressy estate, granted to the New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land Establishment (later known as the Cressy Company). Apart from the year of 1828, which he spent managing a property at Shoalhaven, Toosey stayed at Cressy, becoming manager of the property and building up the company’s assets, and eventually purchasing part of it, Richmond Hill, when the company sold up in 1855. A good part of these reminiscences deal with the author’s life in England before his emigration to Australia. He describes some customs of the Aborigines of the Shoalhaven area, and gives a sketchy account of his years with the Cressy Company.

Date span: 1825–1855
Note: See *ADB*, vol. 2
Arriving in New South Wales in 1842, Townsend settled for a while in the Ulladulla area, before moving to the vicinity of the Moruya River. He later travelled north to Sydney through Illawarra, describing the country and settlers he visited on the way. He left Australia in 1846. Townsend’s narrative, self-consciously ‘cultured’ and embellished with quotations from Virgil, is intended largely for the intending emigrant and relies heavily on excerpts from the accounts of others, especially Sir Thomas Mitchell, George Fife Angas and Alexander Harris. Aiming to awaken the potential emigrant to the pitfalls of rural life in the colony, the author provides a thorough introduction to the modes of existence of the settler, the squatter and the shepherd in these areas. He tells of the types of landholding or leasing arrangements available and describes the settlers’ dwellings, the materials used and the cost of building. Keenly observant of the country’s physical features, he also describes the vagaries of the climate, the native animal and bird life (and their relative suitabilities for the cooking pot), gives portraits of ‘currency’ characters, explains colonial terms, and provides detailed accounts of the native peoples. Frequently critical of the colonial government, he is divided between horror of the reported dark deeds and practices of the ‘uncivilized’ Aborigines and irritation with government neglect of them.

Date span: 1842–1846

Having gained seafaring experience as a clerk in the Royal Navy from the age of nine, and as an officer of the East India Company, Tregurtha took command of the whaling vessel Caroline, out of Hobart Town, in 1831. After many adventures off the coast of New South Wales and Queensland and among the islands of the South Pacific, he became part-owner and captain of a trading vessel, which from 1836 transported passengers and stock from Tasmania to Port Phillip and Adelaide. He was therefore involved in the earliest days of settlement in those colonies, and claims to have been the first to survey the port of Geelong. Tregurtha invested, without much success, in stations in Victoria’s Western District, and in 1851 went to the Loddon diggings as a storekeeper and digger. More than half of The Tregurtha log, which was written in the 1850s, deals with the author’s adventurous life before he had any association with Australia. It is a precise, factual account, evidently written up from journals, but with enough personal comment to convey an impression of Tregurtha as a resourceful, impetuous and supremely self-confident man. He provides a graphic first-hand account of whaling in Australian waters in the 1830s.

Date span: 1831–1852
Mary Ann Brooksbank was brought to Australia in 1841 as an infant. Her family settled in the Campbelltown area, and as a young woman Mary Ann helped her father on his wheat farm, and worked at various times as a barmaid and dressmaker in Sydney. In 1862 she married Joseph Tyler and went with him to the Burrendong goldfields where they worked with some success at mining and prospecting. They then became selectors in the Wellington area, battling considerable hardship to develop a mixed farm with wheat, sheep and poultry. This is a plain narrative, often disjointed and occasionally ungrammatical, but expressing the author’s thoughts about the major events in her life with candour and feeling.

Date span: 1840s–1890s

Ullathorne was inspired to join the Catholic mission in Australia by J.B. Polding. Arriving in 1833 he acted as head of the Catholic Church until Polding’s arrival as Bishop in 1835, uniting the small quarrelling clergy and congregation and laying the groundwork for the future organisation of the Church in Australia. In 1836–38 he visited England, Ireland and Europe, raising money for the Australian mission and recruiting priests, teachers, and the first group of nuns, who travelled to Sydney with him in 1838. On his return he became priest at Parramatta, but still took much responsibility for the administration of the Church, and became involved in controversy over his opposition to the transportation and assignment of convicts, which he had expressed in pamphlets published while in England. Leaving Australia in 1840, he later became Archbishop of Birmingham, and wrote his autobiography in 1867. Writing in a plain, almost blunt, style, Ullathorne gives frank appraisals of such men as Bishop Polding and Father Therry. Much of his pastoral work was among convicts, and he describes convict conditions, on road gangs, in prisons such as the Parramatta Female Factory and at Norfolk Island. He attended executions in New South Wales and on Norfolk Island and describes these vividly. He also reveals his thoughts on human nature and transportation.

A heavily edited, expurgated version of Ullathorne’s autobiography was published in 1891.

Date span: 1830–1840
Note: See ADB, vol. 2

The first full length autobiography written in Australia, Vaux’s memoirs are a lively rendition of his first 32 years of life, during which he was twice transported to New South Wales for petty theft. Dedicated to Captain Thomas Thompson, commandant of the settlement of Newcastle, the memoirs were intended to convince his official readers that Vaux was radically reformed and so ready for reinstatement as commissariat clerk in Sydney, a position he had held, and blithely abused, when formerly transported to the colony. The two volumes are introduced and edited by the poet Barron.
Field, and conclude with a 'Vocabulary of flash language', the first dictionary published in Australia, and of great interest as a glossary of the 'cant' or slang terms used by London 'low life' at the time. Vaux, under the patronage of his genteel maternal grandparents, was well started in life but saw himself as the victim of a 'malignity of fate', which made him inherit his butler father's 'disposition to instability'. His description of his early life shows how this disposition led him to squander the opportunities his grandfather, a retired attorney, provided for him. Although well educated, at 14 years of age he insisted on being apprenticed to a Liverpool linen draper. He soon took up with 'dissolute' companions, was dismissed after he embezzled his employer's money to pay his gambling debts, and later defrauded a sequence of law firms which had employed him on his grandfather's recommendation. Inspired by his reading of the 'navigations of Cooke' and others, he spent a year and a half at sea as ship's clerk on the Astrae, keeping the ship's journal and log. He enjoyed the life but abandoned ship to join a 'fair young Cypriot', who had fascinated him during his perambulations among the fashionable London theatre set. He supported them both by illegitimate means until the young woman was reclaimed by her family. Although he escaped prosecution on a number of occasions, spared by his youth and genteel appearance, Vaux was three times imprisoned on fraud and finally, theft charges. His time in the Bastille, Clerkenwell and Newgate gaols, he claims, completed his education in crime and earned him seven years transportation. His verbatim account of the court proceedings tells how he and his companion escaped the death penalty, his companion being sentenced to seven years in the hulks while Vaux was dispatched to Australia. Giving only a brief account of his voyage on the Minorca, Vaux describes his dealings with such significant figures as Samuel Marsden and Governor King, and gives an insight into the type of life led by the more privileged convict in the colony. Interviewed by King on arrival, Vaux was sent to Green Hill (now Windsor) as a shopkeeper's clerk. After three years, he was appointed to the Secretary's Office in Sydney where he was caught forging the Governor's signature on commissariat orders. King interrogated him and sentenced him to hard labour at Castle Hill, but in August 1806 he instructed Vaux to assist Samuel Marsden in preparing a census at Parramatta. On 10 February 1807, Vaux left for England as King's clerk and tutor to the Marsden children. During the voyage, he fell out with King and, on arrival, just escaped forced enlistment into the navy. Back in London, Vaux resumed his former activities. He married a young woman accomplice and tells how his recklessness caused the miscarriage of their son and returned him to Newgate. There he claims he learned the new skills necessary to send him to New South Wales a second time. He describes his narrow escape from the death penalty on a legal technicality, and his experiences in the condemned cells and on the convict hulk Retribution, where he was detained before being transported on the Indian. He again kept the ship's log, but on arriving in Sydney was indentured to a rough master at Windsor. Later in Sydney he claimed to be a reformed character but was incriminated by his association with a young convict, who eventually became a member of a bushranging gang in Tasmania. Despite his protests of innocence, Vaux was sent to hard labour at Coal River at Newcastle where he remained for two years before being returned to Sydney to labour in a chain gang. Only three months later, an attempt to stow away returned him to Coal River where, as shopkeeper's clerk, he wrote his memoirs. Vaux's autobiography has something of the literary flavour of Thackeray's The luck of Barry Lyndon. His descriptions of life among the criminal strata in the English drinking houses and in the prisons are lively and
informative, and his criminal adventures are told with a developed sense of theatre. His knowledge of the law and the acts of parliament under which he was sentenced inform the narrative, illuminating aspects of the penal code of the day. In describing his dealings with King, Vaux provides a rare portrait of the Governor’s ‘eccentric character’, while his account of their voyage to England is enlivened by descriptions of the ship’s stopover in Rio de Janeiro, of the locals encountered there, and of the ship itself with its cargo of ill-fated Australian birds and animals. Notwithstanding Vaux’s claim that he was a reformed character, his criminal career did not end with the Memoirs. He lived to be transported for a third time after passing forged bank notes in Ireland and arrived in Sydney on the *Waterloo* in May 1831.

Date span: 1801–1817
Note: See *ADB*, vol. 2

231

**Walker, James Backhouse** (1841–1899)

‘Hobart Town 1840–1860. Reminiscences of James Backhouse, F.R.G.S. of Hobart Town, solicitor, as recorded in 1899’ in *All that we inherit*

Compiled and narrated by Peter Benson Walker

The author, the son of Sarah Benson Walker (*q.v.*), recalls his childhood in Hobart Town in the 1840s. His narrative is chiefly a record of changes in the town’s geography and developing architecture, although he also describes crime in the colony, general living conditions, the treatment and behaviour of convicts, and the town’s religious life.

Date span: 1840s–1860s
Note: See *ADB*, vol. 6

232

**Walker, Sarah Benson** (1812–1893)

‘My memories of life in Hobart Town as recorded, in 1884, by Sarah Benson Walker, the wife of George Washington Walker of Hobart Town, banker’ in *All that we inherit*

Compiled and narrated by Peter Benson Walker

After a false start to their voyage from London to Van Diemen’s Land in 1821, when their barque was impounded as unseaworthy, the author, aged 10, and her family, consisting of her parents, Robert and Ann Mather, and three brothers, arrived in Hobart Town in September 1822. Her father opened the first shop in the town and later established a farm at Muddy Plains. The narrator describes the living conditions, personalities and geography of Hobart Town in the 1820s and 1830s. She recalls her first reluctant meeting with James Backhouse (*q.v.*) and George Washington Walker, her decision, with her father and brother, to join the Society of Friends, and her marriage to George Washington Walker after an engagement of seven years, when he was finally released from his service with James Backhouse. The couple opened a draper’s shop in Hobart Town.

Date span: 1820s–1850s

233

**Walker, William** (1828–1908)

*Reminiscences (personal, social and political) of a fifty years’ residence at Windsor, on the Hawkesbury*

Sydney, Tumer and Henderson, 1890. 77 pp.

Walker emigrated from Scotland as a child in 1837. His father opened a school in Windsor, which William attended, before being placed
as a lawyer's clerk at the age of 13. Walker obtained his articles after six years, and in 1852 was admitted as an attorney, and practised as a lawyer in Windsor until 1908. The Reminiscences are based on a lecture given at the Windsor School of Arts, and deal less with his own life than with the history and development of Windsor. Walker describes the town of his childhood and youth, recalling the use of convict labour, the last of the Windsor Aborigines, and the military establishment at that time based in Windsor. He reminisces about family friends, social occasions, such as race meetings, balls, regattas, concerts, theatre, circuses, agricultural shows, vice-regal visits, and major events such as storms and floods. He outlines the development of the town of Windsor over 50 years, during which churches, banks and hotels (of which there were 40 at one time) were established, local government introduced, the railway extended to the town, and a bridge erected over the Hawkesbury. Walker was active in state politics and describes the first elections for the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, and his own election as MLA for Windsor in 1860. He outlines his activities in parliament as they related to his constituency, recalls many of the men who were his political contemporaries, and closes his reminiscences with recollections of his friend, Sir James Martin.

Date span: 1837–1870
Note: See ADB, vol. 6

234

[WARD, JAMES]

Perils, pastimes, and pleasures of an emigrant in Australia, Vancouver's Island and California

Presented as a series of letters to Ward from a fellow doctor in New South Wales, this narrative appears to have been written by Ward himself. Many of the incidents are similar to those he describes as his own in his later History of gold as a commodity and as a measure of value (1852). The letters are intended to help the prospective emigrant as well as merchants and manufacturers and include extended passages of corrective descriptions and general information on conditions in Australia. After a few months as a shepherd at Cow Pastures, near Sydney in 1843, he travelled through the Illawarra and Wollongong area, worked for a time as a medical practitioner and then took a position as surgeon on the whaler Jane. After travelling to Lord Howe Island, New Zealand and a number of Pacific islands, he returned to Sydney in 1848. Ward's narrative is that of an educated man but his attitudes are conventional; he is critical of the assignment system which has led to the colony being represented by a class 'whom our criminal legislation had intended that they should reap nothing from their labours in it, but privation and disgrace', and dismisses the Aborigines as 'the very lowest in the scale of humanity'.

Date span: 1840s

235

[WATTS, JANE ISABELLA]

Family life in South Australia fifty-three years ago

First published as Memories of early days in South Australia (1882)

Writing of herself in the third person as 'Minnie', Jane Watts partly intends her reminiscences to be a record for the younger members of her family of their relatives' pioneering experiences on Kangaroo Island in the 1830s. At the end of her narrative she includes an account of how her book came to be written; initially begun as a diversion at her husband's instigation and after an accident resulted in her permanent
invalidism, it was taken up as a consolation after a year of great sorrow. Watts was the daughter of William Giles (Mr A), who emigrated with his second wife and 10 children to South Australia in 1837. Giles was superintendent of the South Australian Company, employers whom Watts perceives as ultimately ungrateful for his efforts. The hazards of the voyage, the eccentricities of the passengers and the strangeness of life on Kangaroo Island are colourfully and frankly described. Aged 13 when she left England, Watts became chief baker and brewer for the family as well as nursemaid for her younger half-sisters and brothers. Particularly striking incidents are a visit from Sir John Hindmarsh, and a delightful interlude when two young men with musical interests paid the family a week-long visit. In keeping with the narrative’s general tone of sadness at life’s reversals are the accounts of the death of a child and of a miserable marriage between an inexperienced girl and the older, insensitive Dr M. In 1839 the Giles family moved to Adelaide when Kangaroo Island was abandoned by the South Australian Company. Watts includes general, often humorous, descriptions of life in Adelaide with more personal reminiscences such as an account of her own wedding in 1842 to Alfred Watts, and a description of her house on South Terrace. Interspersed with these are numerous histories of ill fortune, sudden deaths and failed marriages. This edition of the narrative concludes with obituary notices for William Giles from the *Register* of May 1862, an account of the life of Alfred Watts, letters and reminiscences of her brother, Thomas Giles (q.v.), of sheep farming and encounters with Aborigines, and an account by Alan Macfarlane Giles of an 1883 search party in which he was the only survivor of five men.

**Date span:** 1837–c.1845

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**236**

**WEATHERHEAD, ALEXANDER**

*(B. 1809)*

*Leaves from my life by Alexander Weatherhead, of Nangutta, Twofold Bay, being fifty-six years’ experience on the South Coast of New South Wales, Australia*

Bega, NSW, 1891 [1892]. 52 pp., port.

Born in Northumberland, England, Weatherhead emigrated with his wife to Sydney in 1834. He worked for a while at Bergalia and Bodalla for John Hawdon, brother of overlander Joseph Hawdon, and eventually bought a property at Nangutta. In 1838–40 he took part in a droving expedition from the south coast of New South Wales to Adelaide. At the age of 77, he returned for a visit to England. Weatherhead is self-conscious about his lack of skill as a writer, describing himself as ‘left in the rough’ educationally, but his somewhat rambling account of pioneering life is punctuated with graphic incidents and humorous asides.

**Date span:** 1830s–1880s

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**237**

**WEBSTER, JOHN**

*(B. 1818)*

*Reminiscences of an old settler in Australia and New Zealand*

Christchurch, NZ, Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1908. 294 pp. port.

In his *Reminiscences*, the author recalls his childhood in Montrose, Scotland, his voyage to Australia as an immigrant in 1835, and his employment until 1839 as a shepherd for the Howe family, on their stations near Sydney and on the Murrumbidgee. Most of the book, however, deals with two overland journeys which he made with the Howes, from the Murrumbidgee to Adelaide, droving cattle, in 1839–41. This part of his narrative is based closely on diaries kept during the trips, and
includes details such as provisioning of the trip, for which Webster was storeman, observations of the countryside, vegetation and native animals, and accounts of open battles and skirmishes with Aborigines, who harassed them most of the way. Webster shows himself to be a keen and sensitive observer of nature and of the Aborigines. He goes on to describe his subsequent experiences in New Zealand, until 1846, during which time he participated in the war against the Maori chief Hone Heke. Although Webster continued his adventures well after this time, as his pamphlet, *The last cruise of the Wanderer*, published in 1858 and dealing with his voyage in 1851 to the Solomon Islands with Ben Boyd demonstrates, the *Reminiscences* end here.

**Date span: 1835-1846**

### 238

**West, Obed (1807—1891)**

*The memoirs of Obed West; a portrait of early Sydney*


Obed West was born in his father's house in Pitt Street, Sydney, in 1807, and spent his life in or near Sydney. His *Memoirs*, which were first published as a series of articles and letters in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 1882, deal less with his own life than with Sydney as he remembers it as a child and young man. West describes early streets such as Pitt, George and Chapel, naming many of the businesses there in 1816 or 1817. He also describes surrounding areas, soon developed as suburbs, and Five Islands, Camden and the Cow Pastures.

**Date span: c.1810-1820**

### 239

**Westgarth, William (1815—1889)**

*Personal recollections of early Melbourne & Victoria*


Westgarth was the author of a number of widely-read descriptive and statistical works about Australia. This loosely-connected narrative, which contains more autobiographical detail than his other writings, was written chiefly during a last voyage to Australia in 1888, its author having returned to settle in England in 1857. Westgarth first looks back on his 17 very active years in Victoria, beginning with his arrival in Melbourne in 1840. He set up business as an import merchant, living first at South Yarra and then at Merri Creek. Features of these early days—the town landscape, local Aborigines, the establishment of major newspapers and representative government, the Victorian goldfields, and friends and personalities of the day, are noted, alongside Westgarth's own involvement in many public issues. These included his key roles in the Mechanics Institute, the Benevolent Society and the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, and his work from 1851 as a member of the first Victorian Legislative Council. In the latter role, Westgarth was chairman of the 1854-55 investigation of the 'Ballarat riot' (Eureka); this is touched on briefly. Westgarth also covers the period after his return to England, when he remained involved in colonial affairs, especially in the campaign to end transportation, and in the initial inter-colonial discussions that led eventually to federation. He brings his recollections up to date with postscript anecdotes of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane in 1888.

**Date span: 1840-1857, 1888**

*Note: See *ADB*, vol. 6*
Originally published in parts in the *Australasian*, 1–22 February 1879, William Westwood’s autobiography is here ‘interleaved with a brief history of his life & death’ by Stephan Williams. It was offered for publication in 1879 by Rev. Thomas Rogers (writing under the pseudonym ‘Peutetre’), who claims to have encouraged Westwood to write details of his life to distract himself while waiting trial for murder on Norfolk Island in 1846. Rogers, who describes the night which he spent with Westwood in his cell prior to his execution, states that he has altered nothing but the spelling in the manuscript, which Westwood bequeathed to him. Although simply expressed, the narrative gives evidence of a good degree of education and intelligence. Westwood makes no excuse for the crimes, including highway robbery, which he committed in England before his conviction and transportation to New South Wales for 14 years in 1837, at the age of 16. He does, however, blame his subsequent misdemeanors on the unreasonably hard master to whom he was assigned at Gidleigh station, in the Bungendore district. He absconded several times and was caught and punished before joining with notorious criminal Patrick Curran in a series of robberies in the Queanbeyan/Canberra district. They parted company when Curran attempted to rape the mistress of a house they were robbing; Westwood indicates that at this stage of his career at least he did not wish to hurt anyone, and had sympathy for the poor and weak—of one robbery, he says ‘they were very poor people, and it grieved me to the heart to take anything from them.’ He seems to have been partly motivated by a desire to avenge himself on those who had treated him harshly (he made a point of robbing ‘Black Francis McCarty’, a magistrate who had sentenced him) and to punish all hard masters, and sometimes allowed convict servants to assault their masters while he had them helpless. Westwood describes the reckless robberies and audacious escapes during 1840 and 1841 which gained him notoriety as the bushranger ‘Jacky Jacky’. Eventually captured and transported to Port Arthur for life, he continually attempted to escape (on one occasion succeeding in getting off the peninsula on which the settlement was located, in an episode reminiscent of Clarke’s *For the term of his natural life*) and was kept in chains for 12 months by Commandant Charles O’Hara Booth. Westwood was moved from Port Arthur to a probation station at Glenorchy as a reward for rescuing some men from drowning, absconded after six months, but ‘ignorant of the country, hungry and tired’, allowed himself to be captured near Oatlands. He was tried and received his third life sentence, this time to be served on Norfolk Island. Westwood’s narrative ends here. He arrived at Norfolk Island in December 1845 and in July 1846 was a leader in a mass convict rebellion, documented by Martin Cash (q.v.), and single-handedly murdered four guards. He was hanged on 13 October 1846.

**Date span:** 1837–1846

**240**

**WILLIAMS, JOHN G.**

*The adventures of a seventeen-year-old lad and the fortunes he might have won*

Boston, Author, 1894. 308 pp.

Written from memory 40 years after the narrated events, Williams’ account covers his experiences of 17 years of wandering in California, Australia, South America and
British Columbia. In 1841 when he was 17, he left his home in the backwoods of Canada and embarked on a whaler bound for Australia. At Geographe Bay he jumped ship, an action he frequently repeated, and escaped capture by walking to Leschenault. In Western Australia he tried several occupations including brick-making, carpentry, kangaroo hunting, blacksmithing and minor surgical work, but found it impossible to make money. After a brief episode on an American whaler, he deserted to walk 100 miles in order to join an English whaler bound for Hobart and thence for England. In Hobart he served on the government brig, Governor Phillip, carrying convicts to other parts of the colony. During this period he helped a fellow countryman serving his ticket-of-leave to escape. After a series of wanderings which took him to Fiji and Lord Howe Island before returning to Hobart, and a sequence of desertsions, he signed on a ship bound for England in early 1847. In July 1848 he was back in America, where he joined the Californian gold rush and incidentally made the acquaintance of Benjamin Boyd. He returned to Australia to join the Victorian gold rush in 1852–53, but was largely unsuccessful and handicapped by a lazy partner. In 1853 he took a ship for South America and subsequently had numerous adventures in British Columbia. This narrative includes descriptions of the Aborigines, whom the author endows with some characteristics of the North American Indian.

Date span: 1841–1858

Wright, an American citizen, fought on behalf of the Canadian patriots against the British at the Battle of Prescott in 1838. He was taken prisoner, tried, convicted and sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted to transportation to Van Diemen’s Land, where he was taken by the ship Buffalo, arriving in Hobart Town in February 1840. Wright and his fellow exiles, who included Gates, Heustis, Marsh and Snow (qq.v.), were addressed by Governor Franklin, then assigned to road gangs in and around Hobart, Wright working at Lovely Banks, Green Ponds and Bridgewater. He was then sent to a station at Brown’s River, where in 1842 he was granted a ticket-of-leave. In 1843 he, along with about 1500 other ticket-of-leave holders, was called on by the Governor to hunt for bushrangers. Wright and five companions were fortunate in capturing the bushrangers Jeffs and Conway, and as a reward Wright was granted a pardon and a passage home. He returned to New York via London in 1843, well before the others originally transported with him.

Wright gives a sombre account of his life in Van Diemen’s Land. He describes his own experiences of the convicts’ miserable conditions, the backbreaking labour in road gangs and punishments such as solitary confinement for trifling misdemeanours. He also witnessed a number of cruel floggings. His bitterness is increased by his sense of injustice at his imprisonment by the English, whom he regards as tyrants and oppressors. He views Van Diemen’s Land society, convicts, officials and settlers alike, as
miserable and depraved. Yet Wright expresses his appreciation of the beauty of the Tasmanian landscape and wildlife, describing native animals, birds, plants and trees. He also describes the customs of the Tasmanian Aborigines and their plight with regard to European settlement with sensitivity. Wright’s narrative is accompanied by other documents relating to the Canadian rebellion.

Date span: 1839–1843
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