The Murdoch Ethos:
Essays in Australian History
in Honour of
Foundation Professor Geoffrey Bolton
THE MURDOCH ETHOS:

ESSAYS IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

IN HONOUR OF FOUNDATION PROFESSOR

GEOFFREY BOLTON

Edited by

Rae Frances and Bruce Scates

Murdoch University

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# Essays in Australian History in Honour of Foundation Professor Geoffrey Bolton

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume of essays came together in the hectic weeks between Christmas and Geoffrey Bolton's departure for the East. From beginning to end it was a collective effort, and a tribute to the resourcefulness and energy of all involved. We are indebted to Lenore Layman and Jim Warren for nominating several of the essayists as well as to the contributors themselves. Thanks are also due to Jim Cooper (who designed the cover), Shirley Booth (who advised on layout), Genelle Jones (for organising the launching), Margaret McPherson, Gerry Verang and Vicki McFadyen of the History Club (for all manner of encouragement and support). We wish to thank Karin Maxwell and Robert Durey who typed and retyped a large and complex manuscript; no doubt they could have found a better way to spend the Christmas break. Wendy Haboldt saw this manuscript through the last of its crises. All these individuals worked very hard to secure the success of this volume, undaunted by an impossible deadline and an even more impossible budget. Their efforts remind us that achievement in the face of impossibility is very much a Murdoch trait.

RAE FRANCES
BRUCE SCATES
Editors

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Introduction
Introduction

Part One: Editorial Comment

Reviewing Geoffrey Bolton's life and work at Murdoch is rather like those first European attempts to describe Australia's platypus: what a complex, curious and extraordinarily energetic creature this is. Like the platypus Geoffrey Bolton defies all the convenient categories of his age. Some have labelled him a political historian, noting his interest in statues, statesmen and parliamentary intrigue. Others have seen him as a champion of 'social history': a persuasive practitioner of labour history, Aboriginal history and all such 'history from below'.

In truth, Bolton's interests are far too evasive to define with any precision. Over the past 30 years his teaching and research have led him from one continent to another, spanning nineteenth century Europe, twentieth century America and a fair proportion of Australian history as well. He is what the American's would call a well rounded scholar: a salutary reminder that Australian scholarship is part of the scholarship of the world. And like the platypus, Bolton is a creature of paradox. He is as much at home in the archives as a radio studio, balancing the rigours of scholarship with a commitment to history for the 'ordinary woman and man', quick with classical allusion but even better at a 'yarn'. At times he seems like an Oxford don, striding uncertainly across the dusty plains of Murdoch; at others, one can almost see the bushman from Balingup, a singed beard and blistered hands embarrassing reminders of that 'bloody woodstove'.

Even his career path proves something of a puzzle. Who but Bolton would move from a long established chair at the University of Western Australia to foundation professorship at an innovative campus like Murdoch; who but Bolton would seek a new appointment (and yet another challenge) when most others (in a similar position) plan to either atrophy or retire?

One last observation before the chronology exhausts itself: Bolton is as essential to Murdoch's landscape as the platypus is to Australia's; both belong there, both regard it as their home. In the thirteen years of Geoffrey Bolton's chair he provided leadership and inspiration for his staff and his students alike. In doing so he
came to embody what many have called the 'Murdoch Ethos'; the belief that learning is a process of growth and innovation and that scholarship should go hand in hand with a commitment to social change. These essays are a product of that ethos and a testimony to the strength and diversity of Australian history under Geoffrey Bolton's 'reign'.

Like Bolton himself, they engage different topics and different times. Several of the essays discuss the historian's role in the wider community, bridging the gap between popular history and the history of academe. Others explore constructions of class, gender and race. All are distinguished by the rigour of their methodology and the extent of their research. Each, in its own way, lends voice to those the conventional historical narrative has often crowded out or suppressed. Written by Bolton's former students, they are a fitting tribute to the individual who has most shaped the way history was taught at Murdoch. On a personal note, this volume is also our way of saying thanks. In December 1987 Geoffrey Bolton secured our appointment as (temporary) lecturers on a job sharing basis, pioneering the principle of equal opportunity in a profession still largely dominated by men. Like every historian he was keen to cite a precedent; that same year the University of Melbourne (otherwise a conservative institution) had made a similar appointment (although in this case the position was tenured). Again it had been history that paved the way. Throughout the term of our appointment, Geoffrey Bolton has demanded rigour in scholarship and excellence in teaching. But more importantly he has left his young, untenured staff free to teach history in the way they believe it should be taught, free to apply their work in the wider community, free to challenge comfortable orthodoxies, to innovate, experiment and change. Change it seems is the motif of Geoffrey Bolton's career. We hope his new post suits him just as well.

Rae Frances
Bruce Scates
Part Two: Reflections on GCB by his Students and Staff.

(Editors' Note: In compiling this volume, the Editors sought comment from those Geoffrey Bolton had worked with or taught. There were many responses, too many to reproduce in full. The following are a representative sample; our thanks to all who had the courage to share their thoughts - RF/BS)

Bolton as Rumpole: Reflections of an Honours Student

At our first honours seminar of 1988 Geoffrey explained that his Oxford background (where the professors had all kept port and claret on hand) had left him unimpressed by the scowling attitude of Murdoch's administration toward lecturers sharing a glass with their students and colleagues. Indeed, he added, he thought of himself as being something of a 'Rumpole' and would make a habit of interrupting our honours seminary incessantly in order that we all might relax with a glass of wine. From that time I always thought as I drove in to Murdoch for my seminar that I was wandering down the road to Pomeroy's to relax in the company of my tipsy friends and to share in their scintillating conversation - not perhaps a normal attitude of mind when driving in to seminars, but a healthy one nonetheless.

John Dunlop

The View from Below: Reminiscences of a Graduate

Were the notes for his lectures etched on the floorboards of LT1, or were they hanging somewhere near the ceiling? In the measured manner of a natural orator, the venerable Prof's head kept me fascinated as he pondered the ground then the air for a coherent string of words, dates and ideas to transform into an eloquent testimony about how the past informs the present. The answers were not always there: but the questions were and what I learned from Geoffrey is that it is the questions that matter most.

Maryon Allbrook

A Learned Friend: Reflections of a Post Graduate Student

Somehow Geoff has always managed to be there. The comforting familiar face in the Alexander Library just when you've run out of money for the photocopier; the strong fresh-brewed coffee and
sometimes even sticky bun in his office first thing in the morning when no respectable post-grad. has been out of bed long enough to breakfast - these things were as important as the more academic side of the relationship between student and supervisor.

I met Geoffrey in London in 1984, when he was head of the Australian Studies Centre at the university of London. A civil servant contemplating with some trepidation a return to study, I was introduced by Geoff to the finest Russell Square could offer in the way of cheap Italian, and was so reassured by him that Murdoch seemed a natural choice when it came to selecting an Australian university. I've never regretted that choice; nor has Geoff let me down. In fact, he stood me up just once. On a summer's day in London I turned up at Russell Square for our regular consultation only to discover that he'd deserted his post for the Royal Garden Party. I turned Republican on the spot!

Geoff has always taken on, in the role of supervisor, the complementary roles of confidante, father confessor and mentor, not to mention real estate agent and used car salesman. But those labels suggest paternalism that Geoff was never guilty of; it's simpler perhaps just to call him a friend.

Jan Gothard

'One of the Troops': a Colleague's Parting Tribute

Cross-legged on the floor of the Coolgardie Convent, breakfasting at Mornington Mills, striding through the bush at Northcliffe, dispensing coffee and grog at Murdoch Geoff was there, encouraging all sorts of endeavour from all sorts of students and staff. He helped to create and sustain Murdoch's informal and friendly atmosphere, lubricating it with good nature, good cheer, kindness, the occasional call (usually implicit) for moderation and a liberal acceptance and encouragement of diverse points of view. Geoff's span and his openness shaped an environment in which the practice of history flourished. We'll miss him.

Lenore Layman

'Complete Consideration': From his Secretary's Desk

"Would this be a convenient time to handle some correspondence?" what more pleasant trait could be hoped for in a working relationship than one of complete consideration. It may be a story about Bill Hayden when he was a policeman in northern Queensland that brings
another laugh in the midst of the busy office routine. A whistle in the hallway, despite the crises occurring all around, that's Geoffrey. When a well known Women's group was awaiting the late arrival of a distinguished Professor, they had their President phone Murdoch in a desperate bid to track him down. The Professor then phoned to say he had been receiving strange looks from middle-aged women as he lingered on the steps of the Concert Hall while anticipating his rendezvous with the President. Just crossing St George's Terrace solved the problem.

Life is never dull with Geoffrey at the helm. My time at Murdoch working with him has been fun, exciting and hectic. I'll miss him a great deal, and I'll also miss opening those high quality envelopes with the little gold crowns on the back flaps.

Genelle Jones

'Ours Patron': From the Secretary of the History Club

'I'll never forget that wink!'

Margaret McPherson

'His Great Achievement': Memories of Murdoch

The History Programme that Geoffrey Bolton established at Murdoch was new and exciting. It began with his Introduction to History, which captured the imagination of first-year students and led into boldly experimental courses in European, American, Asian and Australian history where young teachers were given the freedom to design courses around their enthusiasms. The other history department over the river was enjoying a period of vigour as Tom Stannage and Brian de Garis worked alongside a procession of untenured colleagues - Marian Aveling, Stephen Foster, Alan Atkinson and others. The traffic between the two places benefited both.

Geoffrey was able to provide a distinctive leadership. He helped and encouraged us in our teaching and research. At a time when it was fashionable to sneer at our host culture, he reminded us of its historical richness and complexity. When some of the evangelists of the Murdoch ethos scorned scholarship, he affirmed it. I remember particularly an occasion when a temperamental colleague announced half an hour before he was due to lecture that he would not do so, and Geoffrey filled in with an impromptu survey of American history that missed not a beat.
He had hopes for the Programme that were not fulfilled. The constraints that were imposed on the university from the late 1970s cut across his plans for the discipline, and he was not able to make the appointments he hoped to make. As the trees grew around West Academic, the staff and syllabus were prevented from growing to the dimensions he had planned.

My role in the Programme and the School, during the two years I was there, was described as that of an anal Stalinist. Where he saw the best in the people and situations with which he had to deal, I was more critical. His great achievement was surely to maintain enthusiasm among the staff and the extraordinary range of students who passed through the Programme. The range of writing on aspects of Western Australian history that appears here is surely a fitting tribute, and he leaves behind three equally talented practitioners of telling the story of your own place in Lenore Layman, Raelene Frances and Bruce Scates. Long may the tradition flourish.

Stuart Macintyre

'The Manufacture of Geoffrey Bolton': Results of the Luscher Colour Test

Needs recognition. Ambitious, wants to impress and be looked up to, to be both popular and admired. Seeks to bridge the gap which he feels separates him from others.

Works well in cooperation with others. Needs a personal life of mutual understanding and freedom from discord.

Circumstances are such that he feels forced to compromise for the time being if he is to avoid being cut off from affection or from full participation.

Stress arising from the inability to maintain relationships stably in their desired condition.

Sensitive, and susceptible to gentleness and delicacy of feeling, with a desire to blend into some sort of mystic fusion of erotic harmony. However, he keeps a strict and watchful control on his emotional relationships as he needs to know precisely where he stands. Is fastidious, aesthetic and has a cultured taste which allows him to form and express his own taste and judgement, especially in the field of art and artistic creativity. Strives to ally with others who can assist him in his intellectual or artistic growth.

In brief: sublimated artistic sensitivity.

Rob Pascoe
'Fresh Approaches': Comments from an Old Associate.

Geoff Bolton and I became friends in 1950 at the University of Western Australia. I was President of the Guild of Undergraduates that year, and Geoff was editor (one of the best of the many who have graced that position) of the Pelican. We had nearby offices and often used to meet for a talk in one or the other; sometimes I helped Geoff to correct proofs of the paper. We sometimes left the more entertaining literal errors deliberately!

I have lived in Perth for most of my life; Geoff has spent a considerable time away, but we have remained close friends. His entertaining letters have helped to sustain that friendship. We have been collaborators on three occasions. Firstly as a clowning pair, Glock and Spiel, in the University Procession (in 1950, I think). A photograph exists! In 1973 we published a joint paper, 'European Man in South-Western Australia' in the Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia. This was a pioneering examination of changes in attitudes to the environment and we expanded it and modified it to make the opening chapter of one of the Sesquicential volumes, Environment and Science (1979). More recently we gave the key paper to a meeting of historians in Canberra at which the proposal for a National Museum of Australia was examined. We believe that some of our ideas helped to shape the planning of that institution which presently languishes through lack of Federal Government finance.

We have long shared the desire for the development of fresh approaches to Australian history. I hope that discussion of my work at the Museum helped Geoff to consider some new directions. I certainly benefited greatly from his support and advice as we pioneered, in my department, the work of historians in Australian museums.

One small anecdote to demonstrate Geoff's well-known, phenomenal memory. In London in 1952 I got to know the Australian writer Florence James. When Geoff went to Oxford later I put him in touch. Florence visited me and my family in Perth about ten years ago. She had come to attend a Quaker conference and was anxious to contact the son of a South African historian whom she had met at a Quaker conference. The son was working as a psychologist in W.A.

I telephoned a friend at the UWA who said that the son was not working in the Psychology Department there. I then rang Geoff to see if he was at Murdoch. It gives more point to the story that I cannot remember now the name of the man we were trying to locate. Geoff will. Without hesitation he said, 'There are only four people with that surname in the telephone directory, and I know that it is not the one who lives in Hamilton Hill'. Sure enough there were only four entries in the directory, and one was for a Hamilton Hill address. One of the other three turned out to be our quarry. We were tempted to believe that Geoff may have committed the directory to memory. It was too nice a fancy to put to any further test!

David Hutchinson
Part 1.
Race
IMPRISONMENT AND INSTITUTIONALISATION 1:
Insanity or Social Control?:
Asians in Fremantle Asylum 1890-1900
by Norman Megahey

The rise of the Asylum has been examined by, among others, Andrew Scull¹ and David Rothman². While their respective approaches differ, the explanations they put forward are not mutually exclusive. Scull links the establishment of the Asylum in England with the growth of the capitalist market system, while Rothman sees the move towards Asylums in America as a response to the need to create order and stability in the midst of changes. The establishment of the Asylum in Western Australia cannot be understood without reference to the growth of both European and American Asylums. The concept of the Asylum was firmly established in Western thought by the 1860s, so that its introduction to Western Australia was inevitable as part of the total package, the introduction of a European society.

In this paper I wish to show that the setting up of the Asylum in Western Australia was a response to both economic and social conditions, and that those factors can be seen to have been operating in the presence of a disproportionately high number of Asians among the Asylum population. Firstly, however, I wish to examine briefly the development of the notion of insanity, in view of the fact that this peculiarly Western concept was applied to so many non-Western people. I will then examine the rise of the Asylum in Western society with reference to the work of both Scull and Rothman. Finally I will describe the circumstances surrounding the confinement of Asians in the Asylum, linking these circumstances with factors already mentioned.

INTRODUCTION

The question of how and why insanity came to be identified as a unique problem is dealt with at some length by Foucault.³ Imposing that insanity is a creation of Western civilization he examines reasons for it being set apart. Madness, or folly, for Foucault, is part and parcel of the human condition. He talks of 'that zero point in the course of madness at which madness is an undifferentiated experience.'⁴ It was with the dawning of the Age of Reason that madness acquired a particularly threatening power. The only way the new age could cope with unreason was by total exclusion.
Szasz puts forwards a similar view when he talks of the development of the myth of mental illness as part of the metamorphosis of medieval mind into modern mind, which he says entailed a vast ideological conversion from the perspective of theology to that of science. 'Nature', says Szasz, 'displaced God, the state, the church, and mental illness, witchcraft.'

For Foucault there are other operations at work, contributing towards the stigmatization of madness. For example he connects the developing attitude towards madness with the disappearance from Europe of leprosy. 'What doubtless remained longer than leprosy ... were the values and images attached to the figure of the leper as well as the meaning of his exclusion.' "Deranged minds would take the part played by the leper.'

With the rise of capitalism social and economic factors come into play, and so there were created throughout Europe enormous houses of confinement, made necessary, says Foucault, by the imperative of labour. Confinement for Foucault is a police matter. 'Police in the precise sense that the classical epoch gave to it; that is, the totality of measures which make work possible and necessary for all those who could not live without it.'

Foucault sees two factors at work. First there is the meaning of the madman's exclusion, the symbolic purification of society by the rejection of unreason, and secondly there is the advent of capitalism which results in madness being conceived through a condemnation of idleness in a society needing, above all else, labour.

Scull also sees the rise of the Asylum as being strongly linked with the growth of the capitalist market system, and the impact which that had on social relationships. This impact for Scull is clearly in evidence in the disappearance of social obligation to the poor, which resulted in a strain on the family-based system of relief; hence the need for institutional methods of managing the indigent. However, the conditions of the emerging labour market necessitated the need to distinguish between able-bodied and non able-bodied poor, the new system requiring a large labour pool. Initially, the workhouse served as the means for making this separation, by removing the able-bodied poor from the community in order to teach them the discipline of labour. However, the order and discipline necessary for the proper functioning of the workhouse was threatened by the presence of the madman, who would neither be persuaded or induced to conform to the regulations. The madman's presence in general hospitals and goals presented similar problems. The distinction amongst dependants therefore had to be elaborated.

It is worth noticing here how similar needs gave rise to the first plan to build an Asylum in Western Australia. It was after the introduction of the convict system in 1850 that the need for a lunatic asylum began to be voiced. By the middle to late 1850s, increasing numbers of insane prisoners were being shipped out. Thomas Dixon, Superintendent of Fremantle Prison, reporting in 1857...
on the lack of facilities for control of 'lunatic' prisoners, talked of: 'their bad effect on other prisoners, the impossibility of employing them on working parties .... and the absolute necessity of separating the sane from the insane prisoner.'

Rothman's account of the rise of the Asylum in America deals with prisons and poor houses as well as lunatic asylums. Rothman is concerned with the colonialist attitudes towards social deviance, and he sees the growth of the Asylum as: 'first and foremost a vigorous attempt to promote the stability of the society .... an effort to ensure cohesion in new and changing circumstances.'

By the 1830s, says Rothman, Americans were writing about the origins of deviant and dependant behaviour, and attributing these to faulty organization of the community. "To control abnormal behaviour promised to be the first step in establishing a new system for stabilizing the community." This, for Rothman, was the crucial element that led to the rise of the Asylum. However, the colonist were also concerned with the financial effects of deviancy, so a variety of cases, lunacy being just one, were made part of the definition of the poor. "The lunatic came to public attention not as someone afflicted with delusions or fear, but as someone suffering from poverty." Considering the special category of insanity and its position in the social order, Rothman points out that, while medical men agreed that insanity was a disease of the brain, they assigned its first causes to social organization. Doctors charted likely causes of mental illness as, for example, social isolation, masturbation, religious anxiety. To understand insanity, then, one had to look at the workings of society.

I have given a brief outline of these different yet overlapping approaches to the study of the rise of the Asylum; Foucault's very broad approach dealing with economic and social aspects as well as the nature of madness itself, Scull's economic explanation and Rothman's emphasis of the need for social control in an organizationally fragile society. I intend now to show that elements from all three approaches can be applied to the rise of the Asylum in Western Australia. I hope to do this through an examination of the circumstances surrounding the confinement in Fremantle Asylum of a number of Asians, mostly Chinese, a matter which became an increasing concern for the Asylum and colonial Administrators during the 1890s.

I will first look at how and why these people came to be living in Western Australia. Second, I will look at the circumstances surrounding their actual confinement in the Asylum; how they first came to the notice of the authorities and what behaviours they exhibited that resulted in the tag 'lunatic'.

Finally, I will describe how the problem (from the authorities' point of view) of their confinement was solved by the exportation of 17 of these men to Singapore.
ASiANs AND THE LABOUR MARKET

The Annual Report of the Lunatic Asylum, 1891, reports: 'it is alarming to contemplate the number of dark-blooded men who get admitted. This year there were 17 colonial lunatics admitted; 5 of these are coloured men, i.e. 2 Chinamen, 1 Cingalese, 1 Indian, 1 Manilaman. There are now 17 foreigners, chiefly Chinamen, out of a total of 56 colonial patients.' By 1896 there were 34 Asians out of a total of approximately 101 male inmates, i.e. around 34% of the male patients were Asian.

The exact circumstances surrounding the arrival of each individual Asian into the Colony are impossible to discover. Record keeping was poor, most spoke no English and efforts by various officials in the late 1890s to trace their arrival proved fruitless. Dr Barnett in a memo to the Colonial Under Secretary in 1896 wrote:

Chinese lunatics are forwarded to the Asylum from various districts of the colony with the most meagre information as to their mental state, and no information whatever as to how they came to Western Australia, or from what port. They are simply described as Chinese. Elsewhere Barnett stated that he believed the lunatic Asians may have been shipped to Western Australia from Singapore and Batavia in order to get rid of them. This suggestion was made by others from time to time. The possibility that there was a practise of shipping lunatics from Chinese States is mentioned in the Annual Report of the Singapore Asylum for 1893, which stated that the Straits Settlement had become a dumping ground for a very large number of mentally deranged Chinese from neighbouring states. There does not appear, however, to be evidence that any such practise existed involving Western Australia.

A more likely explanation for the presence of these men in the Colony was the trade which took place in Chinese and Malay labourers. As early as 1847 the following item appears in the Government Gazette:

I am directed by the Governor to inform you, that being desirous of affording every facility to any persons wishing to obtain Chinese or other servants from Singapore, it is his intention to despatch the Colonial Schooner immediately for that purpose, if a sufficient number of servants is applied for under the following regulations.

The regulations outlined were that anyone requiring a servant should furnish the Resident Magistrate of their district with a down payment of 5 pounds to cover immediate expenses, (this payment would be considered a charge against the servant's first year's wages). The Government would pay for the passage and maintenance on board. The
recommendation was that the servant should sign an agreement to remain in the Colony for at least three years and not leave the service of the master before two years. This trade in cheap labour was to continue, restricted only by demand, for the next 40 years, until the passing of 'the restriction of Chinese Immigration Act of 1889'.

A series of correspondence took place in 1878 between Governor Ord and W.D. Moore & Co., arranging terms for the importation of Chinese Coolies. Moore & Co., suggested a price of 3-5 pounds per head. One letter included the information:

We may mention that we have already imported and employed 87 Malays and Chinese and we also employed, through our constituents, 70 Japanese at Sharks Bay, who had been left destitute there.

The final terms arranged for this particular contract was 300 pounds for 50 Coolies to be shipped from Hong Kong.

The terms of the contractual arrangements were strict. Of importance in this respect was the Masters and Servants Act. Initially the Act in force in England applied. Several amendments were made to that Act before a new Act was introduced in 1892. Throughout the law was favourable towards the Master. An amendment in 1868 ruled that the term "servant" should cover: all agricultural and pastoral and other labourers and workmen, shepherds, stockmen, herdsmen, mechanics and artisans, domestic servants and all other servants.

Indenture was normally for three years. If a servant was ill or imprisoned the term of his absence from work would be added to the existing agreement. Any complaint, by either party, during the term of indenture, was to be laid in writing before a Justice of the Peace, a provision of dubious benefit to non English speaking Asians. The conditions of employment were strictly adhered to. The penalty for breach of contract was a fine or imprisonment. A note from the Immigration office dated 19 May 1880, refers to two Chinese Coolies who for some misconduct, I believe refusing to cook, were sent to Perth Prison.

**ASIAN AND SOCIAL DEVIANCE**

Asian immigration into Western Australia was part of an economic strategy aimed at acquiring a source of cheap labour. In this respect the colonial attitudes towards the Asians were straightforward. A different set of attitudes come into focus, however, when the 'cheap labour' was no longer forthcoming, either because a servant refused to work or because the term of his agreement expired. In the first instance the law was clearly able to be bought to bear and, if need be, imprisonment would result. Expiry of agreement, however, left the Asian a free man, something which caused the colonial authorities some concern.
A resolution passed at a conference of Australasian Governments in 1881, called on the Western Australian authorities to put an end to the trade in Chinese, which they considered 'highly prejudicial to the best interests of Her Majesty's free and loyal subjects.' The Resolution went on:

the objection to the Chinese is not altogether one of prejudice of colour or race, but is founded on a rational view of the danger to these British Communities which might in the course of time flow from a people numbering more than 400 million, whose language, laws, religion and habits of life are alien to those of Her Majesty's subjects in Australia.²¹

throughout Australia the Chinese were regarded as dangerous aliens who 'speak in an unworldly tongue',²² and 'whose docile industry, however charming to employers, is unwelcome in British Australia.'²³

In Western Australia concern was expressed in different quarters about what to do with the Asians at the end of their agreements. As long as they were under contract they were economically viable, and under supervision. It is likely that some may have continued to work for their masters after the term of their agreement expired. Others, however, either left their place of employment or were no longer required. In either case the result was the same, the release into the community of Asian aliens whom no-one wanted.

It is worth mentioning the conditions prevailing in the colony to which these men were subjected on termination of contract. The Government prohibited them from settling on any gold field for at least five years after its proclamation. They were not eligible for naturalization, to be employed in the Public Service, or to obtain fishing, liquor or mining licenses, and were not issued with mining rights. These were the legal restrictions; add to them the prevailing colonial attitudes towards 'coloureds', the rejection by a society who regarded the Chinese as a race of pagans 'addicted to vices of a greatly immoral character', and we begin to get some idea of the plight of the Chinese in Western Australia.

The case of Tua Ah Ing illustrates the possible fate of these men. Tua Ah Ing was received into the Asylum in January 1892 on an order signed by Foss and Brockman, Justices at Carnarvon, and a medical certificate stating 'mental aberration'. On 11 January, Dr Hope wrote to the Colonial Secretary stating:

this man shows no evidence of mental aberration .... this man talks so little and that in broken English that it is difficult to prove he has a mental condition.²⁴

Hope informed the Colonial Secretary that he had written to Carnarvon for further details. The reply sent on 13 January, by Foss, states:
imported by G. Brockman. Agreement expired some time back. The man was violent and I don’t know what else I could have done with the man.25

Under Secretary O’Briend, in a memo to the Colonial Secretary, said of this case:

I think it shows the necessity of some immediate alteration of the law under which labourers are imported into the colony if our relief depots and lunatic asylums are not to be flooded with these people. At present the obligation to return these men whence they came on termination of their original agreement is only an obligation in NAME where it exists at all .... it should be made compulsory, under heavy penalty for not doing so, for every importer of coloured labour to return that labour at the end of the original agreement.26

The case of Tua Ah Ing was not an isolated one. A high percentage of Asians in the Asylum in the 1890s had been sent from Northern Districts under orders signed by Resident magistrates and with such labels as ‘weak intellect’, ‘mental aberration’. Dr Hope, before a Civil Service Commission in 1894, stated:

if a Chinaman in the Northern District is very troublesome, he is made to feel miserable and sent down to the Asylum, without proof whether he is sane or not.27

What is remarkable about this statement is that, once sent to the Asylum under such conditions, the Asylum doctors, Hope included, were not prepared to release them. So we find Hope writing to the Colonial Secretary about Tua Ah Ing, whom he has already stated shows no evidence of mental aberration. ‘Do you think the certificate and order are sufficient for his detention, or shall I process another medical certificate?’28

The problem, as the authorities saw it, was two fold. On the economic front they were faced with the prospect of Asian paupers becoming a financial burden on the colony. Besides this, there was the need, in an emerging society, to promote stability and cohesion, hence the need to control the Asian deviants. What Rothman says of the Rise of Asylums in America can be equally applied to the rise of Fremantle Asylum, that is, ‘it was a vigorous attempt to promote the stability of the society .... an effort to ensure cohesion in new and changing circumstances.’29

Foucault, stressing the element of social control, points out, that definitions of madness depend on the elite and the need of the elite for outcasts. The fate of the madman is less important than the act of his exclusion which symbolically purifies society. It could be
suggested that his need for outcasts was especially strong in Western Australia than, for example, in Europe or America.

Miriam Dixson, pointing to the absence of 'an especially robust bourgeois or middle strata', in Australia, argues that this absence resulted in 'uncertainty, and a feeling of something missing, or inadequacy in relation to an English matrix or reference group.' This sense of uncertainty would, it could be argued, result in an even greater sense of the need to promote social cohesion.

**ASIANS IN THE ASYLUM**

By 1896 the number of Asians in the Asylum was causing grave concern to the Medical Superintendant. In his report that year he states: 'I regret to say that the aliens, including Chinese and Aboriginals, now number 34 and are increasing.'

From details which I have been able to obtain relating to 43 Asians admitted to the Asylum between 1882 and September 1896, the following statistics are of interest. Of these 43 there is record of only six being discharged; seven died, 17 were sent to Singapore Asylum in 1896, and ten were eventually classed as chronic, some appearing in Claremont Hospital records in 1908. Three are unaccounted for. Of the 17 sent to Singapore, only three had been interned for less than a year; the remaining 14 had been in the Asylum for periods ranging from two to 14 years. These figures indicate that once inside the Asylum, getting out was no easy task, a fact which concerned one assembly member who, during an 1891 debate on the Lunatic Asylum, questioned:

> Whether they should allow, under our new order of things, an institution like this to continue in a state which certainly somewhat reflected upon liberality which he thought was proverbial amongst West Australians.

He added that lunatics are put into the Asylum by a process of law, 'but once there, it seemed to him that we did our very best to prevent their ever coming out again.'

Two main concerns were expressed by the authorities about the presence of the Asians in the Asylum. One was the financial burden to the colony of the upkeep of these men. Dr Barnett, before a select committee in 1890, expressed concern that these were nearly all young men with a life expectancy of 20-30 years; 'that altogether they were costing the colony some 540 pounds a year to keep.'

The other concern was the effect that the Asians were having on the European inmates with which they were living. Dr Hope expressed this concern in relation to a similar situation to the prison. In reply
to the question: 'Do you think it is a good thing for Malays and Chinese to be mixed up with ordinary prisoners?'

Hope stated: 'We are not likely to teach the British prisoners much by the association .... I do not think the British are deleterious to the Chinese.'

The inability, due to lack of space, to segregate the Asian from European inmates in the Asylum caused some concern for Dr Barnett. In his 1894 report he recommended the erection of a wing for female inmates which would 'allow me .... to use the oldest part of the Asylum for Chinese, Malays and other Aliens.'

The classification of the Asylum inmates is problematical. The early system of classification described the inmates as 'quiet and chronic', 'melancholic and suicidal', 'idiotic, paralytic and epileptic'. Along with these classifications were the categories 'imperial', 'colonial', 'pauper' and 'private'. Class distinction is evident in the two classifications 'paying patients' and 'pauper lunatics'. The 1871 Lunacy Act laid down that 'every Asylum should in the first place be appropriated to the reception of pauper lunatics.'

Among the 43 Chinese whose details I have collected, almost all are paupers, and most as classified as suffering from either 'delusions; or 'dementia'. A high number have no classification recorded. In his study of mentally ill Chinese in Victoria, 1867-79, Edward Chiu, a psychiatrist, says: 'translation of these categories into current diagnostic nosological entities would be difficult and should not be attempted', though he goes on to tentatively equate 'delusional' with 'paranoid schizophrenic'.

Dr Elles, Medical Superintendent of the Singapore Asylum in the 1890s, noted that many of the delusions and hallucinations from which Chinese patients there suffered, were of a simple character than those seen in European Asylums and rarely persisted to any extent, worrying the patient but little. He goes on to say that: 'all Coolies believe in witchcraft and on recovery assigned to that the cause of their insanity.'

The question arises as to how these diagnoses were arrived at, in view of the fact that few of the Asians appear to have spoken English. Interpreters may have been used though this seems unlikely. (I have been able to trace only two recorded instances of this happening). As late as 1911 the Sunday Times reported of Deputy Warden John, who had been employed by the asylum for many years (and who, incidently, escorted the 17 Asians to Singapore in 1896):

to hear him bellow and roar one should be with him when he accompanies the Doctor on his rounds, acting as interpreter to Chinamen, Malays, Indians and in fact, all coloured nationalities. He cannot speak their language, but that is a mere detail. He interprets something to the Doctor.
THE SOLUTION

Annual Reports of the Asylum during the late 1880s and up to 1896, frequently drew the Governor's attention to the high number of Asian inmates. During the early 1890s, Sir John Forrest wrote to Hong Kong, China, and Singapore, requesting that these Governments would take the 'Asian Lunatics'. Eventually, in May 1896, Governor Mitchell offered to take into the Singapore Asylum, 'any lunatics from Western Australia who can be proved to my satisfaction to be a native of this colony', and adding, 'I am averse to taking any Chinese Lunatics who are natives of China.'

Forrest forthwith sent a memo to his Under Secretary, asking him to find out what Malays and Chinese in the Asylum were natives of Singapore. Dr Barnett's reply to the Under Secretary was to the effect that only four could be certified to be natives of Singapore, and that no information was known as to the place of origin of the remaining Asians. However, this does not seem to have worried Forrest unduly as he promptly instructed his Under Secretary to begin arranging for their transfer to Singapore. 'I think,' he added, 'as we do not know anything to the contrary we may fairly assume that all the Malays come from Singapore.'

On 20 July, 1896, the Under Secretary sent a memo to Forrest, 'If we pay, these men might be sent up at once, I think, but not otherwise', to which Forrest replied, 'Let them go whether we have to pay or not.' On 7 September, 17 Asians were despatched by steamer to Singapore Asylum.

Two features of this transaction are worth commenting on. One is the total disregard for the fate of the Asians. It mattered not whether they were being sent to their country of origin; what did matter was that the colony should not be afflicted with John Chinaman, a sentiment which Forrest had expressed a short time before in a Parliamentary debate. This concern was so strong for Forrest that he was prepared to ignore Mitchell's refusal to take natives of China. In fact, of the 17 men sent to Singapore, only two were Malay, one being from Sarawak and the other from Manilla.

The other interesting feature of the transaction concerns the argument repeatedly made that the colony could not afford the maintenance of these lunatics. In a debate on a proposed Chinese Immigration Restriction Bill in 1893, Sir John Forrest bemoaned the fact that: 'we have at present 20 Chinamen (or at any rate coloured men) in the lunatic asylum, a permanent charge upon the colony for the rest of their lives.'

However, the terms under which the Singapore authorities accepted the seven men were that the West Australian Government agree to pay for their transport to Singapore, and thereafter to pay for their upkeep in the Asylum, each annual payment being due in advance. Extra
expenses incurred also went down to the West Australian Government. So, for example, a letter from the Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlement informed the West Australian Government that two of the Chinese had been discharged from Singapore Asylum and returned to China: 'the cost incurred in sending these men back to their country amounts to $16.84, which will be debited to your Government.'

One can only conclude that the economic argument, so frequently used to justify the colonialist attitude towards these Asians, was a rationalization of a deeper resentment based on the irrational notion that the supremacy of the European Race was being threatened by the presence of Asians in Australia, a fear that was continually voiced in Parliament during the many debates on Chinese Immigration which took place in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Two examples will illustrate the frequently expressed sentiments:

We have a moral right to exclude from our shores these alien immigrants with whom we can never mix .... by the existence of Chinese in our midst we have a race that has a demoralising influence on public opinion, and on public industry.

There is some necessity for preventing such an influx of Chinese or any alien population of Asiatics as may endanger the supremacy of our own race.

The over riding concern then was the purification of society by the exportation of Chinese and Asian aliens. The export of 17 of the most undesirable of those people, the lunatics, was a step in that direction. The lack of concern about their eventual fate was to reveal itself again, four years later, when the following exchange of correspondence took place: 10 October, 1900, from Sir John Forrest to Colonial Secretary,

Am I right in saying that only four of the 17 sent before are still alive?

Reply,

'Yes, according to the letter from the Colonial Secretary, Singapore.'

Considering that these were all young men, 'likely to be a burden on the colony for many years,' one would think that surprise, to say the least, would have been expressed in some quarter at the high death rate. The reaction far from being one of surprise was the suggestion, by Forrest, that as 13 of the lunatics sent to Singapore were now dead, the Singapore Asylum should be approached to see if they would take a further batch of lunatics.

The final mention of the unfortunate 17 is in a letter from the Crown Agent, London, to the West Australian Government, refunding $346.66,
being the balance of a sum paid in advance for a year's maintenance of five lunatics from 1 September, 1900.'

CONCLUSION

Erving Goffman, in his book *Asylums*, says that while many total institutions function merely as storage dumps for inmates, they usually present themselves to the public as rational organisations 'designed consciously, through and through, as effective machines for producing a few officially avowed and approved ends.' Such a public presentation is evident in A.G. Ellis's recent history of the West Australian Health Services in which he talks of 'how much the state owes to those who had struggled over the years to minister to the mentally ill'. In fact, the so-called mentally ill figure very little in Dr Ellis's account. The names of successive medical superintendents head seven of the eleven chapters in his book and the sub-headings for each chapter mostly deal with factors relating to public image. So a picture is painted of altruistic endeavour to minister to the mentally ill, which, says, Ellis, goes back to the very beginnings of the colony.

An examination of the workings of the asylum from the inside and at the level of the inmates, unfolds, I believe, a different story. When the people for which the asylum was created are placed centrally, the picture takes on a new and more complete meaning. Social control rather than humanitarian concern seems to be the primary operation at work. In the case of the Asian inmates of Fremantle Asylum this becomes abundantly obvious. There seems to be no evidence for attributing their confinement to any pathological condition; what evidence does exist relates to expressions of concern about their nuisance value and statements expressing abhorrence at the contamination of society by the presence of these men. Neither does there seem to be any evidence, from any quarter, of a caring attitude towards the Asians. Their ultimate fate exemplifies this quite clearly.

A more comprehensive study of the rise of Fremantle Asylum would have to include a look at a cross-section of its inmates, European and Asian. Examination of conditions effecting European inmates may produce a different picture of the workings of the Asylum. It would be wrong to draw wide ranging conclusions from a study of Asian inmates alone, even though these comprised such a large proportion of the Asylum population. What I have tried to do in this paper is to show how the Asylum worked for these people only, and in this respect I believe it to have operated as a powerful weapon for social control.
ENDNOTES


4. Ibid., p.ix


6. Foucault, M., *op.cit.*, p.6

7. Ibid., p.7

8. Ibid., p.8

9. Ellis, A.S., *Eloquent Testimony: The Story of the Mental Health Service*


11. Ibid., p.58

12. Ibid., p.4


14. Colonial Secretary's Office Letters (C.S.O.), 436/93


17. Government Gazette, 14 May 1847

18. C.S.O., 1956/92

19. Masters and Servants Amendment, 1868

20. C.S.O., 1880 1250/3

21. C.S.O., 1881 1394

23. Allan, Alex, Men and Manners in Australia, Cheshire L.T.D., Melbourne, 1945

24. C.S.O., 1956/92

25. Ibid


27. First Progress Report of the Civil Service Commission, V & P, 1891

28. C.S.O., 1956/92

29. Rothman, D., op.cit., p.xviii


31. Ibid., p.199-200

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33. V & P, 1896

34. West Australian Parliamentary Debates (W.A.P.D.), 1890-1891, vol.1, p.105


37. V & P, 1894

38. Chiu, E., op.cit., p.543

39. Leith, M., op.cit., p.11

40. The Sunday Times, 26 February 1911

41. C.S.O., 436/93

42. Ibid

43. Ibid

44. Ibid
45. *Ibid*

46. *W.A.P.D.*, 1893, p.451

47. *C.S.O.*, 436/93

48. *W.A.P.D.*, 15 November 1894

49. *Ibid.*, 23 August 1893

50. *C.S.O.* 436/93

51. *Ibid*


53. Ellis, A.S., *op.cit.*, p.xvii
IMPRISONMENT AND INSTITUTIONALISATION 2:

Protection or Persecution?:

Aboriginal People and Institutionalisation

by Pam Mitson

The last decade of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of a growing 'concern' in Australian society in regard to 'what should be done about' the Aborigines. As the twentieth century progressed 'responsibility' for Aboriginal affairs was increasingly assumed by state government agencies.¹ With this marked increase in government intervention in Aboriginal affairs came the intensified application to Aborigines of a state controlled socialisation process through institutionalisation which Foucault calls 'normalisation'. This 'normalisation' of Aborigines in Australia by means of institutionalisation on government reserves and in 'homes' for children, arbitrary and incomplete though it was, had far-reaching effects upon both individual Aboriginals and upon Aboriginal familial and community structures.

In this essay I will consider the purpose, nature and effects of institutionalisation, how it conflicted with traditional and transitional Aboriginal child-rearing practices and gender roles and, by examining a range of Aboriginal responses to it, I will analyse the strategies for resistance and accommodation to 'normalisation'. Finally, if a systematic consequence of the practices of institutionalisation is the intentional construction of a 'delinquent' sub-group as Foucault argues, then the fragmentation and demoralisation of much of present day Aboriginal society is no accident. That being the case, both the attempted construction of Aboriginal society and Aboriginal strategies of resistance to this construction need to be understood if viability for the Aboriginal community and integrity of Aboriginal identity is to be attained/retained within Australian society.

In 1897 the Queensland Colonial Government drafted the Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sales of Opium Act which defined an Aboriginal 'by his appearance or by his association with other Aborigines.'² In the first decades of the twentieth century this act became the model for legislation and attitudes pertaining to the definition and treatment of Aboriginals in the Australian states and territories. These acts legislated, in the name of 'protecting' a dying race, for increasing numbers of Aboriginal people to be legally
segregated from the rest of Australian society on state-run and financed reserves. They also provided for an increasing degree of paternalistic state intervention in all aspects of the lives of anyone designated by the acts as 'Aboriginal'.

By the 1930s, when it became clear that not only would the Aboriginal race not 'die out', but that the numbers of part-Aboriginals were increasing, this policy of 'protection' and isolation of Aborigines was gradually replaced by one of attempted 'assimilation' of them into the 'lowest level' of white society. To this end there was an intensification of the intention to 'educate' part-Aboriginal males as farm labourers and part-Aboriginal girls as domestic servants which was first conceived in Australia in the middle of the nineteenth century. Aboriginal girls of mixed descent were to be encouraged to marry either part-Aboriginal men or white men from the lowest orders of white society. It was thought that eventually, in this way, controlled miscegenation would solve the 'problem' that Aborigines represented to white society. It therefore became government practice to collect and institutionalise ever younger part-Aboriginal children in a concerted effort to eradicate Aboriginal identity. These policies, partial, inadequately funded and implemented and amazingly intrusive, continued to be applied in most states of Australia in one form or another until the 1960s and in Queensland until at least the late 1970s.

Bolton believes that, although state intervention to 'protect' northern Aborigines in Western Australia in 1905 created 'grievous problems' for those Aborigines in the south of the state who had achieved a degree of adaptive independence within white society, this disruption was 'probably unintended'. However, such innocence of intention seems to be brought into question by the action of politicians and citizens in New South Wales and Victoria in adopting the attitudes and some of the policies of the Queensland Act at a time when there were very few tribal people within their state boundaries. Is there then a stronger reason for the increase in government intervention in Aboriginal lives after the turn of the century than the well-intentioned but largely uninformed embarrassment of politicians and the mixed apathy and guilt of the 'average' White Australian citizen in regard to the living conditions of Aborigines?

Foucault traces the growth of the power of the state, the media and the professions as agents of social control in western countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He believes that with the growth of industrialisation an urge emerged within society to produce 'disciplined' human bodies for use within a 'disciplined' industrial society. Dedication to this production became the more or less overt agenda of schools, asylums, hospitals, poorhouses, prisons and military establishments. The need for 'correct training' of human bodies led to the development of more 'efficient' institutions for their 'production'. Within these institutions efficient, clean, obedient, healthy and silent bodies would be produced by means of an
all-encompassing disciplinary system operating to achieve 'normalisation' of those sections of the community who were in these terms 'abnormal' - that is the young, the working classes, the 'insane', the sick, the poor, and those classed as having broken the law. 11

The 'maxims' Foucault lists which existed for the 'normalisation' of convicts within prisons in the nineteenth century are very similar to those followed by institutions such as boarding schools for whites, and 'training homes' for Aboriginal children in Australia in the twentieth century. These maxims stated that inmates were to be isolated according to age, sex, mental attitude, technique of correction to be used and degree of transformation already reached, and were to undergo a penalty/reward orientated programme of 'education' supervised by trained staff. Release from the institution would occur when 'normalisation' had been achieved and would be followed by supervision and assistance until it was clear that the individual had taken his/her 'right place' in society. 12

Foucault lists as punishable those 'failures' regarding time (interruption of tasks, lateness, absence); activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal); behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience); speech (idle chatter, insolence); the body (incorrect attitude, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness) and sexuality (impurity, indecency). Punishment would be by a whole regime of 'micro-penalties' (light physical punishment, minor deprivations, petty humiliations, disapproval and indifference (as well as by more overt punishment as required). 13

I have described Foucault's analysis of the processes of 'normalisation' at such great length because I believe he gives a remarkably comprehensive picture of what Aborigines in institutions in twentieth century Australia met with and found so alienating. I will now endeavour to trace what happens when a dominant society, dedicated to 'normalising' its 'aberrant' members, decides to 'normalize' within its parameters a minority group with very different aims and processes of socialisation.

A.O. Neville (Chief Protector of Aborigines) stated in 1937 that 'coloured races all over the world detest institutionalisation .. (but it is) infinitely better to take an (Aboriginal) child from its mother and put it in an institution where it will be looked after (my italics) than allow it to be brought up subject to the influence of (native) camps'. 14 Here Neville, as chief protector of Aborigines in Western Australia, is speaking from within a paternalistic 'normalising' conception of what is 'good' for the Aboriginal children under his care, as well as voicing a negative value judgement about Aboriginal society in general. He continues '... our experience is that (the Aboriginal children) come to regard the institution as their home, and are happy to return to it for their holidays'. 15 Here Neville is unwittingly documenting one of the more disabling effects of institutionalisation - the dependency on institutions that it engenders in many of those subjected to it.
In the 1950s the detrimental effect of 'maternal (I prefer 'nurturance') deprivation' on institutionalised children was documented by Dr John Bowlby. He established that institutional life based on the Foucauldian model is always detrimental in varying degrees to the physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of young children - the degree of retardation and dependency resulting from it depending upon 'the age at which the child loses his [sic] mother's care (I prefer to call it nurturant care from any source or sources), the length of time which he is deprived of it, and the completeness of his lack of mothering ... all children under about seven years of age seem to be in danger of injury'.

Nurturance deprivation of young children in institutions arises from the imbalance of numbers of children to sources of likely nurturance, the likelihood that employed staff will not be as fond of the children as parents and kin would be, and the 'normalising' attitudes behind institutionalisation which make real nurturance unlikely in such a setting. In the case of Aboriginal children in the first half of the twentieth century the above factors would have been greatly exacerbated by the racist assumptions about them which were likely to have been held by institution staff.

Gladys Gorunna, an inmate between the ages three and fourteen of Parkerville Children's Home, shows in her autobiography how the caring of older Aboriginal girls could mitigate the worst effects on young institutionalised Aboriginal children of nurturance deprivation and yet how far short of adequate the nurturance received by these children remained. She also documents the importance to Aboriginal children in institutions of contact (however little) with family and friends from outside the institution. She says - 'I guess that was one of the few times when I was lucky to be black because the older Aboriginal girls always gave us black babies an extra kiss and cuddle. That gave me a wonderful feeling of security. I suddenly realised that that was why we hadn't come back to Babyland, she'd died... 'I often prayed to God to give me a family'.

Neville considered homes for Aboriginal children such as Parkerville to be 'simply clearing stations [my italics] for the future members of the race'. Mary-Anne Jebb documents the degree to which Lock Hospitals in the North-West of Western Australia were sub-grade prisons for those Aboriginals diagnosed as having venereal disease between the years 1908-1929. She says (Aborigines) 'who left hospital were termed 'absconders' and were brought back by police.'

Here is the obsession with race purity and 'health', policed by a Foucauldian-type institutionalisation, which found its most extreme expression in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Bettelheim, in studying the effect of such camps on the human psyche, concludes that the combination of loss of liberty, fear, deprivation and the contemptuous racism and inhumanity of warders caused those imprisoned in them to develop both an 'intensification of the herd instinct and a generalised death wish.' In other words the
inmates of such alien institutions tend to internalise to an exaggerated degree the value judgements of their warders at the same time as they seek to cling to those in a like position to themselves. It has been found today that the Aboriginal families most likely to have their children institutionalised are those who were themselves reared in institutions and hence deprived of familial security and affection and of the opportunity to undergo the socialisation processes of their own communities. With these factors in mind and remembering the degree of physical and emotional deprivation of inmates of the more extreme institutions such as Lock Hospitals and the fear with which these institutions came to be regarded by Aboriginal communities in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century, it is not far-fetched to make a connection between institutionalisation in the first half of the twentieth century and the disproportionately high numbers of Aborigines in jails and asylums in the second. There also appears to be a direct correlation between this history of institutionalisation and the high present day numbers of black deaths in custody.

Coral Edwards documents the case of Jane King who in 1923, aged seven years, entered the Cootamundra Home for Aboriginal girls. In 1931, aged fifteen, Jane left the home having been trained as a 'domestic'. She spent much of her later life in and out of psychiatric hospitals, several times writing on being discharged from one or another of them to the Aborigine's Protection Board to seek their assistance in gaining re-admission. In 1962, she writes, 'My dearest wish is to get into Gladsville mental hospital ... If I cannot find a job, I won't last long in other places ... so sorry to worry you again.' It is not clear whether Jane is defining herself as 'mentally ill' because of a low self evaluation and fear of the outside world or from a pragmatic response to a world which refuses to provide for her except by a variety of forms of institutionalisation. Jane by her own admission 'does not mix with Aboriginals', and this no doubt helps to explain her high degree of isolation and sense of alienation. Coral Edwards concludes that Jane's 'problem' is that she has internalised the attitudes of the institution that raised her, far too well for her own good.

It seems clear that there is a direct correlation between the amount of nurturance an Aboriginal child received from members of its own community and the degree of psychological and emotional damage he/she experienced as a result of institutionalisation. Traditional Aboriginal methods of child-rearing were differently orientated to those of nineteenth and twentieth century Europeans. It is claimed that in traditional Aboriginal child rearing practices the emphasis is on security and love rather than on discipline. Meggitt states that a negligent or punishing Aboriginal mother 'is sure to be beaten by her husband and probably by her own mother as well.' However, while both an insistence on the adequate nurturance of children and a willingness to indulge children in the first years of life appear to be features of traditional Aboriginal society, that should not be taken to mean that traditional Aboriginal child-rearing
was or is devoid of all discipline. Both Jimmie Barker and Margaret Tucker record instances of effective traditional Aboriginal forms of discipline which they experienced in early life.\(^3\) These forms, however, acted more as subtle deterrents than as overt and debilitating mechanisms of control. Aboriginal children in traditional contexts enjoy for the first ten or so years of their lives a large measure of freedom within an extended kinship system. They are encouraged to develop physical independence from an early age, and to learn from a wide range of different kin by observation and imitation as much as by verbal instruction. Consequently Aboriginal children tend to be 'person orientated rather than information orientated',\(^3\) and therefore in a particularly vulnerable position when placed in an institution and deprived of their own environment for learning. They will also very likely be set upon a collision course with white institution staff because the latter will have expectations of children and of children's learning 'abilities' resulting from very different child-rearing practices.

Jimmie Barker's and Margaret Tucker's early years demonstrate both how tenacious traditional Aboriginal child-rearing practices are and the degree to which these practices cannot help but be modified by the changing conditions of Aboriginal life. Similarities have been traced between traditional Aboriginal child-rearing practices and those common to a 'sub-culture of poverty' throughout the world. Emphasis in this sub-culture tends to be upon self-reliance, survival and present material rewards outside it.\(^3\) Traditional Aboriginal child-rearing practices have been modified in Australia both by the influence of missions and other white contacts and by pragmatic adaptations made in response to impoverishment and exclusion from mainstream society. What becomes very clear is the degree to which both traditional and 'transitional' Aboriginal child-rearing practices are at variance with those pertaining in government institutions such as 'training homes'.

Not only child-rearing methods were in transition for Aborigines in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century; so too were gender roles. Anne Hamilton believes that Aboriginal women in the north of Australia lost status as the twentieth century progressed because they were judged failures by the standards set for white women while being denied the functions which gave them status in traditional society. She claims the one 'escape hatch' Aboriginal women see to this degradation of their role is marriage to a white man.\(^3\) Diane Barwick claims that in the south, Aboriginal women's status changed in a different way. There, because Aboriginal males found it nearly impossible to stay with and support their families under the injunctions of the act, it became common for Matrilocal families headed by two or more generations of women to develop.\(^3\) Jimmie Barker, James Miller and Margaret Tucker were all raised in families of this type.

What happens then when young part-Aboriginal girls are reared under transitional forms of traditional Aboriginal child-rearing practices
until their teenage years and firstly institutionalised and then completely isolated from other Aborigines within white Australian society? In 1917, when she was thirteen years of age, Margaret Tucker and her sister were collected forcibly from school by the police, against the wishes of their mother, and placed in the New South Wales Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal girls. Though Margaret only stayed at the home for eighteen months, during this time and the nine years which followed which she spent in domestic service in white households, she was almost totally isolated from her family. Often Margaret was unhappy and rebellious and sometimes she attempted to run away or to appeal to her family for help. When, because of the intensive government control over her life, this proved to no avail, Margaret 'adapted' to her life in white society in the ways which that society demanded. She married a white man and spent her married life living in the home of her white in-laws, more or less as a second class citizen. It was only when Margaret's marriage formally broke down that she felt free to seek to reclaim her Aboriginal identity. During all the years when she had been either forced or had 'chosen' to 'live white' Margaret had been internalising the value judgements of those about her regarding race, class and gender and what constitutes 'normalcy'. To cope with the low sense of self-esteem generated by her internalised negative self-judgements acquired in middle-class white society, Margaret originally tried to 'do as she was told' and assimilate into white society by becoming a committed Christian. In time, when she sought to reclaim her Aboriginal identity, she became a Christian activist for the attainment of dignity for all people, including her own. In her autobiography written in 1977, she frequently re-iterates her most dearly held belief that 'it is not colour that counts - character is the most important issue'.

It is clear that even today locality (with possible religious affiliation) and family remain the bonds most important in the self-conception of individual Aboriginals and of Aboriginal groups and that, from at least the turn of the century, regional affiliation, economic interdependence, and interhousehold migration formed the basis of Aboriginal group solidarity. This being the case, institutionalisation not only threatened the psychological equilibrium and socialisation processes of large numbers of individual Aborigines, it also, by disrupting familial and locality affiliations, threatened to destroy such cohesion as existed among Aboriginal social groups.

Rowley claims that Aboriginal reserves in the first half of the twentieth century, because they were never intended to preserve traditional Aboriginal culture, were located for the convenience of whites and populated by remnants of many different Aboriginal groups. Nevertheless, whether unintentionally or not, reserves such as Brewarrina in northern New South Wales, where Jimmie Barker spent thirty years of his life, often worked to preserve traditional Aboriginal society and traditional Aboriginal ways of thinking. One factor causing this was Aboriginal affiliation to the land
Brewarrina was a native reserve of one kind or another continuously for at least a hundred years and during this time many Aborigines, regardless of their place of origin, came to see it as 'home territory'. A second factor were the loyalties arising from shared hardship within the reserves (a healthier form of Bettelheim's 'herd instinct') which tended to bond Aborigines together and establish a sense of Aboriginal identity. The Aboriginal activist Shirley Smith goes so far as to say that 'an Aboriginal is anyone that knows what it was like down on Erambie mission in West Cowra thirty years ago. An Aboriginal is anyone that lived down there with me, that knew what it was like.' A third factor was the mixing on the reserves of people with some traditional Aboriginal background with those of greater acculturation, which often caused 'a situation of reverse acculturation' to occur. The last factor which worked to give Aboriginal society cohesion was the government legislation defining Aboriginality. Bill Ferguson put it in a nutshell when he said in 1938 - 'Though some (Aborigines) are dark and some are fair we are all classed as Aborigines under present legislation'.

C.D. Rowley believes that identity and property rights are the two areas of deprivation which are most fiercely resisted by any oppressed group. It is fruitful at this point to consider the life and responses of Jimmie Barker to discover how one part-Aboriginal man responded to institutionalisation on a government reserve between the years 1912-1942.

Jimmie Barker was born a quarter-caste in northern New South Wales in the year 1900. He spent the first twelve years of his life on Mundriwa native camp reserve and Milroy station reserves, learning the 'bush ways' from his mother's people and white ways from his mother who worked as a domestic at the station. In 1912, along with his mother and brother, Jimmie went to live on the nearby government reserve at Brewarrina. With the exception of the six years when he was sent to a station during his teens to learn to be a stockman, he stayed on this reserve for thirty years. For some time, used to a 'free' life among his mother's people, Jimmie hated the restrictions and deprivations of the government reserve. Rowley speaks of 'the tyranny of management' which was a feature of most government reserves. Jimmie's autobiography graphically confirms this. He says 'he [the manager] had absolute power over all.' In all his years on the reserve Jimmie experienced the benign dictatorship of only one manager; the remainder of the managers varied in his opinion from incompetent to cruel in their treatment of the Aboriginals on the reserves. Why then did Jimmie remain at the 'mission' after his mother died? He was at that time a competent, intelligent and ambitious twenty year old with a wide range of handyman skills. He appeared to interact well with white men if they gave him half a chance and he had never previously had trouble obtaining permission to live outside the reserve. Jimmie tells why he chose to stay on the reserve for such a large part of his life in his own words.

I had always felt at home on the mission, I liked being among my people and had suffered enough because of the
colour of my skin when I worked in other places. During those years it was a constant fight with the white people to get any type of job. The only work available to an Aborigine was on stations or roads ... It was not possible for an Aborigine to have any ambition or to make progress in the world. My wish was for a little security and freedom from trouble with white people. (There were) white men waiting to beat up black men. I am not a fighter and it was better to stay at the mission living a life that was familiar to me.53

Rowley summarises the factors which kept Aborigines on the reserves as being: the comparative safety of the managed reserve,54 fear of the outside world,55 and an affiliation with the land which the reserve represented.56 Because Jimmie was able and ambitious, but aware that the outside world held little place for him, he became in Rowley's terms 'a trusty' that is someone who co-operates with the management and thereby gains certain advantages. Rowley sees this as a very disruptive system with the life of the reserve because the trusty has a favoured life-style, keeps the management informed and often has to act to enforce the manager's will on his fellow Aborigines.57 Jimmie says, 'if there were fights on the mission I had to go and stop them,' and [because Aborigines do not like death and he was 'not afraid of death or the dead'] he had to be the mission undertaker and coffin maker.58 It is perhaps no accident that Jimmie married a woman of Maori extraction! Jimmie wanted a better life-style and education for himself and his children, but in his efforts to attain these in the Australia of his time he had to pay a very high price in terms of social isolation. In 1977 he said he felt that his life has been 'lived between two worlds' with much consequent 'sadness and uncertainty'.59 Jimmie's response to institutionalisation was one of acceptance and conformity.

In contrast to Jimmie's quiet resignation, William Cooper, forced off Cumeroogunga reserve in the nineteen thirties when he was sixty years old, responded to the sort of frustrations Jimmie experienced in a similar way to Margaret Tucker. He became an activist for Aboriginal citizenship rights. Ken Colbung, who was reared from the age of six on the Moore River reserve in Western Australia, believes that the single greatest effect of institutionalisation on Aborigines is the 'deep seated resentment of authority ... especially the police and members of the Health Department and of the Department of Native Welfare' that it engenders in them. He believes institutionalisation makes Aborigines 'aggressive and anti-social, or if not that, apathetic'.60

Long blames 'unreasonable and restrictive laws and close personal supervision' [compounded by an alienated lifestyle as fringe dwellers on the outskirts of country towns in Western Australia in the 1940s] for Aborigines' 'assumption of anti-social and deviant behaviour'.61 The question needs to be asked why did 'the unreasonable and restrictive laws and close personal supervision'
continue for so long in the twentieth century when they were clearly having such visible and deleterious affects upon Aboriginal society?

Foucault discusses the value to a dominant society of constructing by means of imprisonment, a 'delinquent group' whose 'enclosed, separated and useful illegality' can be contained and used as a means of social control over a potentially subversive sub-culture.62 If a proportion of the Aboriginal people are emotionally and psychologically disabled by the effects of victimisation and institutionalisation to such an extent that they are classified even by their own people as 'delinquent' then the Aboriginal sub-culture will remain so divided against itself as to be rendered incapable of challenging the dominant society. At the same time this 'delinquent' group within the Aboriginal community can be exploited for the 'illicit circuits of profit and power of the dominant class.'63

Australian Aboriginals form 1.3% of the total Australian population64 and as such are one of the smallest and most conspicuous minority groups in Australia. It is quite feasible therefore to believe that from the time of first settlement there have been conflicting pressure on Aborigines to become absorbed into the dominant society and/or be constructed as a deviant group. Because Aboriginal methods of socialisation have always been very different to those of European culture, increasingly these pressures have worked to construct a proportion of the Aboriginal people as 'delinquent' and therefore justifiably excluded and exploited by the dominant white society. Despite this, Aboriginal society has struggled to maintain its viability and integrity by adapting old strategies of familial and locality loyalty and of resistance to exploitation, to suit new situations.

Vera Lovecock believes that her people 'are fighting at the moment because they're confused people. They've been moving too fast'.65 C.D. Rowley recognises however that a society can adapt quite quickly to social change provided only if it is allowed to retain its 'own mechanisms for change; or for resisting or adapting to it'.66 It is clear that family and locality are not only the bases on which an Aboriginal sense of identity and security are built, but also the areas in which such measures as institutionalisation suggest both that the sooner the Aboriginal community is re-enabled to heal its own wounds in its own way the better, and that it is in the areas affecting family and security of locality that the dominant Australian society most needs to offer enablement to Aboriginal communities.

2. S. Welborn, 'Politicians and Aborigines in Queensland and Western Australia 1897-1907', in *Studies in Western Australian History*, March 1979, p.18


6. R. Broome, *op.cit.*, p.162

7. B. Rosser, *This is Palm Island*, Canberra, 1978


21. M.A. Jebb, 'The Lock Hospital Experiment: Europeans, Aborigines and Venereal Disease', in *Studies in Western Australian History*, vol.VIII, December, 1984, p.79


26. C. Edwards, 'Is the Ward Clean?' in *All that Dirt*, p.11

27. Ibid., p.13

28. Ibid.

29. R. Hassan, *op.cit.*, p.310


31. M. Tucker speaks of the old women telling stories of fierce 'hairy' beings in an effort to intimidate children; J. Barker speaks of being placed under bark with a smoking fire until close to choking.

32. R. Hassan, *op.cit.*, p.311

33. Ibid., p.324


35. D. Barwick, *op.cit.*, pp.196-206


R. Hassan, *op.cit.*, p.317, p.323

36. R. Broome. 'Breaking down the Barriers', p.32. From 1915 in NSW any 'Aboriginal' girl could be taken without consent from her family by police or board officials and institutionalised anywhere in the state


38. Ibid., p.106

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p.35

42. Ibid., pp.32-38

43. Ibid.

44. D. Barwick, *op.cit.*, p.196


46. S. Smith in K. Gilbert (ed.), *Living Black*, p.251

47. A. Haebich, *op.cit.*, p.64

48. B. Ferguson, 'The day of Mourning' in *Australian 1938*, Melbourne, 1987, p.30


52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., p.121


55. Ibid., p.139

56. Ibid., p.133

57. Ibid., p.182

58. J. Barker, *The Two Worlds of Jimmie Barker*, p.121

59. Ibid, p.182


61. T. Long, 'The Development of government Aboriginal Policy', in *Aborigines of the West*, p.360

63. Ibid., p. 280

64. R. Hassan, op. cit., p. 326

65. V. Lovecock, Black Viewpoints: The Aboriginal Experience, p. 65

66. C.D. Rowley, A Matter of Justice, p. 147
IMPRISONMENT AND INSTITUTIONALISATION 3:

Hiding History:

The Round House

by Peter Scott

But prison's nothing special
For any Nunga I know
'Cos the white man makes his prisons
Most everywhere we go

Aboriginal Country and Western Song

This paper is an Aboriginal social history of the Round House in Fremantle, covering the time it functioned as a prison/lockup. It is written in response to the tourist brochure handed out there and which states:

'Until the turn of the century it was also used as a lockup for Aboriginal Prisoners on their way to or from the Imperial Native Penal Establishment on Rottnest island ..'

This is all that is mentioned about Aboriginal prisoners in the brochure and an enquiry showed that the Aboriginal History of the Round House, as such, has never been written, despite considerable historical and archeological research and funding from the America's Cup and the Bicentennial Project. This paper will be submitted to the Round House authority in the hope that it will provide enough information and generate enough interest to correct this imbalance.

Recently called 'Home of the America's Cup', Fremantle was 200 years ago know as Walyup and was the summer estate for Aboriginal hunter gatherers. Here they caught abundant fish and waterbirds on a seasonal basis and fired the bush for small game. Freshwater could be tapped from underground springs and Macrozamia nuts and other plants were easily harvested. The Aboriginals called the Swan River Warndoolier and it emptied its waters into Derbal Naral, now known as Cockburn Sound.¹

Near where the river flows into the Sound is the place where the
British Empire first established a permanent bridgehead on its route into the western third of the Australian continent. Strategically sited on a limestone promontory, the Round House, still commands panoramic views of the land and sea it once dominated.

Its contemporary inhabitants would have difficulty recognising the way it looked in those day. to the North, instead of the harbour there was an estuary complete with a sand bar across its mouth in summer, and to the east, in the commercial hub, Xanthorrea and White Gums stood where there are now traffic lights, and shrubs took the place of parking meters. Underneath the overlay of bitumen and concrete the ground is still soft and sandy.

The view of the South, over a shoreline now dotted with fastfood outlets and leftovers from the America's Cup, was of a pristine beach and a wide expanse of bay sweeping around to an horizon uncluttered by petro-chemical industry.

Looking West, out to sea, where graceful 12 metre yachts recently did battle, one also overlooks, according to Noongar legend, an area where enormous mythical beasts once fought in the timeless mists of the Dreamtime. The Noongars tell of a fight between a shark and a giant crocodile in Derbal Naral that resulted in the crocodile losing its tail. The tail is still there today and Garden (Meeandip), Carnac (Ngooloorrayup) and Rottnest (Wadjemup Islands) are its serrated ridges that protrude from the sea.

Into this ancient Dreamtime battleground, in 1829, sailed a new invader, one which was destined to change the landscape and prove far more deadly than a mere giant crocodile. On 25 April 1829 the English gunboat HMS Challenger under Captain Fremantle anchored off the Swan River. Fremantle landed first at Garden Island, then on 2 May he went ashore at the mouth of the Swan River, taking as he did so, formal possession of the whole west coast of New Holland in the name of His Britannic Majesty, by hoisting the Union Jack on the south side of the river.

The first mainland camp was set up at this site near Arthur's Head and the ship Parmelia, with Captain Stirling and the first settlers aboard, arrived a month later. The settlers, however, were transferred to Carnac and Garden Islands, where they remained for the next three months, after the Parmelia ran aground.

On 18 June a proclamation was read by Captain Stirling announcing the official formation of the Colony and granting to the native inhabitants the full protection of British Law, as subjects of His Majesty the King.

The Round House, the first permanent construction in the Colony, was commenced in September 1830 on Arthur's Head and was designed as a dodecahedral panopticon, which is to say it has twelve sided outer walls containing cells enclosing a central courtyard in such a way
that all prisoner movements could be monitored from one point. It is significant that the first and most enduring public building in the fledgling Colony was a gaol, built some twelve years before St John's Church. 

The local Aborigines no doubt observed the strangers, their ceremonies and constructions, with curiosity and bewilderment. This can be seen from the fact that they were only able to rationalise the presence of the settlers into the Noongar world view by considering them as ghosts; returned spirits of their own dead. This view of the settlers as reincarnated Aboriginal dead was not only held in the Fremantle area but was generic throughout the full range of the Noongar language groups territory. This can be seen from the term 'Djanga', meaning white man or ghost and the variations of this which were in use over the entire South West. 

The Aborigines who were amongst the most geographically isolated people on earth at this time had little conception of a people moving from their own territory, in order to occupy another's, or of violence on a European scale. It certainly must have been very difficult for them to categorise these sunburned redcoats and settlers into a world view based on nature and the Dreamtime mythology.

The settlers in turn most likely refrained from declaring open war on their Aboriginal co-habitants largely in response to Stirling's proclamation of the Noongar as British subjects and equal under British law. The Aborigines, at this time, were however mostly unaware of His Majesty the King and took some time in giving their cognizance to his rules and regulations.

The traditional Noongar were a semi-nomadic people who ranged over, and knew intimately, considerable areas of land in the South-West. For a people possessing such enormous natural resources, it was totally inconceivable to divide and fence off small allotments under total ownership and then attempt to gain a living from them. An early settler writes of Winjan, the 'chief' of the Murray River tribe:

'Winjan moved about the whole of his territory from time to time. In the early days I used to see him four or five times a year and talk to him at Pinjarra, Mandurah and Fremantle.'

This quote demonstrates part of the Noongar attitude in respect to their land. Vast as it was, they were capable of moving rapidly over their whole estates, which they tended on a seasonal basis. Noongar practises such as firing sections of land for hunting and regeneration purposes were recognised by some settlers at least as a viable conservation practise as well as a pragmatic way of harvesting game in a natural resource based economy:

'the natives at this season of the year are in the habit of setting fire to the country, and killing snakes, kangaroo
rats, etc. as they run from the burning bush, and as the grass and undergrowth are particularly dry they catch fire like tinder and it spreads over a large tract of country. This firing of the country is supposed to keep it healthy, by keeping it open and letting the breeze blow freshly over it. 8

This practice of firing the bush is still current although it is now maintained by the Department of Conservation and Land Management rather than by the Aborigines.

It was, and still is, the differing value systems, particularly towards land holding and property use that have caused the most problems. In 1829 the initial contacts between the Noongar and the Djanga were characterised by tolerance and curiosity but as more natural resources were assumed under colonial control the Noongar offered greater resistance to the colonists.

By September 1832 about 2000 settlers were attempting to make their homes on the west coast and this had a profound effect on the people already living there. 9 The Noongar who moved away from the coast in winter, returned in the spring to burn their lands and instead found them taken. They responded by spearing some sheep and cattle, which was probably 'game' to them anyway, and by helping themselves to the potato crops and vineyards that had grown in their traditional food gathering areas. From this point on mutual animosity and conflict was accelerated and the Noongar resistance began to gather momentum.

Unfortunately, much of the information about the early black resistance fighters has gone the way of the warriors themselves, and become scattered and hidden. Although their bones rest under the rapidly changing landscape, there remain some, however, who are also buried in another sense; their acts of defiance are entombed in the bureaucratic archives of yesterday.

One of these if Yagan, who in retaliation for the murder of one of his people at Butler's farm on the Canning River led an attack, in August 1831, on the farmhouse concerned which resulted in the death of Butler's servant, Entwhistle Enion. Enion's son witnessed the killing: 10

'I saw the tall native called Yagan, throw the first spear which entered my father's breast and another native, Midgegooroo, threw the second spear which brought my father down.' 11

Midgegooroo, who was Yagan's father, was captured about two years later and was summarily executed by a firing squad against the door of the old Perth gaol soon after. 12 In June 1832, Yagan's mob attacked the same farm once again, this time fatally spearing William Gaze, another of Butler's servants. 13
Yagan's extensive knowledge of bushcraft and the landscape held him in good stead and it was only by the deceit of a settler, whom he considered a friend, that he was captured some months later. Yagan was subsequently taken to the Round House Prison in Fremantle to await trial and there would have met the notorious Mr Henry Vincent who was later to gain infamy as the gaoler at the Imperial Native Penal Establishment on Rottnest Island.

The overall reaction of the Aborigines to the European offensive can in many ways be seen as a legitimate and courageous act of self defence in a personal, cultural and environmental context and it is significant to note that despite the fact that it was proven that Yagan had been involved in the killings, he was not to be executed for his crimes. An outspoken settler named Robert Lyon successfully defended him on the grounds that a state of war existed between the Noongar and the settlers, which resulted in Yagan being accorded the status of a prisoner of war. This is a very significant legal decision because it demonstrates that the settlers at the time recognised the conflict as a 'state of war' and that as such Aborigines had rights as defenders of their land. Consequently Yagan was transported to Carnac Islands, from which he escaped three weeks later.

This is the first time the Round House appears in the annals of Aboriginal history, although it had been completed and become operational some fifteen months prior to this in 1831. No statistics were kept for Aboriginal prisoners at that time, but calculations based on the names of the prisoners incarcerated in 1839 indicate that over one third were Aboriginal males, a figure that is still consistent with present prison populations in WA despite the fact that Aboriginal numbers now only account for a small percentage of the population.

About four months before he was murdered, Yagan returned to the Round House and publicly chaffed Henry Vincent, his gaoler. According to the Perth Gazette:

'The chuckling manner of Yagan in describing his escape from Carnac is amusing, but recently he walked up to the gaol door in Fremantle, exchange civilities with his late keeper, and when leaving pointed significantly at the gaol and at Carnac.' (Perth Gazette 2 March 1893).

The next Aboriginal leader to be given a taste of the Round House was a Murray tribesman known as Calyute who was caught and punished in response to a raid on Shenton's flour mill in South Perth. This raid was deemed an especially reprehensible act since it was carried out while many of Perth's leading citizens, including the Lieutenant Governor, were attending the first public flogging of an Aboriginal man arrested for stealing. The spectacle of Goodyak's flogging was intended to provide a lesson to the Aborigines on the implacable nature of British justice. However, while all the soldiers of the
Perth Barracks were parading their martial skills before the assembled guests, Calyute and thirty or so other Murray tribesmen stole all the wheat, pollard and flour that they could carry from the South Perth mill just across the river.\textsuperscript{18}

Calyute was later captured, flogged and then sent down to the Round House in order to reflect on his disobedient conduct and to act as a hostage to ensure the good behaviour of his people. Whilst languishing at Arthur Head, Calyute and the other Aboriginal prisoners were often visited at night by their friends and relatives who crept up close to the walls to talk with them.\textsuperscript{19} In mid June 1834, Calyute was given another sixty lashes and sent on his way. Later in October of that same year Calyute was given a further demonstration of the full meaning of the protection granted to the Noongar as subjects of His Majesty the King under Stirling's proclamation of 1829. Stirling led an ambush on the Murray tribe in Pinjarra, murdering in the process up to forty Aboriginal men, women and children. One of Stirling's men was also killed in the ambush, though somewhat embarrassingly by a musket ball. He was nonetheless buried with full military honours.\textsuperscript{20}

By this time the dodecahedral panopticon perched on Arthur's Head was becoming a prominent feature of the post-contact landscape for the Noongar. At Bather's Beach, just below the prison, the Fremantle Whaling Company commenced operations in 1837 and later that year, to facilitate processing, a tunnel beneath the Round House was excavated.\textsuperscript{21}

In Noongar resource based economy a stranded whale was a propitious event and so during the 1840s foraging Aborigines were a common sight amongst the flensing equipment and try pots on Bather's Beach:\textsuperscript{22}

'During the whaling season the natives came to Fremantle in hordes and feasted to satiety on the scraps after the oil had been boiled from the blubber.'\textsuperscript{23}

This regular food supply induced the Aborigines to remain in the locality in a more permanent form of habitation, in an area which had merely been a 'passing through area' prior to this. Writing of these whaling days in 1929 Daisy Bates commented:

'Manijarup, the old Fremantle tunnel and Wallyulup, the point near Fremantle old jetty, were the old camping places.'\textsuperscript{24}

Not far from the old jetty, on the south eastern side of Arthur Head, in January 1842, the Anglican Ministries opened an all Noongar school under the mastership of the Rev. George King. The Fremantle Native School was modelled upon the early perceived successes of a similar institution in Perth and was opened largely in response to the increasing numbers of Aborigines who had taken up semi-permanent residency due to the whaling industry. The school, however, was not
notable for its successes, the major obstacle being the influence of the parents who persisted in passing traditional customs on to the children, and possibly because the whaling closed down in 1848. In 1849 the Rev. King departed, taking with him the most promising young Aboriginal boy, on a trip to New Zealand. The school was then maintained for a short while after King's departure but in 1850 it was transferred to Perth.25

Meanwhile, up on the hill overlooking all of this, the Round House continued in its function as an instrument of discipline in the callous hands of Henry Vincent, the Gaoler. It was not always as successful as it might have been, however, as is testified to in the government Gazette of July 1837 which documents the escape of 'the native Goodap.'126 Another escape in 1841 prompted the Guardian of Aborigines, Mr Symmons, to 'banish the whole of the Fremantle tribe from the town, until the escaped prisoner, (whom the Fremantle people were suspected of assisting), was caught.'27

During his eight years at the Round House, Vincent, was more than just a turnkey, he in fact earned for himself a reputation as a petty tyrant of a particularly sadistic nature. In 1837, a missionary visited the gaol and reported in the Swan River Guardian: 'The Jailer (sic) inflicts summary punishment, without any order of a Magistrate.'128

By 1838, the seven roughly 4 x 2 metre cells in use at the Round House were inadequate to contain the rapidly increasing numbers of Aborigines deemed as requiring punishment by the Colonial authorities and the official response was to order Corporal Welch to commence a new and larger punishment facility on Rottnest Island.29

Accordingly, in July, the middle of winter, Corporal Welch and three privates of the 21st Regiment, along with ten Aboriginal prisoners were despatched to the island and as no provision for shelter had been made, the Aborigines were chained to a tree at night. Despite the fact the soldiers were considered as experienced in dealing with Aborigines, (the 21st Regiment took part in the Pinjarra massacre and prior to that was instrumental in decimating Tasmania's Aboriginal population) the prisoners escaped in a boat back to the mainland. It was not an auspicious beginning.30

In 1839, Vincent was promoted offshore to Rottnest as the Gaoler, a position incidently, which meant he no longer had any white prisoners under his 'care', and Welch was transferred back to the Round House. Vincent subsequently remained in this position on Rottnest until a medical report disclosed his pathologically violent temperament and in 1867 he was hastened into retirement.31

The Round House, meanwhile, now under Corporal Welch retained many of its functions as a report lockup although from the 1840s onwards it was becoming increasingly utilised as a holding facility for the spiralling numbers of Aboriginal prisoners being transported to and from Rottnest.
In the years that followed the geographic and economic expansion of the colony could be read into the numbers and origins of Rottnest's Aboriginal prisoners. In the early years most of Vincent's victims came from around Perth and the South-West, but as the Colony developed and its radius grew through the Murchison, Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley regions, a far greater number of these black recalcitrants were being sent down in order to be introduced to Mr Vincent.

At the Round House in 1847: 'The greatest number of prisoners at any one time in the year was 31 males and one female', and by 1849, 34 males and two females were crammed into cells that were designed to hold only 14.32

On Rottnest, by 1883, 179 Aborigines, mostly from the North, were packed into buildings designed for just over 100. An influenza epidemic raced through them decimating over one third of their number in less than two months.33

A telegram to the Honourable Colonial Secretary dated 24 June 1882 reads:

'there are seventeen native prisoners in the Round House. Dr Barwell reports that they should be sent to Rottnest at once, the effluvium (sic) arising from them is very bad ...34

This telegram must have elicited a response, for the Governor, Sir William Robinson, also visited the Round House and shortly afterwards, on 3 July, wrote to the Colonial Secretary:

On visiting the Round House on Saturday I found 17 natives chained by the neck, one to the other, and consequently obliged to sit in cramped and irksome positions. I cannot think that this chaining of the natives is necessary, at least not in the wholesale manner in which it appears to be carried out.35

The letter goes on to order a commission 'to enquire into and report upon the practice in vogue of chaining native prisoners' and its findings were that the use of neck chains 'should not be resorted to except in special instances.'36

Even prior to this, however, M. Smith, Superintendent of Police, sent out a circular order to all outlying Police stations, in 1878, directing that:

'The practice of escorting native prisoners chained by the neck shall be discontinued. When found necessary, they should be chained together by their waists, one hand being cuffed to the chain, the end of the chain being held in the constables hand but on no account to be fastened to the horse or saddle.'
In 1882, Superintendent Smith sent out another circular order reminding the constables of the above order and adding that 'the practice of chaining native prisoners together on board ship shall be discontinued'\(^37\).

The findings of the Governor's Commission as well as the circular orders from the Superintendent appear to have been largely ignored by Police constables and Gaolers alike. In 1886, the Rev. J.B. Gribble undertook missionary work in the Gascoyne area, which was where most of the prisoners were being sent from around this time. Documenting his observations in a book called *Dark Deeds in a Sunny Land*, Gribble reported on amongst other things, the ill-treatment of Aboriginal prisoners:\(^38\)

>'In January of this year I saw between 30 and 40 natives chained together and enclosed within the narrow bound of a corrugated iron enclosure not more than 30 feet square, and there they lay day after day and week after week under the rays of an almost vertical sun, while the perspiration poured from their naked bodies ... these natives, most of whom had been brought down from the Peedong country, more than 300 miles, were accused of having speared cattle. I was present when, on the evidence of a very young white man, they were sentenced to two years banishment on Rottnest Island ... One of the troopers in charge told me that some of these unfortunate beings had never seen a white man until the day they were captured and chained.'\(^39\)

*Dark Deeds* sparked a furore in the Colony. Gribble was sued successfully for slander and ostracised.\(^40\) The book, however, was published again in 1905, when the Roth Royal Commission into the condition and treatment of Aborigines vindicated many of its findings, and a third edition was published during the Bicentennial year.

What Gribble's book does not mention was that most of the prisoners from the Gascoyne around 1882 were sentenced by a travelling Stipendary magistrate, C.D.V. Foss, who had been sentencing people for terms of up to three years on Rottnest until it was discovered that the maximum penalty he could legally impose was only six months. The government's response was not to release the prisoners or even to retry them, instead they upgraded Foss's status to make the convictions appear legally valid.\(^41\) (One can imagine what could have happened had Foss passed an illegal sentence of death ... he might have been made a Justice of the Supreme Court!)

In fact, Foss's gaol terms become a sentence of death to about one in three of the prisoners he sent to Rottnest's influenza ridden cells in those years.\(^42\) Statistically five or six of the group of 17 referred to earlier at the Round House would die from influenza:
'The effluvium arising from this is very bad.'

By shifting the focus of the preceding evidence a little closer on to this group of 17 we can see at least some of what had happened to them and begin to construct a profile of a typical Aboriginal prisoner from this time.

When the Doctor and the Governor dropped in to see them it was almost the exact middle of the winter. They would have been cold and very sick people, on the last stages of being transported to a concentration/death camp. Some of them could have been forced to march up to 500 km in neck chains, possibly with one end of the chain attached to the constable's horse to ensure they maintained pace. When they did face trial they were probably sentenced in an illegal kangaroo Court, for an offence possibly as petty as leaving their employment, and then kept in neck chains until their arrival at Rottnest. Not only would they have suffered from the weight of those chains, the steel around their necks would have attracted heat and cold to a considerable degree. One was not able to move away in neck chains, even if he had somewhere to go, without taking the others along. Therefore, they were forced to remain in one or another's excrement for long periods. (A fact confirmed by Gribble). And worst of all, they had been taken from their spiritual homeland, their place in life and worship and consigned to hell.

For this final fragment I will move the focus in a little closer again onto our 'typical prisoner'. Although Brandy may not have been amongst the 17 in the Round House on 24 June 1882, his statement was taken at the same time when some of the survivors of the subject groups were still serving their sentences similar to many of theirs. It is still possible that he was one of them and it is important to hear his story:

Brandy: 'I have been here for some time. I do not like Rottnest. Too many killem, too many maken ill. I came here for killing sheep. I saw the sheep had strayed, and my woman said to me 'kill it', and I did so.

I am cold here in winter. At night it is cold. I have a good blanket now, but I had a very bad one before, all winter. I get plenty to eat.'

A check of the list of the Aboriginal dead on Rottnest, although it was obviously incomplete, showed that Brandy's name was not on it, so it is quite possible that he, unlike at least five hundred of his contemporaries, was one of the survivors of the Imperial Native Penal
Establishment.** Perhaps he even made it to his tribal homeland and met his woman again. There is little doubt, however, that even if this was the case, he would have carried with him deep emotional and psychological scars from the experiences in the plague ridden cells, in neck chains, under tyrannical gaolers and from the mass graves of his contemporaries. Systematic brutality has its own pathology of logic behind it and Brandy had been taught a lesson he would never forget. From the time of his arrest to his release, he would have been force fed the contempt in which an Aboriginal life was held by the new Australian cultural and economic hegemony.

This was also the lesson taught earlier to Calyute when in 1834 he watched the massacre of his people at Pinjarra, led by the same man who, in 1829, stood near the site of the Round House and proclaimed equality and justice for Aboriginal people in the name of His Majesty the King. It is the same lesson again that has been taught to many Aboriginal people over the past two centuries and although the Round House and Rottnest have now become tourist attractions, this brutal lesson is still apparently being taught in the States regional prisons and detention centres.

Evidence for this can be drawn from the terms of reference of the Muirhead Royal Commission and the fact that over 30% of the state's currently serving prisoners are of Aboriginal descent, representing an incarceration rate of about ten times that of the rest of the population.

Perhaps the Judiciary was correct when it accorded Yagan the status of a prisoner of war rather than that of a criminal. The extension of this early precedent could also find that many of the Aboriginal prisoners who followed him and who history shows to be guilty of little more offence than trying to defend their homeland and loved ones could equally be classed as prisoners of war or political prisoners rather than criminals. Certainly, the fact that the Aboriginal prison at Rottnest was in essence a concentration camp lends some credence to this idea. Just as there can be no more eloquent statement of despair by a people, there is correspondingly no greater statement of oppression by a government, than the suicide or murder of political prisoners in its gaols. Seen in this light, the unmarked graves at Rottnest and before that in Fremantle represent the grass roots of the 'Black Deaths in Custody' issue.

Although Rottnest Island functioned as an Aboriginal prison for nearly a century, it was mainly used in the years from 1840 to 1903 and the Round House served it throughout most of that time. The Round House may have been just a cog in the military/industrial wheel for those years but prior to that it was the hub of the wheel itself, as it rolled over the Aboriginal lands. Garlanded with the neck chains of its victims, the Round House stands as a monument of Colonial Justice and to the callous inhumanities that have occurred on both sides of Derbal Naral in its name.
It is hoped that this essay has shown some of the uses that the Round House has been put to in its time as a prison/lockup. Also that it might demonstrate the attitude of the new arrivals towards the indigenous people of Australia and facing Australian society today. Western Australia's History of the treatment of its Aboriginal citizens is still haunted by the ghosts of Henry Vincent, Magistrate Foss, and many others like them. It is to this past, where the patterns of oppression were first established, that we can turn to find the key to understanding the more complex texture of the present and if this past is encouraged to remain buried then it can only serve to perpetuate the spirit of that oppression and ignorance into the future.

It is with this in mind that I respectfully suggest that the Round House tourist brochure could be revised, in this Bicentennial year, to include more of its Aboriginal History. As this small gesture can only serve the greater understanding between European and Aboriginal Australians and by so doing may even contribute to the final exorcism of the likes of Henry Vincent from the Penal system of today.
ENDNOTES


5. N. Green, *op.cit.*, p.7

6. Ibid.,


10. N. Green, *op.cit.*, p.206


12. N. Green, *op.cit.*, p.86

13. Ibid., p.205

14. Ibid., p.80

15. *Round House Draft*, p.10

16. Ibid.,

17. *Perth Gazette*, 2 March 1833

18. N. Green, *op.cit.*, p.92

19. S. O'Conner, *op.cit.*, p.16

20. N. Green, *op.cit.*, p.208


22. Ibid.


25. N. Green, *op.cit.*, pp.151-156

26. *Government Gazette*, 1 June 1837

27. S. O'Conner, *op.cit.*, p.16

28. *Swan River Guardian*, 23 November 1837


30. N. Green, *op.cit.*, p.167

31. *In the Name of the Crow*, Video, SBS


33. N. Green, *op.cit.*, p.172

34. Colonial Secretary's Office File 1493/82


41. *In the Name of the Crow*

42. N. Green, *op.cit.*, p.172

43. *Commission Inquiry into Treatment of Aboriginal Prisoners, Rottnest Island*, WAPP, 1844, No.32

44. *In the Name of the Crow*
REBELLION AND WORK 1:
'Troublesome Natives': Aboriginal Resistance in the Esperance Bay Area
by Leonie Biggins

The history of conflict between European and Aboriginal people in the Esperance Bay area has some parallels with that of the North-West of Western Australia, the common factor being the intense rivalry for access to land and water due to the expansion of the pastoral industry. The purpose of this essay is, therefore, to examine the extent of Aboriginal resistance during the later 1880s to early 1890s.

Henry Reynolds argues that there was a change after initial contact, from 'the pursuit of revenge' in the 'Frontier' to 'economic warfare' and that the taking and destruction of stock, hut robbing and stealing of provisions and weapons was as much politically motivated as economically necessary. It was also an indication of the Aboriginal abhorrence of 'possessive individualism'. As the Europeans reacted to this 'thievery', or 'criminality' the Aboriginal action fell 'naturally into the archetypal pattern of guerilla warfare' and 'the fortitude and courage of Aboriginal clans which experienced the massive impact of European invasion demands our attention and respect'.

In the Esperance Bay area between 1888 and 1892 there is evidence to support these argument and show how during this period the Aboriginal response to invasion was '... positive, creative and complex', and 'the heroes of nationalist mythology had their little known black counterparts'.

Although deprivation, depredation, cruelty and injustice are central elements of this contact history it is my intention to draw attention to the active resistance of the Aboriginals rather than to pass judgement or present 'victim history'.

Before presenting some case studies from the 1880s and 1890s some earlier material regarding the conflict between the Esperance Bay
Aborigines and the Dempsters, the major pioneering pastoralist expanding and diversifying their interests in the area, is important.

At Esperance Bay ... Aborigines were wreaking havoc with an isolated cattle station owned by the Dempster brothers ...

The period referred to by Robinson and York was the 1860s when the Dempsters were forced to seek advice from the Colonial Secretary regarding the 'troublesome natives'. F.B. Barlee replied to the Dempsters 'that you should deal with them as mercifully as circumstances will admit of, taking care, as much as possible, to avoid any infringement of the law'. In 1867 and again in 1869 the Dempsters reported that it was 'necessary in self-defence to take an Aboriginal life' and received similar advice:

There is no intention on the part of the government to interfere with the action taken by the settlers at Esperance Bay so long as no complaint is preferred. But the government can not be expected to approve of, much less adopt, the illegal act of persons who take up their stations beyond the limits within which the government are able to afford police protection. As to placing the offenders on an island until they can be tried, you must take the responsibility from which the government possesses no power to shield you.

In 1870 Barlee told the Dempsters:

... His Excellency ... has no power to give you authority for any act not within the letter of the Law, but at the same time it may be necessary for you, in the absence of the support of the law, to inflict such punishment upon marauders as would be recognised as within the spirit of the Law and just and reasonable in itself. So long as such punishments do not appear excessive or unjust and His Excellency sees no reason to believe that you will not continue to endeavour to cultivate friendly relations with the natives and promote their welfare he is not disposed to interfere. Kind and firm treatment, plenty of food to those in your employ, with a present now and then, in which the Government will from time to time contribute by sending blankets, will go far to ensure confidence in you and a desire of those in communication with them not to molest the benefactors of those in whom they are interested.

Although the Dempsters may have treated potential Aboriginal employees with 'kind and firm treatment' this did in effect give them permission to stockwhip stockspearers and break up families:
In '72 ... Nookatich was chained to a cart ... and trotted along in durance vile ... to Inshore Island ... proved innocent ... and liberated, while the rest of his relatives and others, who were very troublesome were placed on the Island ...⁶

In 1873 Andrew Dempster again informed the Colonial Secretary of the necessity of shooting an Aboriginal whom he had been pursuing as the result of the theft of shepherd's rations, a gun and ammunition. Governor Weld noted, 'I am of the opinion that he acted both courageously and legally, and that he acted with great propriety in at once reporting the circumstances'.⁷

A journalist writing local history in 1890 outlined in detail many skirmishes of earlier settlers with Esperance Bay Aboriginals and blamed 'the troubles' on the employment of ex-convicts and 'toujours les dames':

None but the very outcasts of humanity will go into far out stations where law, order, telegraphs, and justice cannot reach, and unable to read, they simply exist from one year to another bringing the vile accumulation of their years of contamination with the earth's lowest humanity into the bush, where they exercise an autocratic reign of terror over all natives who come in contact with their daily lives ... shepherds that the pioneer had to deal with ... dragging unfortunate native women about by their wealth of raven locks ...⁶

After the 1873 encounter (in which Andrew Dempster received shots to his head)

... the settlers moved to Menbrunup ... Several years passed ... then ... Several natives liberated from Rottnest returned (and) ... by sending runners with a 'maintch' stick decorated with locks of hair from the heads of the ringleaders, they collected about a hundred men, women and children for a grand carnival ... to be followed up by a raid on the Dempster Bros' sheep ... The members ... persuaded all the natives employed on the run to join them ... (and) drove off ... between 300 and 400 young weaners ...

A party of angry settlers caught up with them, and captured them after using a 'deaf and dumb' Aboriginal woman (who with her small child had been acting as a scout for the Aborigines) as a hostage. Some escaped but were recaptured and 'imprisoned' on the local islands.¹⁰

These events took place before the establishment of the station at Fraser Range and demonstrate several points: Dempster sought advice
and protection from the government but found it necessary to deal with the 'troublesome natives' himself as the resistance was so persistent. They also demonstrate the refusal of the Europeans to admit that the Aboriginal people were at war with them.

Although admitting 'catastrophic losses of sheep from raids by Aborigines' the Dempster family stated:

very little trouble was had with the natives, - the occasional attempt to break in and steal the stores was the limit of their depredations, or the case of the odd bad one who stole a firearm as well ...

Andrew Dempster had explored the area of the Fraser Range in 1866 because his sheep at the Esperance Bay station were showing signs of coasty sickness but found that water was scarce in the area. However, the Forrests reported a further discovery of water there in 1871 and Andrew 'determined upon claiming a pastoral lease around the Range'. In return for 'opening up the land' by completing a road to the Fraser Range in 1873 the Dempsters received a free grant of 500 acres. When it seemed likely that gold might be present Andrew Dempster asked for a renewal of his lease, and increased rivalry for the land around the Range and adjoining areas from other pastoralists drove him to make more improvements and conduct further searches for water. Dempsters applied for 30,000 acres at the South West end of the Range and 1,000 acres by a tank or dam which they had made 35 miles nearby in 1874. In 1875 further leaseholds were applied for and by 1883 they had 7,000 sheep on the runs at Fraser Range although 3,000 died in the summer drought. The shortage of water meant that they were constantly making new tracks into the area, no doubt inhabited by Aboriginal people, and they were sinking dams, wells and building tanks. The first shearing at Fraser Range was carried out in 1884. In 1886 Andrew Dempster even backed the cost of an unsuccessful mining venture in the area, but by 1901 the profitability of the property was falling:

Open range shepherding soon became a mere memory, and the days were over when the Dempster brothers could claim over a million and a half acres of pastoral land at Esperance and Fraser Range.

The family history suggests that this failure was due to poor management and overgrazing, but perhaps Aboriginal resistance played a part as well. A very difficult time for the Dempsters appears to coincide with the persistent resistance by the local Aborigines as the pastoralists pushed on into the Esperance Bay area. The period of 'new tactics' developed in response to escalating conflict with the growing number of Europeans present. These 'new tactics' such as stealing guns, driving away sheep and stealing provisions (not necessarily for consumption) and persistently harassing the pastoralists as opposed to an earlier response of retribution killings, can be seen in the following case studies:
WERRY WERRY

In September 1887 Werry Werry was sentenced to 14 months at Rottnest for sheep stealing but, after serving this sentence, he again stole sheep from the Fraser Range station in May 1890. He was arrested by P.C. Pilkington in a round up which followed the murder of Aboriginal tracker and police assistant Jimmy Parrish in April 1890 (see below) and was sentenced to another two years at Rottnest. 16

MARRABOOL (also referred to as Barcoola)

Marrabool was 'a reputed troublesome thief on the road to Fraser Range' and 'wild Bardook man' (see end notes 1 and 2) charged with stealing three sheep from the Dempsters on 12 August, 1887 17 and 30 lbs of flour, on 27 August, 1887. In May 1888 he was brutally murdered by Michael Griffin, a shepherd employed by the Dempsters. Aboriginal assistant shepherds, Dabb and Tommy Newmall, together with the women Cabadan and Nancy gave strong evidence that Griffin had killed Marrabool and co-erced an Aboriginal named Sambo to torture him. Griffin threatened the witnesses and told Sambo that there was a warrant out for Marrabool. L.C. McGlade stated in evidence at the trial that he had had complaints from Dempster and his shepherds regarding Marrabool but no 'information had been laid against him'. This was a sensational case and the press stated that the barbarity of the incident was 'unfit for publication'. 18

From the notes of Inspector Rowe it appears that he had no doubt as to the guilt of Mick Griffin (a warrant had been previously issued against him for assaulting and wounding Billy, an Aboriginal in 1885) 19 and did his best to have him brought to trial. Griffin fled the area when he discovered that his Aboriginal assistants were prepared to inform Inspector Rowe (also Protector of Aborigines) of the atrocity. Griffin was finally apprehended at York. At the hearing in Albany, Mr Dymes, the defender, reserved his defence, but raised the point that as no inquest had been held it had not proved that the body found was that of Marrabool, or that Marrabool was actually dead. 20 The Australian Advertiser reported that:

Griffins' trial had resulted in the acquittal of the prisoner. As the case proceeded, the story told by the native witnesses for the Crown varied in many details. Mr Haynes, addressing the jury for the defence, urged that these discrepancies rendered the whole of the evidence utterly unreliable. He also set up the theory that the murder was committed by the natives, who, to screen themselves from justice and the retaliatory laws of Marrabool's tribe, endeavoured to fasten the crime upon Griffin. The jury after a brief deliberation, acquitted the prisoner. 21

This case highlights several aspects of the conflict in the area at
the time. On reading the reports so far made available it would appear that Mick Griffin was guilty. However, Haynes' defence was not so far fetched as one might suppose: Tommy Newman and Dabb were Toodyay natives in the employ of Mr Dempster and although they may have feared Griffin and been prepared to give damning evidence against him, the point is that conflict on this property may well have been exacerbated by the fact that the Dempsters not only brought convict workers into the area from the Avon valley but also Aboriginal workers.22

BALAN

On 24 September, 1889 Balan was charged with stealing 6 sheep from the Dempsters and had been placed in irons by Alex Cherry, (an ex-convict) shepherd23 of the Dempsters' but he escaped. One hundred sheep had been driven off the Dempster property by Balan and his companions. Cherry and Winmar, an Aboriginal assistant, tracked Balan and turned him over to P.C. Evans. He was sentenced in Albany to 18 months on Rottnest Island.24

At this time the press reported that 'certain natives' wanted for sheep stealing in the Esperance Bay area were 'especially troublesome to the settlers' necessitating Constable Evans being out of his saddle for only very short intervals from May to September:

... Between the Thomas River, Belladuney and the Fraser Range ... Constable Evans with his native assistant and another native lent to him, got onto the tracks of the natives wanted for sheep stealing and followed them for several days. For a time he travelled to the West Fraser Range and ... having secured his prisoners with the aid of native assistants he brought them into Esperance and then on to Albany. They were all convicted of the crimes laid to their charge and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.25

Interestingly, Evans also reported that many Aborigines were being 'usefully employed' by Scott and Brooks (neighbouring pastoralists) in sinking wells and building dams and tanks.

PETEGERURA AND BIBBERTY

Several Aborigines who had been employed in this work were charged with sheep stealing in the area in September 1890. Petegerura, Micky and Bibberty had been employed by Scott, building a tank, but Scott sent Petegeurra and Bibberty away because 'there was no grub for them.' Petchel, Jillegullum, Bibberty and Petegeurra then drove sheep away from Brooks' property. Petegeurra and Bibberty were charged with stealing 10 sheep and sentenced to 12 months imprisonment at Rottnest.26
DARTAMULGA

Records show that Dartamulga was an active resister around the Esperance Bay area for some time, especially in 1890. In March of that year Mr Dempster complained that the Aborigines around the Fraser Range were causing him a great deal of trouble and P.C. Pilkington lists Dartamulga amongst those he was chasing later in the month. The tracker Jimmy Parrish asked P.C. Pilkington for a gun in order to protect himself from this 'sulky fellow' (see below). Later in the year Pilkington stated that he had arrested Dartamulga for sheep stealing in June but that he had escaped. In December 'Dartmolgar' described as a pagan who could neither read nor write and had no occupation, was charged with stealing, taking and carrying away 3 sheep, near Fraser Range, out of the Dempster brothers' flock. The witnesses were Michael Griffin and an Aboriginal woman named Winnie. Dempster's manager H.G. Bostock, as magistrate, sentenced him to 12 months' hard labour at Rottnest and made the remarks: 'an old offender, has been giving great trouble at Fraser Range and its neighbourhood'.

JIMMY PARRISH (ALSO INVOLVES GNOUING, NEWMAL, CARTAPATILDA, WANDAMARLONGARA, JENABUNDA, WINNIE and others).

In March 1890 following Dempster's complaints that the Aborigines around the Fraser Range station were 'very troublesome', P.C. Pilkington and 'native assistant' Jimmy Parrish went to the Fraser Range in search of offending sheep stealers Gnoouing, Newmal, Cartapatilda (Pudding Head) and Dartamulga. They had great difficulty apprehending these men and were assisted by Punch, a part-time employee of Dempsters and a local Aborigine. He led them to water and tracks of the offenders. Punch and Jimmy Parrish became separated from Pilkington as they left the horses and went on into the Range on foot and came across Gnoouing, Newmal, Cartapatilda, Wandamarlongara, Jenabunga, Winnie and several others, including three women. Pilkington waited overnight at the station until the next evening when Punch returned alone and stated, in reply to Pilkington's question as to the whereabouts of Jimmy, that 'Blackfellows all kill him with sticks'. Punch reported that Jimmy had attempted to arrest Gnoouing and Winnie on sheep stealing charges but a fight broke out with Newmal, Wandamarlongara, Cartapatilda, Jenabunga, Winnie and the other women also taking part. Jimmy had fired the revolver which he had obtained from Pilkington out of fear of Dartamula, a 'sulky fellow' (who apparently was not present) but the Fraser Range Aboriginals had control of Jimmy's arms. Punch took Pilkington to the scene and Jimmy's badly mutilated and naked body was buried by Pilkington. Pilkington later took two trackers and P.C. Evans and arrested Newmal, Cartapatilda (Pudding Head) and Winnie. Newmal resisted violently, trying to get Pilkington's rifle but Evans secured him with a chain. Punch told Pilkington that Winnie struck the first blow and the other three women all beat Jimmy.
with 'cundies' but Inspector Rowe successfully applied for a remand for Winnie and used her as a witness for the prosecution. The Aboriginals charged with the murder were undefended. The evidence at the trial in Albany of Newmal and Cartapatila revealed that Jimmy Parrish was beaten, bitten, stripped of his 'white man's clothes' and had a very long stick thrust through his body by way of his mouth. At least eight apparently 'tribal' Aborigines had taken part in the killing.

Punch stated that he ran away and hid in fear overnight; he was the last companion of Jimmy Parrish and the major witness in the case. Newmal and Cartapatilda were committed for further trial in Perth but on 13 October, Inspector Rowe was informed that the Attorney General declined 'to file any information' against them. The press commented:

This is certainly a most extra-ordinary decision for the case was a strong one. It will not add to the security of life in the far away districts of the Eastward.

The Attorney General, C.N. Warton, became noted for his leniency in dealing with 'tribal' Aborigines.

This case concerning Jimmy Parrish is central to this paper: he had been an assistant to a linesman of the name Parrish (probationary prisoners from Rottnest were frequently used to protect and guard linesmen) and most probably was not from a local tribal area. Jimmy was caught in the conflict between the Europeans and local Aborigines. For a 'long time' he was assistant to Lance Corporal McGlade stationed at the Esperance Bay Police Station, and was probably deeply involved in the pursuit, arrest and conviction of local people. He was apparently well-respected by the Albany community as a cricketer and this murder caused outrage in the local community.

The details of his murder by the resisters in the Fraser Range indicate that the local Aborigines recognised his alliance with the invaders: they killed him in a ritualistic revengeful manner and stripped him of his 'white man's clothing'. This illustrates the response to one of the 'greatest dangers of a new white world': the Aboriginal trooper or tracker. The incident took place in the middle of the period under review, was caused by the increased resistance due to the expansion of the Dempster property and the encroachment of their employees on the Aboriginal people. It is likely that the incident exacerbated resistance as the manhunt that followed his murder increased the contact and conflict.

JOHNNY CADGILL

On 19 October, 1890, Johnny Cadgill, aged 16, was charged with stealing on 17 August, a large amount of rations from a tent and
sentenced by Bostock to six months' hard labour at Rottnest. For a similar offence on 20 August, he was sentenced to three months' cumulative, and for a third offence on 30 August, another three months' cumulative. In April 1892, Johnny (named as Cadgin, Cudgen, and Cadgill by the press) was charged with larceny and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment but, whilst undergoing his sentence locally, on Breaksea Island, he took the lighthouse keeper's boat and escaped. He was caught in a storm and suffered exposure, (the local press marvelled at his survival), before being apprehended and was sentenced to a further six months' for escaping and six months' for stealing the boat. Interestingly, Johnny Cadgill re-appears in 1904 on a charge of escaping legal custody.

MULYAL

Johnny Mulyal, aged 30, described as a heathen who could neither read nor write, and had no occupation, was taken into custody by P.C. Sherry and charged on 14 June 1892 that he "did on or about the 29th January last, feloniously steal, take and carry away a quantity of rations to wit: flour, tea and sugar, the property of W. and G.C. Moir". Bostock sentenced him to two years' imprisonment on Rottnest with hard labour for larceny of rations from a shepherd's camp and remarked that he was "a bad offender and a pest to the neighbourhood". The witnesses in the case were G.C. Moir and an Aboriginal woman named Judy. Johnny Mulyal had in his possession a Winchester Rifle.

The local newspaper reported that Mullayal, 'a notorious Aboriginal thief', who had been a source of great trouble to the settlers down the coast was arrest on 22 May near Bremer Bay by Constables Sherry and Murphy. He was arrested on a charge of stealing one sheep, one axe, two pack saddles, a tent, camp oven, a quantity of tea, sugar and flour from Moirs of Fanny's Cove. When arrested Mullayal had a rifle and was in the company of about 40 other natives:

The prisoner had previously sent word into the police that if they attempted to arrest him he would shoot them down. All the settlers and kangaroo hunters ... are highly pleased ... at the capture of Mullayal ...

A further report stated that a warrant had been issued for Moolyal some months ago, but he had managed to keep out of the way:

the police deserve great praise for having captured him. He is supported to be very cute, and if he knows there is a policeman within miles he will make out to the back marlcock country, where it is impossible to follow him. He seemed to be dreaded by all the shepherds and bushmen in general around here, as he so
often, as they commonly term it, 'cleaned them out', He had when caught in his possession firearms which he had stolen from some sandalwood cutters. Several other charges similar to the above mentioned will be brought against him so there is no chance of escape for him.\textsuperscript{42}

On 4 July, 1892, it was reported that Moolyal left Esperance on the cutter 'Eva' to serve his sentence. However, in Esperance on 4 June, 1895, Moolyal was charged that on 23 May, he was in possession of a quantity of clothing, knife, tomahawk, billy can and part of a tent 'which might reasonably be supposed to have been stolen'. This charge was withdrawn but on the same day he was charged with having stolen on 6 July, 1894, a large amount of clothing and provisions including a tent, camp oven and tobacco. Bostock sentenced him to 3 years' hard labour at Rottnest 'for taking tobacco and inciting others to rob and receive stolen property'.\textsuperscript{42} This offence must have taken place shortly after his release from Rottnest.

TOBY

This last case concerns Toby, who was perhaps not so lucky:

A notorious ab. nat. sheep-stealer was accidentally shot at Fraser's Range about the middle of last month. A half-civilised coast native named Toby had been at his old game, and the shepherds determined to catch him ... They despatched three natives to try and find him, which they did, with several others of his tribe. They fled, but the three trackers singled out a man each, and took after them. Wyenburt, who happened to single Toby out as his man, was running along when a firearm which he had in his possession accidentally went off shooting Toby in the back. He died in a few hours from the effects ... \textsuperscript{43}

A further report noted that 'the native, ... Wyeburt ... came in at once and reported himself to the police, but was soon released, it having been proved to have been purely accidental'.

These are only a small sample of the recorded cases in newspaper reports, occurrence books and charge sheets. Further research through Aboriginal oral history, European family history and the examination of other archival material would test my argument that there was a furious and persistent battle going on between the settlers and the Aboriginal population of Esperance Bay. As indicated by some of these cases it is likely that strength may be added for arguing that Aboriginal women were positive, active participants in this resistance.

One example of an incident not officially recorded comes from Mrs
Bostock: she recorded in the station daybook on 21 May, 1891, that W. Dempster had to come down from the Avon Valley to attend to the 'troublesome natives' in the Bardock country of the desert region at Fraser Range and took with him a large party including a Mr Truslove, referred to as a policeman, and 3 weeks' rations for the trip.44

Aboriginal resistance was so strong during this period in the North West that it was receiving media attention all over Australia and, although the pastoral industry was accused of indulging in a 'slave trade' on one hand, and the humanitarians on the other were accused of 'Gribblemania', nowhere is there any evidence to show any awareness that the Aboriginal activity was a positive response to invasion. The intensity of the activity around Esperance received local editorial comment which supports Reynold's argument as it stated that 'where they have caused to attack the white man, they have not caused to slay his flocks'46 and 'often drive away a considerable number of sheep upon which to hold high festival'. This editor also points out that the use of European Laws will not solve the problem and 'their fate we fear ... lies in extinction'. the 'fear' may well have been subconscious hope for an end to what might be described as a 'thirty years war' in the pastoral district of Esperance. Humanitarians of the day preferred to see the Aboriginals of Fraser Range as victims, describing them as 'a most wretched race, dying daily from starvation' and appealing to the government for 'something to be done'.47 However, this is overshadowed by the treatment of the Aborigines as criminals and, more importantly to the Aboriginal people's sense of power, a denial of the fact that a furious struggle for survival was going on. The Dempsters certainly had the power to get rid of 'troublesome natives' around their station by sending them off to Rottnest, but the case studies show the persistence and tenacity of the Aboriginal people.

'Troublesome natives' in the Esperance Bay area during the late 1880s to early 1890s were indeed active, positive resisters to the European invasion using many of the 'new tactics': prisoners from Rottnest returned home to continue the fight, leaders were emerging, raiding of enormous quantities of provisions not necessarily for consumption increased. Aborigines were also difficult to apprehend around the Fraser Ranges (as in guerilla warfare), guns were being used, 'traitors', such as Jimmy Parrish were dealt with and as suggested by Henry Reynolds informers such as Punch were also used as the conflict reached its height.

NOTES FROM CASE ON MARRABOOL

1. There is a difficulty in working with Aboriginal names, particularly because Europeans did not know how to spell them, and had in impertinent habit of using 'nick names' such as
Pudding Head for Cartapatilda. My case could be weakened, for example, if Moolyal is not Mulyal, or strengthened if it could be proved that Tommy Newmall is also Newwal.

2. Bardock and Bardook are the terms used to describe 'wild' Aborigines in the region examined but who the actual Aboriginal group or clan living around Fraser Range was, is uncertain and requires further research.
ENDNOTES


2. Ibid.,


6. *Australian Advertiser*, 6 September, 1889

7. Alleged Outrages on Aboriginal Natives, W.A. Despatches, Perth 1873, WA:ABO, p.91 (Battye Library)

8. *Australian Advertiser*, 7 July 1890

9. Erickson, op.cit., p.18

10. *Australian Advertiser*, 7 July 1890

11. Erickson, op.cit., p.18

12. The Dempster of Esperance Bay, PR 4115 FC (Battye Library)

13. Erickson, op.cit., p.84, p.123, p.197


15. Reynolds, op.cit., p.105

16. *Australian Advertiser*, 26 September, 1890

17. *Police Gazette*, 1887, p.201

18. *Australian Advertiser*, 5 December 1888

19. *Police Gazette*, 1885, p.77

20. *Australian Advertiser*, 5 December 1888


22. Erickson, op.cit., p.

23. Rica Erickson, *WA Dictionary of Biography*, vol.2
24. *Australian Advertiser*, 27 September, 1889

25. Ibid.

26. *Australian Advertiser*, 26 September, 1890

27. Ibid.

28. Esperance Police Court Charge Sheets, 781/13, 1885, 1897, 19 December, 1890

29. *Australian Advertiser*, 26 September, 1890

30. *Australian Advertiser*, 13 October, 1890


33. *Australia Advertiser*, 26 September, 1890

34. Ibid.

35. Reynolds, *op.cit.*, p.104

36. Esperance Charge Sheet, 19 October 1890

37. *Australian Advertiser*, 2 May, 1892

38. Marchant, *op.cit.*, p.37

39. Esperance charge sheets, 14 June, 1892

40. *Australian Advertiser*, 3 June, 1892

41. *Australian Advertiser*, 12 June, 1892

42. Esperance Charge Sheets, 4 June 1895

43. *Australian Advertiser*, 14 August, 1892

44. Erickson, *op.cit.*, p.248

45. *Bulletin, Sydney Truth* in *Australian Advertiser*, 21 October, 1892

46. *Australian Advertiser*, 21 May, 1890

47. *Australian Advertiser*, 15 January, 1892
REBELLION AND WORK 2:  
Footnotes to History:  
The Afghans in Western Australia  
by A. Koutsoukis  

INTRODUCTION  
The writer's interest in Afghans and their role in the history of Western Australia started late last year while doing some research on life on the Goldfields during the 1890s. References to the Afghans in the books consulted seemed to be very brief, and wider reading to discover more about their role yielded few results. A number of books preferred either to ignore the Afghans completely or only made passing references to them in a few brief footnotes. Here was an area of history which had obviously been neglected. While a great deal had been written about life on the Goldfields in general and about the miners in particular, little had been recorded about a people who must have contributed substantially to the development of the region through their expertise in the handling of camels. Here was a fruitful area of historical investigation, a chance to fill in some outstanding gaps in the social and economic history of the state. Moreover, it was an opportunity to recognise before too late the contribution of a people hitherto largely ignored, and who deserved to be more than mere footnotes to history.  

The first aim of this investigation was to determine how and why the Afghans came to Western Australia. Before this is attempted, it is necessary to make a point about the use of the term 'Afghans'. When starting this investigation, the writer assumed that the term meant people born in Afghanistan, but has now found that this is not necessarily the case.  

All authorities consulted agree that the term is a general one, including not only Afghans, but people born in adjacent regions such as Rajasthan, Baluchistan and Pakistan. McKnight makes the point that a small group from Egypt, Persia and Turkey also had the term applied to them. The reasons for this confusion are twofold. In the first place, most of the people in the Afghanistan-North West Frontier region were nomads who took little notice of prescribed
international boundaries. They wandered over a wide region and their homes were in many places. Such boundaries as there were, tended to alter too with inter-tribal fighting and the intrusion of the British Raj, hence even people who didn't travel much found themselves 'belonging' to various territories at different times. Mr Ayub Khan pointed out that his father was born in Gorgushti, which was once in Afghanistan but is now in Pakistan. Of course most Australians, being ignorant of British Indian politics, would not appreciate the significance of an alien's birthplace. To them, all people from this region were similar in appearance, hence were dubbed with the same name. In South Australia, the abbreviated term 'Ghan' was frequently used, and this has been perpetuated in the name of the train which runs from Marree to Alice Springs.

Although all are agreed that the term Afghans actually included non-Afghans, there is no agreement about the proportions of the various groups. McKnight claims they were mainly from Rajesthan, Baluchistan and West Pakistan. George Farwell agrees that the term is a misnomer (as does Malcolm Wallace), and says most were Indians from a score of groups, clans and tribes near the North West Frontier. Mr Amier Bux stated that in his opinion, the composition of 'Afghans' on the Goldfields was 70% Afghans, 25% Baluchis and 5% Indians. Interestingly enough, his own father was born in Benares, India.

Since no evidence is offered to support any of these assertions, it is impossible to decide which is nearest the truth. What is interesting however is the fact that conflicting ideas of the 'Afghan' origins have been the subject of politically-interested debate. In April 1895 a letter was sent from the Anti-Asiatic League to Warden Finnerty, protesting at the increasing number of Afghans on the Goldfields, and requesting that no more be allowed to come in the future. Mr Finnerty's reply was in part as follows: 'With regard to the Afghans ... from inquiry made by me it appears that, if any, very few of these men are Afghans, but actual British Indians, and therefore not aliens.'

This reply drew a furious retort from the editorial columns of the Coolgardie Miner of 6 May 1895. The editor, a man named Frederick Vosper, was a leading light in the anti-Asiatic League. In rebuttal of Warden Finnerty's claims, Vosper wrote:

there are a score of men on the field today who have spent years amidst both Indians and Afghans in their own countries, who affirm that ninety per cent of the so-called Afghans in this country are in reality Afghans, and not Indians as the head of the Government would have us believe, simply because he is an advocate for cheap labour.

For the remainder of this paper, the term 'Afghans' will be used in its general sense. For the purposes of this investigation it is not
necessary to go further into the specific regional birthplaces of those people known by Australians simply as Afghans. This could be an area of study in itself and needs no further attention here.

Afghans were resident in Australia for several decades before they made their appearance in Western Australia. The first recorded Afghan camel drivers to arrive were three men (described in some accounts as 'sepoys') brought to Australia in 1860 to accompany the Burke and Wills expeditions. Only one, Dost Mahomet, seems to have found his way into popular historical accounts.

The next known group of Asian camel-handlers consisted of 31 men who accompanied the camels brought into South Australia in 1866 by S.J. Stuckey. Stuckey was acting on behalf of Sir Thomas Elder who recognised the potential value of camels in the outback and desired to build up a substantial herd to exploit the situation. Succeeding shiploads of camels brought more Afghans as attendants and they were soon busily engaged in tending the camel trains that plodded stoically through the outback.

Although some were content to remain in menial employment as drivers, others were not. A few displayed considerable business acumen and went into business for themselves, importing camels from India and drivers to go with them. One such was Abdul Wadi (sometimes spelled Wade) who was so successful that by the 1890s he had some 400 camels and 60 drivers working for him over a vast area in South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. His workers were engaged on three-year contracts on which they earned £3 a month plus rations.

Of similar talents was Faiz Mahomet, who arrived in South Australia at the age of 22 about the year 1874. He was soon manager of Elder, Smith and Company's camel station at Hergott Springs (later re-named Marree). His talents must have been phenomenal, for in 1880 he purchased the station from his former employers. In March 1889 he took his brother Tagh into partnership with him, thus forming the company of Faiz and Tagh Mahomet. The Mahomet brothers ran a lucrative trade in camels but as well branched out into general trading as well.

The writer has not been able to ascertain who were the first Afghans to come to Western Australia. Camels were imported directly into the colony at least as early as 1886, but by whom it is not certain. It is possible they were accompanied by Afghan attendants. Late in 1887 two ships (the Abergeldie and the Yeoman) docked in Fremantle with cargoes of camels for sale. There were 44 Afghans on the Yeoman and presumably a similar number on the Abergeldie. Few camels were sold in Fremantle (only 12 from the Yeoman) and the ships continued on to Port Augusta. Some Afghans may have remained with the Perth camels, but no record has yet been found of them.

The Statistical Register of Western Australia shows that in 1892 the number of camels jumped from 42 to 395. This is the year that the
Mahomet brothers came to the colony, thus it is reasonable to suppose that if they were not the first Afghans in Western Australia, they were among the first.

With the stimulus of gold being discovered in the arid outback, there was great scope for the introduction of both camels and Afghan drivers. Faiz Mahomet and others like him were quick to realise this need and took steps to supply it. The numbers of camels and Afghans were to increase rapidly in the next five years. It is easier to document camel numbers than Afghan numbers however, and the precise number of Afghans remains vague at the present time.

Those who arrived in Western Australia either came direct from Asia by ship or from South Australia. Most who came from South Australia drove camel teams overland although Sultan Raz Mahomet and his erudite secretary Mahomed Musa Khan preferred to come by ship. Malcolm Wallace claims that the first overland trip from South Australia to the Goldfields by a camel train was accomplished in 1894. Its leader was a young Englishman named Alfred Health who was chosen to lead some 70 camels belonging to Sultan Raz Mahomet. Six Afghans accompanied him. The journey started at Hergott Springs on 25 March 1894 and ended in Coolgardie in the last week of July.

The second area of investigation was to examine the contributions of the Afghans to the development of the state. There can be no doubt that their contribution was a valuable one. The camel was an animal particularly suited to the harsh arid countryside in which the miners dug for their fortunes, and the Afghans' long acquaintance with this animal made them its natural guardians and drivers. Afghan cameleers carted passengers, food and water to the Goldfields and their efforts kept many a miner alive. Some Afghans brought goods such as clothing onto the fields, and from here the step into peddling and hawking was not a great one. Afghan pedlars were a common sight, venturing far out into the outback to supply miners in parched and isolated areas.

Some of the more prosperous opted for a more settled life, and opened general stores. Ameer and Moosa Khan became drapers and general merchants at Peak Hill and Cue, Ayar Mahomet opened a business in Mt Magnet, while the Mahomet brothers had stores in Coolgardie, Geraldton, Cue, Day Dawn and Mullewa.

A few fancied themselves as herbalists. Hanji Mahomet Allum practised in the goldfields till he left for South Australia where he later achieved nation-wide fame for his skills. In 1895 an Afghan named Hoffiz was advertising his skills in the Coolgardie Miner. Apparently, his speciality was the curing of piles.

Before the railway line reached Kalgoorlie in 1896, Afghans were prominent in the freight-carrying business. Faiz Mahomet claimed that when he first came to the area, the cost of cartage from Southern Cross to Coolgardie was 1/- per pound. He thought this cost
was exorbitant and instead, offered to cart freight from York to Coolgardie for 6d per pound. No doubt this made him popular with the miners, but the thoughts of his competitors can be imagined.

The extension of the railway line did not diminish the Afghans' carrying business, only its scope. Instead of trying to compete with the railway, they complemented it by transporting goods from railway terminals out into isolated areas where the railroad would never venture. Loads of fencing posts and heavy mining machinery were carted off into the interior by huge camel teams capable of drawing many tons of dead weight. On occasions they might backload with heavy bales of wool from outback sheep stations.

Perhaps the best known and most prominent of all the Afghans was Faiz Mahomet whose main base was Coolgardie. He had large shops in Bayley Street, the main street of Coolgardie, and operated a cartage business as well. He often 'staked' miners by providing them with rations and sharing in the proceeds of any gold found.

In addition to his business activities, Faiz Mahomet was prominent in community affairs, and respected by both Europeans and Afghans alike. In 1895 he lodged a petition on behalf of his fellow-countrymen for the protection of their lives and property against threats from hostile Europeans. Two years later he was seeking permission for Moslem 'priests' to land in the colony to minister to the growing Islamic community. He was even assisting the Chief Inspector of Stock by reporting on camels suffering from lung complaints. Such involvement in civic affairs was not enough however to earn him Australian citizenship. His claim for naturalisation in 1896 was politely refused.

Although Afghans received much criticism from the European community on a number of scores, there were still those who were able to appreciate the value of their contribution to the colony's progress. A letter that appeared in the Coolgardie Miner of 28 July 1894 from "C.L.B." took the side of the Afghans after heavy criticism of them by two previous correspondents. He wrote as follows:

Re the Afghan Question. Whether your correspondents, British and Irish Oaks, are carriers or water condensers who fear competition from the swarthy man, I know not, but I do know that many a digger on the way back to the fields has been enabled to pull through till he got a few ounces of gold by reason of the Afghans selling him tucker at a fairly reasonable price. Whilst the men at Kurnalpo were dependent on white camel drivers and carriers the price of flour was from £5 to £6 per 50 lbs., but as soon as the Afghan camel teams found their way to the field the price suddenly dropped to £2/10-. And that was not the only occasion on which the Afghan came to the rescue of the digger who was being starved out by his Shylock-like
white brother. If the diggers wish to pay famine prices for tucker by giving a few avaricious whites a monopoly of the carrying trade, by all means let them agitate for the expulsion of the Afghan. So long as the Afghan is precluded from mining, his presence on the fields can do no harm to the miners, and they are the men whose interests should be consulted in this part of WA and not those of carriers and storekeepers who are anxious to profit by them.

Fifty years later, the author Malcolm Uren summarised their contribution as follows:

... the work they did on the Goldfields earned most of them respect and affection. Many a miner relied on the Afghan camel teams to bring him food and water, and rarely was that reliance misplaced. In matters of business the Afghans had a strong sense of equity together with a native ability to make a profit.¹⁰

Notwithstanding these two expressions of commendation, how did the community at large react to the Afghans? In the absence of any anti-Afghan riots, one must support that they were at least tolerated. But the majority were never accepted socially. Most towns in which Afghans lived had a place called 'the Ghans' Camp' on the outskirts. Housing was usually extremely simple - perhaps a rough corrugated iron shed or a bower shed: a framework with gum branches on top to provide shade. Housing meant little to Afghans involved in a nomadic life.¹¹ Farwell described them as living 'on the other side of the line'.¹²

To the fact of their substandard living conditions was added considerable newspaper criticism. In the Coolgardie Miner of 1894 and 1895 letters and reports critical of Afghans were far in excess of those commending them. This does not necessarily mean that the majority of people were opposed to them. What it does means is that those Europeans hostile to the Afghans were more prolific letter writers than those in favour or that editorial policy gave hostile opinions greater coverage. However, the content of the letters does indicate that there were some aspects of the Afghans' presence or behaviour that were disturbing to some people.

It is apparent that some of the miners viewed the Afghans in terms of racial prejudice, and fears of a swamping of the goldfields by Asiatic hordes were expressed by a number of writers using the clichés associated with racial prejudice. For example the editorial of the Coolgardie Miner of 16 June 1894 stated: 'By and bye we shall be overrun by Mongolian hordes if we do not now protest against our Afghan visitors, and there is perhaps no greater curse that could fall upon us than a Chinese invasion.' It further proceeds thus:

We fear that a low, degenerate, mongrel race of human beings will follow where they lead, and for the
protection of our Anglo-Saxon race we say, and say emphatically, 'ooshtah', which, being interpreted, means 'lay down'; we have no use for you at present.

In a similar vein, a correspondent calling himself British Oak wrote to the paper a fortnight later. He too was critical of the Afghan presence, complaining:

Some Afghans already hold miners' rights and keep stores. This is the thin end of the wedge. The Chinese will surely and certainly follow, and the whole Asiatic question will hurl itself upon us in all its evil hideousness, like a thunderbolt.\(^{13}\)

Another correspondent with the nom de plume of Irish Oak added his comments three weeks later. He said:

We do not want to harbour the crowd of Asiatics and Afghans' of whom those here now represent only thin end of the wedge.

He went on to claim:

Australia for the white man; we came first, colonised and opened up the country, and do not want the Asiatic, who can exist upon the smell of an oil-rag and a few ounces of rice, to usurp our hardly-won territory and starve us out, which they will surely and certainly do if we allow them.\(^{14}\)

Six months later the fear of 'invasion' was still prevalent. An isolated news comment for 2 February 1895 reads as follows:

Two Chinamen have arrived in Coolgardie. These are the precursors of the invasion. Eighty-four Afghans were landed in Fremantle. They [sic] cry is still to come. Are the whites of this field still awake?

The pages of the Coolgardie Miner for 1894 and 1895 contain many accusations against Afghans for alleged offensive behaviour. One of their most grievous offences was supposed to be their propensity for washing their feet in drinking wells. In the middle of October 1894 there was a sensational incident when several white men got into a fight with some Afghans over such an issue. One of the white men, by the name of Knowles, drew his revolver and shot two of the Afghans, one of whom died shortly afterwards. This incident came to be known as the Point Malcolm affair and aroused considerable interest and controversy in the community. Knowles was arrested on a charge of manslaughter, and public meetings were held to raise money for his defence. Eventually Knowles was acquitted to the intense satisfaction of the anti-Afghan segment of the community. The Coolgardie Miner of 1 January 1895 expressed its satisfaction in
these terms:

Had he been hanged or imprisoned the insolence of the Asiatic population, already unbearable, would have known no bounds, and the gross offences which led to the unfortunate shooting match would have been multiplied on every side. The verdict given will show the Afghans that they cannot in future destroy or pollute the means of livelihood of the whites - for the few and isolated soaks are no less - without running the risk of a shooting affray. 15

Another accusation levelled at Afghans was the crime of camel-planting. They were alleged to steal camels from white men, hide the animals in a safe place, then come forward with the animals once a reward had been offered for its return. 16

Some Afghans were accused of being dishonest and untrustworthy. A letter was published on 9 April 1895 from one A.J. Vogan of the Roseberry Prospecting Company of Sydney. He claimed that on at least two occasions, Afghans employed by prospecting parties had offered, for money, to show him certain valuable finds made by their employers. His summing of Afghan labour was as follows: 'I have been forced to employ, at various times, Chinese, Malays, Kanakas, and others and lastly Afghans, and the last is the most unsavoury, untrustworthy and disagreeable of the lot.' 17

Afghans were seen as an economic threat. Their wages of £3 per month were only a fraction of the European’s salary of £14 per month for the same job, and many Europeans feared their competition. The editorial of the Coolgardie Miner for 6 May 1895 made this point clear:

That the question of admitting Asiatics to the colony, is a most vital one to every working man on the field, no one will deny, and it behoves every such man, as well as every other individual who has the interests of his fellow colonists at heart, to put his veto on the matter whenever it comes up for discussion. No white man can compete, and live, with these Afghans.

There was even one occasion when Afghans were accused of being child molesters. The Coolgardie Miner of 11 April 1895 reported that a young boy had been approached by three Afghans who 'made improper overtures to him for money'. The boy concerned also alleged that a night or two before, a companion had been carried off by Afghans and had only escaped by crying 'Murder!'

The most concrete manifestation of the anti-Afghan feeling on the Goldfields was the formation of the Anti-Asiatic League in Coolgardie in 1894. It was very interested in the Knowles case, and helped to raise funds for his defence. It held numerous public meetings to
protest the increasing Afghan population on the 'fields and led a deputation to the Premier calling for the cessation of Asian migration. A working class organisation, it was not generally supported by professional and business men.

It is of course difficult to determine whether the complaints against the Afghans were justified and based on fact, or whether they were motivated by a sense of malice on the part of some disgruntled individuals. On this issue, Faiz Mahomet raises an interesting viewpoint. In his petition to Sir John Forrest of January 1895, he asked for fair play and the proper protection of the rights and property of Afghans. He complained of a number of abuses to which Afghans had been subjected and referred to the criticisms that had been levelled at them. His opinion of the critics of Afghans was that they were 'stumporators' who stirred up trouble deliberately either because they were business rivals or because they had their eyes on a seat in parliament.16

On the last question for investigation - that of the fate of the Afghans once the need for their special expertise was ended - not a great deal can be written. There seem to have been two main alternatives: either they went home or they moved further into the outback where camel trains could still operate at a profit.

Firm statistics of Afghan numbers are generally very hard to come by, but the following table. However, statistics included in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Immigration of Non-British Labour (1904) show that although Afghan immigrants were still arriving in the period April-December, such immigration was slowing almost to a halt. In every case, immigration was always countered by a substantially greater emigration rate. Overall, in a period of less than three years, the total number of resident Afghans dropped by one-third.

Another interesting feature of these figures is that no females are recorded. Generally, the Afghan men came alone. Some, like Mr Ayub Khan's father, went home frequently (say every two years) and raised their families in Afghanistan, but always coming back to Australia where conditions were apparently lucrative. Others remained bachelors, or took Aboriginal wives. A few, like Mr Amier Bux's father, married European women. But generally speaking, with few marriage ties to bind them to Australia, most Afghans returned to their homelands.

Of those who remained, the only recourse was to continue to operate their camel trains in areas where they could operate without the competition of railways. They moved out into areas like Leonora, Wiluna, Meekatharra, Mundriwindi, Nullagine, Marbel Bar, Hall's Creek and Wyndham. In these areas, their services were invaluable as the country was pitiless and harsh where only the strong could survive. Camel trains brought supplies to outback stations and isolated mining shows and their presence was more than welcomed.19
But by the late 1920s, they were faced by a new form of competition, that of the motor lorry. This new vehicle could travel faster, carry heavier loads and offer cheaper freight rates and it spelt the end of the Afghan camel-trade. Within a few years, the economic value of camels dwindled to almost nothing, and most operators simply turned their camels loose rather than destroy them. The large herds of feral camels that roam the Australian outback today descend from those released by the despondent Afghan camel drivers.

Their living gone, what became of these men? A few drifted into the towns where they operated stores (eg Aly Mahomet, Moora). Some took up farming land (eg Nawab Khan in Mullewa), while others became itinerant pedlars (eg Charlie Abdullah Aswani - or 'Black Charlie' - at Kelmscott). A number simply retired and came to Perth so as to be near the mosque in William Street. The writer recalls seeing some of these old men in Perth in the 1940s - dignified old patriarchs in turbans. In 1954, the remaining seven Afghans, now very old, returned to their homeland to die.

Only two Afghans are known to have married European women. One was Kadder Bux, the other Faqir Shah. The families of these men have assimilated into the Australian community, and to all intents and purposes there is no such thing as an Afghan community in Perth.

COMMENTS ON FUTURE RESEARCH:

It is apparent that the research so far conducted is as yet inadequate for any serious study of Afghans in WA. Much more work remains to be done before a more complete picture of their activities emerges. In addition to the needed work already indicated in the preceding pages of the report, the following points need to be made:

1. Newspapers have so far been the most fruitful sources of information and must be heavily relied on in the future.

2. Work needs to be done on the theme of Afghan-Aboriginal relations. This is an important facet as yet neglected.

3. More work could be done on the role of Afghans in other states, as complementary information to the situation in WA.

4. There is scope for some biographical work on one or two prominent Afghans - say Faiz Mahomet in Coolgardie or Dost Mahomet in Port Hedland.
ENDNOTES

4. Ibid., 6 May 1895, p.2.
6. Dost Mahomet never returned to his native land. He was buried at Menindie around 1872.
7. Following the murder of Tagh at Coolgardie in January 1896 the firm was re-named F and T Mahomet.
8. Three such miners, Englishmen named Parkes, Rogers and Lockhard, found the first gold at Lake Darlot in the Lower Murchison field.
9. Faiz Mahomet was also a heavy contributor to the Perth mosque, opened in 1905.
13. Coolgardie Miner, 30 June 1894.
15. See also W.J. Raeside's comments: Uren, *op.cit.*, p.43.
16. Coolgardie Miner, 10 November 1894
17. Ibid., 9 April 1895, p.3, col.e.
18. At least one of the Afghan-critics did end up in Parliament. Frederick Vosper was the member for North-East Coolgardie from May 1897 to 1900.
20. Their names were: Haji Fagurd Deen, Zayart Khan, Mohammed Bux, Chulam Mohideen, Syed Khurdarame, Syed Perdouce and Juma Khan.
Part 2.
Class
IN THE FACTORY:
'Burnt Fingers':
Mills and Ware Biscuits 1898-1952*

by Shirley Booth

INTRODUCTION

The biscuit industry throughout Australia, like many manufacturing concerns of the early 1900s, was dominated by family companies. Following World War II the threat of overseas companies breaking into the Australian biscuit and cake market eventually brought about a change of profile. To ensure their survival, an association of family biscuit companies (from each State), including such well-known names as Brockhoff, Swallow and Ariel, Menz, and Mills and Ware, was formed in 1958 as the Australian Biscuit Company. Arnott's of Sydney subsequently became the major share holder of all the companies involved and took over as the main biscuit manufacturer in Australia.

Between the years 1952 and 1973 at Mills and Ware, the major involvement of, and eventual take-over by Arnott's Proprietary Limited saw significant technological changes as well as a changing ideology of management. On 1 January 1973 the business changed its name to Arnott, Mills and Ware Proprietary Limited, and the once famous trade name 'Mills and Ware's' began to fade into history as it took a secondary place to Arnott's.

Mills and Ware operated in Western Australia from 1898 until 1952 as a company which reflected the influence and close involvement of the Mills family. Its development through those years was hampered by the Depression, two World Wars, and government capital restrictions. Despite these major economic influences Mills and Ware, the oldest and largest firm of biscuit manufacturers in Western Australia, remained one of the largest factories in the State and provided jobs for significant number of skilled and unskilled labour throughout these years. Its products won firm support from Western Australians, as well as being highly regarded elsewhere in Australia and other parts of the world.

*This essay has been extensively edited because of essay length restrictions. Interested readers should feel free to contact the author.
Much of the manufacturing detail available about Mills and Ware comes from formal sources and from limited company records. These indicate how the factory operated, the expansion of buildings and machinery, the output of numerous varieties of cakes and biscuits, and management control. It is, however, the information obtained from personal interviews that expands the firm's historical record in a useful way. Former employees have spoken of, for example, their views of management, the effect of their working conditions, the social consequences of their involvement with the firm, and some of the special features which helped to make Mills and Ware the 'household' name for biscuits and cakes, particularly up to the 1950s.

BEGINNINGS

William Mills, the son of Joseph Mills, was born in Liverpool on 22 June 1866. He came to Australia after finishing his apprenticeship as a baker. He worked his way out to Victoria as a ship's baker in 1887. He married in Melbourne and stayed there for about eight years before joining the rush to the goldfields near Kalgoorlie. His income possibly came from his trade as a baker there, rather than from gold prospecting.

Henry Ware was virtually the silent partner in the business. He is believed to have been a schoolboy friend of William Mills in England, and he too ventured to the goldfields. He worked at the mine until health problems forced him to return to Perth. William Mills, who had also left Kalgoorlie, commenced business in a small way as a baker and pastry cook, first at Broome Road, Subiaco (1897), then near Fremantle Road in Cottesloe (1898). From the little corner shop in Cottesloe, Mrs Mills, with basket on arm, walked from door to door selling the cakes and biscuits. A small, hand-turned biscuit-making machine was purchased and by 1899 the output increased to such an extent that larger premises were needed, and the business moved to Mandurah Road, South Fremantle. Henry Ware, who provided financial backing, was taken into partnership. The two men became proprietors of the Swan Cake and Biscuit Factory, which was then 'a modern biscuit and cake-making plant'. In 1904 Henry Ware died and his interest was purchased by William Mills who maintained full control until his own death in November 1917.

William's eldest son, Stanley, was called back from overseas war service to take over the business and he was joined later by younger brother Nelson. Under their direction the factory expanded in size and the company grew in reputation. It was incorporated as a limited company in 1924, still carrying on the business as 'bakers and manufacturers of and dealers in biscuits, cakes, bread, flour, farinaceous compounds, and materials, confectionery, lollies, sweets, pickles, preserves and condiments'.
RAW MATERIALS

The foundations of the business were firmly established by William Mills, whose ideas and recipes were many and varied. By 1912 his factory produced over fifty varieties of biscuits ranging from 'ship's bread and cabin biscuit to the delicate wafer sweetmeat'. In fact, he was very keen to keep up with the latest developments in the biscuit trade and his finances were obviously sufficient during this period to enable him to take a trip to England and America. At the St. Louis Exhibition he saw the first automatic wafer machine at work and ordered one for his own factory.

A significant feature of his cake and biscuit making was his insistence that locally produced raw materials should be used where possible. Almost all the flour used was milled from Western Australian wheat, and from 1932 this was processed at the Western Star Flour Mill, of which Mills and Wares was a joint owner.

THE FACTORY - EARLY DAYS

When the business shifted to Mandurah Road in 1899 it was to a site housing a tin shed 40 feet by 200 feet, bought from Ross and Company Confectioners. The 'factory' shed was divided into two working areas, one for despatch, the other for biscuit and cake preparation. Not long after, the adjacent properties belonging to John Crooks, Grocer, and Holmes Brothers, were taken over to enable an office, a tinsmiths, and case-making section, to be added to the factory. The production equipment then consisted of one 4-bag drum mixer (for trial mixes), two small cutting machines and two small chain ovens - 30 feet long and fired by wood from stove holes underneath the ovens. Within the next decade the automatic wafer machines were added, as were four cake 'patent steam Decker' ovens (which baked continuously for eight hours each day).

The early sources of information about Mills and Wares painted an idealistic picture of the production conditions and the 'benefits' the Company received from its 'spirited enterprise' during this period. The galvanised iron and wood building may not have been so hygienic as to ensure 'the acme of cleanliness' described by the authors. When Mabel Pilling started at the factory (1914) 'it was a poor place, they were only feeling their feet... there'd be perhaps a month at a time we'd have to be put off because there was no work'. She remembers that production was not so automatic as 'to avoid handling of things', and that 'the floors used to get quite
messy during the week and on Saturday mornings staff used to clean up the factory ready for a fresh start on Mondays'. She recalls too, that the extreme heat generated by the old wood ovens in the factory made working conditions very uncomfortable. During many lunch hours she and fellow workers would go down to the ocean and sit on the Marine Terrace rocks to cool their feet in the water.15

Stanley Mills had a reputation for high production standards and quality and he was according to Roy Stagg,

a stickler for perfection. But he had the utmost difficulty in getting it up to that perfection because of the set up of the place. It wasn't a clean place, it had old galvanized iron walls with concrete floors and everybody tried to keep it clean, but with places like that it's difficult.16

FACTORIES BILL

On 30 September 1903, William Mills was examined at length by a Select Committee appointed to inquire into the 'Factories Bill'.17 An inspection report had made several charges against the factory, particularly relating to sanitary conditions, refuse disposal, and employees' clothing - all charges which William Mills fiercely rebutted.

At that time the government had not provided deep draining to the area and consequently storm waters 'got into the back portion of the factory'. Parts of the back yard (75 feet by 30 feet) were converted into a mire; mud and dirt were carried to the floor of the workrooms by the employees' boots. When it was suggested by the committee that a path should be made to the closets from the factory, William Mills did not think that would be of much benefit 'because I should have to be there to see that the employees (the boys in particular) walked on the asphalt. This nuisance occurs only after a lot of continuous rain, and it disappears in a day', he said, not being inclined to go to the expense.

In reply to a question about refuse disposal he argued that 'the Municipal arrangements are not altogether as they might be. We have no incinerator at the present time in Fremantle, and consequently there is trouble to get rid of the refuse; nevertheless, we make it a point to remove it from our premises once a week'. He also said, 'I have been doing nothing else but attending to the sanitary arrangements since I went there'. He emphatically denied that the premises showed neglect and that the machines were dirty:

A corrosion of flour cannot be considered dirty. It cannot be prevented. If the flour adheres to the sides of the pans, it is flour, pure and simple ... the biscuit manufacturing of today is practically
done entirely by machinery. Only on one or two occasions and at certain machines is the dough handled by the operators.

He considered the remark that employees' clothes were dirty as ridiculous. He had tried to enforce an order that all employees should bring white aprons, but this was not successful, despite some staff being dismissed for defiance. He provided 'flour bag' material and the boys could cut new aprons as often as they liked. No one was allowed to work in a dirty apron.

His girls, however, 'in respectability and carefulness in dress', compared with any he had seen in any other part of the world, despite the fact that the 'girls do not earn sufficient to keep them in a state as clean as the inspector might demand'. He spoke highly of his staff, but with emphasis on having the right type of female: 'Biscuit factory employees in other states are considered the refuse of the working population, and the lowest lot of girls and boys in the State. That cannot be said of our people. We always look to the respectability of the girl; and if that is assured I think we have assured everything that is necessary'. 'It has been my ambition ... to get the best appearance I could throughout the factory'. He had 50-60 girls and boys employed there and in his opinion, they needed considerable supervision.

The factory was not, he asserted, poorly lit, nor insufficient in air space as claimed. He said that there was 30,000 cubic feet of airspace, the walls were 16 feet and the gables went up to 24 feet. It was not lined because it would cost £400 to £500 to do so and it would increase the cost of fire insurance, interfere with the ventilation, and have a tendency to harbour vermin.

After responding to the charges raised by the inspection report, William Mills was asked by the Select Committee to comment on a variety of clauses proposed for the Factories Bill, including hours of labour, and overtime limitations. He did object to the Bill, saying that it wasn't necessary - 'I am complying with everything in the Bill. My hands are in a better condition now than they would be under the Bill if it passed in its entirety'. His hands worked 48 hours a week and overtime was very little. Only the men worked it and were paid time and a half (the Bill provided for time and a quarter).

**BURNT FINGERS**

When war broke out in 1914, restrictions were imposed on the factory. Raw materials were rationed, and production was confined mainly to Service biscuits (Cabin, Maree). The factory operated from 7.30 am Monday to 7.30 pm Saturday to produce these biscuits. At this time the company was employing approximately 80 staff. Female staff had their tasks extended to taking biscuits...
off the trays as soon as they were taken out of the oven. According to Mabel Pilling (employed 1914-1923),

they'd be taking these hot biscuits off the tray and all their fingers would be bleeding because they were so tender. Their fingers were raw, red raw at the top, but you see they had to get used to that too. For those few days you had to stick at it, until your fingers began to harden to the heat. There was no wrapping your fingers up - you wouldn't do it."19

Kath Stagg remembered that during her time in the factory (1929-1939) on an assembly line - 'hot biscuit trays were put in front of you and you used to run them up with your fingers, weigh them on scales, and the next girl to you wrapped them in greaseproof then another girl labelled them and stuck the end of the packs with flour paste glue before stacking them to dry, ready for packing in tins the next day'. 'It was hot work running up the biscuits like that, and we were wringing wet, we had blisters on the tops of our fingers because the trays were hot'.21

The boys employed to lift the red hot trays of biscuits from the ovens were also at risk of burns - they used only hessian 'maulers' for protection.22 The extreme heat constantly generated in the factory made the job 'damned hard work' for the employees.23 The problem of sore fingers seems inherent in the job for female biscuit packers. The hot biscuits were not the only ones to cause injury. Linda Neville remembered bleeding fingers resulting from handling the army biscuits which were 'so hard, and used to have lots of little spikes, like a coarse meal, and they were very rough'.24 Even today, the Nice biscuits which are topped with sugar, cause a friction which just wears the skin away. It is not easy, apparently, for the girls to wear gloves to protect themselves. The firm tried these but they were not successful.25

DEPRESSION

1924 saw the next major development in the factory with the installation of a three-pan wood oven, followed in 1926 by a bigger four-pan oven purchased from England.26 The positioning of these wood ovens was to cause Mills and Ware's first strike. A 24-hour strike was held to protest about the water coming into working areas near where the ovens were being installed. The depth of the ovens (including stoke holes) necessitated some excavation of the area, but due to the proximity of the ocean to the factory, the water table was high and it had to be drained away causing messy and difficult working conditions.27 These ovens enabled increased production and the income from sales resulted in some capital expansion, but progress was shortlived. The onset of the Depression in 1929 saw a temporary setback in business.
Roy Stagg started work as a junior labourer with the company in that year. He was 15 years old and his first week's wage was 17/6d for a 48-hour week, which included Saturday morning work. He recalled that they were really hard times and every week there used to be a notice put on the door of the men's and girls' changerooms that they were on a continuous week's notice from this date, 17 January or whatever. It was very seldom that anybody got kept on for more than two years. You got 2/6d rise after 12 months, 2/6d after 18 months, and after two years you got five shillings rise - if your name wasn't on the door!28

Phyl Seubert was 16 years old when she joined the company in 1930 as a telephonist. She considered she was lucky to get a job at that time but recalls that a lot of the girls employed then were her age because 'that was the year when they were getting rid of the older ones'. Her two sisters, Dolly and Ivy, worked in the factory and she remembers Dolly being put off because she reached the age of twenty-one and would have to be paid the adult wage. Ironically, Dolly was manpowered later during the World War II and ended up having to work shifts at Mills and Ware. There was no social support in those days for the unemployed and many people would go from door to door asking for food. Phyl has clear memories of the people who knocked at their door trying to sell buttons, elastic or some small item that would earn them money for food. 'People worked hard to get a few shillings', she said.29

Harold Dale was employed by the company in 1922 as office boy, aged 16 years. During his period of employment he made up and paid the wages of staff, and also became responsible for the purchasing of stock. He became a victim of the 'Depressions dismissals' because he was over 21 years of age. As a result he had to postpone, until 1935, his marriage to Ethel Mills whom he had met and worked with in the office. Apart from stopping her getting married to Harold, the Depression didn't seem to affect Ethel nor her family seriously because they were all working.30

EARLY AWARDS

In 1920 the Arbitration Court accepted a 12-month agreement between Mills and Ware with other food manufacturers, and the Coastal Food Manufacturers' Employees Union.31 Among the conditions of this agreement was a minimum weekly rate of wages, which, for all male and female workers, was equal. This showed a payment of 15/- per week for the first three months' experience, with a 5/- per week rise for each six month period up to 18 months and thereafter 30/- per week. There was no provision for annual leave, but increased rates applied if time was worked during special holidays throughout the year (eg Christmas Day, Easter, etc.)32
By 1924 an agreement between the same parties included a holiday of one week on full pay. The hours of work for males over 16 years was forty-eight per week and forty-four hours for females, and males under 16 years. The minimum wage structure had changed to the extent that junior females were paid a starting wage of 17/6d with increments up to the age of 21 years, when they earned 37/6d. Adult females, irrespective of experience, were paid 45/- per week. By comparison junior male workers (i.e. finishing brake hands, assistant mixers, machine hands) commenced at 35/- per week, progressively rising to a sum of 55/- after three years' experience. The adult male wage, depending on the top of duty carried out, ranged from 84/- to 95/- per week.33

In the 1925 agreement, female wages had not altered from those of 1924. Junior males however, although starting at 35/- per week, had obtained an increase of 5/- (to 60/-) after three years' experience. The adult male rate altered in range from £4/10/- to £5 per week.34

WORLD WAR II

The years of World War II were significant in the company's history. It saw another period of rationing of raw materials and the cessation of fancy line biscuit production. It found itself once more producing Service biscuits (for all Australian Armed Forces in the Middle and Near East) but this time under strict Government regulations in which the factory was classified to engage in Defence Contracts.

Ray Doherty recalled that the Army biscuits were produced right through the night, as well as during the day - and the process was very slow. Because of the thickness of the biscuits they took a long time to cook, and the speed of the machines couldn't be increased.

The pressure to produce the biscuits caused disruption to the lives of the employees. Linda Neville had to work over a whole weekend on a consignment of biscuits so that it could be loaded onto a ship before it left Fremantle. She resented this when she found that it was her brother-in-law's embarkation day on the Sunday. When she asked the factory foreman (Jack Doherty35) for the day off to see her relative for the last time before he went away, it was not granted. 'I had to work, we made all these biscuits and packed them all and everything. And the boats left without them! I could have screamed.'36

WARTIME CONSIGNMENT OF THE BIG OVEN

The war also prompted the firm to update its biscuit-cooking technology. In 1939, Mills and Ware used individual pans on intermittent machines with manual transference of biscuits to the ovens. The company realised how time-consuming this was compared
with new equipment which enabled biscuits to be placed on a continuous band running through the oven; in order to reduce production man hours they purchased one of the ovens for their factory. It was shipped out during the war, but because it was so large (requiring a building 250-300 feet to house it) it was broken up and parts were consigned to different ships. All but one vessel got through. The one which was sunk carried an oven with a 150 feet long baking chamber. The remaining parts were then put into one of the big storehouses in Carrington Street, opposite the Fremantle Cemetery. A replacement unit was eventually obtained but it was not until about 1953 that the factory was rebuilt to accommodate the big oven.\[^{37}\]

**MANPOWERED**

As a result of the Manpower Directorate during World War II women, in particular, found themselves mobilised into working in essential industry in both traditional (women's) and non-traditional (men's) work. The Mills and Ware factory, already one of the State's largest employers of women, had a female staff of 53 per cent between 1939 and 1941. Employment figures are not available for the years 1942 and 1943 but records show that by September 1941, at least, female employment at Mills and Ware peaked at 222, compared with 150 males. From 1944 and 1946 over 69 per cent of the factory staff were women. From this period up to 1951 the female employment figure only fell by four per cent (see table). Mills and Ware become one of only two private 'factories' (of 2598 operating in Western Australia in 1943) employing more than 100 women, the other being Goode, Durrant and Murray (clothing and shoe manufacturers).\[^{38}\]

Win Wray recalled that when Mills and Ware advertised for women to do men's work there was no shortage of applicants and 'all types of women came - some of them were really strong'.\[^{39}\] Manpower control officials came to the factory and directed which male staff had to go. Roy Stagg remembers that ten men were taken from the despatch and driving areas and he ended up being the only one of the original team left. He said that his work load increased substantially due to the inexperience and unsuitability of those appointed to work with him.\[^{40}\]

Those women manpowered to work in the biscuit factory probably found conditions harsher than expected, although many of the additional staff employed were older married women who had worked at the factory when they were single. They carried out the hot and heavy work in the mixing process and on the ovens. Occasionally, women working on the ovens received burns to their arms when the trays slipped. One woman was burnt from elbow to wrist and asked to be put on other work until the burn healed. When the manager refused, the woman showed her medical certificate to Manpower officials who finally granted her a release from the factory.\[^{41}\]

In 1943 the Coastal Food Manufacturers' Employees Union requested long
gloves for the women doing soldering; masks for those working with icing sugar and flour; improvements in ventilation in the dough cooling rooms; coloured globes in various parts of the factory to prevent eyestrain; limits to be set for maximum temperatures and length of time worked on the ovens; and stools for women on packing work. The Board of Reference conceded only the last item, saying that all the other matters were beyond their jurisdiction. These matters do not appear to have been taken up again during the period of the Manpower Regulations.

For women, food processing was traditionally a low paid industry. However, during this war-time period those employed in 'selecting and assembling goods for packing' at Mills and Ware were awarded 90 per cent of the male rate by the Women's Employment Board (December 1943). However, the Award delivered in January 1945 shows the return to pre-war practice with the basic wage for males being £4/19/11, and for females only £2/13/11.

After the war years the company continued to employ more females than males. However, only in a few instances were women kept on in the traditional men's jobs which they had filled during the war. One worked in the mixing department and one or two were employed in the biscuit-cutting machine area. They were retained in those areas because they were good operators and did their work well. The increased femininity of the post-war workforce compared to that before the war was more usually the result of two other factors. Firstly, new jobs made available by the firm's diversification into fancy products more frequently went to women rather than men. Ron Dawson indicated that in those days there was discrimination in pay - it was much cheaper to employ women than it was men. 'As we came out of the war and varieties of biscuits came back on to the market, the girls could do all the fancy lines - icing of cakes, cream sandwiching of biscuits', he said. Secondly, the increased demand for packaging with expanded production increased the numbers employed in this traditional 'female' occupation.

STRIKES, UNIONS

The Coastal Food Manufacturers and Wholesale Mixing and Packaging Establishments Employees' Industrial Union of Workers first gained a limited Award for its members on 21 May 1920. In 1924 the clauses within the Agreement expanded those approved in 1920 (hours, overtime, holidays, time and wages book, changerooms) and added five more covering annual leave, first-aid equipment, notice retermination, higher duties, aged and infirm workers.

A further application to the Arbitration Court in 1925 for a wage adjustment was successful, and it continued to apply to the court for amendments to the Award over the next 14 years. In 1939 the Union became closely involved with the first major industrial dispute in the history of Mills and Ware.
The strike started on 31 July 1939 with the employees walking out in protest over issues which are thought to relate to their long-standing complaints about the physical conditions under which they had to work. A particular dispute with management over 'tea money' for those working overtime became the 'straw that broke the camel's back'.

The workers 'hit the company where it hurt most' according to Ron Dawson. They waited until all the plant started and at 7.30 am with biscuits coming through the machines - they walked off, leaving biscuits dropping out of the ends of the continuous ovens. Management and supervisory staff tried to salvage what they could but there were trays of biscuits all over the place. Some employees felt so bitter about it all that they stoned the Manager's car as he drove away from the factory.

The exact duration of the strike is not clear, but it seems to have lasted around four weeks. The Arbitration Court convened a compulsory conference of representatives of the union and Mills and Ware on 1 September 1939, and it is thought that a return to work occurred around this date, precipitated by the outbreak of World War II.

Industrial Gazette records of Arbitration Court proceedings provided valuable detail of some of the factors surrounding the dispute. Protracted negotiations between employers and workers finally resulted in 'agreement in all matters in difference except two' and these were brought before the Court for adjudication. In both cases (one relating to meal money and one to shift-loadings) the Court found in the employer's favour.

SIDE EFFECTS

The length of the strike caused stress, both for the workers and for management. The strikers were faced with hardship financially and, like the lumpers who traditionally raised funds for those on strike, a group of female union members (including Sadie Shearer, her sister Jean and Dassie Cooper) ventured as far as Kalgoorlie to collect money in aid of their fellow workers. Fremantle, in those day, was noted for its union activists, especially among the waterside workers, and the wives of many of them worked at the Mills and Ware factory, so it is likely that there was moral support from that sector.

UNION MEMBERSHIP

There is no indication that women were anything but rank and file union members, but they considered, for various reasons, that it was necessary to belong. Ethel Dale, who worked in the office, joined the company in 1923, at age 16. She became a member of the
Federated Clerks’ Union because she believed that union membership was essential to gain improvements. There was no pressure to join, but she was pressured to pay once she had done so. The fees were three shillings per three months if under 21 years, and seven shillings and sixpence for adults. She would put away threepence per pay in preparation for the Union collector.\textsuperscript{55}

Phyl Seubert remembers that her threepenny collection tin always seemed to be full of IOUs because she would dip into it before the Union representative arrived. She joined the Clerk’s Union because her father said she must.\textsuperscript{56}

Win Wray, who had joined the office staff in 1924, said that just after she started there was ‘a general clerical strike’ which lasted about three days. A stopwork meeting was called and members at Mills and Ware joined the stoppage. Her father told her that she need not go to Trades Hall – ‘the men will go and they’ll tell you what to do’, but he suggested she be ready to go back to work that afternoon. She remembers waiting at the bus stop to return to work and union members turned on her for not attending the meeting. Next day, she went to the Hall with her friends from Elder Smith’s and was put off by the behaviour – ‘if anyone got up and had anything sensible to say, there was stamping of feet and, even in those days, yelling out “Comrades”, not “Ladies and Gentlemen”’. She felt strongly that everyone who belonged to the Union should go to meetings and have their say to prevent a vocal minority of members bringing about a strike that others did not want.\textsuperscript{57}

Mable Pilling put her view of conditions in 1914 ‘we were frightened of the bosses – they weren’t too bad I suppose. They didn’t bother about unions in those days. If there had been a union, I don’t think they’d have been allowed to put us off when they did. As soon as they got slack, the whole factory would be empty waiting for the good times to come around again’.\textsuperscript{58}

\textbf{MANAGEMENT VIEW}

After the industrial dispute of 1939, management seemed to adopt a policy of conscious co-operation with unions, and thereafter the only stoppages which occurred were those caused by external factors involving associated unions eg Transport Workers’ Union. In 1951, the Articles of Association of the company included a reference that the Directors would take all such steps they thought fit ‘to prevent or settle strikes or industrial disputes or matters by conciliation or otherwise’.\textsuperscript{59}

Factory Manager, Ron Dawson, who had been with the company since 1943, reflected something of the policy in his position. There had been little trouble with the unions in his time and he believed that the policy of close contact with the employees had helped. Seventy-five per cent of his day was spent on the factory floor and
he knew the majority of workers by name. As he spoke with them he would get the feeling of any unrest, and workers were encouraged to come to his office with any problems. Because the business was very people-oriented the management and staff relations were considered important in helping maintain high productivity. To avoid unnecessary disruption, the Union Secretary, a committee of workers, and management would try to come to terms 'around the table' before taking matters further.60

In 1940, interestingly, Mills and Ware registered an employers' organisation under the Industrial Arbitration Act 1912-1935, as the Biscuit and Cake Manufacturers' Association (Union of Employers).61 It is uncertain whether this action was taken to give them formal right of entry into the Arbitration Court, or because of wartime pressures and government controls.

'HANDICAPPED' WORKERS

The company had always employed a small percentage of disabled people who would carry out repetitive tasks. In 1943 the Coastal Food Manufacturers' Employees' Union made a claim for three such workers - Aitken, Davern and Connolly - to receive the minimum wage. The Court decided that they should only receive a certain percentage of the wages of 'unspecified worker' (referred to in clause 20(b) of the Award), according to their degree of disability.62 In 1943, Aitken was rated as having a 10 per cent disability; Davern and Connolly were both rated at 25 per cent.

In 1945, the Union submitted a claim to the Court that Davern and Connolly 'should now be paid the full basic wage'.63 The case raised some conflicting issues. The employer's representative claimed that both men were physically and mentally below normal and their employment by the company was in reality an act of kindness, because Connolly was performing duties normally done by junior workers and Davern's duties were generally performed by girls - neither worker was capable of being placed on other employment in the factory. After inquiries involving personal interviews with the two men and medical reports on their working capacity, the Board accepted a clear consensus that the two men were physically sound, and said the under-rate workers' clause of the Award would not be applicable because they were neither 'aged nor infirm'. It concluded that 'there are many basic wage earners in the community who cannot read or write and who would not fare well in an intelligence test but who nevertheless are capable of returning a fair day's work'. The Board of Reference determined that both men should receive the basic wage.

LONG SERVICE

During the days when the factory conditions were generally unsatisfactory, employees thought things were hard and that the
Mills’ management wasn’t doing enough to improve matters. Kath Stagg in recalling conversations with Mills’ family members in later years, found that times had been hard for them too. Loans were not easy to get for factory improvements and available funds went on production development at the expense of employees’ facilities. However, Stanley and Nelson Mills did take an interest in the personal welfare of their workers. Ron Dawson remembers, for example, Nelson Mills assisting needy staff with essential furniture for their homes, and in one case, an employee on labourer’s pay, deserted by his wife, was left to look after his five sons. Nelson bought each of the boys a new bike when Christmas came around.

The attitude of the Mills brothers was to look after people who had given good service. Prior to Long Service Leave becoming part of employment conditions, the company acknowledged the contribution of six of their senior employees, and gave them and their wives a 22-day return trip to Sydney on the coastal vessel ‘Kanimbla’.

When Mabel Pilling left the factory to get married (1923), she was earning only a small wage but had managed to save a little each pay to lay-by items for her glory box. She has never forgotten Mr Mills presenting her with a three-tiered wedding cake and a half-dozen knives, in recognition of her nine years of service.

FAMILY AFFAIR

The Mills and Ware factory was a significant landmark to the residents of Fremantle and districts. It was also the major source of employment for many of the working-class families in the area. Former employees, in interview, thought it was like a ‘big family affair’, and the large number of families mentioned by them indicates that the company probably played an important part in the economy of the region, as well as having other social consequences. It was not unusual for more than one member of a family to have spent several years working with the company. There were many youths and girls employed there who also participated in regular social activities, i.e. dances, picnics, and these social relationships usually resulted in marriage.

The Doherty family tree shows an incredible length of service to Mills and Ware. By Ray Doherty’s reckoning it adds up to something like 400 years: ’my uncle was Sales Manager, Mr Percy Patterson, he worked here for 49 years and nine months. My father (Jack Doherty, Factory supervisor) was here for 45 years or maybe a bit longer. My cousin Henry Holmes worked in the cake house for 45 years (also his mother, sister Nelly, brothers Dougie and Bobby). My grandfather worked here for about five or six years as a watchman, my mother (before marriage) was here for about eight or nine years as a forewoman - all her sisters worked here, uncles, cousins - some worked here for about 20 years’.

The Doherty’s lived close to the factory, as did many of the
employees. Their home in Jenkin Street was eventually taken over by Mills and Ware for extensions to the factory, and they moved to nearby Scott Street, on property bought from the Mills family. Ray, who is appropriately known as 'Mr Bickies', has the distinction of having been born, raised and employed on the one site (a period of 60 years). He met his wife at the factory and says 'all I've got in life I owe to Mills and Ware. The way the company has gone is a monument to the Mills' and the people of Fremantle - it has had an influence on the lives of so many'.

THE COLLEGE

Traditionally, factory workers have been thought to be 'uneducated and rough types'. The generalisation has often upset the workers themselves and it overlooks other economic factors that bring people to work in such areas.

William Mills, in 1903, certainly didn't consider his staff as the 'refuse of the working population'. And, Mabel Pilling didn't like the way people looked down on such work! She was hurt when her brother-in-law called her 'factory girl' in a derogatory way:

I've often heard since that they though anybody was rough who worked in a factory. But that isn't so. Why I don't know - whether it was that Australians weren't used to factories - after all everyone worked in a factory where I came from.

Harold Dale remembers that as far back as 1922, the Mills and Ware factory had been called 'the college' or 'finishing school'. The latter phrase is the one that stuck. Roy Stagg says that in Fremantle there were only a few places were 'kids who didn't have much education' had outlets for jobs. Mills and Ware was the 'finishing off school - where you went to finish off your education'.

Sadie Ferris felt that the stigma of 'finishing school' attached to the factory was misleading. The girls were from good living families, and they perhaps wanted to do other work, but had to accept whatever job they could at the time. She said the term related to the fact that at 15 years of age the girls (because of family pressures) had to leave school to work. Instead of going on and doing another two years at school - they completed their 'education' at Mills and Ware, 'Nowadays young people have opportunities we never had, the government helps out, but we had no such assistance'.

COMPANY HOMES

Although the company was not involved in the purchase of a lot of
homes, it tended to obtain property in the immediate vicinity of the factory to allow for future expansion. Up to recent times adjacent homes (two or three) belonging to the company were occupied by employees for a nominal rent.

During a period when unemployment was down to one and a half percent, the company was looking overseas for workers with particular skills, i.e. bakers, biscuit or cake mixers, because such people were not available here. To encourage them to come and work for Mills and Ware, homes were purchased or rented for them. The first purchases made in the late 1940s, early 1950s, were in areas not necessarily close to the factory, e.g. Beaconsfield, Fremantle. Houses were hard to come by at the time, but if a skilled worker was found every attempt was made to find accommodation.

The shortage of homes in the 1940s was a matter to which the government paid close attention. Remarks made in a Factory Inspection Report of 23 March 1945 referred to the provision of a 'welfare block' for employees: 'Mr Mills was interviewed and stated that no decision had been reached in this matter. The company had purchased nearby residential property for the purpose, but in view of the present housing shortage did not feel justified in dispossessing the present tenants'. The preceding report, dated 30 January 1945, had indicated that architect-prepared plans for the development of an 'Industrial Welfare Block' had to be submitted to the Industrial Welfare Division (Food Services) of the Department of Labour and National Service for assessment, then passed on to the Workers' Homes Board, before going through to the Inspector of Factories for approval to proceed.

ADVERTISING

The biscuits and cakes produced at Mills and Ware were well received by the public. However, one activity of the company which has now disappeared was the promotional medium of distribution samples bags at the Royal Show. Mills and Ware leased the same corner kiosk at the Claremont Showground from the early 1920s until 1977 when, because of the increasing total costs of the exercise, which also included a big display in the Exhibition Building, the activity was discontinued. The sample biscuit bags and cases, always recognised as good value for money, were a sellout every time and were rated as one of the most popular with generations of children.

In 1934 Mills and Ware were reported as having a 'keen marketing and advertising policy' which had effected 'the firm's deserved rise to prominence;'. Two staff members of the 1920s, who had demonstrated artistic talent, are thought to have been instrumental in the firm's image-making success. Arthur Williams, who started as a ledger keeper, became keen on the advertising of Mills and Ware products, and eventually was made advertising manager. He left the company to start what became a well-known advertising agency in Perth.
- A.J. Williams Advertising. His promotional catch phrase 'Takoma cracker' (take-home-a-cracker) and his "Biscuit Boy" are still remembered. Percy Hunt, whose service with Mills and Ware spanned 1919 to 1924, was employed as driver and general duties, but his skill as an artist was used to produce various promotional materials. He later became a professional artist under the name of Ivor P. Hunt.80

One promotional 'gimmick' of the 1930s was the introduction of coupons in the Milk Arrowroot packets. For a minimum of 25 coupons customers could choose such things as towels, pillowslips, jam dishes, etc., and for 50 to 75 coupons the reward was quality crockery or silverplated dishes. This particular biscuit line had always been popular and during the promotion campaign the office girls were kept busy handling the hundreds of coupons handed over the counter or delivered by post.81

CONCLUSION

Towards the 1950s, as the restriction brought in during the war eased, the company introduced many fancy cake and biscuit lines. The need to extend the production area to cope with increased business became essential. In 1952 Arnott's Proprietary Limited, secured a major interest in Mills and Ware (Holdings) Proprietary Limited and the company's borrowing power increased. Sufficient capital was obtained for a completed modernisation scheme and expansion of the production area of the factory.82 Whilst the major rebuilding programme was in operation a second automatic oven (250 feet) was purchased and installed, and a more scientific approach was introduced to biscuit-making with a modern laboratory being set up for research, and testing materials.

In 1961 machine wrapping was introduced, thus eliminating a task previously carried out by women packers. In fact, by this time, many of the processes for which women had previously been employed were being carried out by machine. For example, an automatic stacker placed biscuits into continuous rows on their edges, prior to transfer to the packing section where they were weighed out, wrapped and sealed.

Arnott's dominance in the Mills and Ware operation has been effective in changing the shape of its future. The infusion of capital has meant that the industry can not only take advantage of technological change, but also significantly improve the physical conditions in the factory. No doubt the employees of today are much better off than those who worked under the Mills family system. For many of the 'old hands' just having a job was important, but they also were aware of the part the company played in their lives socially - and the interaction with their fellow workers over a long period was important too. The policies of the new management have brought about change at such a pace that the long-serving, and former employees of Mills and Ware are recognising the end of an era!
ENDNOTES

1. The American biscuit company Nabisco tried to gain a stronghold in the Australian biscuit and cake market by attempting to buy the well-established factory of Swallow and Ariel.

2. Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia: Thiel, 1901; J.S. Battye, Cyclopaedia of Western Australia, 1912.

3. Very little documentary evidence is available of Mills and Ware because early records were destroyed. Atlas Foundry in Queen Victoria Street, Fremantle, may have incinerated papers belonging to the company (ref: Clem Booth). Records were kept tied up in bundles for about two or three years then destroyed. Today the company records have to be kept at least seven years (ref: Ron Dawson).

4. From an interview (24/10/84) with the nieces of William Mills, Elsa (McCrae) and Ethel (Dales), who said that their mother told them about their uncle's background. Their father James was a younger brother to William and he came out in 1905 to be Manager of the company until 1915 when he left to go to War. Another brother John also joined the company for a time, as tinsmith.

5. From an essay written by Margaret Dawson, 1968 (Battye Library ref. no. HS/PR 1818).

6. Refer Post Office Directory 1897 and 1898 (Battye Library).


8. Twentieth Century Impressions of WA, p.496.


12. Company Records: The Flour Mill 1932; see also The West Australian, 26 April 1934.


15. Mabel Pilling interview 27 August 1982. Employed from 1914-1923 in the factory and rose to the position of forewoman. She started on five shillings per week and finished
on one pound seven shillings and sixpence. Also refer to chapter, 'The Factory Worker's Daughter' in Jan Carter, Nothing to Spare - Recollections of Australian Pioneering Women, Penguin, 1981.


18. M. Dawson essay.

19. Carter, op. cit., p.80

20. Win Wray interview 3 September 1982. Paper rationing during World War II caused difficulties. It was so restricted that with each allotment to the factory, Win Wray and the Sales Manager would have to spend hours working out a 'jigsaw puzzle'. For plain biscuits there was a greaseproof lining, and a wrapper. They would work out how many shapes (eg Milk Arrowroot, Nice) could be cut from each 30 x 40 inch sheet before sending it to an operator to be guillotined. It was a 'great thrill' if he reported that only small shavings were left.


22. Tully Davern, an intellectually handicapped boy, made the maulers from old hessian sacks.

23. Roy Stagg interview 22 October 1982


25. Ron Dawson interview 19 December 1985


27. Win Wray interview 3 September 1982

28. Roy Stagg interview 22 October 1982

29. Phyl Seubert (nee Loxton) interview 4 September 1982

30. Ethel and Harold Dale interview 24 October 1984
31. Full title - The Coastal Food Manufacturers and Wholesale Mixing and Packing Establishments Employees' Industrial Union of Workers

32. WA Industrial Gazette, 1920 - Food Manufacturers' Employees Agreement (No.30 of 1920, p.639)

33. WA Industrial Gazette, 19 May 1924 (No.4 1924, pp.13-15)

34. WA Industrial Gazette, 8 March 1926 (No.55 of 1925, p.331)

35. Jack Doherty was Ray's father. He worked at the factory from 1910-1960 in the position of foreman, finishing as Factory Superintendent.

36. Reekie, op.cit., p.115

37. M. Dawson essay

38. Reekie, op.cit., p.55

39. Win Wray interview 3 September 1982

40. Roy Stagg interview 22 October 1982

41. Reekie, op.cit., p.56

42. WA Industrial Gazette, 1943, vol.xxiii, p.46

43. Reekie, op.cit., p.56

44. WA Industrial Gazette, 1945, vol.xxv, p.34. This Award also introduced the Junior Worker's Certificate which obliged young employees to furnish the employer with a certificate giving full name, age, date of birth, as well as details endorsed by previous employers indicating length of service and class of work performed. Any junior worker wilfully mis-stating his age to gain a higher wage level was guilty of a breach of the Award.

45. Ron Dawson interview 19 February 1985

46. WA Industrial Gazette, 1920 (No.30 of 1920, p.638)

47. WA Industrial Gazette, 19 May 1924 (No.4 of 1924, pp.13-15)

48. WA Industrial Gazette, 8 March 1926 (No.55 of 1925, p.331)

49. Roy Stagg interview 22 October 1982. In particular, toilet facilities were poor and totally inadequate for the numbers of employees. There were no tables or seating in the changeroom, and the females sat on biscuit tins alongside their work area
during breaks. Up to this time the Union obviously hadn't achieved in practice what they succeeded in getting into the first Award of 1920 - viz. suitable mess and changeroom to be provided.

50. Ron Dawson interview 19 September 1984
51. WA Industrial Gazette, 24 January 1940, p.371
52. WA Industrial Gazette, November 1941 (No.21 of 1939, p.374)
53. Sadie Ferris (nee Shearer) brief interview February 1985
54. Ron Dawson interview 19 September 1984
56. Phyl Seubert (nee Loxton) interview 4 September 1982
57. Win Wray interview 3 September 1982
58. Pilling, op.cit., p.80
60. Ron Dawson interview 19 September 1984. Commenced employment 1943 and retired March 1985
61. WA Industrial Gazette, 1940, p.397. Registration 10 September 1940, No.377
62. WA Industrial Gazette, 1943, vol.xxiii, pp.46-7
63. WA Industrial Gazette, 1945, vol.xxv, pp.316-7
64. Kath Stagg interview 22 October 1982
65. Ron Dawson interview 19 September 1984
66. Pilling, op.cit.
67. Kath Stagg interview 22 October 1982. Names of some families with two or three members working at the factory. Walsh, Shearer, Chetwynd, Diedrich, Doherty, Loxton, Hammond.
68. Ron Dawson interview 19 September 1984
69. Ethel Dale interview 24 October 1984. The vessel Dauntless was hired for the annual picnics up river at Keane's Point, Mosman Park. Staff helped to prepare foods but the firm supplied everything. This social activity ceased approximately 1926.

70. Ray Doherty interview 2 October 1984

71. Refer section 'Factories Bill' this essay

72. Pilling, op.cit.


74. Roy Stagg interview 22 October 1982. Places of employment for unskilled workers - D. & J. Fowlers, Woodson's, Rope and Twine Works, Gadsden's, Burford's, Mills and Ware

75. Sadie Ferris (nee Shearer) interview February 1985. Employed 1931-1938 in packing etc

76. It is generally recognised that 2 per cent of the population is unemployable, ie handicapped (ref: Ron Dawson)

77. Ron Dawson interview 19 September 1984

78. Refer Department of Labour and Industry, Factories Inspection Branch, AN25/1, Acc 749, file 230/38 (Battye Library)

79. Pratt, op.cit., p.559

80. Ethel Dale interview 24 October 1984

81. Phyl Seubert interview 4 September 1982

82. M. Dawson essay
LOOKING FOR A BETTER DEAL:
The 1979 Co-operative Bulk Handling Dispute

by Geoff Harcourt

For much of the twentieth century Australian blue-collar work has been highly unionised with a majority of workers working under a craft union in a closed shop environment. Many of these unions have widespread national membership cutting across different industries and various employers. This makes it difficult for any one union to serve its members effectively and leads to pockets of dissatisfaction, particularly if there is a hostile employer. In such cases how can workers achieve their aspirations? How can they hope to influence work practices and pay? Industrial law allows them to refuse to remain in their union, as individuals, but is fairly ambiguous towards anyone attempting to join another union of their own choice. These questions are of particular interest in light of the fact that closed shops call for preference for a union, not a group of workers. Should workers in these cases be forcibly removed and replaced by preferred unionists? Such a scenario manifested itself in Western Australia, in a dispute which involved two nationally based unions, a large employer and part of its workforce. The aim of this paper is to trace the process of this unusual situation with special attention paid to how the workers and the union they chose used the legal system to influence the outcome to their own advantage.

Co-operative Bulk Handling (CBH), Western Australia's grain handling authority, commenced full operation at its Kwinana terminal - a huge high technology plant - in May 1977. The GH/plant operators there were covered by the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) which had represented CBH operators under a State award since 1947. Many of those engaged at the new terminal had transferred from the old North Fremantle terminal as its operations were scaling down considerably with the opening of Kwinana. Two years earlier the Fremantle men had been involved dispute in which their Union had (as one member put it) 'sold them out'. Consequently, the men carried with them on transfer to Kwinana, a deep seated mistrust toward their union. This mistrust had expressed itself several times before as petitions in attempts to leave the AWU and seek coverage under a Federal award with the Waterside Workers Federation. Furthermore those at the North Fremantle installation, which is actually on Port Authority land, identified strongly with waterfront life - both in work and culture.
However, all previous attempts at admission to the WWF had been rejected as the issues were considered to be too complex.² But after 1977 two separate events were to galvanise the CBH workers' resolve to leave the AWU, and alter the WWF's attitude towards them as potential members of the Federation.

Firstly, in November 1977, a totally new Kwinana-North Fremantle AWU award was sought to replace the existing North Fremantle one. Based on the premise that the new plant had two and a half times the capacity of North Fremantle, it was hoped for, including a wage rise and a shorter working week. However, the end result some twelve months later was a paltry $2.70 a week rise for a few top grade operators. To the bulk of the men this was conclusive evidence that they should renew their attempt to break with AWU and seek a better deal with the WWF.

Secondly, the WWF was going through a profound alteration to its philosophy. Ironically (especially for the past CBH petitioners), the rethink centred around broadening of the union's definition of a waterside worker. Basically this was a move toward industrial unionism - an ACTU endorsed policy.⁶ Fundamentally this approach meant that one big union would cover an entire industry. It was hoped this new model of union would reduce needless demarcation disputes and stop unwarranted extra costs as much unnecessary duplication of ward negotiation would be eliminated.⁷ In the case of the waterfront, the WWF saw itself as having the only legitimate claims of this sort. Change to the WWF constitutional rules covering eligibility of entry into the union and identifiable areas of wharf work were needed. A group of tradesmen traditionally covered by the ETU and the AMWSU were signed up as the first 'new' wharfies, resulting in a challenge in the Federal Court over the legality of these moves.⁸ It was in this context that the complex 1979 CBH dispute took place.

The move to petition the WWF was beset with difficulties. Due to an inexplicable lack of communication between the two terminals the initial moves, which required total unanimity, almost failed. However, by 28 February 1979 all plant operators had signed, and the Federation had recognised and accepted the applications for membership by 12 March.⁹ Tactics became important from now on as legally the men were still financial members of the AWU and as such were legally bound until June. Consequently the WWF sought to keep a low profile until such times as the men could resign from the AWU by not renewing their tickets and then serving CBH with a log of claims for a WWF award.¹⁰

Such a strategy was hard to keep quiet. Within a matter of weeks unforeseen circumstances meant that the WWF and its new members had to expose their intentions far earlier than intended.

A maintenance strike at Kwinana and North Fremantle in early June provided an arena for the first battle between the two unions (and
the company) over who had the right to represent the men. After a week of this strike by CBH electricians all but nine (WWF) plant operators were stood down at Kwinana (total lay-offs at North Fremantle were avoided due to the small number of staff). Initially the WWF stayed out of the dispute but when the AWU failed to avert the stand-downs by a legitimate claim that plant hygiene could keep the men employed, the WWF stepped in demanding that their members be reinstated without loss of pay. CBH refused to recognise the WWF as having any legal right to represent CBH workers and hence refused the demands. A nation-wide all post stoppage was called to bring CBH to yield and resulted in arbitration being used to settle the issue, which folded quickly after the electricians were back at work. The WWF claimed victory with the reinstatement of the plant operators but the company defiantly disputed that union's input into negotiations.

With the failure of the stand-downs to frighten the 'maverick grain handlers', CBH and the AWU attempted to reassert their control in the workplace. Pressure was stepped up on individuals by both the company and 'its union' to purchase the correct union ticket. This was ignored. A more decisive and clandestine move was a joint application to the State Industrial Commission to alter the reference clause in the existing AWU award. The alteration reaffirmed the AWU as the sole union onsite and called for any exemptions to this to give seven days notice of intent. Armed with this, CBH began sacking workers for not being financial members of the AWU, starting with seven men at North Fremantle on 19 July. The WWF this time was ready to mount its own legal challenge to gain the right to cover the grain handlers, so rather than take industrial action it decided to support the dismissed men financially. At the same time the union took out a Supreme Court injunction restraining CBH from dismissing any more men.

July 26 saw both CBH and the WWF use more legal channels to try to further influence the outcome of what was now shaping up as an extremely complex matter. Firstly, CBH successfully applied to the Supreme Court to have the WWF injunction against any further sackings set aside. Secondly, the grain handlers applied to the Industrial Registrar, R.R. Ellis, for exemptions from joining the AWU. These were granted and the dues held in trust to be paid to a recognised charity, as required under the law. The next day (27 July) was possibly the most dramatic of all to this point of time. With their exemptions in their hands forty non-AWU grain handlers reported for the day shift at Kwinana. There were also three others still at North Fremantle. They found the gate locked. CBH staff told the men through the fence that their exemptions were not valid under the AWU award preference and unless they rejoined immediately they would not be allowed to start. This directive was refused. The company promptly issued dismissal notices to the first seven men available with the least amount of service. It then requested the remaining thirty-three to start work. They refused and by 8.30 am they too were sacked, leaving twenty-two men – 13 rostered
on afternoon shift and the others on various forms of legitimate leave not sacked but later deemed to be on strike by CBH. At this point the AWU was rather fortuitously able to supply CBH with twenty 'financial' AWU men for immediate start at the plant. To the locked out grain handlers these men were quite simply 'scabs'.

Underpinning these sacking were tactics by CBH to place the WWF in a legal bind. The company needed to be seen as a victim of standover tactics. To do so it had to engineer a situation whereby the WWF appeared to be restricting its lawful operations. As no ship-loading was in progress at Kwinana this was a difficult task. But waterside labour (WWF) was ordered regardless. This labour was automatically withdrawn thus setting in motion CBH's legal ploy which was processed in the Supreme Court in a most unconventional manner on Sunday, 29 July. However, all the legal manoeuvring on CBH's part paled in to insignificance as over the weekend the WWF took some decisive action of its own. A special conference in Sydney voted to call a nation-wide all port stoppage in retaliation for the sackings.

An urgent compulsory conference was called by the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in Sydney on the Monday in an attempt to resolve the dispute. Mr Justice Robinson, the Depute President of the Commission, set down a six-point plan that sought compromise:

1. The state award to continue to be the industrial regulation for employees of CBH at Kwinana and North Fremantle terminals until May 1980 or until rules application of WWF is determined, which ever is the later, and if in any event, until an order or an award is made to the contrary by a competent tribunal.

2. Employees at CBH Kwinana and North Fremantle terminals who presently have exemptions from AWU membership may continue to maintain those exemptions thereby adopting a neutral stance for the purposes of state award regulation.

3. Issues of representation, third party intervention and award variation during interim period to be determined by a joint hearing of a member of this Commission and a member of the Western Australian Industrial Commission. The WWF undertakes that it will not seek that the employees of CBH be represented other than by individually named agents.

4. The proposal and its implementation does not involve any recognition by the company or the AWU that the WWF is the appropriate union to cover CBH employees at Kwinana or North Fremantle terminals or elsewhere.

5. Proposal is made entirely without prejudice to the rights of CBH and the AWU to raise any objection they may deem fit to the change of rules application by the WWF or to any other rights of CBH or the AWU.
6. The WWF undertakes:

(1) Not to seek coverage of any grain installation away from the waterfront and not to accept applications for membership or admit to membership any person employed or to be employed in any such installation.

(2) Not to accept membership application from any grain handlers at any waterfront grain terminal or installation at Albany, Bunbury, Esperance or Geraldton.

The proposal is made in the context of a lifting of all bans and limitations by the WWF and the re-employment by CBH of all dismissed employees.25

The WWF accepted the proposal without comment but CBH and the AWU rejected it out of hand. The company's principal objectives were that it would not have anybody on site who remained a member of the WWF and it felt it had a moral obligation to its new employees: the AWU concurred with this stand totally.26 This attitude irked Justice Robinson and lead him to issue a press statement censuring CBH.27

CBH evidently did not want a strong union like the WWF inside its terminals considering the 'good relations' it had enjoyed with the AWU. It therefore decided to starve the men out, hoping they would return to the (ineffective) fold of the AWU. The Federation responded with financial assistance to all the striking grain handlers, levying its A class wharfies two dollars a week. The levy remained in place for the duration of the lock out, providing each man with $180 each week. This was more than his flat pay and (equally importantly) tax free.

The AWU moved quickly to shore up support within the union movement. At a meeting of the WA Trades and Labour Council, AWU delegates accused the WWF of body snatching and made other emotional assertions. This had the desired effect of gaining the support of some influential union leaders, some of whom attacked the WWF in the press.30 The TLC contacted the ACTU asking for its support in sanctioning the waterfront union. Before these moves gathered any real momentum though, the General Secretary of the WWF, Charlie Fitzgibbon, himself an influential member of the ACTU hierarchy, sent a detailed explanation to the Secretary of the WA TLC, Peter Cook. This appeared to have a telling effect as the TLC campaign against the WWF fell away.31 Only the ACTU remained an interested party in the drama and only at a much later date tried to settle the dispute.

Meanwhile, desperate attempts were being made in many areas to end the crippling national waterfront strike initiated by the WWF. By the end of July over 200 ships were tied up, costing industry some ten million dollars a day.32 Another arbitration hearing was
listed, this time in Perth. The first ever of its kind, this conference was to be a joint sitting of both the Federal and State bodies. Held as a private conference, each party could speak in confidence, with the Commissioner(s) merely offering advice. The talks lasted three days from Friday, 4 August through to Sunday, 6 August. Tragically, these talks also broke down, CBH again being the intransigent party. In a positive move though, the Federation saw the need to limit bad press over a national stoppage so it decided to isolate the dispute to CBH. By 9 August the national stoppage was called off, banning only CBH ports. Nevertheless, with the stalemate still firmly entrenched the failed conference was adjourned until the 20th, leaving a two week period to cool off.

Why did CBH reject the proposal set down at another hearing? Basically it was for the same reasons it instigated the lock-out. Manager Green set these reasons out explicitly to the sacked grain handlers in a letter sent to them on Monday, 7 August which stressed the company's and the AWU's legal rights. It began with the fact that the industry was a grain handling one, not a waterfront one. The presence of an agreed State industrial award at Kwinana and North Fremantle gave the AWU sole right to cover CBH workers. The WWF had none of these things; even if it was trying to change its rules and constitution in attempt to do so. As a result CBH plant operators should give up membership of that union. If not they should leave the industry. To facilitate any such desire CBH was now prepared to offer what it saw as generous severance pay, on the following basis:

Pro-rata long service leave for those with four years service or more. One week's pay for each year of service - with a maximum of five weeks' pay. Four weeks' pay in lieu of notice.

All those who wished to stay in the industry would need to rejoin the AWU (and leave the WWF naturally) and, on doing so, they could re-apply for their position where 'every consideration' would be given.

What this meant was that there was no guarantee that they would get back in the gate, even on CBH's terms. The response to this offer was understandably negative. The company still intent on asserting its authority ordered all the employed grain handlers back to work on Monday, 13 August at 7.30 am. Otherwise they would be considered absent and therefore dismissed. These men on advice from the WWF did report to Kwinana at the prescribed time. However, they were told they must first resign from the WWF and henceforth rejoin the AWU before they could start. This they refused, and after some lengthy discussion the grain handlers walked out at 11 am, not to return. CBH then promptly terminated their employment: the same treatment it had meted out to their comrades some weeks earlier.

CBH now saw the dispute as settled. It had acted strictly within the law, whereas its former employees and an outside union had not. Consequently, the company urged the WWF to back down and lift all its
bans. If not the union would be responsible for the standing down of 1200 AWU men in the country installations. When the WWF rejected this out of hand CBH and the AWU attempted to induce AWU men to commence ship loading by going on to the wharves to scab, by doing wharfies' jobs. Geraldton was the country port targeted for this operation but to their credit the men there voted 59 to one against the idea. It appears that this highly provocative suggestion was only a threat as there was no attempt at any other country port. Ironically, there were no country stand-downs either.

One could be excused for forgetting that there was supposed to be a cooling-off period before a reopening of arbitration on Monday, 20 August. It is not surprising that these talks also broke down, again with CBH steadfastly refusing to recognise any rights of their sacked employees. What did eventuate though was a set of talks between the two unions, involving the ACTU President, Bob Hawke, as a mediator. CBH General Manager Green initially snubbed the talks saying that they could not help in any way. But when it became obvious that the AWU position had weakened substantially, the ACTU seeking co-operation in gaining an amicable solution the company reluctantly agreed. These talks also failed. Once again CBH refused to compromise, despite every effort to find some middle ground.

It took another month of talks before the dispute was finally settled. Much of the delay was now caused by outside interference from interested rural pressure groups, all hoping to strengthen CBH's resolve. In the forefront of this was the National Farmers' Federation which took Federal court procedures to have the WWF deregistered. All these threats and court actions simply delayed a final settlement which all parties (except the rural lobbies) wanted. Even CBH had begun to tire of the ordeal. An acceptable solution was eventually thrashed out in arbitration by 22 September with a return to work effective from the 26th. Basically this settlement was along the lines Justice Robison proposed two months earlier. The men were to be reinstated. But, with the 'new' workers keeping their jobs, CBH claimed that the terminals were grossly over-staffed. The excess numbers would be shed from the WWF men (according to CBH anyway) after three months or, at the latest, after the Federal Court decided if the WWF men could remain in that union. Finally in the interim the reinstated workers had to rejoin the AWU.

The final terms of settlement were seen by CBH as a victory, seemingly because they believed the pending Federal Court ruling, to decide whether the grain handlers were entitled to remain WWF members, would go its way. Despite this optimism the settlement must be seen as a compromise: an attempt to minimise the damage of an altogether avoidable dispute. CBH's claim that common sense and natural justice had prevailed was hardly very convincing; particularly when it accused the Federation of drawing out the dispute. If one looks at the final settlement and the original one
proposed by Justice Robison a mere four days after the lock-out (and the one proposed by Hawke in mid-August) there are many similarities. How could CBH hold anybody who was willing to agree to the original terms responsible, when CBH itself took more than eight weeks to agree? Furthermore, in holding out so long it would seem to be that the company had regard for natural justice only for itself. The 82 grain handlers were, it seems, apparently little more than property, perhaps like a few tonne of wheat. Therefore, total capitulation on the part of their workers was necessary.

If CBH saw the settlement as a victory what about the grain handlers? How did they see the result? Going on the unanimous support for a return to work it would appear that all was well. After all, they had got their jobs back and they were still members of the WWF, even if they had to rejoin the AWU temporarily. But no one fully understood the implication of clause four, part two, until CBH actually produce a 'hit-list': men for whom it maintained it could not find work. For these twenty-four men (eighteen at Kwinana and six at North Fremantle) any 'victory' suddenly had a hollow ring to it. Even though they were put on idle time with full pay, the AWU scabs remained on the job. Meanwhile the rest of the plant worked flat out to catch up on lost production. Fortunately all of these men were able to be re-employed after another seven weeks as the harvest called for increased manpower. For some, though, it was only a temporary reprieve. After Christmas they were again put on idle time while the Federal Court heard the case for the WWF constitutional amendment. Here started a long and frustrating legal process which was to wear many grain handlers down, more than twenty leaving the industry of their own accord.

Despite the fact that those who stayed on had to wait several years to get legal recognition as full WWF members some would say CBH has never morally recognised the WWF - it has to be seen as a remarkable achievement. A democratic principle of freedom of choice, often used against unions, was utilised against an employer who showed little regard for its workforce and a 'tame-cat' union who preferred a quiescent membership. The battle was never as the AWU asserted, an attack on the fundamentals of unionism. It was a battle to strengthen unionism and worker solidarity inside a workplace by seeking more effective and relevant representation. It was a battle for a better deal.
ENDNOTES

1. Waterside Workers' Federation, Fremantle Branch: CBH File, No.1 (1954-75)

2. Ibid., there were four previous petitions: 1958, 1968, 1972, 1975

3. 'Moving the Grain at Kwinana', CBH Pamphlet, CBH (1986). Also see, Supreme Court Affidavit of 1954 on North Fremantle output in WWF, CBH File, No.1

4. CBH Job Delegate's File, (1978)

5. Noel Goodes (Grain Handler), interview, 10 May 1987

6. West Australian, 29 June 1979. Also see, ACTU Constitution and Rules, ACTU, Melbourne (1975), p.3, and 'Industry Union Benefits', in Maritime Worker, WWF, Sydney, June 1980, p.27. For the proposed changes see, extract from, 'WWF Constitution and Rules' and 'Proposed Changes ...' in WWF CBH File, No.2

7. West Australian, 29 June 1979

8. Ibid.

9. WWF, CBH File, No.2; copy of petition and letter of acceptance

10. Ibid.

11. E.J.U. Green, (CBH General Manager), stating CBH position, West Australian, 29 June 1979

12. Ibid., 6 July 1979

13. CBH Job Delegate's File, (1979)

14. The Kwinana and North Fremantle Grain handling Award 1978, clause 7; also see, 1979 Amendment of the same document

15. Vic Slater (WWF Secretary), interview, 15 May 1987

16. West Australian, 24 July 1979

17. WWF CBH File, No.2

18. Ibid.

20. See letter to all Grain Handlers from CBH Management in WWF CBH File, No.2

21. Bruce Lambert, (Grain Handler), interview, 14 May 1987

22. N. Ireland, op. cit.

23. WWF CBH File, No.2

24. Ibid.


26. WWF, CBH File, No.2

27. Sydney Morning Herald, 31 July 1979

28. WWF CBH File, No.2

29. A. Olsen (Grain Handler), interview, 14 May 1987

30. V. Slater, op. cit.; told of how he was WWF representative at the TLC meeting (which was not specifically called for the CBH dispute but the matter was raised as urgent business) where the AWU asked for support to prevent the WWF from body snatching. They got this support, particularly from the ETU and the AMWSU, (two unions who had a score to settle with the Federation. For a report see, West Australian, 30 July 1979


32. West Australian, 3 August 1979

33. WWF, CBH File, No.2

34. West Australian, 10 August 1979

35. Ibid.

36. CBH Management Letter, 7 August 1979 in WWF, CBH File, No.2

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., letter 9 August 1979

39. WWF CBH File, No.2

40. Ibid.
41. 'Strike News (Re: CBH Dispute)', Fremantle Branch News, No.3, 17 August 1979, cites telex sent to WWF by Mr Green, and reply by Federation

42. WWF, CBH File, No.2

43. West Australian, 23 August 1979

44. WWF CBH File, No.2

45. Ibid., re: National Farmers' Federation attempt to have deregistered.

46. Western Farmer and Grazier, 27 September 1979. Also see, WATFED TELEX No.AA93777/AA25645, re.: 'Terms of Settlement'

47. WATFED TELEX, op.cit.

48. Western Farmer and Grazier, cites E.J.U. Green (CBH), on the company's intentions towards the grain handlers not wanted; also, Dave Mills (Grain Handler), interview, 15 May 1987: recalled the tension and bitterness towards the aliens, in particular the excessive wages - more than $600 per week, (Mills was one of those who was told he was not required)

49. WATFED TELEX, op.cit., clause 4, part (11)

50. CBH Job Delegate's Files, (1979 and 1987); lists of union membership at time of dispute and the present

51. The Federal Court handed down a decision in May 1980 in favour of the CBH grain handlers remaining in the WWF. CBH then dragged the issue through an exhaustive process of appeal that delayed the rights of their workers for another four or more years.
Commercial coal production commenced at Collie in 1898 and progress in the early years was greatly facilitated by the extensive coal mining experience of the miners who came, or were brought, to the field. The first two producing mines were run by experienced entrepreneurial managers. This wealth of experience contrasted vividly with the lack of specific knowledge amongst the early specialist entrepreneurs. An appreciation of this curious mixture is essential to an understanding of the subsequent development of the Collie coal mining industry.

An average of 350 men were in employment each year in Collie during the first decade of the twentieth century.¹ Over the same period there were hearings in the Arbitration Court during which it was customary to establish the background and credibility of the witness before taking evidence. Whilst it needs to be recognised that witnesses tended to be experienced, articulate and confident men and that such people were more likely to migrate to a new field, the transcripts remain a valuable source of information on the characteristics of the early miners.

Miners' Backgrounds 1903-1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years of Mining Experience in,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Alexander McCaughan</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Archer</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John McDermott</td>
<td>14, NSW, Vic, Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alexander Grant</td>
<td>29, NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Robert L. Williams</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Gregory</td>
<td>40, NSW, Vic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Andrew Galloway</td>
<td>24, Scotland, NSW, Qld, Vic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Reid</td>
<td>13, Scotland, NSW, NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrew Lillicot</td>
<td>15, England, South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phillip Whitworth</td>
<td>15, England, Vic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Reeves</td>
<td>14, NSW, Vic, Tas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Dixon</td>
<td>30, Vic (Gold in WA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Joseph White</td>
<td>14, NSW, Qld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael Gavan</td>
<td>30, England, NSW, Vic, NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph Failless</td>
<td>11, Gold only, no coal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dennis Davy</td>
<td>12, England, South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Edmund Mahoney</td>
<td>30, NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Harry rice</td>
<td>16, South Wales, NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Horrocks</td>
<td>40, Yorkshire, Eastern States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Arbitration Court Files 1095/104, 169, 170, 172, 261, 368
Strangely enough, few men apparently moved to Collie from the Western Australian goldfields. In 1905 Joseph Fairless had been in Collie nine months after doing machine work for 11 years on the goldfields and James Allen had been mining gold for 27 years before coming to Collie in 1909. No doubt there were others but the goldfields' influence does not appear to have been great in this early period. Yet the 'Patstone Document' lists 65 men working at the Proprietary in 1904 who had an average of 18 years' mining experience apiece. The wealth of experience brought to Collie is apparent: it came from outside the state.

The establishment of an experienced workforce was the result of several factors. John McDermott for example, had left Queensland with his wife and five children because 'work was slack'. John Evans, Manager of the Proprietary, told the court in 1903 that he had overcome an early shortage of skilled miners by bringing men from the east and New Zealand. By 1905, according to Evans, conditions in Collie were so good that miners from the eastern States flooded in 'to such an extent that there were double the number of men in Collie today than the trade warrants'.

Thus there was a favourable perception of conditions at Collie to which men were either attracted or recruited. Two points stand out: the early workforce at Collie was experienced and for many of them that experience was British. This meant that the customs, traditions and attitudes of nineteenth century British coal mining were imported into Collie along with the men. Scarcely surprising then that a union was formed as early as 1900, a union of men with a wealth of militant experience who knew how to go about getting what they wanted.

An obvious want was an appropriate level of earnings. None of the miners giving evidence in 1903 said he could live at all comfortably on his pay. Robert Archer, for example, had nine children and lived in town on a block that was mortgaged. His family could not afford to buy meat and he had to supplement their diet by catching kangaroos. Alexander Grant had seven children and was not earning enough to live on. He was in debt for food but he had built his own house which he owned freehold and thus paid no rent. Other miners did have to pay rent. Philip Whitworth was married with four children and rented a house in Wittenoom Street at 8/- a week. Thomas Dixon too was unable to afford the cost of a home. Single miners such as James White lived in a camp and ate meals at a boarding house in town. He paid £2.6d a week for three meals a day. There was no rent charged for his camp and it was on a Company lease but he did have to pay a sanitary rate. William Reid also lived in a camp and ate at a boarding house.

Average earnings at the Proprietary during the second half of 1903 were a little over £3 a week. In the first quarter of 1904, miners at the Proprietary averaged £2.10.0 a week. In 1905, Thomas Dixon at the Collie Burn averaged £3 a week working eleven shift
fortnights and Robert Williams at the Cardiff averaged £2-11-0 a week working six shift fortnights. Between September 1904 and April 1905, the Cardiff miners averaged £2-15-4 a week working eight shift fortnights.\(^9\) Although these amounts are difficult to evaluate in terms of costs of living a guide to their adequacy may be gained from the level of home ownership.

Timber was readily available at Collie and indeed formed an alternative source of income in slack times. This encouraged the erection of a more substantial type of abode. More importantly, however, the early capital structure was not strong enough to set up a 'company' town. William Bedlington, Manager of the Proprietary, pointed out to the Ewing Select Committee in 1902 that the 'residents are a different class from the residents in any other mining township in the State. The men have brought their wives and families from the other States and the majority of them have built homes for themselves. There is no 'canvas town' in Collie.'\(^{10}\) Two years later, at the Proprietary in December 1904, some 44 of 65 coal hewers had built their own home.\(^{11}\) Apparently the level of earnings was such as to enable a good proportion of the workforce to take advantage of the situation. The high rate of home ownership and the significant number of families in this early period at Collie indicate a stable workforce. This stability, when allied to the extensive background experience of the men, proved a powerful combination in times of stress.\(^{12}\)

Although the level of home ownership suggests that earnings in general were adequate, some men apparently did quite well. For example, John Reeves, a shiftman at the Proprietary in 1905, had been in Collie five years. He had married there and built his home at a cost of £50. He was buying 100 acres and had, by 1905, paid off £8. He was fond of horses and had bought a pit pony from the Company for £22.\(^{13}\) This is supported by unchallenged evidence given in 1905 by Loftus Connor, the Managing Director of the Cardiff, that 'the men said they were quite satisfied if they had four shifts a week to work, in fact they never intended to work any more.' In another unchallenged statement to the Court, Evans said 'the men are better off working three days a week in the Cardiff mine than working full time in Newcastle. The wages are so good the men come from all parts of Australia.'\(^{14}\) Admittedly the evidence is sketchy but it does seem that in the three or four years before 1905 at least, earnings were enough to provide tolerable conditions for a significant proportion of the Collie workforce.

The broad experience of the miners was matched by the first Collie entrepreneurial manager. William Bedlington was the son of a South Wales mining engineer and gained his Imperial First Class Mining Certificate in 1872 at the age of 21. He migrated to New South Wales in 1886 and managed several collieries over the next ten years. In 1896 he came to Collie and was involved in the flotation of the West Collie Coal and Fireclay Company to work a lease at Allanson. This became the first producing mine on the field but soon ran into very
poor quality coal and closed down in August 1898. Bedlington went on to play a prominent role in Collie both in a managerial capacity and as a 'pillar of society'. In 1902 he managed the Proprietary and in 1905 he was in charge of the co-operative mine, having previously managed the Cardiff and the Collie Boulder. He later returned to the Proprietary as lessee.

With the failure of Bedlington's coal seam in 1898 the Forrest Government moved quickly to shore up its involvement in the industry that had been expressed thus far by way of contracts and railway construction. It came to the rescue of the field by calling for tenders to lease the so-called Government mine sunk in 1895. The successful tenderer was H.M. Deakin who took over in November 1898. He named the mine Wallsend and its subsequent success was 'largely due to the energy and enterprise of the lessee', according to the Inspector of Mines in Collie. Little is known of Deakin who died in September 1899 but he was obviously a mining man of considerable drive and experience.

The same was true of the other managers who opened up new mines. The practice of having experienced men in the mould of Bedlington and Deakin continued. Samuel Straw, Manager of the Cardiff in 1905 and one-time Manager of the Proprietary, had started in coal mining at eight years of age before coming to Collie. John Evans who came from Cardiff in Wales was, like Bedlington, a certificated mine manager. Like Straw, he had started in a mine at the age of nine and done practically every type of mining work before becoming a manager in 1879. He had migrated to New South Wales in 1884 where his tough reputation was consolidated by the part he played in breaking the big 1888 strike at the Wallsend mine in Newcastle. Aggressive managers like Evans were inhibited at Collie and in 1905 he was moved to regret the innovations that had crept in 'through the weakness of the people who first established this industry here'.

Both Bedlington and Deakin were coal mining men first and entrepreneurs second. The first of the specialist entrepreneurs to become interested in the coal field was Zebina Lane, well known for his activities on the eastern goldfields. In 1897 Lane was able to float the Collie Proprietary Company in London after the State Government announced its intention to further support the field by linking Collie to Brunswick by railway. Lane took over the Wallsend mine in 1902 and by 1903 had invested £65,000 in coal and an ill-conceived briquetting plant in Bunbury. In contrast to the experienced Bedlington and Deakin, Lane had 'no previous experience of coal mines'.

In January 1903 a newly formed company started mining at Cardiff. The principal entrepreneur involved was Loftus Connor who, like Lane, had had no previous experience in coal mining. By November 1903 the Cardiff mine was being served by a railway spur line laid at Government expense. This line was originally intended to go only as far as the Collie Boulder lease but effective lobbying in the
Legislative Assembly by John Ewing, the Member for Collie, ensured its extension to the Cardiff lease. Unfortunately Ewing forgot to tell the House that he had a financial interest in the Cardiff lease and an agreement with a London financier that was contingent upon the lease being served by a railway line! The Hastie Select Committee merely 'regretted that Mr Ewing did not, when advocating the railway, take the House into his confidence and explain his personal interests in the leases'!

In 1904 R.C. Young formed Scottish collieries to take over the Collie Boulder lease. Young also readily admitted he knew nothing about coal mining when he started. By 1905 he had leased the Proprietary and achieved a strong position in the industry, controlling almost 62% of the output for that year. Connor at the Cardiff controlled a little under 24% with the remainder coming from the Co-operative. The last mentioned colliery had eighteen shareholders at £50 each who were also working miners. They paid a fortnightly call of not more than £2 and by April 1905 had paid off £23 each. Such a low capitalisation was facilitated by having the plant on a 21 year lease. Apart from those at the Co-operative the early entrepreneurs were remarkably ignorant of mining practice and were thus at something of a disadvantage in dealing with industrial matters.

A noticeable feature of entrepreneurial and managerial behaviour in Collie was the preference that men such as Ewing, Evans and Bedlington, displayed for wielding power through local community organisations. This may have been a reaction to the constraints experienced in the industrial area. Be that as it may, Ewing was on the Health Board in 1897 and, with Evans and Bedlington was a foundation member of the Coalfields Progress Committee. Ewing and Bedlington were members of the first Municipal Council in 1901. Evans and Ewing were prominent members of the first Masonic Lodge formed in Collie. Ewing was also a member of the Legislative Assembly for two terms and lost no opportunity of furthering his interests in that Chamber.

The distinctive nature of Collie's industrial history in the twentieth century has been remarked upon elsewhere. Collie was manned initially by a workforce experienced in the British tradition. The early entrepreneurs lacked experience of coal mining in any tradition and, as the level of home ownership demonstrates, this enabled the miners to attain a relatively favourable industrial position. There was a noticeable involvement of the state in the industry and entrepreneurs in the community. The individuality of the Collie coal field was undoubtedly enhanced by all of these factors.
ENDNOTES

1. Reports of the Department of Mines

2. Western Australian Arbitration Court File (Henceforth WAACF), held in Battye Library, 1095/172

3. WAACF 1095/104, p.29

4. WAACF 1095/104, pp.3,6,9,10, 1095/172, p.96

5. WAACF 1095/172, p.61, 1095/505, p.1

6. WAACF 1095/104, p.25,33

7. WAACF 1095/172, p.46,53

8. WAACF 1095/104, document

9. WAACF 1095/172, paysheet, transcript, pp.44,47,150,151

10. J. Ewing, Report of the Select Committee on Stimulating Coal Mining 1901-02, p.27. Votes and proceedings 4P:1S:4V

11. WAACF 1095/172, 'The Patstone Document'

12. B. Pope, 'Skill, Autonomy and Change in the Workplace: The Coal Mines of Collie, Western Australia, 1890-1925.' (Murdoch University, Bachelor of Arts with Honours thesis, 1982), pp.144-145

13. WAACF 1095/172, pp.41, 183

14. WAACF 1095/172, pp.150,112


16. WAACF 1095/169, p.9; 1095/172, p.14


18. Reports of the Department of Mines, 1898, p.lxxxii; 1899, p.122


20. WAACF 1095/170, p.118

22. WAACF 1095/172, p.74


24. WAACF 1095/172, p.146


26. WAACF 1095/263, p.22

27. J.H. Lord, *op.cit.*, pp.121,126,141,143

28. WAACF 1095/172, p.18


30. B. Pope, *op.cit.*, p.146
'Toughing it': Life and Work in a Main Roads Department Camp, 1928-1934

by Tresna Shorter

It is of equal importance to record the experiences of the men who laboured on public works during the formative years of the State's development, as it is to record the achievements of politicians, surveyors, architects and engineers. The dreams and visions of the men in high positions would not have been realised without the toilers who wielded pick, axe and shovel.

An ideal project of public works to examine for this purpose, is the 3,500 Farm Scheme (at first called the 3,000 Farm Scheme) which was conducted under the authorities of the Public Works Department and Main Roads Board, in conjunction with the Agriculture Bank and the Department of Lands. The 3,500 Farm Scheme was arranged under a tripartite agreement drawn up between the British Government, the Commonwealth of Australia and Western Australia. Under the terms of the agreement, the United Kingdom would provide a loan of £34,000,000 and it agreed that for every 10,000 assisted migrants, 3,000 should be members of families. The State agreed to accept one assisted migrant for every £75 spent on public works. This proposal was attractive to the British Government because it was troubled by a high rate of unemployment, compounded by ex-servicemen and women seeking to re-enter the workforce. The agreement was signed in April 1925 and the Development and Migration Act was constituted on 21 July 1926.

The 3,500 Farm Scheme consisted of eight million acres - one million of which extended eastwards from Mollerin to Bullfinch, for which five hundred farms were planned. And seven million acres southwards from Southern Cross to Ravensthorpe and east to Salmon Gums, which held sufficient land for 3,000 farms. This paper will concentrate on the latter part of the Scheme and specifically that part which encompassed Lake Cronin at a location commonly referred to as Forrestania.

Locating Forrestania proved difficult for the researcher. Records at the Agriculture Protection Board, the Main Roads Department and the Department of Railways, stated that a district by that name existed,
however, the Mines Department records spell the name as 'Forrestonia'. The Department of Lands and Surveys claim that a district by either of those names does not exist, yet there is a Lands and Surveys map which indicates the direction of Forrestania.

The first record of a district named Forrestania can be seen in a petition to the honourable Minister for Mines, Phillip Collier, dated 27 August 1915, when a small gold rush occurred near a place called Mid Ironcap, approximately one hundred and sixty kilometres south of Southern Cross. The petition was signed by 'thirty-three prospectors and residents' and the address from which it was sent was 'Forrestania, via Mt Holland'. The petition said that sixty men were there, with the number increasing daily. (They were petitioning for a public battery).

Forrestania rose to prominence a second time in 1928, with the advent of the 3,500 Farm Scheme. This Scheme had been thought by some historians to be the brain-child of Phillip Collier, however, there is sufficient reason for believing this to be an incorrect assumption and that it was actually the product of the creative thought and vision of William N. Hedges. In 1922, Hedges published a small book titled, A Practical Scheme for Land Settlement in Western Australia in which he advocated a system of land settlement in the eastern districts 'west of a line' drawn from Southern Cross to Esperance. Hedges was concerned after seeing disheartened and over-burdened migrants, packing up and returning to England after just a few short weeks in the bush. He was forthright in voicing his disapproval of Mitchell's Group Settlement Scheme, describing it as 'haphazard'. He said that no matter how willing the English migrants were, they could not possibly have the knowledge to economically carry out the land clearing and water conservation which was required to establish a farm from virgin bush.

Hedges devised a scheme which would provide new settlers with the basic requirements to begin farming immediately on arrival on the land, without the struggle experienced by those who had participated in the Group Settlement Scheme. The similarities between Hedges' Scheme of 1922 and Collier's 3,500 Farm Scheme of 1928 are many -

- the appointment of an advisory committee
- the same location
- pioneering dams to be built for preliminary work
- between 81 and 101 hectares of land to be cleared on each 405 hectare block
- the clearing to be done under close supervision through a large contract system
- roads and railways to be built ahead of settlement
the British Government and the Commonwealth of Australia to fund the Scheme

a large proportion of the settlers to be migrants from Britain.8

Further reason for believing that the Schemes were one and the same, is the Hedges' book illustrates W.C. Angwin, MLA, examining a wheat crop at Emu Hill in 1921. Just three years later, in 1924-25, the Minister for Lands, Immigration and Industry was none other than Angwin.

PERTH, DECEMBER 1927 TO AUGUST 1928

The 1927-28 growing season had produced a bumper harvest, and for the first time Western Australia had produced more wheat than any other state in Australia. In addition, wool production had increased by 35,000 bales since 1926. The media excitedly reported the state's statistics for wheat and wool production describing the growth of the wool industry as 'meteoric' and predicting a brilliant economic future for Western Australia.9 As well, the price of wool was up and good returns were anticipated. Everyone believed that the future of Western Australia lay in agriculture, so much so that politicians themselves were purchasing land.10 Due to the harvest, optimism ran high, and the men in government can be forgiven for the air of euphoria which prevailed at the annual social of the Institute of Surveyors, held on 22 December 1927. In his speech, the Minister for Lands, M.F. Troy, described Western Australia as a 'country of great opportunities', adding 'there be no fear of retrenchment of surveyors so long as I am in office, we have got the land and the climate.' (sic)11

However, even at this early stage, all was not well in Perth. Rumblings of change were in evidence. During December 1927 anxiety had been mounting among the numbers of unemployed. On 23 December a demonstration took place at Fremantle where the organisers collected the names of fifty men and presented them to the local members of parliament in an effort to gain 'relief' for them over the Christmas period.12

As January passed into February, it became abundantly clear to the government that the numbers of unemployed were increasing and that they had a real problem. With the joys of a newly harvested bumper crop still fresh in mind, together with Collier's amended policy for land development,13 and a serious unemployment problem, the ingredients were just right for the commencement of the 3,500 Farm Scheme.

In February the government appointed an advisory committee to investigate the possibilities of land development on a scale never before attempted anywhere in Australia.14 The members of the committee were:
In the space of a month, on 29 March 1928, the committee had completed their investigations and submitted a report to the Undersecretary for Lands and Immigration providing a list of the estimated expenditure for the Scheme, which was identical to the Scheme advocated by W.N. Hedges in 1922. It was to cost £8,725,000 and was expected to be completed within five years. 15

Unemployment continued to rise, and on 25 May, the Premier approved the release of £12,000 for the purpose of providing work. Part of this money was for clearing roads for survey operations south of Southern Cross. 16 Four days later further approval was given for the clearing of roads in the Lake King area. 17 Clearly, pressure was mounting. On 7 June, a conference was held in the Premier's office, the results of which were to have far-reaching effects.

The conference was attended by the Development and Migration Commission, Messrs Banks, Amery, Gepp, Gunn and Robinson, the Minister for Lands, Mr Troy, the Engineer in Chief, Mr Stileman, as well as the heads and secretaries of several other relevant government departments. The subject for discussion was the 3,500 Farm Scheme. Proposals for clearing land and roads, and the provision of a water supply in the Forrestania area, were put forward. The Development and Migration Commission had given their approval to the Schemes, and the premier cabled England for £150,000. He undertook to make funds available immediately. 19

Simultaneously to these events taking place at government level, civil unrest amongst the unemployed was reaching even greater heights, until on 23 and 24 July, demonstrations in the streets of Perth generated into riots. Eight days later, on 3 August, the first contingent of fifty men left Perth for Forrestania. 20 Although the 3,500 Farm Scheme had been planned long before the depression, there can be no doubt that the unemployment problem and the demonstrations were instrumental in causing the premature commencement of the preliminary public works programme at Forrestania. 20

FORRESTANIA, AUGUST 1928 TO JULY 1929

On 3 August 1928, fifty men departed Perth for Forrestania, under the foremanship of Malcolm Slaven. 21 This was the advance party. Until now, Slaven had been foreman for the Main Roads Board at a camp at Mandogolup, which was known at that time as '7 mile'. 22 He was a short, portly man who smoked a pipe and looked a figure of
authority, often wearing a black cape and leather leggings, hat and boots. He was exceptionally well thought of by those who worked under his authority.23, 23

Before embarking upon what he knew was to become an enormous project at Forrestania, and despite instructions from the Under-Treasurer that the men must be employed through the Labour Bureau,25 Slaven had the foresight to personally invite some men whom he knew from the '7 mile' camp. They were men who had proved themselves to be reliable, hard workers.26

The method of recruiting at '7 mile' was a very simple process. A small shed stood alongside the rail-stop, and inside the shed was placed a long tool box, called the 'dog-box'. Men looking for work, sat on the box each morning and awaited the arrival of the foreman, who would walk along the row and select whom he wanted.27 Under this system of employment, it would have been in one's best interest to establish a reputation as a hard worker.

The structure of hierarchy at the camps was thus:28

Inspector

Foreman

Gangers

Leading Hands

Navvys

The men and equipment destined for Forrestania travelled by train from Perth to Southern Cross, where everything was unloaded onto a vacant block.29 The equipment included sixteen trucks, two Fordson tractors and scoops, a Wippet car,30 and tents, sacks, picks, axes, shovels and slashers, for at least four hundred men. The equipment was reloaded onto the trucks, after which the police escorted the convoy to Marvel Loch.31

In 1928, Marvel Loch consisted of a hotel and a hall, with a house situated between the two larger buildings. The hotel proprietor must have been just as astonished by the sudden influx of business, as the men from Perth were amazed by the publican - for he stood before them, a vision in white - white shirt, white trousers and white shoes32 - in stark contrast to his red, dusty environment.

The convoy stayed overnight at Marvel Loch, where the men took this
opportunity to hold a bucks dance. They jigged and danced the night away to the tune of a couple of mouth organs and a piano accordion provided by some of the men. They spent the entire night at the hall, sleeping there when the revelry finished.33

During the course of the evening, Slaven had approached two of the men and told them he wanted them to accompany him next day as he had to locate Lake Cronin.34,35 One of the men, Bill Taylor, had been 'horse boss' under Slaven at '7 mile'. (Taylor had his collie dog with him). The other, was just a lad of seventeen years, Jim Bertram. Jim had also previously worked under Slaven's authority at '7 mile'. He had been 'water-boy' for the navvys and gangers who had constructed the roads on the Peel Estate and in the surrounding districts.36 It is believed that Slaven, concerned for the boy's moral welfare, included him in the journey to the lake, to keep him away from the rest of the men who would spend the following day drinking at the hotel.

The journey to Lake Cronin proved long and arduous. Rain had fallen recently and the track was boggy. By nightfall the party had only reached Mt Holland. Slaven decided they should stay there for the night and go on next morning. Not expecting the journey to take so long, their baggage had been left on the trucks at Marvel Loch. The night was bitterly cold and frost lay all around. Slavan and his driver slept in the car, while Taylor and the youth lay on the ground with a fire on each side and the dog between them in an effort to get warm. They lay shivering in the frost, yearning for day break.37 In the morning, the party resumed the quest for Lake Cronin, coming upon it some twenty-four kilometres further on.

Lake Cronin, the only source of fresh water in the district, became the hub around which the preliminary public works programme revolved. Some weeks previously, a sample of water from the lake had been submitted to the government Mineralogist and Analyst, Dr Simpson, who had tested it and declared it suitable for human consumption. The water was cloudy grey in colour and Simpson recommended a purifier by adding half a pound of kopi to 100 gallons of water.38 Slaven and company returned to Marvel Loch and brought the convoy through to Lake Cronin where within a week, a small town of tents, erected in nearly spaced rows, sprang up.39

THE LIVING CONDITIONS

Each man was issued with a tent, measuring approximately 2 metres x 2.5 metres, and two sacks with which to make a bush bunk.40 In order to construct the bunk, which was built in three sections, it was necessary to first cut down a couple of small trees. Two thin poles were required to slide through the sides of the sacks, while two forked posts had to be driven into the earth so that the bed could be wedged in such a way as to be kept up off the ground.41 For anyone who did not have a commercially made mattress and blankets, the mattress was a palliasse - a sack filled with straw,
and the blanket was a wagga - hessian bags sewn together with binder twine. Furniture was constructed from boxes and tins. A box (in which petrol tins had been packed) turned on its side, served as a table-cum-food cupboard. The opening was placed so that it faced the person sitting at it. Four legs were nailed to the box, and a hessian bag was hung across the opening to keep out dust and flies. To prevent ants from invading the food, the legs were placed in small tins in which a little kerosene floated upon a small amount of water. The chair was a petrol tin over which a folded hessian bag was placed for comfort. Petrol tins were used for many purposes. Standing upright, with the top removed and a length of wire connected to two sides - it became a bucket; lying sideways, with only a side panel removed and the sharp edges neatly turned down, it became a receptacle which would be used for washing dishes, for washing the body, or for washing clothing. Or it could be used for storing eating or cooking utensils. Innovation was the key to survival.

Arrangements had been made with traders at Southern Cross to provide provisions for the men at the camp. The state guaranteed the payment of accounts on condition that the goods were sold at Southern Cross prices and trucked to the camp at no extra cost. A truck load of provisions had been included in the convoy from Southern Cross, provided by store-keeper Harry Friedlander. Upon arrival at Lake Cronin, the first task assigned to Jim Bertram, was to unload and distribute the food. This was easy compared to the second task he was assigned. With the assistance of one other man, dampers, sufficient for the needs of fifty men, had to be baked every day until arrangements could be made for a baker to provide bread. The dampers were cooked in camp ovens.

By the end of the first week, butcher, baker and greengrocer shops had been constructed, and a months' supply of food was now on hand. These business premises were small huts constructed from corrugated iron. Harry Friedlander, the proprietor of the grocery business, also provided postal and banking facilities.

INITIAL WATER CONSERVATION

After setting up and organising the camp, the task of paramount importance was to conserve the existing water in the lake, which measured 61 cm in depth and was expected to be 'sufficient to begin with'. It had been impressed upon Slaven that everything possible had to be done to minimise evaporation. The job immediately at hand was to convert a portion of the lake bed into a man-made tank, called a box-tank.

The men, using pick and shovel, dug a square shaped trench, to surround an area large enough to hold 1,820,000 litres of water. When the trench was dug (about 2.5 metres deep) truck loads of clay were brought in and the clay was shovelled into the trench. The men
then pugged the clay, using large poles which were procured by cutting down gimlets. When sufficient clay had been pugged so that it reached ground level, it was then extended as a wall above ground level for approximately another 2.5 metres, like the walls of a dam.\(^{53}\) Next, trucks loaded with rocks arrived and each rock was individually placed into position over and around the walls until they were completely covered. Finally cement blocks were situated at regular intervals around the interior of the wall so that a cover could be placed over the water.\(^{54}\) (What the cover was made from, remains unknown). The construction of this tank took three months. The box tank was then filled with water from the lake. This supply was continually replenished by water carted some considerable distances from various catchments situated between Lake Cronin and the No. 2 Rabbit Proof Fence.\(^{55}\)

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

During the first five weeks the number of men increased from fifty to 376.\(^{56}\) During the task of building the box tank, other men were sent to work in the various areas of employment in dam building, road clearing and block clearing. According to a report by Foreman Slaven, dated 6 September 1928, 'great discontent' was felt by the men on arrival at the camp when they discovered that the price that they were to be paid for road clearing, was considerably less than the amount quoted by an official in Perth. They had been told to expect eight shillings for clearing thirty metres,\(^{57}\) when in fact they only received between three shillings and sixpence, and seven shillings.\(^{58}\) Slaven wrote that it had taken some considerable time to make the men see the impossibility of carrying out what they had been told in Perth.\(^{59}\) The same problem arose with block clearing. In Perth, the men were promised £2.10.0 per hectare for chopping down, but Slaven believed the amount paid should be left up to the representatives of the Agriculture Bank to decide, and that in fairness to the men, it should fluctuate according to the classification of the country.\(^{60}\)

**ISOLATION**

The government directed that eighty-one hectares should be cleared, on each 405 hectare block. This was increased to 101 hectares a few months later. Using handsaws as well as axes, the men worked in teams of two and were sent to work at varying distances, as much as fifty miles and more, from the maincamp.\(^{61}\) They were living in extreme isolation, in dense bush, without a vehicle and without any other means of communicating with another team, or with the main camp. Contact was maintained with the main camp by the arrival of the water truck twice a week.\(^{62}\) On these occasions each man received eighteen litres of water.\(^{63}\) To ensure that the water lasted the required length of time, it had to be used more than once before discarding, eg water used to wash the potatoes for the meal,
was also used to wash the body, and then used a third time to wash items of clothing. 64 The men wore the same style of clothing winter and summer - flannel shirt, trousers, thick woolly socks and boots, with the bottoms of the trousers tucked into the top of the socks. The flannel shirt served the purpose of soaking up the perspiration from the day's labour.

The only other occasions when the men saw anyone other than the driver of the water truck, was when the representatives of the Agriculture Bank visited fortnightly to measure the amount of clearing that had been done 65 — enabling wages to be calculated. The men's wages arrived at the camp fortnightly accompanied by a guard. This was deemed necessary because some of the men had been involved in trouble in Perth and it was thought that the payroll was unsafe. 66

The wild-life was very much in evidence at Forrestania - and yet not so wild. The dingoes were curious about the intruders. At night, they ventured right up to the sleeping men and sniffed and licked their feet. At the end of the day's work, the men had to make sure to hang their axes and slashers in a tree or they would find the wooden handles chewed next morning. It is believed that the dingoes were attracted to the salt from the men's hands. 66

The men worked from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm, not always stopping for a smoko, and eating their midday meal, a crib, in the shade of a tree. 67 The work was not suited to all who were sent there. Some men, not having the health and stamina to work hard, were forced to leave.

Although conditions at Forrestania were extreme, the toughness and strength of the men who worked on Public Works Department projects during the depression, was revealed many years later by Percy Dhu, who survived as a prisoner of war, working on the Burma Railway in World War II. After the war, Mr Dhu was heard to say that he believed he had survived because he had 'toughed it' in the Main Roads Department camps during the depression years. 68

Hard working men, clearing for roads, cleared sections measuring 122 metres by approximately 6 metres wide, daily. Calculated on the basis of receiving payment at the rate of seven shillings for 30 metres, the men earned between £5.10.0 and £6.0.0 per week. 69 Despite the initial complaints as reported by Slaven, there were men who were content with the amount of money they received. One man who was interviewed by a journalist for the Southern Cross Times, said, 'I have sent £30.0.0 to my eastern states relatives and have a credit of £15.0.0 in my savings bank book. This state will do me.' 70

During the men's leisure time, at weekends and on evenings after work, they went prospecting for gold, hunting for Mallee hen's nests (for eggs) and rabbit trapping - which provided them with the rare
luxury of fresh meat. To keep flies off the meat, it was placed in a hessian bag and hung either from the tent pole or from a tree.

Their diet consisted mainly of what was commonly called 'bully beef', which came in a sealed tin. Mutton was also available in tins. From a recent field trip to the site of the camp, it was plain to see from the quantity of rusted tins, that the men had eaten fairly equal quantities of 'bully beef' and herrings in tomato sauce. Other items, they consumed, were Tom Piper 'Wham', baked beans, Cadbury's cocoa, vinegar, tea, beer, Irish Moss cough mixture, and castor oil. Their food orders, including vegetables and other requirements, were obtained by giving an order to the driver of the water truck, who would deliver the items on the next trip.

The success of each team of two men, in terms of the amount of timber cleared, depended on how well the men were matched. In the case of Jim Bertram, he was very successfully teamed with a man named Ned Dryden. Dryden was an experienced axeman from Queensland, and despite the difference in the ages, the two worked well together. Jim was not a stranger to hard work as he had worked for his father (a hard task master) on the Peel Estate since he was twelve years old. The pair worked long and hard, saving their money. The partnership finished when a few months later, Dryden announced to Jim that he knew where there was gold and was off to start up his own 'show'. He invited Jim to go with him, but the boy declined the invitation. Jim's next partnership was not as successful, and just a couple of months later, Jim left Forrestania and returned to Perth.

THE 'HOSPITAL'

According to Slaven's annual report dated 19 June 1929, he had set up a 'casualty station' at the main camp. This was in the charge of a registered nurse who was the matron. Information about the 'hospital' is limited to the report, and one photo; as the Department of Health does not have any record of its existence. This suggests that it was probably little more than a first aid post-cum-nurse's station. The photo of the establishment shows that it was constructed of corrugated iron with a canvas covering for a roof. A tin hut nearby was probably the nurse's office. Slaven reports that he charged the men 6d a week to offset the cost of running the hospital, enabling it to be run at no cost to the government. This charge was common in the goldfields, known as a medical allowance, it entitled the patient to free bandages and medicine. Since there were approximately four hundred men working in the district, the total amount collected would have been approximately £10.0.0 a week.

The wages for trained nurses working in the capacity of matron at that time, was approximately £2.10.0 plus an allowance for her keep. In addition to providing the wages and a living allowance
for the matron, the money collected would also have paid for the services of an assistant for her as well as to cover the cost of the cooking and laundering needs of the sick.\textsuperscript{79}

The only women known to have been at the camp, except for the first week when Slaven's wife and children arrived for the school holidays, were Mrs Bullock,\textsuperscript{80} wife of one of the gangers, and the nurse, who remains unnamed. In all probability, Mrs Bullock and the nurse may be one and the same.

\textbf{THE RAILWAY}

At the Premier's Conference on 7 June 1928, the Department of Railways was allocated £10,000 for surveying and £20,000 for the location and conservation of water. The money for surveying was meant to be for work of a pioneering nature only. However, for reasons unknown, more permanent work was accomplished, causing a blow-out in the budget.\textsuperscript{81}

In one year, from 25 June 1928 to 30 June 1929, the Railway surveyors conducted a traverse run southwards from Southern Cross to Forrestania - 160 kilometres, as well as a permanent survey, complete to 112 kilometres from Southern Cross.\textsuperscript{82} From the time railway surveying commenced, the press, and the settlers who were already established in some outlying areas, brought pressure to bear upon the Department to announce exactly where the lines were going to be situated. Reticence by the Department about its work, gave the impression that very little work was being accomplished, and even that the settlers needs were being ignored. Contrary to this, the Railway survey team accomplished a creditable amount of work.\textsuperscript{83} The reason why the public were uninformed about the location of the line is due to the fact that until the surveyor returned to the Department with his field books at the completion of the job, the Department did not know exactly where the line was going to be situated.\textsuperscript{84}

Simultaneously to railway surveying between Southern Cross and Forrestania, additional work was in progress between Mukinbudin and Bullfinch where the line was actually being laid. The Railway Advisory Board had decided that this line was more urgently required because settlers were already established along this route.\textsuperscript{85}

The celebrations of the opening of the line between Mukinbudin and Bullfinch took place on the weekend of 22 July 1929, just eleven days after the abandonment of Forrestania. The excitement at the opening celebrations which were organised at both Bullfinch and Southern Cross, provided Premier Collier with a foil for deflecting awkward questions put to him by some people during the opening speeches.\textsuperscript{86} In the excitement over the progress of the railway line the failure of Forrestania was forgotten.

Despite the depression, and the shortage of money throughout the
decade of the thirties, the railway programme, planned under the 3,500 Farm Scheme, continued. The Collier Government, and the Mitchell government which followed, were committed to honouring the agreement.86

WATER

During the eleven and a half months that the preliminary public works programme was underway, the search for water was continuous. It was imperative to the success of the Scheme – not only to secure sufficient water for the men working there at present – but to find an ongoing supply for the railways and for the future settlers. A report for 31 October 1928 from the Engineer in Chief of Railway Construction, F.W.A. Stileman reads –

'FORRESTANIA:

Boring at native rock, Sheok Rock and 6 Mile Rock, total depth bored 136 metre (approx), has given no result. Investigations of other rocks with a view to conservation by tanks, is in progress.

Construction of a 2,730,000 litres tank at Lake Cronin is in progress and of a small tank at 6 Mile Road has been commenced (sic).87

The report following this, dated 30 November 1928, stated that the box tank at lake Cronin had been completed and filled with water from the lake but its capacity was now reported to be 1,820,000 litres.88

In January 1929, the services of R. Lockhart Jack were obtained. He was a recognised authority on the problems of water supply, and the Deputy Government geologist for South Australia. Lockhart Jack conducted an investigation into the water problem in the Forrestania district. His report said:

1. That normal ground water is saline and useful water will only be found under exceptional circumstances.

2. That portable water should be looked for in the vicinity of the granite rocks, choosing sites where there is a concentration of the run off and pervious soil.

3. The high level sand plain gullies should be tested by boring in conjunction with some suitable geophysical method of determining the depth of decomposed granite present.

4. That the ultimate water supply must depend on surface conservation.
He concluded by saying that 'the variability of this country makes it at once apparent that no stereotyped scheme of providing water is applicable', and he recommended that soil salinity tests should be conducted.\(^9\)

In July, shortly after the submission of this report, rumours began circulating within the various government departments as well as in the media,\(^9\) that the 3,5000 Farm Scheme was going to be abandoned. Simultaneously E. McLarty, the Managing Trustee of the Agriculture Bank, received notification from London that the agreement was cancelled.\(^9\) It remains unknown whether the Development and Migration Commission informed London of Lockhart Jack's findings and realising the futility of continuing with the scheme, withdrew. Or, whether the London Bank, monitoring the situation in Wall Street, became troubled by the course of events taking place there, took some precautions. The puzzle may never be resolved. However, one thing is certain, contrary to what many historians think, it was not Dr Teakle's report on soil salinity which brought the 3,500 Farm Scheme to a halt, because he did not commence investigations of the soil at Forrestania until August 1929 and his report was not completed until 10 February 1930.\(^9\) But there can be no doubt that Teakle's report would most certainly have prevented any thought of recommencing the scheme when the economic situation improved.

* * * * * * * *

During the 11.5 months that the men worked on the preliminary public works programme at Forrestania, they completed an immense amount of work, so much in fact that it is more than can be completely listed in the space provided in this paper.

ROADS

Total cleared - 1,048 kilometres

LAND CLEARING

Chopped down - 6,000 hectares

Burnt off - 607 hectares

Picked up - 350 hectares

Fire breaks - 361 kilometres

WATER CONSERVATION

Dams excavated - 1 x 367 cubic metres

1 x 1,147 "   "

1 x 1,300 "   "
MOTOR TRANSPORT

Water  -  591,5000 litres transported to depot
         -  568,750 transported to men's camps

STORES

(approx)  428 tonnes of stores transported from Southern Cross to Depot

153 tonnes distributed from depot to men's camps

(This last amount seems to be inadequate, in correlation to the amount of water delivered to the men's camp).

MEN

600 men were conveyed from Southern Cross to the Depot and then conveyed to road and block clearing in the following areas - Lake Cronin, Lake Carmody, Dusted Miner's Settlement and Parker's Range.

The total expenditure on work at Forrestania amounted to £62,296.

* * * * * *

The Managing Trustee of the Agriculture Bank, E.A. McLarty, must have long had doubts about the success of the 3,500 Farm Scheme. He knew that farmers south of Salmon Gums were having difficulty in growing crops sufficient to cover costs and to make a satisfactory income to provide them with an acceptable standard of living. On 26 October 1928, McLarty sent a letter to the Under Secretary for Lands, stating that the Trustees had decided not to make any advances on new holdings on Mallee lands south of Salmon Gums. The bank had been left with sixty abandoned farms and faced with a heavy loss. He warned that no bank assistance would be available to applicants of Mallee lands. If this was the situation for farmers south of Salmon Gums, how much worse the position would been for settlers north of Salmon Gums, who would have greater expenditure in transporting grain over longer distances, and also in receiving goods on their properties. The letter caused comment from the Surveyor General, J.P. Camm, who said, 'I think it is essential that a clear understanding be obtained as to the Bank's intentions regarding the country between Southern Cross and Salmon Gums.' Nothing came of it - the Scheme went on.

McLarty was aware of the immense Mallee root system in the Forrestania district and how suckers caused contaminated wheat samples for farmers. Agricultural technology at that time had not
progressed sufficiently to solve the problem. He also knew about the low rainfall and the absence of ground water south of Mt Holland. Yet despite knowing all this, there is no record of McLarty taking a stand against the Forrestania project. At great expense it was allowed to continue for another nine months.

McLarty was in the unenviable position of being expected to oblige the Development and Migration Commission and Collier's government, on the one hand, and look after the interests of the Agriculture Bank on the other. Although the State Government acted under the guidance and encouragement of the Development and Migration Commission (appointed by Canberra), it would be expected that after the failures of the Group Settlement Scheme, under the Mitchell government, that Collier would have proceeded with caution. The 1933-34 Royal Commission reported that Collier 'induced' McLarty to make advances in the areas which were in doubt. This tends to indicate that McLarty did not have the strength to oppose Collier. It wasn't until July 1929, when notification was received from London that the Agreement was cancelled, that McLarty withdrew the Bank's support for the 3,500 Farm Scheme. A telegram was sent to Slaven instructing him to close the camp down and return to Perth. The men disbanded, rejoining the ranks of the unemployed.

In hindsight, this turn of events proved fortunate for Collier, the State, and the potential settlers. Had the Scheme continued and reached its final stage, water salinity, soil salinity, low rainfall and the intense Mallee root system would have combined to cause economic waste and human suffering.

Why Collier persisted in continuing with the Scheme for as long as he did, is unknown. However, there are two possibilities. Firstly, the men in government were convinced that the future of the state lay in agriculture, so much so that they did not doubt it for an instant, even venturing into agricultural pursuits themselves. This confidence was caused by the two good years of 1926 and 1927 when wool production rose and a bumper crop occurred, due to exceptional spring rains.

The other possibility for Collier's desire to see the 3,500 Farm Scheme eventuate, is that he had a hard act to follow in succeeding Sir James Mitchel as premier. Although the Group Settlement Scheme attracted criticism, there is no doubt that Mitchell was a dynamic man who left his mark on the development of the state.

In view of the failure of the 3,500 Farm Scheme and that no-one in government would gain from the recollection of it, it is not surprising that it has been allowed to fade from living memory. The success with which it has been allowed to be forgotten, is apparent by its absence in the writings of Malcolm Uren and F. Parrick, in Servant of the State. This History of the Main Roads Board 1927-1976 (1976), of M. Glendinning in The History of the Main Roads Board 1926-1956, and in the book by J.S.H. Le Page, Building a State/The
Story of the Public Worlds Department of Western Australia 1829-1985 (1986). Uren and Le Page omitted to write anything at all about the Scheme, while Glendinning wrote all of nine lines. Le page's recent publication is an example of the modern trend in writing the histories of corporations, companies and industry - to record the successes and omit the failures, thereby giving an inaccurate account.

Why did the toilers themselves neglect to record their exploits? Generally, these men had received very little education - some intermittently, while others none at all. Theirs was the period in Australian history, when for many, clearing and working the land was of paramount importance. The family's livelihood depended upon it and the family economy came before education. It was the period when a boy was expected to do man's work. Some learnt to read sufficiently enough to comprehend the newspaper, but they were unable to spell well enough to write.

How did the men feel about living in extreme conditions of hardship and isolation, especially for a Scheme that failed? From the information which remains, it is clear that they detested receiving sustenance, and as long as they worked for their wage, that was all that was important. The measure of the man was in terms of how many cubic metres of earth he could shovel in a day, and how many hectares of virgin bush he could cut down in a week. If a man couldn't work hard and long, 'he was hopeless'.

Sixty years on, the box-tank at Lake Cronin still remains as a monument to the men who worked there. The remaining rusty petrol tins, although grim testimony to the deprivation of depression, also provoke a sense of wonder at man's innovation in time of needs. While there is an absence of trees in some areas around the lake where the main camp was situated, and it is unlikely that these areas will ever recover to return to their former grandeur, there is little other evidence of the hive of activity which once took place there.
ENDNOTES

1. J.P. Gabbedy, *Yours is the Earth*, Perth, 1972, pp.205-206

2. Ibid., p.206

3. 2999/15, Mines Department File, Battye Library


6. Ibid., p.9

7. Ibid., p.6

8. Ibid., pp.6-18


10. R.H. Doig (former Private Secretary to Premier Collier)


14. 1181/28, Main Roads Department (MRD)

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Acc 1235, file 666/28, Battye Library

19. 1181/28 (MRD)

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. W.J. Bertram, Carlisle. Former employee of Main Roads Department. Interviewed 15 June 1987

23. Ibid.

25. Acc 1235 File 666/28, Battye Library
26. W.J. Bertram
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. W. Slaven, 4 October 1987
30. 1181/28
31. Mrs Molly McAuliffe, Floreat Park
32. W.J. Bertram
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. According to M. Bignell, A Place to Meet, Perth, 1981, Lake Cronin is believed to be named after Michael Cronin, an early settler of Katanning, who in 1894, blazed the first trail from Katanning to the goldfields. The Aboriginal section of the WA Museum, records graffiti on the rock in Bates Cave in the Hyden area which reads:
   M. Cronin 1894
   M. Cronin 1914
   D. Cronin (no date)
36. W.J. Bertram
37. Ibid.
38. 1181/28 (MRD)
39. W. Slaven
40. W.J. Bertram
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. W.J. Bertram, and also evidence on recent field trip to Lake Cronin, 17-19 October 1987
47. *Southern Cross Times*, 27 October 1928

48. W.J. Bertram

49. 1181/28 (MRD)


51. 1181/28 (MRD)


53. W.J. Bertram and from information gained from field trip

54. Information gained from field trip

55. Acc 1235, Batty Library

56. 1181/28 (MRD)


58. *Southern Cross Times*, 27 October 1928

59. 1181/28 (MRD)


61. W.J. Bertram


64. *Ibid.*


68. Victoria Hobbs, South Perth. Interviewed 10 November 1987

69. *Southern Cross Times*, 27 October 1928


71. W.J. Bertram

73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. 1181/28 (MRD)
76. Ibid.
80. W.J. Bertram
81. Acc 1235, 666/28, Battye Library
82. Ibid.
83. R. White (Surveyor). Interview 17 November 1987
84. Ibid.
85. Acc 1235, 666/28, Battye Library
85A. Southern Cross Times, 27 July 1929
86. J.P. Gabbedy. Interviewed 28 August 1987
87. Acc 1235, 666/28, Battye Library
88. Ibid.
89. Southern Cross Times, 27 July 1929 and 3 August 1929
90. 1181/28 (MRD)
91. J.P. Gabbedy (1972), p.168
93. 1181/28 (MRD)
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. 510/51 Rural and Industries Bank, Hay Street, Perth, Royal Commission Report 1933-34
98. Ibid.
99. W.J. Bertram
ON THE RAILS: Life on the Line in Western Australia in the 1950s

by David Walker

This paper is written with the intention of illuminating the lives and work of some of the men who constituted the Western Australian government Railways' permanent-way gangs in the 1950s. The decade of the 1950s has been selected for two reasons. Firstly, as a child I was raised in a variety of railway towns and whistle-stops as my father was employed as a ganger on the permanent-way. Thus my relationship with the railways was intimate in these early and formative years of my life. Although this relationship has long since been severed I nevertheless still feel a certain affinity with a sub-culture which has now disappeared. Secondly, the 1950s were years that witnessed the railway network in Western Australia undergoing a radical transformation. This metamorphosis entailed a change from a hastily, haphazardly constructed, and largely ignored (maintenance-wise) system to a modern, long distance transport network. Although the twin catalysts of this transformation were economic and technological, it fell to the labour of men armed with crude tools to implement this permutation.

The initial section of the paper, a chronological history of the construction of the Western Australian railway network, has been written drawing exclusively from secondary source material. Following this section, (which should be considered as an 'Historical Introduction'), I turn predominantly to the use of primary source material such as Western Australian Government Railways Annual reports, Union Awards, Weekly Notices and personal documentation to provide the reader with a broad overview of some of the conditions and circumstances of the permanent-way workers.

The composition and hierarchy of a permanent-way gang is considered, followed by a description of the work, working and living conditions, day-to-day problems, and the leisure activities of these gang members. In an attempt to draw the paper to a close, I return to the secondary source material to detail a brief description of the factors which generated the period of 'rationalisation' within the Western Australian Government Railways that finally resulted in the demise of the sub-culture.

The first recorded European settlement in Western Australia was in 1826 when Major Lockyer landed at the southern port of Albany in charge of a contingent of soldiers and convicts with orders to establish a military post. This settlement, in the territory then known as New Holland, was the precursor to the western half of the
continent being taken possession in the name of the British Crown and becoming known as Western Australia in the following year. By the 1870s the population of the state has grown to an excess of 15,000 and the economic position had gradually improved to a point where the government cautiously approached the concept of a railway construction to facilitate the transportation of a variety of products to markets or to shipping ports. It should be remembered that until 1917, when the Trans-Australian Railway opened, that apart from the occasional camel train, Western Australia's only link with the outside world was by sea routes.

However, prior to the first governmental railway project being initiated there were at least three privately constructed and owned 'timber lines' connecting forests to shipping localities. The first of these lines was built by the Western Australian Timber Company and opened in 1871, connecting the Layman homestead at Wannerup with the company's jetty at Lockeville (near Busselton), a distance of some 12 miles (approximately 20 kilometres). It was on this section of the line that the first steam locomotive - 'the Ballarat' - was operated in Western Australia. During the following year (1872) two more railways were opened in order to tap the jarrah forest near Perth. The longer of these lines connected Jarrahdale to a jetty at Rockingham, a distance of around 25 miles (40 km) and the second was a horse drawn tramway linking the Darling Range forests to Mason's Landing on the Canning River (near the present site of Cannington).

Construction of the first government railway line connecting Geraldton to Northampton, a distance of 33\(\frac{3}{4}\) miles (54 km) began in 1874 with a view to facilitating the transportation of lead and copper extracted from the mines around Northampton to the coast. However, due to difficulties encountered during the construction - not least of which was the remoteness of the project and also a decision to alter the gauge of the line from 3 foot 0 inches to 3 foot 6 inches - the project was not completed until 1879 with a cost 'blow-out' of more than double the original estimates.4 Partially as a result of the problems encountered on this project, the government decided the next railway venture in the state would be closer to the population centres.

The inhabitants of Perth first received the services of railway transport with the construction of the first stage of the Eastern Railway. The section was a 20 mile (32 km) stretch from Fremantle, via Perth to Guildford, opened in 1881. This line had been extended through the difficult hilly terrain to Chidlow's Well by 1884, on to York by 1885, and terminated at Beverley, a distance of 100 miles (160 kms) from Perth in 1886. The advantages opened up by an effective rail service were quickly recognized by the colonists, which resulted in a mushrooming of spur and branch lines throughout the rich eastern agricultural district.

During this period in Australia's history the majority of the 'mail steamers' on the England-Australia route called at the southern port of Albany instead of at Fremantle. This factor, plus the demands of the southwest rural settlers lobbying for modern transport facilities
similar to those enjoyed by their counterparts in the eastern agricultural region, coupled with the Government's lack of finance, led to the inception of a railway service being privately constructed under a 'land grant principle', that is, large tracts of land along the railway route were granted to a private company, contracted to build and operate a desired railway service.

The first of two such projects; a railway line connecting Beverley and Albany, a distance of 243 miles (400 km) was constructed on the basis of a grant being made of 12,000 acres of land per mile of line built. This was opened in 1889. The line was originally privately operated by a construction company - the Western Australian Land Company - until the service was acquired by the Government in 1896 at a cost of £1,100,000 (approximately $2,200,000). The second 'land grant railway' linking Midland Junction to Walkaway, a distance of 277 miles (425 km) was negotiated at the same rate as the Great Southern Railway described above. This line opened late in 1894 and continued to be operated by an autonomous private company known as the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia until 1964 when the State government finally purchased it.

During the 1890s the government also assumed an active role in railway construction. The rich farming and timber regions of the south-west had continued to develop and as a consequence the South-West Railway was built. This line joined an isolated, local railway system which serviced the Bunbury area (opened in 1891) to the main network at East Perth and was in full operation by 1893.

Meanwhile events in the Eastern goldfields provided a catalyst for frantic railway construction to the rich gold deposits being discovered further and further to the east. The discoveries in Southern Cross in 1887, Coolgardie in 1892, and the fabulous Kalgoorlie-Boulder finds the following year created such a demand for a fast, modern transport system that not only was the goldfields railway to Kalgoorlie completed by 1897 (a distance of some 376 miles/600 km from Perth) but it also resulted in much of the existing track over the Darling escarpment being upgraded.

As time passed and with indications signalling a decline in the gold mining boom, greater attention was again focused on the state's agricultural industry. As a result, during the first decade and a half of this century a proliferation of railway construction occurred over the state's entire agricultural regions, the object being to provide a rail-head within a 20 mile (32 kilometre) journey from any 'selection'.

This boom in railway growth and the importance of this for the Western Australian population and economy can be gauged from the following statistics. Between 1895 and 1915 the annual tonnage of goods carried increased from 255,839 ton to 2,454,000 ton; the number of annual passenger journeys rose from 1,022,248 to a staggering 18,635,327; and the annual train mileage from 997,540 to 5,404,814 miles.
The years of the Great War witnessed a cessation of further railway construction and it was not until the onset of the 'roaring twenties' that progress was once again initiated. At first these gains took the form of upgrading and refurbishing the existing track and facilities but by the close of the decade another construction boom was in full swing. This boom was a result of the demands placed upon the government for increased agricultural railway services, probably a reflection of the various soldier resettlement schemes coming to fruition instigated in the immediate post war years. The result was a spiderweb of railway lines criss-crossing the southern half of the state with a total track mileage of 4,079 miles (6,526 km) in 1929.7

The depression dramatically slowed all economic progress of the western world and the Western Australian Government Railways (WAGR) was no exception. However, there was one anomaly to this economic slump in Western Australia, that was the lucrative gold deposits discovered around Wiluna resulting in a railway being built from the diggings to Meekatharra. This line's construction was completed and the service placed in operation in 1932.

As finance gradually became available in the late 1930s a massive programme of rehabilitating the permanent-way (the 'permanent way' [usually shortened to per-way] is the common term used by those initiated to mean the railway track) was set in motion only to be abruptly halted by the drain of available manpower and finances by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

Throughout the war years maintenance on the per-way could not be kept up and by the end of the war deferred maintenance of the per-way and structures had accumulated to an estimated £1,250,00 ($2,500,00).8 Another factor contributing to the poor condition of the per-way was the original construction techniques. As pointed out in the WAGR Annual Report for 1953-54 'the original construction had been conducted at a very low cost, and with little regard to scientific location'.9 Consequently, after a period of, in most cases, in excess of fifty years with the ravages of continual use, little if any maintenance, floods, erosion and corrosion, the entire WAGR per-way network was in poor repair.

As part of the policies enacted by the WAGR Commission in an attempt to arrest further deterioration of the per-way, special efforts were made to recruit large numbers of men to be employed as per-way gang members. Let me now attempt to illustrate the method and conditions of work and a little of the lifestyle of some of these men, who put a stop to this 'period of creeping obsolescence'10 usually considered to embrace the years between 1920 and 1950.

Here's to the knights of the gleaming rail -
Here's to the boys who never fail;
To the faithful souls who work away
From the public eye and the limelight's ray.
In the winter's cold and the summer's sun,
Their deeds unheeded and their praise unsung.
Oh, much it is we owe to them;
So charge your glasses - let them clink,
Raise them up - and down your drink -
To the boys of the silent service! 11

In this rhyme, 'the boys of the silent service' referred to are per-way gang members. In Western Australia (at least during the period under consideration here) this gang was made up by a group of per-way repairers - pick and shovel labourers (in other states sometimes called fettlers or packers12) under the auspices of a ganger. The term 'ganger' also appears to cause confusion. According to Patsy Adam-Smith, newspapers often report 'a group of gangers, doing this or doing that'. These reports no doubt would have left the indoctrinated wondering what a group of gangers were doing together in one place at one time. Patsy Adam-Smith goes so far as to see a similarity in this misuse of nomenclature to 'calling the head of a diocese and his priests a group of bishops!'13

Most exalted of all per-way crews was the Flying Gang - a crack team of highly experienced repairers, under the command of a senior ganger which was rushed to the site on any section of the track demanding emergency work. Banjo Paterson eulogized such a team as follows:

The Flying Gang

I served my time, in the days gone by,
In the railway's clash and clang,
And I worked my way to the end, and I
Was the head of the "Flying Gang".
'Twas a chosen band that was kept at hand
In case of urgent need;
Was it south or north, we started forth
And away at utmost speed.
If word reached town that a bridge was down,
The imperious summons rang -
"Come out with the pilot engine sharp,
And away with the flying gang".

Then piercing scream and a rush of steam
As the engine moved ahead;
With measured beat by the slum and street
Of the busy town we fled,
By the uplands bright and the homesteads white,
With the rush of the western gale -
And the pilot swayed with the pace we made
As she rocked on the ringing rail.
And the country children clapped their hands
As the engine's echoes rang,
But their elders said: "There is work ahead
When they send for the flying gang."
Then across the miles of saltbush plain
That gleamed with the morning dew,
Where the grasses waved like the ripening grain
The pilot engine flew -
A fiery rush in the open bush
Where the grade marks seem to fly,
And the order sped on wires ahead,
The Pilot must go by.
The Governor's special must stand aside,
And the fast express go hang;
Let your orders be that the line is free
For the boys of the flying gang.

Well might the 'Governor's special' have stood aside for the flying gang, but the majority of per-way crews life was never so exciting nor prestigious. A ganger and his crew of repairers, responsible for a stipulated length or section of per-way, toiled continuously in isolated areas labouring on back-breaking work, at times in the cruelest of weather.

The number of men in the gangs varied greatly, dependent upon various factors. The locality of the gang's 'home-station'; available accommodation and facilities at that location; the general economic climate of the time; and seasonal considerations (a factor which governed the availability of agricultural workers) stand out as important determinants. Some gangs at times had as few as one or two members, whilst others probably rarely dropped below their full compliments. However, instances of the latter circumstances must have been exceptional, for in the WAGR Annual Report for 1950 are found comments relating to the 'utmost difficulty' being experienced in obtaining and keeping skilled and unskilled staff, especially those who were prepared to accept country postings. Again in the 1951 Annual Report it is recorded that a dearth of labour is evident, apparently in part because 'present day conditions - under which there were more jobs than men ... [thus] many prospective employees are guided by such transitory advantages such as larger pay envelopes in preference to a career ... '

Whilst the validity of this section of the report pertaining to the overall situation in the labour market could be strenuously questioned there is little doubt that the WAGR was experiencing acute manpower shortages. However, some relief appeared to be at hand. In the Railway Institute Magazine of 1 July 1949, The Sitter which was the nom de plume for the author of the monthly contribution 'Kondinin Kalling' relates that the number of per-way gang workers in that town had increased to about 65 percent of capacity, a fact that was:

heartening to see ... [especially] the well laid out tents at centres which were almost devoid of life, not only for the maintenance of the per-way but also
for the business people and the train of social activities which followed in their wake.\textsuperscript{18}

The exuberance of The Sitter should not be taken to heart, as the rejuvenation of the railway network was to prove painfully slow. Even if the labour shortage could have been remedied more quickly, which it wasn't, the shortage of materials in the post war years was severe thus inhibiting rapid reconditioning of the system. However, the labour shortage problem was eased considerably by the influx of European 'Displaced Persons' who were placed in the WAGR per-way gangs upon their arrival in the state. By the late 1950s these immigrants had swelled the ranks of the per-way gangs by around 800 men.\textsuperscript{19}

In the 1951 Annual Report is found the following statement:

The advent of New Australians has considerably improved the labour position and it is hoped that the arrival of further immigrants early in 1952 will enable the administration to replace those who are leaving at the end of their two year's contract and also increase the labour force still further.\textsuperscript{20}

(The term 'New Australian' was fostered (within the WAGR at least) in part as a result of an appeal published in the Railway Institute Magazine. This appeal was made by Earthier Caldwell, asking all Australian citizens to refrain from calling new immigrants 'DP's, Balts or displaced persons' because these names took on unpleasant undertones.\textsuperscript{21})

Undoubtedly, there would have been many problems incurred by these 'New Australians', not least of which well may have been the various forms of personal abuse and discrimination, but on the whole (in the world of the per-way gangs at any rate) there appeared to be amicable co-existence as the two following passages suggest. The first is supplied by the author of 'Mullewa Moans' using the pseudonym Froth Blower in the Railway Institute Magazine when writing about the 'turn out' at the 'send off' for the district's Inspector of Permanent Way (IPW), George Beckman in 1950: 'the League of Nations was present in force in Mullewa ... some of those New Aussies can sing, and even Fred Shultz of Pindar, rendered harmony'.\textsuperscript{22}

The second comes from an anonymous author although his/her origins are made quite clear. This letter was published in the Railway Institute Magazine in reply to an article which had evidently appeared in the Melbourne Herald claiming exploitation of new immigrants to Australia:

I am myself a DP, but I am not going to give my name or nationality because I am afraid that the Russians may use some repressions against my relations who are left behind the iron curtain ... the whole news, which Russia said about our conditions of life in Australia is nothing more than rubbish, ... if 'Uncle
Joe' wanted to know how we came to Australia I would tell him we came voluntarily, by our own will, and more we are asking the Australian authorities to allow us to come over here ... we came to Australia on contract to work for the government for the period of two years, and we had been told about it. We work with Australian workers and we have got the same conditions of work, the same pay, and the same amenities ... the Australian Government gave us free passage, gave us jobs to earn a decent living, and we should and must do what we have undertaken to work for two years under direction of the Government.23

The 'same conditions' as Australian workers entitled the 'New Australian' workers in the per-way gangs to climb aboard the gang's open 'Groper' model motor trolley, commonly referred to as a 'Casey Jones' with tools of trade (eg shovel, pick, crowbar and hand borer). The trolley was driven by the ganger or another authorized person who must have been able to 'read and write, [have] in his possession a watch which showed correct railway time, a copy of the latest issue of the Working Timetables, and copies of Special Train Notices, if any, for the day ...'.24 The trolley was driven along the line to a point on their 'length' where the day would be spent replacing sleepers or railway line; reballasting the per-way, burning-off, or performing one of the many other onerous tasks which their work entailed. Burning-off was a task designed to result in minimizing the possibility of fires caused by a spark escaping from the coal burning steam locomotives Care had to be taken 'to ensure that not any damage is caused to [telephone] wires [and] any brush or tall undergrowth of inflammable nature growing under the wires must first be cut down and moved well clear of the telephone line before being burnt off'.25

During the wet weather heavy rains resulting in floods caused many 'washaways' of the per-way. The seriousness of these occurrences varied from winter to winter. In the 1954 Annual Report of the WAGR it was noted that during the year 'there were no washaways of any consequence'.26 Conversely in the previous year damage had been severe. When these washaways occurred the gangs worked around the clock to re-establish the continuity of the per-way. The speed and efficiency of such an operation is well illustrated in the following extract from the 1953 Annual Report:

On the Eastern goldfields the section Doodlakine to Booraan had to be closed on 25 March, 1953, with bad washouts and scours over the whole section. A portion of the line was reopened on 26 March, and the remainder on 27 March, 1953 ...27

Gang members, depending upon the location of their 'home-station' were entitled to be issued with weatherproof clothing. The 1950 union award stipulated:
Gangers and Repairers on lengths between Geraldton, Walkaway-Yuna-Ajana, also west of No.2 Rabbit-proof Fence and south of Goomalling (should receive) 1 long oilskin coat every two years (and) 1 pair of leather leggings every six years.29

Footwear was not part of the kit issued to gang members, but the Book of Rules and Regulations advocated that:

As employees are liable to imminent danger owing to their boots becoming fixed in points or between rails, elastic sided boots are recommended, so that the foot can be withdrawn more rapidly than from the boot of other designs.30

In the early 1950s a pair of 'elastic sided boots' would have undoubtedly constituted a substantial percentage of a gang member's pay packet. Wages at that time were relative to a government controlled basic wage. Representation could be made to employers by employees, or on their behalf for a 'margin' in excess of that wage. To provide details of this concept and to illustrate the considered worth of per-way workers the following tables have been included for the early 1950s.

**Basic Wages per Week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>£7.6.6</td>
<td>£3.19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Land Division</td>
<td>£7.6.7</td>
<td>£3.19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldfields and remainder of State</td>
<td>£7.14.8</td>
<td>£4.3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Margins above the Basic Wage paid to Per-way Gang Members**32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Margin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repairer</td>
<td>£0.11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- First year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; - Second year</td>
<td>£0.14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; - Third and thereafter</td>
<td>£1.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Repairer</td>
<td>£1.3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganger in charge - 1st class</td>
<td>£1.6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; - 2nd class</td>
<td>£1.12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; - 3rd class</td>
<td>£1.17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganger Perth yard</td>
<td>£2.4.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above scales of pay were paid for a forty hour working week, Monday through Friday with overtime rates coming into effect for weekend work or work in excess of an eight hour day.33 After 12 month's continuous service an employee was entitled to two week's leave on full pay each year.34 During the year gazetted public
holidays were observed. Sick leave was accumulative at the rate of one week per year of service, sick pay was determined after completion of one year = full pay; prior to that at a rate equal to full pay divided by twelve and multiplied by the number of completed months of service.

The relationship between gang members appears on the whole to have been cordial and at times outright congenial. Jim Hanley, the past president of the West Australian Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees' Union of Worker (WAASRE) tells of a time when a 'new chum' arrived at a whistle-stop on the Wiluna line. This place (called Mumbina) consisted of nothing more than the homes of the per-way gang 'home-stationed' there. The train arrived at 3.00 am on a cold morning. The 'new chum' was met by the ganger at Mumbina and ushered home for scones and tea.

The above related circumstance probably reflects an exceptional case rather than the rule. A story related to Patsy Adam-Smith possibly represents the situation more faithfully and also takes into account the vagaries of human nature:

Most gangs got along real well together. At lunch time one of them is sent to boil the billy up and they all share it and sit around yarning. A track repairing gang out from Inverell were a funny lot. While they were on the job they'd work like nobody's business. But they were very suspicious of one another. This day I came on them and the gang was so bitter each one was boiling his own billy. You never saw such a sight!

After a day's labour on the per-way the gang usually returned to its 'home-station'. Occasionally, perhaps under exceptional circumstances, the gang would camp out overnight. These occasions were rare and when they did occur, as in the case of work being done on a washaway for instance, little sleep or off-duty time would be possible.

'Home' to many per-way gang members was, in the early years of the 1950s, rough and ready. As Fred Affleck notes:

... at one stage there were over 600 tents scattered across the [railway] system. These were supplemented by war surplus Nissan huts. Some families lived in tents for two or three years until the Department was able to construct permanent housing. These tents were hot and dusty in summer, cold (and in many places also wet) in winter ... few had electricity.

In fact it is generally considered that the lack of suitable accommodation in the country areas was the main factor which prevented the complement of per-way gangs achieving a desired level.
The 1949 WAGR Annual Report stresses this point, as does the Annual Reports of the following five years.\textsuperscript{40}

The WAGR Commission obviously heeded the reports and acted in a way as to alleviate this problem, as the following table shows.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Built & Acquired & Comments \\
\hline
1950 & 19 & - & \\
1951 & 70 & 11* & *Includes 2 old school buildings purchased for conversion \\
1952 & 56 & 10 & \\
1953 & 160 & 69 & \\
1954 & 110 & 2 & \\
1955 & No Report on Housing & & \\
1956 & 200 & 7 & \\
1957 & 3 & - & \\
1958 & No Report on Housing & & \\
1959 & 1* & - & *in the process of being built for the Station Master at Bruce Rock \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Number of Houses Erected and Acquired by the WAGR\textsuperscript{41}}
\end{table}

The previously mentioned table showing the number of houses erected and acquired by the WAGR is indicative of two aspects. Firstly it clearly shows the actions taken by the Commission in an attempt to attract per-way employees. Secondly it reflects a decrease in the workforce as the 1950s wore on. This staff reduction was a ramification of the rationalization program which is discussed at a later stage in this paper.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Average \\
\hline
1949 & 10,865 \\
1950 & 11,364 \\
1951 & 11,838 \\
1952 & 12,049 \\
1953 & 12,491 \\
1954 & 13,465 \\
1955 & 13,554 \\
1956 & 13,856 \\
1957 & 14,102 \\
1958 & 13,398 \\
1959 & 13,240 \\
1960 & 13,081 \\
1961 & 12,612 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Staff Numbers WAGR 1949-1965\textsuperscript{43}}
\end{table}
The accommodation shortage may have been solved by one means or another by the end of the decade but there were quite a few problems along the way as the following will illustrate. These extracts are lifted from a letter written by a Mrs E McKinnon, the Buntine Ganger's wife, to the Commissioner for Railways, Mr Hall on 3 January 1956. The McKinnons had been occupying a new bunkhouse for two months and had, since the time of moving in been:

*plagued with flying insects, grass hoppers, moths and even stray cats ... (all blame being apportioned to the lack of flyscreens). These houses are definitely unsatisfactory for a married man with family and furniture, as the rooms are so small and our furniture will not fit in, and a lot of it is stacked on the back verandah, which is consequently untidy. There is not even a bathroom here, only a shower room with a primitive shower arrangement, under which my youngest child will not go. Nor will it be satisfactory in winter. I can cope with the lack of space and bathing facilities, but I definitely do not like serving and eating meals with flies, so I am asking if it is possible for us to have fly-wire doors and windows put on?*

A communication from the Comptroller of Accounts and audits to the Commissioner dated 22 February 1956 suggests the fitting of flyscreens to 65 bunkhouses and 65 cabins throughout the state, four of which were located at Buntine. In the same communique a rent increase of 6 pence per week for such facilities was recommended.

Mrs McKinnon was one of many who made direct representation to the Commissioner. Maybe he had a reputation for harbouring concern for the per-way gang members. Fred Affleck asserts that it was the Commissioner's concern for the welfare of the staff, especially the 'wives in remote places left alone in camps all day ...' that had prompted him to appoint a Welfare Officer by the name of Mrs Gabrielle Welsby in late 1950.

The activities of this officer are well summarised by the account which appeared in the 1953 Annual Report which read:

*The Welfare Officer continues to visit wives and children of employees in country areas, particularly those of New Australians. She resigned from the Department on 21 June 1957. A successor will not be appointed but arrangements have been made for welfare requirements to be attended to.*
From the above reports it would appear the Welfare Officer was of immense assistance to the WAGR staff in general. This is an amazing contribution when it is remembered that the average size of the staff throughout the years of Mrs Welsby's employment was around 12,000 many of whom, especially the most needy (ie the 'New Australians') were widely scattered across the state. Fred Simmons, now retired but in the past an Industrial Relations officer with the WAGR claims that Mrs Welsby was Commissioner Hall's sister-in-law and 'that's why she got the job ... she came from England I think ... probably went back there'.

All this notwithstanding, Mrs Welsby was employed for seven years and from what limited accounts are available she did perform her tasks creditably. One recurring problem she may have had to confront would have been caused by the remoteness of many of the gangs' 'home-stations' and the associated difficulties this isolation would have created for the supply of fresh provisions.

To a certain degree this problem was overcome by the WAGR Commission allowing a free 'market-pass' to be issued to every employee 'home-stationed' outside the metropolitan area. This market-pass enabled free train travel to the nearest town of such a size as to afford the purchase of all required supplies at a competitive price. The regulations governing the frequency of the issue of these passes was such as to allow two adult passes per month with provisions for children included. Furthermore the Commission allowed 'free-freight' to the maximum weight per fortnight of two hundred-weight for a married man and one hundred-weight for a single man. This allowance of course had to be carried by rail from the most convenient market town. [One hundred-weight is equal to approximately 45.5 kilos]. For this particular period of time the WAGR Commission exhibited an amazingly 'advanced' principle on marriage. The official definition of a 'married man' was indicative of this. 'A 'married man' includes a single man who has a parent or child dependent on him and resident in the state of Western Australian, but does not include a married man whose wife and family are neither resident with nor dependent upon him.'

From various Weekly Notice instructions over the years it is apparent that meat, bread, dairy produce, and ice constituted the bulk of perishable supplies ordered in. Kerosene, the fuel for 'hurricane' and 'tiley' lamps, was also in demand. Vegetables and eggs were frequently the subject of instructions but as many per-way workers cultivated their own vegetable plots and/or chicken runs, these commodities were usually 'home grown'. Rabbits, goats, and other fauna such as pigeons, malley hens, kangaroos, and on at least one occasion (to the writer's certain knowledge), Black Swans supplemented provisions ordered in.

Another commodity in great demand and which was permitted under 'free-freight' were books from the Railway Institute Library. In the
days when technology had yet to progress to a point to allow the production of even a radio that operated efficiently from batteries, let alone a television receiver, there was a great reliance for entertainment and enjoyment achieved from the reading of books. The Railway Institute operated libraries at Perth, Bunbury, Fremantle, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Merredin, Midland Junction, Narrogin and Northam. From the shelves of these establishments approximately half a million books were dispatched for loan annually to railway employees and their families during the 1950s.54

Gardening was another activity widely engaged in during leisure hours by per-way gang members. This pastime was not only practical (a successful gardener would supply his/her own fresh fruit and vegetables, together with fodder for the 'chooks') but could also prove profitable. The popularity of gardening throughout the railway network inspired an annual competition sponsored by the WAGR Commission, which supplied a first prize of £3, second prize of £2, and a third prize of £1 to the three best kept gardens in each of the six railway divisions.55 These six divisions of the railway system were then (as they are today): Metropolitan, Central, Eastern, Southern, South-western and Northern.

Many per-way employees were forced to spend at least a portion of their leisure time engaged in what was known as an 'outside job'. An outside job as the term implies, was a second job performed to supplement wages earned as a per-way worker. This practice was strictly against WAGR Commission policy unless special approval had been given by the Commissioner for Railways:

No officer or servant of the Department shall engage in any employment outside the duties of his office except with the approval of the Commissioner.56

Investigations into complaints made against railway employees allegedly involved in such practices date from 1922. A Mr G Dickens of Hay Street, East Perth, complained to the Commissioner about a WAGR Dispatch officer named Watson for accepting remuneration for his services as a drummer in a band which played 'Old Time Waltz Music'.57 Numerous complaints were received over the following years about railway employees 'moonlighting' as radio salesmen, football umpires, members of various Roads Boards, musicians, vineyard owners and workers, SP bookies, keepers of rooming houses, and one for being engaged as the sub-editor of a well known newspaper.58 However, possibly the case which best emphasises the plight of the per-way workers' need for extra money is illustrated by the following episode:

The Commissioner received a complaint from Messrs. Carr and Beltis, residents of the town of Kellerberrin, pertaining to an 'outside job' being held by a repairer on the per-way gang of that town. The job
held was that of the school gardener. The repairer, a man named Davies, when questioned about the allegation confirmed it to be true, but said he only did the job because he was paying £4.8.0 on his home, and had ten children, seven of whom he was obliged to keep, one being married, one being in the services, and one 'gone trapping'.*9* Davies received a caution.

Alcohol played an important role in the lives of many per-way workers living in isolated and lonely 'home-stations'. There are numerous anecdotes describing the lengths to which some men would go to lay their hands on 'the drink'. In many cases the problems involved in acquiring 'bought liquor' were insurmountable or the expense prohibitive, but there was always the 'home-brew' as the following account illustrates:

As soon as they knocked off work they got on this murderous liquor ... Lantana Rum - a mixture of methylated spirits (white lady), flyspray and kiwi boot polish. One man went mad on it, many were silly for weeks at a time.*60*

The magnitude of alcohol-related problems is indicated by the frequency in the *Weekly Notice* printed reminders to all staff of the relevant rules and regulations pertaining to intoxicating liquor and the penalties which applied to those under the influence of intoxicants.*61*

As the years of the 1950s passed the WAGR Commission gradually overhauled its life line - the per-way. In the second half of the decade economic and technological factors began to allow, and in some cases force, the Commission to enter into a period of rationalization.

The 1950s were the years that witnessed the coming of age of road transportation. Road transport was more convenient and in the long run cheaper than rail transport. This led to many country branch and spur lines - which had originally been constructed for agricultural transport - becoming no longer economically viable. Between 1956 and 1957 approximately 820 route miles (1,310 km) of per-way, servicing agricultural regions, was closed.*62*

Whilst economic considerations were important, it was technological progress that provided the main catalyst to bring about the redefining of the railway system in Western Australia. As mentioned previously road transport evolved to become the dominant mode of transportation, but within the railway world itself changes were afoot. On 4 May 1954 the first diesel-electric locomotives were commissioned into service. By 1956 a total of 69 of these revolutionary engines had been delivered to the WAGR Commission. These new machines needed little water and carried their own fuel, consequently the numerous refuelling and watering points along the per-way became obsolete. Many such points had also been the 'home-station' of per-way gangs.*63*
Improved traffic control systems operated by electronic gadgetry also removed the necessity for large numbers of control points along a route. This automatic system, known as Centralised Traffic Control (CTC) was installed throughout the entire WAGR network during the late 1950s. Another innovation - 'Thermit welded rails' - facilitated the laying of more dependable, safe, and a longer-lasting per-way. Much of the network was upgraded using these rails during the decade under review here.

The above-mentioned improvements resulted in the redundancy of many per-way gangs' 'home-stations'. The majority of affected gangs were re-located to regional centres where they joined existing crews. This occurrence suited the Commission as well as the per-way member's representative body, the WAASRE. As Jim Hanley, the then union official stated: 'It suited the railways, it saved them money. We supported it because it offered a better quality of life to our members'.

From the regional centres the per-way gangs now sped to their days' labour on fast road transport - the 'Casey Jones' days had passed. The tools of trade had become mechanised track laying equipment and motor driven tools. Railway maintenance work no longer relied upon intensive labour and this point is well illustrated in the 1956 WAGR Annual Report:

> The patterns of staff recruitment underwent some changes during the year. At the commencement the department was faced with labour shortages ... At the end of the year the only vacancies were for trainee enginemen, juniors, boilermakers, blacksmiths and electrical fitters.

This paper has been an attempt to illustrate to the reader the conditions and circumstances of the permanent-way gang members employed by the Western Australian Government Railways in the 1950s. In this endeavour I have provided an extremely attenuated historical overview of the construction of the state's railway network from 1871 to the immediate post World War II years. The decade that followed, that is the 1950s, was a period of rejuvenation and rationalisation within the WAGR. As these processes unfolded the 'meat in the sandwich' was the permanent-way gang members. I have considered the hierarchy and composition of these gangs, their working and living conditions, and the leisure activities to which they turned in their free time. There are many other issues which equally deserve inclusion in this paper - the role and problems of women and children who accompanied these men and the degree of pride and dedication of these men to their work stand out as the most serious topics ignored. I can only seek shelter behind the excuse of constraints imposed by the lack of time and length of my paper in this matter and any other deficiencies which the reader may perceive.
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44. Letter from E. McKinnon to the Commissioner for Railways as contained in Battye Library File #1240/R1776/38
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Part 3.

Gender
WOMEN AT WORK:
One of God's Police?
Policewoman Ruth Dunlop

by Leonie Biggins

In her paper, 'Placing Women in History', Gerda Lerner points out:

all conceptual models of history hitherto developed have only limited usefulness for women's history, since all are based on the silent assumptions of a patriarchal ordering of values ... (New) ... conceptual working tools of the historian of women's history ... should be tried out, discussed, refined. But they are not ... the whole answer ... No single methodology and conceptual framework can fit the complexities of the historical experience of all women ... (Since) women are and always have been at least half of humanity ... the idea that women are some kind of sub-group is wrong. (However) their culturally determined and psychologically internalized marginality seems to be what makes their historical experience essentially different from that of men.¹

This paper is an examination of the life and work of Ruth Dunlop who during the interwar years, when less than 26% of Australian women were in the paid workforce², may be seen as 'exceptional' and because of the nature of her work 'worthy' of a place in the history of Western Australia. She may also be seen as the epitome of the 'God's Police' stereotype³ but since this has its roots in the ages-old bifurcated female image by which men have categorised women as either passive and good, or evil and powerful⁴ two questions ought to be addressed: How did women see her? How did she see herself? To address these questions the reality of her life must be examined within the complexity of her specific cultural context and this leads us to ask: Was she both an agent of social reform and a subject of the dominant ideology concerning women's prescribed roles? These questions will be addressed by presenting a biography of Ruth Dunlop who was employed as a policewoman [Regimental Number 1355] in Western Australia between 1921 and 1943.
Public concern regarding the spread of venereal disease, especially when cases were discovered amongst army recruits in Perth in 1914 led to closer regulation of prostitution and a gradual concern that

The principal centres of infection are no longer now, as in former days to be found more or less easily amongst the ranks of professional prostitutes, but amongst those unfortunate clandestine traffickers who ... pursue the paths of vice in our streets and parks to the imminent danger of the unwary."

This, together with an increasing awareness that imprisonment was not an effective way of reforming prostitutes led, during World War I to the appointment of women police constables whose duties included surveillance of parks, hotels, dance halls and brothels to prevent young girls being decoyed for immoral purposes."

The Commissioner of Police had some difficulty in obtaining suitable recruits for this work; the women selected had to have a 'strong moral character' and be capable of instilling confidence and trust in their relationships with women and children. The other prerequisite was that the applicant should be a qualified nursing sister."

One of the first policewomen to be appointed in this State was Mrs Ruth Dunlop. Ruth was born in Seymour, Victoria in 1883 to Margaret and James Gloster who had a drapery business in 'Ned Kelly Country'. [Gloster was a witness for the prosecution at the trial of Ned Kelly, the 'evidence he was to give almost convicting Ned out of his own mouth']³ James was a fervent Baptist and he and his wife gave their children a strong religious upbringing. Ruth was the youngest of the nine out of eleven of their children who survived infancy and was frequently heard to remark that 'life was a horror at home on Sundays!' The Glosters moved to the Western Australian Goldfields following the effects of the 1890s depression in Victoria and later to Perth where James died in 1907. Ruth commenced her nursing training at Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie hospitals and completed her certificate in 1909. Nursing as we know it was then only about 50 years old having been initiated by Florence Nightingale who turned it into a skilled and respectable occupation:

"Nursing was rapidly accepted as one of the few occupations open to women of good breeding. It complemented the importance placed on women's caring role in the family ... merely an extension of these duties ... "

While working in the field of home-nursing she met J. Robert Dunlop who was a branch manager for Burns, Philp and Company Limited. Shortly after their marriage on 14 April 1914 he was transferred to Sydney and then to Nuku'alofa which brought them into closer contact with his family. [Robert's father was a veteran of the Crimean War and the Indian mutiny who later graduated from a Theological College in Glasgow and came to Sydney to work with the Rev. J.D. Lang. He
'defected' to the Plymouth Brethren group and worked in and around Sydney as something of a social reformer and a headmaster. He was described by his grandchildren as 'rather dour, and overzealous in his attempts to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'\(^{10}\) Their two children, Peter (born 1915) and Margaret (1916) were born there but after only 3 years of marriage Robert died on 7 February 1918 at the age of 33 from a congenital heart disorder. Ruth and the children after staying with her in-laws for a short period went to Albury where with the assistance of her unmarried elder sister, and by 'farming' her children out to a woman whom they 'hated' completed her midwifery training apparently with the view of independently providing for herself and her children.

On return to Perth in 1920 where her mother and other relatives lived, she took up work in the field of 'home-births' whilst living with another sister Cissy Forman and her husband Jack. She found the work unsatisfactory because of the demanding hours and uncertainty of a regular income; she was caught in the trend away from homebirths to institutional confinement. In 1921, therefore, she took the opportunity to obtain relatively good wages and regular hours by joining the women's police: she was seen to have the required 'good character' as well as having the medical training.

The next few years were very difficult, she lived in rented premises changing address several times in the Fremantle area where she first worked, had problems with child-care arrangements and frequently had to rely on support from family and friends. Miss Chipper, also a member of the women's police (an ex-social worker with the Salvation Army) shared a house with Miss Williams in South Fremantle and was able to assist Ruth on occasions. Miss Williams ran the house sometimes providing for lodgers and so was able to care for Peter and Margaret especially when their mother required hospitalisation for a short period. Sgt. Jerry White and his wife also helped by giving the children their lunch while they were attending school in his neighbourhood. Ruth frequently told her children that she did not have much respect for most of the policemen she knew; 'the force is riddled with graft', she would say. Apparently Jerry was an exception!

Margaret had initially been enrolled at the rather elite establishment of the Anglican Church, Girton College, High Street, but although she was declared to have been at the 'top of the class' her mother did not feel she was 'learning anything', and since the fees were really too high she moved her into the state school with her brother. Margaret and Peter believed their mother found her work quite arduous and depressing at times but stuck with it as it was perhaps the best way for her to remain independent and provide for and educate her children. People found her to have a strong air of authority, but generally believed her to be a kind and compassionate woman. When coming off duty one Christmas day about 1924, she spoke to two children she met near her bus stop and was appalled to learn that they had not celebrated Christmas or received any presents due to their parents' poverty. She went home to her own children who
were surrounded by presents (sent by generous friends and relations whom she believed overindulged them in an attempt to compensate for the lack of a father) and asked them to given up some of their gifts, and help her make up a hamper of food and presents. She then took this to the other family. Ruth's mother died during that year and her sister, 'Aunty Ciss', a year or two later.

Margaret and Peter often felt that their mother's over exposure to the 'seamier' side of life made her overprotective of her own children. They were not allowed very much freedom of movement and friends and associates were closely vetted by their mother. Her hours of work meant that she had to employ a 'girl' to look after the children and these were changed quite frequently. Sometimes the children disliked their 'minder' and sometimes they got on well. Following a transfer to Perth in 1925 the Dunlops lived in Beaufort Street, and later Wasley Street and while living here it was impressed upon Margaret that she must never walk in Hyde Park, she was to keep to the footpath when walking home from Highgate school. One day she thought it would be nice to walk on the grass, just on the other side of the low railing, but just as she stepped over it her mother drew up in a police car and caught her. She was very annoyed and sent Margaret home with instructions to go to bed and stay there. When Grace, the current child minder arrived and found her confined to bed she was annoyed; it was a Friday night and she and her boyfriend had planned to take the children with them when they went to the Shaftesbury Theatre. Since she couldn't leave them alone and she wouldn't miss out on her night out, she got Margaret up and dressed her and they all went off to the theatre. The children thought it a great treat, but their mother was furious. Margaret never again walked in Hyde Park; Ruth, in trying to be both mother and father figure to the children, insisted that 'what she said, went'!

Ruth's office in Perth was in the old Police station off Roe Street, behind the Beaufort Street Police Court. The women police shared an office over the charge room and lock-ups. On more than one occasion Margaret was left in the charge room to wait for her mother, mostly on weekends, however there was always someone with them when she was on night duty who Ruth paid to look after them and prepare their evening meal. There was not much time for socialising apart from family visits, and Ruth never remarried. During her years with the police Ruth turned away from her parents' religion and joined the Christian Science Church which she and her children attended regularly. She became the WA representative for their international daily newspaper, The Monitor. The most distinctive features of this church which she found more practical and meaningful to her, was that it was founded by a woman, Mary Baker Eddy, and had no preacher or leader. 11

Perth by this time had become quite a bustling city, the rapid expansion of primary production meant the 1920s were a time of prosperity and the population by 1929 had reached 427,000 including 43,700 immigrants. More than half this total population was located in the metropolitan area and men no longer outnumbered women to any
significant extent. This meant that more women and children were passing through the city areas and needed the assistance of policewomen one way and another (see fig.1). Community concern for high standards of living and morality meant that venereal disease was still a concern and control of prostitution was a duty of the Vice Squad, assisted by policewomen. The policewomen also did regular work concerned with neglected children, women who were destitute, or drunk in the street, or simply needed escorting through the unfamiliar city. They did not wear uniforms during this period, had free passes for the trams and often used the Police Force Bentleys, with a driver. A relief from routine chores was to get dressed up and attend the races or the Royal Show, in the course of their duties! One or twice Ruth went interstate to escort women prisoners back to Perth, and on one occasion she travelled to the country in a police-van escorting a very pregnant and deranged woman back to Perth. She took her nursing case having first checked all its contents and was terrified that she would have to deliver the baby in transit. Although she had kept up her midwifery registration she had not been called upon to use such skills, and fortunately, this occasion was no exception. She was sometimes required to spend the night in the lock-up with a prisoner and when this happened she was brought home in a police car the following morning, ran a hot bath and dumped all her clothes in the wash-house before going to bed. The children remarked to each other that they were never certain whether this was a reflection on the state of the lock-up or the prisoner.

Margaret was sometimes self-conscious about her mother's work; when a child at school said in an accusing tone of voice 'Your mother's a policeman!', she would deny it vehemently and walk away saying to herself, 'She's a policewoman, and if you don't know the difference I'm not going to tell you!' She was never quite sure who was more embarrassed if she bumped into her mother coming out of Miss Wright's office at the Perth Girls' School. She would be wondering which poor girl was in trouble with the headmistress, and the police, and her mother would be concerned not to betray the confidence of the young person with whom she was concerned. She was most circumspect about protecting the identity of the people she had to work with. In the 1930s she took Margaret with her several times, when she was off duty, to the Royal Perth Hospital to visit a young woman whom she was officially in charge of. She never formally introduced her simply referring to her as 'Susie'. She was in a 'special' ward and looked very thin and seedy. Eventually when she was discharged Margaret had the job of taking her to the railway station by taxi, a luxury since Ruth and Margaret never used taxis, and 'Susie' was returned to Albany. Sometime later a parcel arrived for Ruth; it contained two beautifully handworked table cloths, one embroidered with the words: 'In as much as ye have done it - ye have done it unto Me'. Ruth never revealed to her children why 'Susie' had been in hospital or what she had done for her, but they all treasured the cloths for years.

Ruth's children were by now almost adult and they moved to Victoria
Park while Peter was attending University and Margaret after finishing at Perth Modern School went on to Claremont Training College, but their mother was still very protective of them and of her "clients'" identity.

But, 'We were not stupid', said Margaret, 'we could read the newspapers'. In 1935 they observed what they described as 'exciting, real cloak and dagger stuff'. The Caris brothers' case was a notorious murder trial that dragged on for months; with headlines such as WOMAN MAKES AMAZING REVELATIONS IN CARIS CASE and a photograph of the woman they had been introduced to under a pseudonym covering her face and disappearing into a car, it is not surprising Peter and Margaret soon put two and two together. Ruth was required to take a Kalgoorlie prostitute into protective custody; as a crown witness whose life had been threatened by criminals she took her every evening to a friend's home in Kalamunda. A police car brought them home to the Dunlop's for a quick cup of tea, the number plates were changed and they took off again into hiding making various detours. Margaret was sent out to buy 'Pearl' a wig. Although as always being careful not to reveal too many personal details about 'Pearl', Ruth did tell Margaret that although she would be pleased when it was all over, she had enjoyed 'Pearl's' company and developed a lot of respect for her: 'She was a very good mother', was all she would say.

The protective measure of Ruth were sometimes violated, one night when Margaret was a teenager, a man same to the front door while her mother was still at work and used abusive language towards her and frightened her somewhat. He was angered that Mrs Dunlop had had his children declared neglected and institutionalised. Ruth was furious when she got home and took Margaret to the police station to verify his identity and laid a charge against him. Ruth was mostly upset about his swearing in front of Margaret. On another occasion it was Margaret who was annoyed about having her privacy intruded upon; members of the CIB came to the house, again while her mother was not at home and 'quizzed' her about her associations with a theatrical group from the Patch Theatre. Margaret who was at Training College at this time regarded these people as her friends and colleagues and so she was most unco-operative when the police intimated that they were responsible for the dissemination of communist propaganda. 'Anyway', she said, 'I didn't have a clue what they were talking about and even if I did I wouldn't have told them anything - I felt they had a terrible nerve asking me such things and virtually expecting me to spy for them'.

This occurred during a period in Perth's history which has sometimes been described as relatively free from class conflict but it was in fact a time of great unrest and reactionary concern regarding the growth of the socialist movement. During the depression of the thirties unemployment rose to at least 32% in 1932 and this meant an increase in the duties of the policewomen. Crowds were to be seen daily outside 'soup kitchens', there were few jobs and limited education facilities for young men and women. Even the university
was closed. Although the figures show no significant increase in the crime rate Ruth Dunlop must have been faced with many destitute and unhappy women and children needing assistance.

In an effort to cope the government made itself very unpopular and increased discontent led to many strikes and street marches of protest. The policewomen assisted with this also. In 1932 reaction to the activities of the Communist party led to Ruth being called upon to accompany Inspector Douglas in a search of the home of Katherine Susannah Pritchard and a confiscation of literature and correspondence. How Ruth Dunlop felt about this we do not know but in 1933 while protesting about the conditions of those unemployed men who were 'exiled' to work in appalling conditions, separated from their families and being grossly underpaid from limited government funds, Mrs Mountjoy, a leader of the Communist Party, was arrested and 'bailed out' by Pritchard. In a personal interview, Joan Williams told me that the policewoman who attended Mrs Mountjoy was 'sympathetic' and that in general the women involved 'knew we had the sympathy of the policewomen, we, along with other members of the women's movement regarded them as 'showing the flag' for women trying to obtain equal status in the paid workforce.'

The women's movement in Perth at this time, although essentially made up of middle-class social reformers, was genuinely concerned to improve conditions for socially deprived groups and encouraged women in seeking childcare facilities, and education and career opportunities. During this period of Ruth Dunlop's employment the women's groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Society of Friends, Women Justices Association and the Labour Women's Central Executive (sometimes under the combined umbrella of the Women's Service Guild) sent a constant stream of letters to the Commissioner of Police with various questions, complaints and requests. Some were concerned that policewomen had 'the same opportunities for advancement' as the men and pointed out that 'as they are after all trained nurses' they should have greater opportunity for promotion. Some asked for an increase in the numbers of policewomen 'in view of the strenuous times in which we live', and some asked that the women be given uniforms to control the troops and protect women from being accosted. Others wanted more young policewomen for 'the object of influencing the young girls of Perth for their own good'. The Commissioner of Police replied:

policewomen, although 'mainly concerned with social welfare' have the same 'provisions, powers and privileges' as the men and the men after all have been 'trained in first aid'.

He does at this time attempt to get recruits from trained social workers in the Eastern States but draws no applicants. In replying to the request for increased protection from troops he said visiting troops were only in town for 7 to 10 days a year and he felt that uniforms would hamper the effectiveness of the policewomen. Five
women for the whole state was enough, he said, and therefore they do not require a separate office either. 'Anyway, policewomen are a dying race, South Australia is the only state fostering them and in Queensland they will soon be extinct.' He does concede one point however, and advises the WA Housewives Association that:

women police permanently attached to the Department draw the same rate of pay as other members of the force. Recently, at the request of various Women's Organisations, several women attached to such organisations offered their services in a voluntary capacity, and they are engaged on patrol work for a few hours of an evening three evenings per week.

Applicants for a vacant position in 1939 were advised of the conditions:

Wages - during the 12 month probationary period 11/6 per diem plus 2/6 lodging allowance

Twenty pounds in lieu of uniform and the 11/6 increases to 14/6 when passing out.

Hours - 9 am to 1 pm, and 2 pm to 6 pm one week,
9 am to 1 pm, and 7 pm to 11 pm the next.

One day is to be taken off in every 14, this is to be a Sunday. Annual leave is 3 weeks and Long Service Leave can be taken after 10 years, for 3 months.

The duties are social welfare - 'principally devoted to safeguarding the moral welfare of women and children between the ages of 14 and 21 years'.

The policewomen were under less than subtle pressure within their own department during this period. Initially it was considered that women were too weak physically to undertake the dangerous work of policing and in 1936 a newspaper cutting was circulated for the attention of the women police stating that women were considered too old to work after reaching the age of 45 years. Another common reason for resistance to women working as police was fear of 'contamination':

In my view and experience a woman investigator should not be so vilely contaminated in the general interests of her sex. The less decent women see of these aspects of life the better for them, the community and future generations.

This cutting was from the London Police Review but was circulated amongst the women police and kept in the File.

In 1939 the Public Service Commissioner asked the Commissioner of
Police to inform him regarding the duties of policewomen and he replied that the duties required them to

keep a separate file for all young women and girls, whom they endeavour by their assistance and advice to put on the straight path, such a file to record their movements and behaviour until the officer is satisfied that they have either reformed or have become incorrigible.\(^\text{29}\)

A report filed by Ruth Dunlop in 1939 can be summarised as follows. (Ruth had just taken over from Mrs Dugdale as senior policewoman and this may reflect her own individual approach):

The number of children brought before the court has decreased since it has been found that such a measure in the past was not satisfactory, 'whereas supervision by the Women Police has proved to be a great assistance, both to the children and to the parents'.

Women and girls called at the office of the women's police for assistance and advice, and in some cases they have been supplied with clothing, which has been collected for this purpose.

A girl of 15 who had been privately placed in a home by her mother 2 years ago has responded very well and has now been placed in domestic work. Her conduct and behaviour are very satisfactory and she has voluntarily repaid the Home for her maintenance since her parents were unable to do so.

Another girl who had run away from her country home, but whose parents have since died, keeps in touch with us and is now preparing for the nurses entrance examination with a view to training in a public hospital.

The evil of supplying liquor to young girls is still a problem and requests have been made for the legal provision whereby the Women Police would have power to deal with this.

Children performing in public, street trading and begging, and fortune-telling have been attended to. Railway stations, hotels, wine saloons, parks, reserves, beaches, tram and bus terminals and picture theatres (where we have seen very little trouble) have been patrolled 'in the interests of young girls and children'. 'Several children and young people have been spoken to regarding their conduct in Hyde Park'.

Assistance of food and clothing has been given to 113 women and 33 men, 99 women and 30 men have been 'spoken to'. One woman (with 3 children) whose 'mental condition was below
normal' and had no idea where she was going or what she was doing, was taken to the Children's Protection Society and washed and fed, clothed by St Vincent de Paul Society and escorted to relatives in Kalgoorlie.

Assistance has been given to women who have been before the Court under the Inebriates Act, and escorted by the Women Police to the Inebriates Home Mosman Park. Where necessary their children are taken to the Receiving Depot, Mt Lawley before being returned to their mothers.

Women and children in the courts, either facing trial or required as witnesses have been attended to by the Women Police; 14 required First Aid.\(^3\)

From this and various other reports and correspondence it can be seen that the policewomen worked in close liaison with the Children's Department, and various charitable organisations as well as with the CIB and the Vice Squad. It can also be seen from this report that control of prostitution was not the primary or only concern; this was due to the combined effect of the successful regulation of prostitution during this period\(^3\) and the Health Department taking more responsibility for the control of venereal disease by agreeing to set up a special "VD" clinic at Royal Perth Hospital.\(^3\) It was finally acknowledged that imprisoning diseased women was not beneficial to anyone. Since compulsory examination was still being carried out policewomen were sometimes called upon to assist in tracking down women suspected of carrying the disease. This was a very controversial issue of the time and one in which the women's movement became embroiled.\(^3\)

The social changes which resulted in a freer lifestyle of the young people of Perth together with society's concern for their good health and social welfare increased after World War II and extended the duties of the policewomen in the 1940s.\(^3\) The number of policewomen was increased and Ruth Dunlop trained a policewoman named Ethel Scott who became well known in Perth, especially for her work with 'juvenile delinquents'. In later years increasing numbers of social workers outside the women's police took some of the welfare chores out of the hands of the police. Ruth and her colleagues did not have an equal opportunity with the men, they all remained 'constables' and in plain clothes. They were not accepted by the men as full members of the Police Federation until the 1960s.\(^3\) Ethel Scott was the first policewoman promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 1947, Inspector in 1967 and Superintendent in 1971. In 1964 she revealed that the nursing training prerequisite had been dropped 10 years earlier and that recruits were 'trained in first-aid, the theory and practice of police work and how to restrain violent people'. She also stated that a policewoman should be kindly, have common sense, tact and interest in people because the work was still mainly concerned with the welfare of the young.\(^3\) Whilst concern from the community in the early 1940s led to Ruth Dunlop being invited to 'lecture' church youth groups during her spare Sunday afternoons, Ethel Scott frequently addressed women's groups regarding
her career as much as about the problems of young people in Perth.

Although the role of the policewoman changed a little over the period under discussion, it can be seen to be a role which is closely related to women's prescribed roles as nurturers and caretakers of women and children. They have not therefore been regarded as 'real' police in the eyes of their male colleagues; the WA Police union's official voice, Police News, pays tribute to many of its members who receive promotion, transfer or retire, presenting large photographs, biographical details and recounting of past achievements but mention of the policewomen who were listed as financial members and amongst the most senior is not made. During Ruth's years of service she was mentioned twice, but only in the social notes: when on leave in 1942 she attended her daughter's wedding, and in 1943 she was congratulated for joining 'the proud ranks of Grandmother'. Her retirement does not receive a mention in the Police Union Journal; The Daily News announced her retirement in 1943:

Mrs Ruth Dunlop, who has been in charge of the women police in Perth for a number of years is retiring from the force ... Many members of the force joined in the expressions of good will to her.

Ruth retired with a small superannuation and three months accumulated leave pay. She felt herself lucky not to have become a 'pensioner'; many middle-class people in Perth at that time believed that being a pensioner was a 'comedown' and an indication of a person's failure to provide for themselves. Since she did not own her own home and was noted for her generosity ('She would give anyone anything, people tended to think she had more than she did') she had difficulty making ends meet and being on a small superannuation she was precluded from special benefits such as medical assistance. She eventually gave up the lease on the house in Victoria Park which she had been renting for nearly 20 years and took two small rooms in the basement of Bible House in St George's Terrace. Her church work was her main interest outside her family. In the first few years of retirement she travelled to Fiji to stay with her son and several times to the Eastern States to stay with relatives. She often helped with home management and child care while female relatives were giving birth.

By 1950 her health was failing; she had developed a relatively rare blood disorder which led to recurring minor strokes and intermittent hospitalisation over the next few years. She was such a fiercely independent women who was 'used to being mistress in her own domain' that her family were reluctant to make room for her in their own homes. They considered she would be 'quite difficult to live with'. So she moved about staying three months with her daughter and son-in-law, a month with her nephew and three months with her son, etc. The men in these families felt threatened by her independence and 'air of authority' and the women although sharing much the same opinion were too tied up with their own child-bearing
and child-rearing to take on the added chore of caring for an elderly relative. Margaret had six children and Peter was not well, he had a similar heart condition to that of his father and required an implantation of an artificial heart valve in the 1950s.

While visiting her in hospital Margaret was told by an elderly patient that Ruth was well known and respected by sections of the public of Perth and had often been seen outside the bars, and wine-saloons at night in the 1930s and 1940s assisting women influenced by alcohol - 'She would stoop down to the gutter, take out her own handkerchief and wipe their faces'. These were the women whom she assisted to the Inebriates Home in Mosman Park, whether they appreciated such assistance or regarded it as an infringement of their liberties we can not be sure. Alcohol was seen to have strong links with 'immorality' and it was a common strategy for preventing promiscuity to apprehend women who were under the influence.41

In 1953 Ruth had a fall in the hospital and broke her hip, requiring surgery, and never really recovered. She died on 2 June 1953, aged 70. In 1978 Margaret was approached by a woman who thought that her mother was the first policewomen appointed in Western Australia and wanted to include her story in the publication Reflections.42 Margaret informed her that she was mistaken in that fact and declined to give her any information, for she stated, her mother would have been appalled to think that anyone should think her worthy of inclusion in such a publication.

CONCLUSION

Most of the information in this essay, especially the contents of Ruth Dunlop's report of 1939 indicates that she cared about women and took pride in the success level of attempts to reform their character. Her institutional role was essentially that of a social reformer and social worker who could be seen as one who was interfering in the autonomy of the lives of people from lower socio-economic groups. In any attempt to find out how such people regarded her I spoke to a woman who commenced work in a Roe Street brothel in 1938 and later became a brothel keeper. She told me that the 'girls' always felt that the women police were more of a help than a hindrance. They knew they could always go to them and speak 'woman to woman'.43 However, this not really the view of the destitute woman who may have felt harassed. What is needed is evidence to show how she treated those she might have regarded as irredeemable and how she felt about it. For a more balanced account further research is needed.

As a moral guardian and agent of social reform Ruth Dunlop can be described as one of God's Police, both admired and resented. However, she was also subject to the dominant ideologies of her time. The system of ideas and beliefs and their expression in practice during her lifetime which reached a peak during the 1920s and 1940s, this was 'Population Ideology' which held that a large, healthy and
racially pure population was central to moral and economic progress. The nation was obsessed with its size, composition and health, and the ideology manifested itself through State intervention in matters of health, welfare and education. The central focus of this was women and their bodies; its principal mode of control was women's work within their families; its central icon was the Ideal Mother. Counter to the politics of this ideology were the individual and collective struggles of women to control their own lives and bodies, the struggle for a freedom of their own defining.44

Raelene Davidson's thesis demonstrated how working class women, especially prostitutes were involved in this struggle. In 1938 a prostitute told the Royal Commission that 'it was the social system of Australia that forced me to work for myself, and when I could not get a decent living wage anywhere else, I went there (ie, Roe Street, notorious for its brothels).145 Another prostitute proclaimed to policewoman Dugdale that she was 'as good a bloody woman as any bloody woman around here'. This statement was made when the woman was being harassed by Dugdale for allegedly neglecting her children.46 Ruth Dunlop's life was also one of struggle, she entered the police force because she needed the job in order to remain economically independent and frequently told her children that was the main reason she was so conscientious. As a career it was often unpleasant and restrictive, offering no promotional prospects. It illustrated the convenient notion that social virtue induces people such as nurses and custodial personnel to perform unpleasant tasks which result in compensation in the form of merit in the eyes of the community instead of remunerative compensation or career opportunity.47 Her capabilities as a 'good woman' were exploited and used to justify her exclusion from equal access to career opportunity and remuneration. Although it is tempting to assume that Ruth Dunlop preferred her duties as a policewoman to those of a policeman, the important point is that policewomen of that period were actively discouraged from entering the force on an equal footing with the men. They subsequently suffered in terms of status and economic reward.

For the whole period of her life Ruth Dunlop was striving toward the ideal of the good woman which, as Jill Matthews points out, dissipates at the end of mothering leaving her merely a survivor, economically dependent on the State or living in poverty.48 Such a woman, however, can not be described merely as a victim of gender ideology or as one of God's Police: She was a strong, compassionate and independent woman capable of acting on her own initiatives. Although evidence regarding her actions, motives and conscious decision making is difficult to elicit, especially when access to Police Department files is limited, her story along with that of many other women from a variety of backgrounds forms part of the social history of Western Australia.

Ruth Dunlop should not be valorised simply because some members of the community regarded her as a 'worthy' woman, nor should she be
denigrated as an agent of social control working in collusion with a patriarchal State.

* * * * * * *

Author's Note:

This paper was written 5 years ago as an undergraduate project and is in the process of being revised for inclusion in an Honours thesis on the role and duties of the women police in Western Australia: 1917 to 1940s. In order to develop a suitable theoretical framework I am currently working on a comparison of the theories of Anne Summers, Jill Matthews, Kerreen M. Reiger, Jacques Donzelot and Michel Foucault. It is my belief that the early policewomen were as much influenced by the 'moralizing philanthropists' and 'social reformers' as they were by the new emergent class of 'professional experts'.

My major informant is Mrs C.J. Biggins (Margaret Gloster Dunlop), daughter of Ruth Dunlop, whose generous assistance in passing on family memoirs, official documents, papers and photographs is greatly appreciated. Margaret was for some time my mother-in-law and always my friend.
ENDNOTES


3. A. Summers, Damned Whores and God's Police, 1975


6. Ibid., p.100


10. Family correspondence, 1979


15. Oral transcript from interview with Margaret Biggins, October 1985

16. P. Hasluck, Mucking About, Melbourne, 1977

17. J. Williams, The First Furrow, WA, 1976


19. Ibid., p.188
20. Williams, op.cit., p.132
21. Telephone conversation with Joan (Justina) Williams, September 1985
24. Letter in above file, 29 April 1940
25. Letter in above file, 31 August 1939
26. Sinclair, op.cit., p.3
27. Women Police File, op.cit., 8 April 1936
28. Ibid., 21 January 1944
29. Ibid., 4 August 1939
30. 'Return of Work Performed by Women Constables for the Year ending 30 June 1939', Battye Library, An 347/2, File 131
31. Davidson, op.cit., (passim.)
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34. Sinclair, op.cit., p.17
35. Ibid., p.30
37. WA Police News, 1920-1943
38. The Daily News, 5 June 1943
40. Ibid.,
41. Davidson op.cit., p.167
42. D. Popham (ed.), Reflections: Profiles of 150 Women who helped make Western Australia's History, Perth, 1978 (A commemorative publication to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Western Australia).
43. Telephone conversation with Mrs Mary Scrimgeour, 30 September 1985

44. J.J. Matthews, *Good and Mad Women*, Sydney, 1984, p.75

45. Davidson, *op.cit.*, p.139

46. *ibid.*, p.188

47. Law, *op.cit.*, p.192

48. Matthews, *op.cit.*, p.17
WOMEN AT RISK:
Rape in Western Australia in the Nineteenth Century
by Janet Greenwood

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s there has been an increasing interest by people from all sections of society in discovering and defining the causes of the world-wide oppression of women. Much of the study, has been empirical and descriptive with a core of material that has attempted to analyse the causes of women's oppression. At the present time, there is no one answer to the reasons why one group of people oppress another, whether it be the oppression of women by men, coloured people by white people or economic oppression of poor nations by rich nations. A part of the attempt to understand these complex, unequal exchanges will centre on the continuing efforts to discover all the information that helps to explain the roots of oppression.

In a very small way, this is the aim of my paper; to add more data by way of historical research, to the description of women's oppression. (A problem for feminists is to convince others that women are oppressed). In researching historical material about women in nineteenth century Western Australia I used as my starting point the ideology of contemporary feminist research and literature. If women are not allowed their full potential as human beings it must follow, therefore, that there are means by which men control the behaviour of women. Susan Brownmiller in her book Against Our Will, started from just this point in her introduction where she concluded, 'From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.'

The purpose of Brownmiller's book was to write a history of rape to prove conclusively that women have always been victims of threats of violence (rape). By this insidious threat, a woman, whether she is conscious of it or not, no longer has the freedom of thought and action that is available to a man. A woman has to, at all times, protect herself from a possible rape and these forms of protection are both physical and mental. To enforce the threat of rape, the woman as a victim of an attack is treated as if she was at fault: in one way or another, her behaviour is seen to cause the rape to happen, except in exceptional circumstances such as where the victim has been either over or under the acceptable age limits or she has been a nun behind high walls.

The purpose of my research is to discover that number of women of the colony of Western Australia who were victims of rape. My main
concern is not so much in recording the available statistics but rather in attempting to discover any information about the women who were being victimised in this manner. In this way it should be possible to use the results, if any, in a comparison with victims of rape today.

Because I consider the word 'rape' to be too narrow a definition of the violence that occurs, I have decided to use the term 'sexual assault' to cover any act of aggression by a male towards a female that has a sexual component.

THE LAW AND ITS APPLICATION

The laws relating to sexual offences against women in the nineteenth century were generally the same as the laws of England. On 7 July 1865 assent was given in the Western Australian parliament to the 'Criminal Law Consolidation Ordinance 1865'. Previous to this, England had consolidated and amended the various acts of England and Ireland into a more composite Criminal Law. The Ordinance of 1865 was a simple step to make the Criminal Law of the Imperial Parliament the Criminal Law of the colony of Western Australia.

There was one major difference in the law of Western Australia. The death penalty for rape had been abolished in England in 1841, but rape still stood as a capital offence in the colony. The 1865 Ordinance covered over 100 criminal offences but there were eight that related explicitly to sexual offences. In the summary in Appendix I, I have used the same numbers as in the 1865 Ordinance.

There are several points worth noting about these laws. A felony was a sentence of not less than three years while a misdemeanour was a sentence of not more than three years. The discrepancy between the penalty for unlawful carnal knowledge of a female child under the age of ten years and another over the age of ten is difficult to understand. The effects of a sexual assault would be the same, no matter what the age, but I have been unable to find any information as to the reasons for the discrepancy.

The fact that I would question the discrepancy is one of the well-known problems of historical research. That is, the morality of the researcher creates a problem in attempting to explain causes and effects of actions of an earlier time. In trying to understand the laws relating to sexual offences of the nineteenth century I have used a summary of the legal status of women in the nineteenth century in England. (Appendix II) With the information in this summary it is possible to suggest at this point that females were viewed as a possession by the male head of a household - her father before marriage, her husband from marriage onwards. A female as a possession must be protected so as not to lose any value. A rape of a marriageable female is not only an attack on a female's chasteness, but also damaging to a man's marketable commodity. Hence the severe
penalty for rape against a female of child-bearing age. As well, because a man's wife belonged to him totally, to have your wife raped was to have a valuable possession damaged. Obviously the death penalty was seen as a deterrent to any would-be rapist.

Females between 10 and 12 appear to be caught in limbo. They are not viewed as children needing as much protection as a child under 10, but they are not quite at the age where sexual molestation would appear to effect their prospects on the marriage market.

I am aware that these attitudes towards a female's worth were shared predominantly by the middle and upper classes of English society but because it is just this section of society that influenced the making of laws, the fact that the working class people may not hold these attitudes does not lessen my argument.

A further point that is most striking is the penalties for a sexual offence by a man against another man or an animal. The severity of the sentence further highlights the attitude towards sexuality in the nineteenth century, but more importantly, the fact that though the attempt at sodomy and bestiality is termed a misdemeanor the maximum penalty is far greater than that of attempted indecent assault on a female child. In other words, according to the attitudes of the time the assault of an animal was worse than the assault of a female. (In actual fact, before the 1865 Ordinance, bestiality was a capital offence; a prisoner was sentenced to death on 2 December, 1863, for bestiality with a goat). *

Finally, to help in the explanation of the sources of my material, it must be understood that in the actual practice of the law there is no appreciable difference between the nineteenth and twentieth century. Except for technological advances the process of the law is exactly the same. From the time a crime is committed the apprehension, committal and trial procedures that took place 100 years ago, would take place in the same manner today if the same crime was committed.

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

The major sources for information on sexual offences against females have been the Police Gazettes held at the Battye Library and the Criminal Record Books at the Supreme Court, Perth. The police Gazettes are bound volumes of information sheets that are printed weekly and circulated to all police stations. The information in these Gazettes detail all crimes committed or reported to the police for the previous week. As well, they have details of each offender that has been arrested or sent before a lower court and whether they were discharged, sentenced or if they had committed a more serious crime, whether they were set down for trial at a District Court or at the Supreme court. The result of these trials were also recorded so it is possible to follow the case from the time the offender was charged to the final outcome, throughout Western Australia.
Additional information is given on such matters as lost property, missing friends, comitas to the Lunatic Asylum and the results of inquests. Important 'wanted' notices from all over the world have been included. Perhaps the most interesting is one for the 'Kelly Gang' in December of 1878.

The Criminal Record Books are large volumes that give a summary of trials held at the Supreme Court in Perth. The following is an example of information found in the Criminal Records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Date of Committal</th>
<th>Date of Trial</th>
<th>Plead</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>666</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Unlawful Carnal Knowledge of female under 10 years</td>
<td>12.11.1874</td>
<td>7.1.1875</td>
<td>Not</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>9 years Penal Servitude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first Criminal Record Book covers the years from 1830-1887. The second, much larger moves from 1887 to 1907. I did not see any further Record books held at the Supreme Court, so I cannot say whether they follow the same format today. The number for each trial is important as it is the number under which any information relating to a particular trial is filed.

Originally, I used information obtained from the Police Gazettes but as they only began in 1878, I was more successful in getting information through the Criminal Record Books. Unfortunately, in the second period I chose to study, 1890-1895, there were only three files available at the Court, out of a total of 40 I asked to see. The period of 1870-1975 was more rich as out of the 17 files I asked to see, only three were missing.

SUPREME COURT FILES

A much deeper analysis of sexual assaults can be made of the period 1870-1875 because of the many files available. It is possible to get information on the offender and, more importantly, the victim. Although there is no transcript of the actual trial, each file contains the statements made by the victim, the arresting police officer and any witnesses. In the case of a female child victim a member of her family (nearly always the mother) made a statement and if penetration of the vagina by the penis was alleged by a victim of any age a medical officer would make a statement on the results of an examination. The statements are those given at a lower court in a preliminary hearing where the decision was made as to whether the crime should be taken to the Supreme Court. The length of each file varies according to the length of each statement and the number of
witnesses. Occasionally the offender made a statement in defence but usually they would plead not guilty and reserved their defence.

Contained within the depositions of the witnesses are portrayals of the life lived by women during the 1870s. Although there is only a relatively small number of files they obviously give a picture of what life was like for much larger numbers of women, particularly in rural areas.

1870-1875

Total Offenders - 17
Total Victims - 19

The age range of the victims is, as far as is known, from 5 1/2 to 40. (There are three offences against 5 1/2 years old girls). The particulars of the victims can be further broken down to:

- 30.0% were under the age of 10
- 23.0% were between the age of 10 and 12
- 35.0% were over the age of 12
- 12.0% are unknown

From these figures it can be seen that 53.0% of the victims were under the age of 12. It cannot follow from this fact that to be over the age of 12 was a guarantee of safety against sexual assault. What the figures from the nineteenth century suggest is that once females have passed the age of 12 they are less likely to report an offence. Again, this viewpoint is based on knowledge of sexual offences in the 1970s. It is a well-documented fact that the majority of women who are assaulted do not report to the police. Statistics of unreported rapes range from only one woman in three making a report to one in twenty. These estimates have been made by legal agencies in different western societies and although both figures are more than likely incorrect it does not alter the fact that any official statistics on rape do not present a true picture of rape.

1890-1895

Total Offenders - 41 (two men committed two offences)
Total Victims - 40 (in two cases, two men assaulted the same woman)

The age range of the victims is as follows:

- 21.0% were under the age of 10
- 11.0% were between the age of 10 and 12
- 58.0% were over the age of 12
- 10.0% are unknown
By the 1890s there had been a considerable drop in the numbers of reported victims under the age of 12. In the period of 1890-1895, 32.0% of the victims were under the age of 12, whereas for the period between 1870 and 1875 the corresponding figure was 53.0%. This large decrease can be explained by the fact that the figures for the later period were taken from the Police Gazettes which recorded every offence that occurred throughout the whole of Western Australia while figures for 1870-1875 are compiled from Supreme Court records only. Many of the assaults recorded in the Police Gazettes never reached the Supreme Court. They were tried in District Courts throughout Western Australia or the offender was discharged after the lower court hearing.

Besides discovering the numbers of sexual offences that actually occurred it is possible to show the status of the offender. Except where the file was available it is not possible to be accurate as to the status of the victim. The next section is an attempt to show that the status of the offender and the victim was taken into consideration in deciding whether the offender deserved punishment or not.

THE STATUS OF THE OFFENDER AND THE VICTIM

For the offender, status is derived from their past criminal record. The victim's status is derived from her relations to the central male figure in her life. That is, if unmarried, that of her father or, if married, that of her husband. I have not found a single incident of assault against a female who was living in a house without a male head of the household. By the 1890s some of the women reporting sexual assaults, particularly in the Perth area, appear as if they could be living independent of a male, but it is not possible to prove this. The offenders in 1870-1875 were mostly expirees, ticket-of-leave men, Colonial prisoners or Imperial convicts. 64.0% had criminal records. Three of the offenders were Aborigines, four were classified Free men (meaning they had no previous record) while one is unknown. This position had reversed by 1890-1895; in this period 75% of offenders were classified as Free men. This change in the status of the offenders is hardly surprising in view of the growth of population in the colony and the fact that the transportation of convicts to the colony had ceased in 1868.

Because of the files available for the 1870-1875 period it can be shown there is not one case where a female with equal or lower status to the offender was given satisfaction by the courts. That is, a victim had to be of higher status than the offender before the court would record a conviction against the male. (See Appendix III).

It is difficult to make a similar claim for the period 1890-1895 due to the lack of files but some interesting points can be observed. Very few offenders were ever 'admitted to bail', and if they were for a sexual offence there was never a guilty verdict brought down. The
offender who could raise the money for their bail must have been a 'man of substance' as there were so few cases of bail being set, no matter what the charge. For the 41 charges laid for sexual assaults during this time only four were admitted to bail.6

The four cases I will now discuss give more details of how the status of the woman affects the final outcome of a trial. The first two cases are remarkable for their similarities. The women were alone with their very small children and so they were the only people to give evidence on their attempted assaults. In the first case, the woman was the wife of a shearer. Her husband usually only came home from work once or twice a week. No charge for the offence was laid until after the husband had returned home, two or three days after the attempted assault. The prisoner was found not guilty. (During the nineteenth century women were unable to lay charges themselves).

In the second case, the woman was the wife of a farmer and the prisoner was in service to him.8 The victim's husband had left the farm for the day on business and while he was absent the night the prisoner attempted to rape her. The attacker was found guilty and sentenced to two years with hard labour.

The final two cases are examples of women who, though married, have lost their status in the community. The first woman's husband worked away from home on a semi-permanent basis.9 Within the testimony there are vague references to the unhappiness of the marriage. The victim usually had members of her own family living with her - who from all accounts was as poor as she was. The man who attempted to rape her was a person for whom she baked bread and did washing so as to earn extra income. Despite testimony by witnesses who saw the victim immediately after the attack and observed her state of distress and her torn clothes the prisoner was found not guilty.

The last victim was, according to all the testimony, 'a disgrace to all women'.10 The police constable stated, 'I know nothing of M... M.... personally. I have never seen her drunk. I have heard she is a loose character.' Witnesses heard screams from the victim's house but, 'it was such a usual occurrence that he took no notice'. Evidently the husband of the victim was considered to be a drunkard as well and drunken brawls were not unusual. A conversation that had taken place was recounted at the hearing. 'She might have said that Mrs M... was a disgrace to all women, but I did not hear her. The expression is often used.' Another witness testified, 'Mrs M.... is as bad as she can be, she can't be worse.' The same witness admitted however, that 'I have never heard her making a similar charge (of rape) against others.'

The prisoner was found not guilty on the charge of rape, but Mrs M... had so obviously been savagely attacked and beaten that he was sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for 18 months on the charge of 'assault causing actual bodily harm'.

The most important information to be found in the 1870-1875 files were the glimpses into the lives of females of all ages throughout the colony. Certainly there is no information on what could in any way be considered a wealthy person. Each of the women were living a life of relentless hard work, poverty, isolation or a combination of all three. The tiny percentage of women contained in the files raise many questions, not least of which is how typical was their life-style? That is, what percentage of women did not suffer during the development of the colony?

A DESCRIPTION OF THE 'REAL WORLD' OF SOME WOMEN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

It is not my intention merely to list a catalogue of horror', but with the description of some of the attacks I have attempted to show the life-style of a much wider community. One of the cases I will quote from occurred in 1880. I consider this justified because from this file there were certain aspects that can only add to the knowledge on women.

I have divided the description into two broad categories: Females under the age of 12 and those over this age.

SEXUAL ASSAULTS OF FEMALES UNDER 12

As with sexual assaults today, the greater majority of the victims know their attackers, some for long periods of time. Typically, the mother has sent the girl on an errand to the offender's residence or he was living within close proximity of the victim.

The attitudes of adults to children can be seen in one incident in which sisters, aged 12 and 10 had been raped by their father. Both girls used the word penis in describing the sexual abuse of their father. In each case the examining authorities were astounded by the use of the correct word. In every other case, the victims had used such euphemisms as 'cockie' or 'dickie'. Certainly the language of older females was much more restrained. Her own genitals and those of the man were invariably referred to as 'private parts'.

The two girls referred to above had had a shocking life. Their mother had died and left the father with four children, the eldest being the girl of 12. The cause of their mother's illness and death was not explained but the father was obviously a very violent man. Even before the death of the mother, the girls had been sexually assaulted by the father. There is evidence that people outside the family knew that the girls had been abused and raped but it was not until the eldest girl was nearly beaten to death by the father that the community took any action. Then the interest reached a level which can only be seen as just short of voyeurism. Much of the
evidence given by the 'concerned' wives of the police constable and medical officer seemed to be mainly interested in documenting the results of the sexual abuse on the girls' genitalia.

There is only one instance of a father being involved after he had found out that his daughter, aged 7, had been raped. In every other case it was the mother who examined the child, informed the police and gave evidence at the preliminary hearings. In this case, the medical examination by a doctor led to an examination of the accused who was suffering from a disease, "commonly called the 'Clap'". Because the parents were both busy during the day making hay, the mother had to explain to the hearing that she 'frequently washed her children'. Evidently the hearing was concerned that it had taken three days before the parents noticed anything wrong with the child. The infection the child had been given no doubt was a part of the reason why the prisoner was given a sentence of nine years. The usual sentence was two or three years.

Typically the victims were with one or more of their siblings at the time of the offence and evidence was always taken from them. At the actual time of the attack the prisoner always managed to send the other children away from the scene on some pretext or other so their evidence merely verified the fact that they had arrived at a particular place at a particular time. The mother of each victim would usually discover the truth when the child appeared in pain, often up to two or three days afterwards. The victims had all been threatened by the man and had been too frightened to tell anybody of the offence.

One of the most revealing cases I read occurred in 1880 when a child of 10 was raped. She had gone and stayed at the home of a 12 year old girl. From there they were sent by the mother to the house of the prisoner. He raped the 10 year old and was helped to do so by the 12 year old, who had obviously had sexual relations with the man before. He gave money to both girls, sixpence to the 10 year old and ninesthen to the 12 year old. The 10 year old, on returning to the home of the 12 year old was made to give the money to the other girl, who then passed it on to her mother. What was the level of poverty of the family where the earnings by prostitution of a 12 year old daughter was so essential to the family welfare? Although the man was given a severe sentence of 20 years penal servitude for the rape, there was never any record of prosecution in relation to the 12 year old girl.

SEXUAL ASSAULTS OF FEMALES OVER 12

During 1870-1875 there were three rapes by Aborigines. Two were against white women and one against a 15 year old Aboriginal girl. The discrimination shown in the case of the Aboriginal girl was very apparent by the fact that her attacker was found not guilty, although two witnesses testified on her behalf. The girl was the only
rape victim not to have a medical examination. The girl's main concern was that her attacker 'has got three wives and one of them is my sister. 'This man has no right to me'. Besides the transgression of white man's law it would appear that he had also transgressed tribal law.

The file of a rape by an Aborigine known to the victim gave a clear description of the life of the woman. She was married, 23 years old with three children, the eldest being four years old. She lived near Ellendale which is in the Greenough district. In her own words this is a description of her life: 'I live in a hut in an isolated part of the bush. I was at home with my children on the 20th of this month. My husband was at Mr Logue's which is five or six miles from my place.' The woman had put up a long fight against the native whose age was later guessed at to be 10 or 19. 'I was screaming the whole time and so were my children.' The hut did have an alarm bell to ring in case of an emergency but she was unable to reach it. After the rape the woman walked, with her children, a mile to the nearest neighbour and asked for them to send for her husband. When her husband arrived the first question he asked his wife was whether the native had 'done' anything to her.

The examining authorities asked questions of the woman, one of which must have been why she had not locked herself in the hut. The reply was, 'it would have been useless for me to have fastened the door, the native could have got through any part of the hut. The door was made of sacking. I am 23 years of age. I have never had occasion to bring forward a similar charge before. I swear positively that the prisoner is the man who ravished me.' To make sure she was telling the truth the estimation of the Aboriginal's age had been made as the result of a medical examination by the medical officer to ensure that the prisoner was physically capable of an act of rape.

The husband also gave evidence to the hearing. 'I occupy a tillage lease about a mile from Chadwick's. My wife and children live there in a hut. I am living at Mr Logue's. I only come home to my wife on Saturday nights. My wife and children are usually alone.' The medical officer who examined the woman showed admirable restraint. After listing a long list of the bruises on her body, he stated, 'I should say from what I have heard of the evidence that A... H.... had been ravished.'

The rape of a 17 year old by a family friend occurred at Auburn during 1870. The case was clear-cut and the man was eventually hanged. Besides sympathy for the victim there was strong evidence of sympathy for the wife of the rapist. She could have lied in defence of her husband but made no effort to do so although the thought of a future without a 'breadwinner' for her and her children was a frightening prospect. She had gone to the home of the victim to ensure the girl arrived there without further attack from her husband. The victim's mother testified, 'she could not speak for crying. I asked her to stop all night and go home in the morning but she burst out crying and rushed out the door.' On the following morning the local police constable came to the rapist's home to
arrest him. Within the constable's testimony were the words, 'I went to the prisoner's house and saw his wife. She was sitting with no boots on and her hair in disorder and appeared as if she had been crying, her eyes were swollen very much.'

Throughout these descriptions above one point becomes more obvious. Life in the country of colonial Western Australia was far from an idyllic rural scene. Much has been written about the isolation of women in rural communities of colonial Australia. Much less has been written about the fear the women must have lived under. The culture of Australia has typically glorified the rural pioneers and battlers with commendation for the mateship of the men and the stoicism and loneliness of the women. Though not denying the stoicism and hardship, these must have been harder to endure with the ever-present fear of assault from the men of the community.

During the 1870-1875 period, 64% of the sexual assaults occurred in rural areas. Similar figures are arrived at for the 1890-1895 period. In fact, for the year 1895, all the sexual assaults reported to the police occurred in rural areas.

CONCLUSION

When I began my research one of my assumptions had been that the sexual assaults were aimed mainly at women. It only took a very short time before it became obvious that females of all ages were in danger of attack. This situation is the same today, but it is an aspect of sexual assaults that is not widely recognized in the community.

Before a man can be successfully convicted of a sexual assault a woman must have some necessary prerequisites. Firstly, she must belong to a man of good repute in the community. Then if it can be seen that the prisoner is of 'lower' status than her husband the prosecution will be successful. For women who are not 'successfully' married or are of 'lower' status than the attacker it is not worth her while to report the attack to the police.

Secondly, although she must be of a good status to get a conviction, it does not follow that the more important her husband the easier to get a conviction. There is not one case of sexual assault where the woman came from what would be considered a wealthy home. It would seem that to be at the extremes of wealth and influence negates a woman's chances for ordinary civil rights. Again, this situation is similar for women of the twentieth century.

A final point to be made is in the area of research that has been covered. Before any conclusive statements can be shown as proven it will first of all be necessary to cover a much longer time period than has been done in this research. In this way it will be possible to document fully any changes in sexual assaults that occur over a thirty or forty year time span. Again, only then will it be possible to show clearly a true picture of life for women in nineteenth century Western Australia.
ENDNOTES

1. Susan Brownmiller, Against our Will, England, 1976, p.15
2. Statutes, 29v; 5; 381
3. Ross Barber, Australian Journal of Politics and History, vol XXI, no.1, April 1975, p.31
4. I am unable to remember exactly where I first saw the summary of Blackstone's Commentaries
5. Criminal Record Book, no.1, 1830-1887
6. Appendix III, 1890-1895, case 15,16,33,34
7. Appendix III, 1870-1875, case 4,5
8. Appendix III, 1870-1875, Case 5
9. Ibid., case 17
10. Ibid., case 8
11. Ibid., case 12
12. Ibid., case 15
13. Criminal Record Book, no.1, 1830-1887, file no. 936
14. Appendix III, 1870-1875, case 7
15. Ibid., case 16
16. Ibid., case 1
APPENDIX I

3. RAPE:

Whosoever shall be convicted of the crime of rape shall suffer death as a felon.

43. AGGRAVATED ASSAULT:

is an assault that cannot be treated as common assault and battery and can only be perpetrated on a male child under 14 years and a female of any age.

maximum - six months with or without hard labour
minimum - fine the sum of 20 pounds

49. PROCURATION for ILLICIT CONNECTION:

is a misdemeanour against a female under the age of 21.

maximum - two years with or without hard labour

50. CARNALLY KNOWING a GIRL UNDER 10 YEARS of AGE:

is a felony.

maximum - penal servitude for life
minimum - not less than three years
or maximum - two years with or without hard labour

51. CARNALLY KNOWING a GIRL OVER THE AGE OF 10 YEARS AND UNDER 12 YEARS:

is a misdemeanour.

maximum - penal servitude for three years
minimum - two years with or without hard labour
or maximum - two years with or without hard labour.

52. ATTEMPT TO COMMIT 51 and 52:

is indecent assault or attempt at unlawful carnal knowledge and is a misdemeanour.

maximum - two years with or without hard labour

61. SODOMY AND BESTIALITY:

with either a man or an animal and is a felony.

maximum - penal servitude for life
minimum - not less than 10 years
62. ATTEMPT AT 61:

is a misdemeanour.

maximum - not more than 10 years
minimum - not less than three years

or
maximum - 2 years with or without hard labour

63. CARNAL KNOWLEDGE DEFINED:

Carnal knowledge is said to have occurred upon proof of penetration only. (Previous to this definition it was necessary to prove emission of semen).
APPENDIX II

LEGAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Blackstone's Commentaries on the English Law (published 1765) were the lawyers' authority for well over a century.

According to Blackstone:

Wives classed with minors and idiots and had not responsibility under the law.

Even an engaged woman had to ask her finance's permission before she disposed of any of her possessions.

Property, earnings, liberty, the children she bore all belonged to her husband.

Wives could not sign a contract, make a will, cast a vote. (This last point she shared with single women and, until the late nineteenth century, with many men).

A wife had to promise to 'obey' in the marriage service - this was no idle promise either!

Until 1884 a woman could be imprisoned for denying her husband his conjugal rights.

Until 1891 a man had the unchallenged right to prevent a woman by force from leaving him.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

Pre 1839 A woman living apart from her husband had no rights to her children.

After 1839 Infants Custody Act - A judge might allow a woman who had not had adultery proved against her to have custody of children under seven and right of access to older children at stated times.

DIVORCE

Pre 1858 Divorce was impossible (except through a special act of parliament). The wife remained the husband's property even if he deserted her. He could still claim all her earnings and possessions as his.
After 1858 Marriage and Divorce Bill

1. A man could get a divorce on the grounds of adultery.

2. A woman could not get a divorce on grounds of adultery alone - she also had to prove her husband guilty of cruelty, bestiality, sodomy, desertion or rape.

3. Divorced persons could remarry.

4. A deserted wife (a) was protected from her husband's claim to her earnings, (b) could claim maintenance, (c) could inherit or bequeath property, (d) could enter into legal contracts on her own account.

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT
1880, 1882, 1893

Gave women full rights over their own earnings and finally over their own property. Also gave women rights to sue and enter into legal contracts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Status of Offender</th>
<th>Status of Victim</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Expiree farmhand</td>
<td>daughter of small farmer</td>
<td>hanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Free labourer on a farm</td>
<td>daughter of small farm</td>
<td>3 years p.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Expiree labourer</td>
<td>wife of shearer poor, illiterate</td>
<td>Not Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Expiree labourer</td>
<td>wife of farmer husband employed offender</td>
<td>2 years p.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aborigine</td>
<td>Aboriginal girl</td>
<td>Not Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Expiree</td>
<td>married woman known drunkard</td>
<td>Not Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>daughter of tradesman</td>
<td>Not Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aborigine</td>
<td>wife of farmer</td>
<td>sentenced to hang, commuted to life imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>had previous criminal record</td>
<td>incest against two daughters</td>
<td>Not Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Expiree</td>
<td>children</td>
<td>Not Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Expiree possibly employed</td>
<td>daughter of farmer</td>
<td>2 years p.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Expiree labourer</td>
<td>daughter of farmer</td>
<td>9 years p.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Aborigine</td>
<td>wife of leaseholder</td>
<td>hanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Expiree labourer</td>
<td>wife of labourer in semi-permanent separation from husband</td>
<td>Not Guilty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In cases 4 and 5 there were no witnesses to the assault. The testimony of the women concerned was all that was taken into consideration.
Case 7 is the only instance where no medical examination was made on the allegation of rape.

In case 8 and 12 the verdicts of not guilty were brought down for the sexual assaults, although the offenders were given prison sentences for the violent attacks they had made on the females.

It is difficult to determine the status of the victims in case 13. It is the only case where the offender was not violent or threatening to the victims which is a possible cause for the verdict of not guilty.
NURTURANCE AND NEGLECT 1:
The Making of a Policy:
The State Children's Act 1907
by Christine Dimovich

In 1907 the State Children's Bill was presented to the Western Australian Parliament, passed, and enshrined in legislation as the State children's Act No. 31 of 1907. The passage of this Bill represents but a small moment in the total context of the parliament's operations. However, like any Act of Parliament, it symbolises much more than the words on pieces of paper. It has a history and an outcome. The reality of people's lives created the need for the legislation, and its passage shaped the lives of those who followed. Why did Western Australia need a State Children's Act? Why in 1907? Who shaped it, and who benefited from its introduction? Attempting to answer such questions can highlight much about the development of social welfare policy in Western Australia. It can also provide insights into the nature of life for many Western Australians who have been forgotten by orthodox, celebratory accounts of the state's history; the destitute and those neglected by the society at large - in this case, women and children.

Although it can be said that this Act represents more than words on paper, it is the pieces of paper which survive as the source material for the researcher. The formal proceedings of the parliament are readily accessed, annual reports of government departments are available, official statistics and newspapers provide further sources. While these records enable us to create a picture from the perspective of those 'speaking' through them - the politicians, the 'helpers', the newspaper reporters, the bureaucrats - the voice of the poor, destitute and neglected remains silent. No destitute mother was called before the select committee convened to contribute to the formulation of the State Children's Act, no illegitimate children were consulted (some children came within the jurisdiction of the stated until 18 years of age), the opinions of unemployed fathers were not sought and documented. One potential source of the authentic voice of this group is the letters written by them and their advocates to the Colonial Secretary's Office. The CSO Subject Index does list correspondence from some citizens asking for relief. However, very few of these documents survive in the archives. It remains for the researcher to draw on the available 'official' evidence which attempting to compensate, where possible, for the fact that part of this story remains untold. It is important to explain at the outset of this essay that the State Children's Bill refers
only to white children. At the time that this policy was introduced, all Aboriginal people were subject to the control of the Protector of Native Welfare – i.e. all Aborigines, young and adult alike, were 'wards' of the state. Their story is outside the parameters of this essay.

Changes to social policy do not occur in a vacuum, but with a social, economic and political context. The interplay of these structural factors determines the character of the eventual policy outcome. Therefore, before this specific policy can be examined, it is necessary to briefly sketch an outline of the human environment of Post-Federation Western Australia.

In 1890, (the beginnings of the WA gold rush period) the total population of the colony was a mere 46,290. By the turn of the century, this number had quadrupled to 179,708. By 1907, the population had further skyrocketed to 263,846. The majority of these new colonists came from South Australia and Victorian goldfields, and, as Stannage notes, at the turn of the century more than 50% of the residents of Perth had been there for less than five years. Whilst the gold rushes bought expansion and prosperity, it was not prosperity for all. Such rapid expansion must inevitably create stresses and tensions difficult to contain in a tiny community. By 1907 some of these strains were beginning to be reflected in the population statistics. In this year, the population increased by only 0.80%, the lowest percentage increase since 1888. With the 1907 immigration standing at 22,012 and emigration at 23,523 – a population turnover of almost 10%, a sense of transience is indicated. It is notable that in this year, 1907, emigration outnumbered immigration by 1,511. The records of the Colonial Secretary's Office indicate that several people requested, and were granted, assisted passage within the state, to other Australian states or back to their homeland.

By 1907, then, major relocations of the population and restructuring of the economy was underway. As gold production declined, agriculture was increasingly relied upon to provide the state with a solid economic base. Opening up the land became a major focus of government policy. It is notable that the portfolio for Lands and Agriculture was held by the Premier Newton James Moore. Rural resettlement was encouraged and the infrastructure for rural development – railways, roads, harbours – were given high priority and funded by massive overseas borrowings. Despite this development phase, unemployment was creating a growing concern for government officials. In 1907 the Superintendent of the Government Labour Bureau wrote to inform the Colonial Secretary of an increasing number of unemployed in Perth, advising that 100 navvies had applied for a position which could only be offered to four men. He cautioned

"If there is any government or other work could be pushed on it would be well to do so, to prevent what
may arise at any moment, an outcry among the unemployed.

As the population grew and unemployment increased, poverty and its ramifications became more visible. The relationship between this socio-economic environment and women and children can now be considered.

The role of women as unpaid wife, mother and housekeeper was consolidated throughout Australia when the Harvester Judgement of 1907 was handed down by the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. Wages would henceforth be set at a level which would ensure the frugal comfort of a man, his wife and three children. Women, however, were not recognised as having dependants and had their wages set at between 50-54% of the male wage. With child endowment still several decades away, the mothers of illegitimate children, or women widowed or deserted with children, were left to survive as best they could. Few job options were available to women. In Western Australia, as in Australia as a whole, women's employment was found in areas which can be considered an extension of their domestic role - nursing and teaching for educated middle class women; food preparation, clothing manufacture and prostitution for women of the 'lower orders'. The statistics for employment in industrial establishments indicate that 1,626 of 1,984 women employed in this category worked in the clothing industry. All but 117 of the women working in industrial establishments were employed in three industries - clothing, food preparation and printing. These areas have traditionally been areas of low income and poor conditions. The respective male and female wages within one of these areas (general hand in food preparation) illustrated the gender differentiation, with the male rate set at £2.0.0 per week while the female rate was between 12/- and 15/-.

For those women supporting children, and perhaps an invalid or unemployed husband, this wage would barely suffice to provide a basic existence. For the women who was unable to find 'legitimate' work, prostitution was one option, pleading to the Colonial Secretary a case for outdoor relief another, and the Women's Home presented perhaps the final option. The CSO File of Mrs Eliza Lockyer illustrates the general philosophy of the Public Charities Department to outdoor relief. On 23 August, 1907, the Colonial Secretary's office received a letter from Mrs S. Matthews written on behalf of Mrs Lockyer. Mrs Matthews informed the office that Mrs Lockyer, who was suffering from rheumatism, was in 'very needy want' of clothing for herself and her daughter. A further letter was received, penned by Eliza on her own behalf. Eliza's letter (which is now damaged and in parts indecipherable) begins with a complaint about her treatment at the hands of a relieving officer of the department who had tightened up on Eliza's clothing allowance. The tone of the letter, however, remains respectful, humble and pleading. Eliza tells the Colonial Secretary: ... I have only one dress to my back and when it is washed I must wate till it gets dry and the days are bitter cold...
James Longmore, Superintendent of Public Charities, remained unmoved by Eliza's tale of poverty. He informed the Under Secretary on 30 August,

this woman and her daughter have been recipients of government relief for a number of years. They are difficult to satisfy and are continually grumbling and crying out for more. 14

Eliza Lockyer, Longmore explains, has a son and a married daughter who are able to assist with her keep. He concludes that he may in this instance consider some additional clothing if so instructed by her superior, however, 'unless able to subsist on what she receives, then the Home is the only alternative.' 15

Eliza Lockyer, a widow in ill-health with a daughter to support, was destined to remain trapped within her poverty.

For those women who were able to find work, finding care for their children posed a further obstacle. In a community with such a high rate of migrant population, it was the fortunate woman who had members of the extended family who could be called upon to assist, while illegitimacy carried with it a heavy burden of social stigma and isolation. For many women, institutional care or fostering out of children were the only alternatives. In 1907 Western Australia had ten institutions and reformatories which provided care for 'destitute and neglected children' as well as 'delinquent' children. 16 Only one of these (The Salvation Army Home, Collie) was outside the metropolitan area. On 31 December, 1906, there were 623 children in these institutions. 17 This figure represents a 7.60% increase over the previous year. Private support was paid on behalf of 168 of these children. A further 455 children received a government subsidy of 1/- per day, having been committed by the Court or referred by the Charities Department. During 1906 a total of 858 children had been admitted to institutions as state supported children. The institutions operated as charitable organisations run by religious denominations - Catholic, Anglican and Salvation Army. the sponsoring bodies received no financial assistance from the state for any capital or recurrent funding. 18

Very few of these institutions were able to provide any care for children under the age of three, while the Parkerville Waifs Home was the only organisation properly equipped to take babies. 19 At the time of the parliamentary enquiry concerning the passage of the State Children's Bill, 60-80 infants were being cared for at the Parkerville Home while many other children referred to the home had been fostered out to 'suitable homes'. 19a The government maternity home in Pier Street and the Industrial School Nursery in Subiaco both provided care for some infants and their mothers until the children were considered old enough to be sent to other institutions. 20 The Charities Department was sometimes able to provide material and financial aid to enable children to remain with their mother in the community prior to their being sent to an institution. (This
maternal care was seen to be important for the first one to two years of life as breast feeding was recognized as a deterrent against illness leading to infant death). Such cases were dealt with 'on their merits' as were all claims for government assistance. The bona fides of the mother were established by, i) a personal interview with the Superintendent of the Public Charities, ii) a home visit by an officer of the department and, finally, iii) a police report. It appears that little research has been done into the subject of 'baby farming' in this state. The term is used to refer to situations where infants who could not be cared for by their parents were taken in, usually by a woman, for profit. Stannage tells us only that 'baby farming was widespread', and that numerous cases of cruelty and neglect were reported. Some regulations regarding fostering were included in the Health Act (1898) Infant Life Protection Section, in particular clauses 104 and 105. Clause 204 deemed that foster homes must be registered with the local Board of Health. Furthermore, it should be found that adequate food and attention was not being provided, registration would be withdrawn. The responsibility for supervision of the foster homes lay with the local councils. Clause 105 required that no child who died while in the care of a foster parent may be buried without the production of a Coroner's or Justice's certificate. These regulations, however, were not enforced. There was no restriction on the number of children who could be taken by one foster home, nor was any restriction placed on charging fees. While some women may have found fostering a viable way of gaining some income, the way was open for unscrupulous operators to provide inferior care in order to increase their profit margin or, alternatively, to take lumpsum payments and allow the infant to die.

In July, 1906, a small public meeting was held in the Perth Town Hall motivated by concern over what J.S. Battye later called the 'very common occurrence' of 'grossest cruelty and neglect to helpless infants'. As a consequence of this meeting the Children's Protection Society was formed. It consisted of a general committee which elected from its number a twelve member executive committee. Among the committee membership can be found the names of many eminent Perth citizens of the time - which indicates the society's social perspective and its considerable potential for influencing government policy. The inaugural president of the society was Edward Makeham who was also a member of the Legislative Council. Walter Kingsmill and James Connolly were also both members of the Legislative Council and each served a period of time as Colonial Secretary, with Connolly succeeding Kingsmill in the position on 7 May, 1906. The annual subscription of 5/- was payable by members. This fee, plus the requirements to participate in social fund raising functions would effectively ensure that this society remained a middle-class venture. The objectives of the society were:
- to protect children from ill-treatment from parents and guardians
- to put an end to baby farming
- to foster out children
- to encourage parents to maintain their own children
- to visit and report on every child in their records

The general aims were to prevent the need for state supported children and to keep family bonds intact. The society lay relatively dormant until early in 1907 when the exposure of one particularly horrendous example of baby farming threw the whole question of the care and control of destitute children into the public and political arena.

On 29 September, 1906, Elizabeth Booth gave birth to a healthy baby girl. For this new mother, however, there was little to celebrate. Elizabeth was an unmarried mother, and her circumstances had forced her to spend her confinement at the House of Mercy in Highgate Hill. During the three months Elizabeth stayed at the home with baby Ethel, it is likely she spent many hours contemplating her child's future. Could she have imagined that within five weeks of leaving the home, Ethel would be dead and Elizabeth would find herself involved in the murder trial of her baby daughter's foster mother?

In order to continue her employment as a general servant, Elizabeth Booth sought foster care for her baby. The House of Mercy recommended that the baby be placed in the charge of Nurse Alice Mitchell, a registered nurse operating a registered foster home at 24 Edward Street, Perth. Elizabeth was informed that the fee payable to Nurse Mitchell was 10/- per week, plus a further 5/- payment if a doctor was called to attend the child. While Ethel's father contributed 7/6 per week towards Ethel's keep, the expense to Elizabeth represented a large portion of her 15/- per week wage. Elizabeth went to Edward Street once or twice a week to visit baby Ethel, but after the first few visits, Alice Mitchell refused to allow her to see the baby, claiming she was sleeping. When Elizabeth and her friend Alice Skinner arrived to visit Ethel on 2 February 1907, they found the child asleep on the bed. Elizabeth did not recognize the child as the strong, healthy baby she had delivered to Alice Mitchell's care only weeks before. Elizabeth was unable to wake the child who was obviously dying. She saw that the baby's clothing was clean, but Ethel had such a 'nasty smell' that Elizabeth would not bear to investigate too closely. Alice Mitchell told Elizabeth that Dr. Officer had attended Ethel, diagnosing diarrhoea, and recommended a diet of barley water and Nestles milk. Elizabeth owed 10/- doctor's fees and 7/- for medicine.
It was not until Police Corporal O'Halloran and Dr Davey visited the house on 5 February in response to an enquiry that Alice Mitchell's practice was called into official question. Baby Ethel Booth, together with baby Horan Brown (the daughter of another unmarried servant girl, Maud Brown) were removed from the premises of Mrs Mitchell and admitted to the Perth Public Hospital. Baby Brown, who was some five months older than Ethel Booth, was diagnosed as suffering from bronchitis. She also showed signs of starvation. Horan Brown responded favourably to the medical care she received in the hospital. Ethel Booth could not be saved, and on 11 February, 1907, she died.

Alice Mitchell was required to appear before a coroner's inquest into Ethel Booth's death. As the tale of Ethel Booth's short life and brutish death unfolded, so too did the full details of Alice Mitchell's baby farming racket. On 3 January, 1901, Alice Mitchell was granted a licence to take in children under the age of two. Regulations required that a register be maintained showing the names and dates of admission of each child in Mrs Mitchell's charge. The first entry in Alice's register was dated 16 February 1902; the last 5 December 1905. Court evidence showed this was an irregular and incorrect record. Alice was registered under four different addresses during the six years she operated her 'service'. Carl Roux and his wife were lodgers at 25 Edward Street, and were witness to the plight of several children who came to stay with Alice. Carl told the Coronial Inquest that Alice had, on occasion, had seven or eight babies in one small, filthy room. By the time of the trial, police had traced 43 babies who had been Alice Mitchell's wards. Thirty-seven of these children had died either at the home, or shortly after leaving. It was, however, only the death of Ethel Booth which was the subject of the inquest and trial. Alice was charged with murder by the coroner; the jury of the Supreme Court found her guilty of the lesser charge of manslaughter. On 14 April 1907, Alice Mitchell was sentenced to five years imprisonment with hard labour. Alice's trial concluded with a condemnation by the jury of the 'disgraceful neglect in the administration of the Infant Life Protection clauses of the Act', the Lady Inspector having found Alice's home to be 'all in order'.

On 15 April, 1907, the Perth City Council received a petition from a large number of influential rate payers calling for a public meeting to address the issues of infant life protection. The meeting was presented with a number of points for consideration, including that a request be made to the Western Australian government to conduct an investigation into the matter, and to draft suitable legislation to protect the lives of 'unwanted children'. The Government acceded to this request. In June 1907, James Longmore, in his position as Industrial Schools Inspector, was sent to assess the systems adopted in South Australia and Victoria. (The New Zealand and New South Wales systems were also examined, but the Bill for an Act was drafted along the lines of the South Australian and Victorian legislation).
In South Australia, control of destitute children was the responsibility of the Destitute Department from 1866-1895. In 1872 Boarding Out Committees were formed by the appointment of 'ladies' who made decisions about the placement of children in foster homes. In 1895, the South Australian State Children's Act formalised the role of the Boarding Out Committees with the establishment of the State Children's Council, a non-government organisation which was empowered with legal and financial responsibility for children under their care, including State Children (wards of the State). Under the auspices of the State Children's Council were seven institutions and 80 lying-in and licensed foster mothers. The institutions operated primarily as reformatories and, in 1907, were home to 182 children whilst a further 1,107 children were living in foster homes supervised by the Council. While the State provided subsidies for children assigned as State Children, the council relied heavily on public charity for its continued operations.

The Victorian system also operated largely on a boarding out system. 2,141 children were fostered out in 1907, 972 were fostered to their own parents (the parents having 'care' but not 'control' of the children) and 456 children were placed in institutions for 'punishment and reform'. Further to this, the Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society alleviated the Victorian government from the worry and expense of 839 children in need of care but not eligible for the status of State Child. While committees were formed to supervise the placement of the children, as in South Australia, the Victorian system vested control of children in a government department rather than in a non-governmental council.

The Western Australian Bill represented an amalgam of these two systems. The new legislation repealed four existing Industrial School and Reformatories Acts 1874-1893 and those portions of the health Act relating to Infant Life Protection, focusing attention on the boarding out system. A State child was defined as a child who had been declared by the courts to be

a) an orphan and destitute

b) a child with parents morally, mentally or physically unfit to be parents

c) boys or girls who are 'uncontrollable' by parents and therefore in danger of entering upon a criminal career.

A child could remain a ward of the State until 18 years of age. After the age of 14, such children were no longer entitled to financial assistance, but were expected to find work. The ultimate legal and financial responsibility for State Children would vest in a state department, as was the case in Victoria, although provision was made for registered benevolent societies such as the Children's Protection Society, to be awarded children by the court,
to place as they saw fit. It was anticipated that all children under three would be placed with foster mothers, while children over this age may be placed in either a private home or an institution. All foster mothers were required to be registered by the department as 'fit and proper' persons to provide care for infants. With the exception of close relatives, only registered foster mothers would be permitted to take in children.45

Part VI, Clause 80 of the Act controlled financial arrangements, prohibiting the foster parent or society from taking any financial contribution from the natural parent.46 The State assumed the responsibility for paying foster parents. The clause allowed for the State to seek reimbursement from the natural parent where this was considered appropriate. The legislation also considered maternity/lying in homes, requiring them to be registered and open for inspection by departmental officers.47 The government would pay for a mother to stay in such a home for a period of twelve months... 'caring for the mother in order to save the child'. This provision was seen as an advance on the South Australian system where only the baby was subsidised.48

Another important feature of the State Children's Bill was the proposal that a children's Court be established. Such a provision was a progressive step at a time when very few Children's Courts existed throughout the world.49 The principle aim of the establishment of a children's court was to separate children from adult offenders, treating children not as criminals, but as poor unfortunates who are either without parents or who have drunken fathers and mothers and who are placed in their position through no fault of their own.

Children were henceforth to be tried by special magistrates, in the magistrate's rooms, to be detained at the house of a policeman or some other 'respectable person' rather than being locked-up. The legislation provided that the press could not publish the proceedings of the children's court.

The Health Act Clause 105 covering the reporting of infant death occurring in foster homes and institutions was incorporated into the State Children's legislation.

It was the hope of the Colonial Secretary, James Connolly, that the passage of the Bill would be straightforward and swift. He was, therefore, not impressed when Walter Kingsmill proposed that a select committee be established to investigate more closely the details of the legislation.50 Kingsmill was particularly concerned that a department (as in Victoria) rather than a council (as in South Australia) had been regarded as the appropriate organisation to administer the State Children's Act. James Longmore, according to Kingsmill, had influenced the legislation from his position as departmental head, and had an 'unconscious bias' preventing transfer of power away from his department.51
The Select Committee served to do little more than to delay the passage of the Bill. It made no recommendations, but proposed five minor amendments to clauses. The witnesses to the enquiry (representatives of institutions, Children's Protection Society, Police) disagreed on the appropriate body to administer the Act, as did members of the committee. Makeham and Kingsmill (Children's Protection Society, MLC's) were both in favour of a council, believing that a non-governmental council would be more approachable than a government department. Makeham was concerned that human nature would dictate that the philanthropic work of the community would be destroyed if a department assumed the responsibility for caring for these children. Connolly and Longmore (Colonial Secretary and head of department respectively) were more concerned that a council would not be financially accountable and would allow parents to 'neglect their responsibilities'.

The entire debate surrounding the passage of the Western Australian State Children's Bill represents a struggle between vested interests; private charity vs public welfare, non-governmental council vs state government department. There is, on both sides, a constant undercurrent of concern with the cost to the state and erosion of the individual responsibility for the maintenance of children. What would Elizabeth Booth have thought of this debate? How much relevance would it have on her life? Was it the 'very strong desire' of women like Elizabeth Booth and Maud Brown to 'get out of their responsibilities at the very earliest moment' as James Longmore asserted? Such a 'blaming the victim' approach to social policy-making does little to change the structural difficulties of life for poor working class families. However, as Stannage states, 'in that (the State Children's Act) retarded the growth of baby-farming, it was a major social reform'.

The social conditions that we tend to take for granted now have a relatively recent history. They have been won through the blood, pain and suffering of 'ordinary people' and the humanitarian concern of their advocates. In a society where it is becoming more and more fashionable to denounce the provisions of state welfare, it is timely to remember where such reforms came from and to recognise our responsibility to ensure that they are not eroded.
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NURTURANCE AND NEGLECT 2:  
Bereaved Mothers in a Male World  
by Lorraine Williams

Tis most melancholy to witness the proceedings of an Australian funeral ... The ceremony was peculiarly rational. A printed notice was sent to all the friends, gloves and long crepe badges were provided for all present, and in an adjoining room a table was profusely spread with cake and wine! The hearse was decorated with white plumes, illustrative of youth, and the Church service was as chill as the atmosphere, and no ladies attended the funeral.¹

This passage conveys several messages. It implies that there is such a thing as a distinctly Australian funeral in the mid-nineteenth century. The sending of 'printed notices ... to all ... friends', and the provision of 'gloves and long crepe badges', suggests that the occasion is deliberately and rigidly structured and ritualized, as does the observance of the ritual meal. The invitation to friends also implies community ties and support and emphasizes the social nature of the occasion. Moreover, the status of the dead had an important place in this ritual for here it is displayed by the 'white plumes, illustrative of youth'. 'The Church service', which is seen to be as 'chill as the atmosphere', seems such that it could offer no warmth or consolation to the bereaved and the overall impression is of contrived formality, emotional control and discomfort - hence it's rationality. Finally, it is observed that 'no ladies' attended the funeral and this too could be seen to account for the seeming lack of emotion.

Such ritual and etiquette surrounding death and bereavement, funerals and mourning in nineteenth century Australia served to reinforce and perpetuate the existing patriarchal hegemony and social ideology. According to Brain, when arranging burials and funerals 'Both black and white Australian societies make certain differentiations' according to gender, age and status.² It is further argued by Brain that this 'stereotyping of behaviour ... attempts to control and channel personal grief by providing standard ritual expression'.³ Nevertheless, this stereotyping of procedure and behaviour also served to emphasize important differences in how death...
and loss were experienced in nineteenth century Australian society according to such factors as wealth and poverty, status and gender, religion and race and environment. As Aveling writes of death, 'Its implications are different for men and women, for the powerful and the powerless'.

This essay, while exploring some of these factors, will attempt to put some of 'ladies' back in the funeral so to speak, by recording their personal experience of death in the loss of their child. This is not intended to be a generalisation, since some mothers may have participated in the funeral ceremony. The main primary sources used will be those personal accounts written or orally relayed by these mothers and held in published documents. In order to do this, however, it is necessary to establish some definitions.

The Pocket Oxford Dictionary defines 'bereaved' as 'leave desolate; (of death etc) deprive of child, wife etc', and this seems to imply that bereavement is more the province of the male. Hegemony in the sense used here means the way in which the dominant group manipulates social consciousness and social practices to perpetuate and enhance their dominance. Hegemonic power is closely related to this in the sense that this dominant group within nineteenth century Australia was also a gender-based power structure which perpetuated the rule of the male over the female within society and within the home. Ideology is a set of ideas advanced by that dominant group which, although seeming to be rooted in reality and in the natural order and therefore serving all interests, ultimately acts to the advantage of this group. Nurturing has been defined as 'bringing up, fostering care, nourishment, rear' and it is in the sense of fostering care and rearing through childhood to adult life that the concept is meant here.

Probably one of the most significant factors influencing a bereaved mother's experience of the loss of a child in death in nineteenth century Australia was her powerlessness within a male dominated society and home. Not all agree with this. Grimshaw for example argues that on the contrary 'women exerted considerable influence within the family' although she does acknowledge that there were limits to this power. According to Griffin and Tobin, however,

Parents, and especially mothers are often unfairly 'protected' ... and denied the opportunity ... to participate in any funeral rituals, lest it should distress them.

Mothers, often acting from a position of powerlessness would have had no alternative but to submit to this 'protection'. Thus Eliza Shaw after 'just one fleeting glance ... was led away' from the presence and sight of her drowned sons' bodies while the father, stereotyped the stronger sex and the 'protector' remained. As will be seen, there was a sadness as well as a certain irony in this. This
impotence of the mother is often very vividly portrayed in Australian literature, for example, in The Lost Child

Dan wouldn't have her [his daughter] buried in the Station cemetery; she must be buried in consecrated ground, at Hay. The child's mother wanted to go with them, but Dan refused to allow it, and did so with a harshness that surprised me.\textsuperscript{12}

If, as Griffin and Tobin maintain, the practice of carrying on traditional forms of burial known 'at home' such as the burial in consecrated ground and the religious rites this implied, 'created not only a sense of belonging but were a great comfort' to the bereaved in nineteenth century Australia, it could be argued that some mothers were often left comfortless and alienated in the event that they were often denied these positive supports.\textsuperscript{13} Moreover, rituals and ceremonies of one's own religious persuasion were not always possible. Prior to the Church Act of 1836 and even after, the Church of England and its rites and ceremonies were the only ones provided.\textsuperscript{14} This would have had special implications for those bereaved Catholics, most of whom would have been Irish, for whom Catholic funeral rites were not only closely tied in with hope of salvation but who would have bitterly resented this perpetuation of English oppression.\textsuperscript{15} Later, and especially in outback stations and towns, not only were consecrated cemeteries not always available but neither were the clergy available to perform the accustomed funeral rites and offer solace to the bereaved.\textsuperscript{16} Thus, the bush-funeral

... plints of green wood for his coffin, a bush carpenter his undertaker, a bullock dray his hearse, reckless and hardened men his mourners, and the wild forest or open plain his burial place.\textsuperscript{17}

Suggesting perhaps that only real men were to be found in the bush.

Perhaps the essence of this powerlessness of a mother is shown by the following sample of death notices taken from one paper and which were published in 1838, 1840 and as late as 1850. From a twentieth century viewpoint, these notices and those not included here are highly unusual in that in only one is the mother acknowledged and in that one perhaps it is only the missing father which makes it the exception.

On Thursday, the 27th September, Richard Wyatt, youngest son of Mrs W.C. Alger, Castlereagh-street, aged fifteen years.\textsuperscript{17}

On Friday morning last, the 9th instant, after a severe illness of fourteen days, Joseph Charles Tremayne, the infant son of Mr H.J. Potts, of the Bank of New South Wales, aged three years and five months.\textsuperscript{19}
January 26th. In Green Park Building, Bath, of rheumatism of the heart, in his seventeenth year, William Lyster Willis, eldest son of the Rev. W. Downes Willis, MA, lecturer of Walcot, and Minister of All Saints, and nephew of Mr Justice Willis of this Colony.

On Monday, 30th September, of scarlet fever, on the north shore, George Mitchell, youngest son of Captain D.C.F. Scott, aged eight years and seven months.

Although much more methodical research would be necessary to establish some positive reason for the style of the above notices, it is interesting to speculate about the missing mothers. It is possible that their absence reflects the prevailing ideology of the early nineteenth century which, upheld by the legal system and the church, stressed that children and wives were the property of the father and husband. It is obvious from the information conveyed by many of these notices that they were inserted by those who held positions of status within society quite apart from their positions of power as heads of households. In this the middle-class mother, closer to the creative force of this particular ideology, may have been more 'protected' and affected by sexist stereotyping. Dixson, however, argues that the lower and poorer women within colonial society were the most likely to be affected by powerlessness.

According to Aveling, the 'Victorian ideology saw motherhood as the supreme fulfilment of women's life.' As early as 1830, Eliza Shaw writes - 'real happiness to a mother was at home more than anywhere else, even if that home were but a mud edifice in the wilds of Western Australia'. This idealisation of motherhood and of the ideal woman necessarily carried with it connotations of fragility, of femininity and the need for protection, and as has been seen, had important consequences for the bereaved mother. Aveling argues that' this same desirability of women, ascribed as emotionality, was cited to justify the subjection of wives to allegedly more rational husbands.'

Closely intertwined with this ideology of motherhood was the concept of the mother as nurturer and yet, ironically, child mortality rates were sufficiently high, Aveling believes, to ensure that 'all women faced the strong probability that ... one of their ... children would not survive into adolescence.' If Brains is right in his contention that the death 'of a close member of the family' arouses 'inevitable feelings of guilt and self-accusation' what would be the internalisation of such concepts and ideologies as 'nurturer' and 'mother' mean for the bereaved mother? Gorer also suggests that 'their self-image may be destroyed; the more they have thought of themselves as mother ... ' In view of such factors, what then of the experience of the mother, Mrs Millet on the death of her child? What was the experience of other mothers whose children, seen by society and the husbands, and even themselves, to be in their care, wandered away to be drowned or lost?
A child of three years old wandered away one morning from its home, and the mother, imagining that it was gone to watch its father at work in the saw-pit... felt no anxiety until her husband came home alone and... asked for 'little Tommy'. He and his half-frenzied wife examined... every inch of ground for miles around... weeks grew into months and brought no trace, and the dreary consolation alone remained... that the heat was so excessive on the day the child was lost, that its sufferings could not have lasted many hours. One evening, as the mother sat outside her door, in her own words to me 'bewailing as usual', she saw a woman coming... with her apron thrown over a little box that she was carrying, and, instantly divining its contents, cried out in a distracted manner,... "Them's my Tommy's bones!" the sad little relics had been discovered by a neighbour in a thicket but three quarters of a mile from the child's home... the body appeared to have been devoured by either pigs or wild dogs, and the tokens were few to identify, but a part of a little boot, and some scraps of a plaid frock, enabled the poor parents to recognise the remains as those of their lost darling.

This experience, moreover, is a stark and violent contrast to that structured and stereotyped funeral outlined in the beginning, and to the 'protection' afforded Eliza Shaw. On the contrary, neither the circumstances and environment nor the female neighbour, afforded this mother 'protection' and from her cry "Them's my Tommy's bones!", it is obvious not only that she was not very well educated and since her husband worked in a saw-pit, was working class, but that she harboured no illusions about the death of her child. Yet her desolation is expressed by her comment 'Bewailing as usual.'

According to Aveling, 'the respectable men of Perth clung to the idea that death was an event divinely intended to punish sin.'

Moreover, etiquette advised that

It is not desirable to enshroud ourselves in gloom after a bereavement... for, in fulfilling our duties to the living, we best show the strength of our affection for the dead, as well as our submission to the will of Him who knows what is better for our dear ones...

Mrs Richards records her own account of her long and bitter journey to this prescribed submission and acceptance.

My baby by this time was 2 and a half years old and such a bonnie little chap... When I looked at him my heart stood still. The doctor attended the little fellow for three days, but he died on the Tuesday afternoon and was buried the next day. I just don't
know how I survived that time. I was in a delicate state of health, and for my little one to be taken from me at that time seemed the last straw ... our dear old tabby cat never ate and rarely left our baby's room after he died. About ten days later we found him lying dead on the foot of baby's cot ... Just a month after our bereavement our baby girl was born - our darling little Ella, who was the joy and comfort of our home ... Our baby was ... one year old ... a dear, happy little soul ... on the previous night our baby had a turn of what seemed to be diarrhoea, and I told the doctor about it. He called again next morning and I knew he was worried ... he told my cousin my baby was dying - that the lining of her stomach was coming away. He was right. She died that evening at the age of 13 months, from the same complaint that had taken my little boy ... caused by the condensed water. After that I felt I just wanted to die - our two lovely children taken from us in just over a year, I grieved terribly, and felt so rebellious that I told Puppa [her husband] I would never be happy again. I would sit for hours and hours wondering what was the meaning of it all, and why my little ones had been taken from me. When I knew later I was going to have another baby, I was not at all pleased ... But then one day the answer came to my ever-recurring question of why she was taken. As plain as if the words were spoken to me I was told this: You had to give your Ella for God to have her in Heaven. 32

The view of women as fragile and in need of protection and even more prone to emotion and grief operated from the discriminating assumption that not only were mothers natural nurturers by virtue of their biology, but also from the view that the 'typical' Australian male was strong and hardened. 33 Griffin and Tobin argue that 'women ... are shown to be grieving while the men celebrate the continuity of life' and believed that 'this is an accurate reflection of social practice.' 34 Fathers then, were not seen to experience the loss of a child with the same intensity. Perhaps this explains the constant within Australia nineteenth century literature of the 'grieving mother'. However, Eliza Shaw's account of the loss of her sons, written a year after their deaths by drowning, reveals her husband to be visibly affected by the experience. She writes

Until this day, I have been unable to write of this terrible happening ... Shaw has several times sat down to write ... but each time he has burst into tears and walked away to his fields ... to compose himself ... he is reduced by sorrow ... They [the soldiers of the 63rd Regiment] only with the greatest difficulty
There is a growing body of opinion that the loss of a stillborn baby and the deaths of young infants leaves many parents with unresolved grief. In the letters Penelope Selby wrote home to her family in England from 1845-1851 she often mentions her seven stillborn sons and the one dead daughter.

Often when I have been lonely have I thought of my little girl ... but God's will be done ...  

Thank God I have been once more spared although as usual my baby was dead ...

... How often I think of your little [motherless granddaughter] Clara. If I had her here I would love her very much. I quite agree with your mode of feeding. I always intended to adopt the same plan had I had a living child. My last was a very fine boy although little more than seven months. What a lot of boys we should have had about us had they all lived.

What would I have done if I had had my eight boys about me? The one girl would have had plenty of work shirtdmaking. I should have been obliged to send them home in a body to seek wives. I must just hope the two I have combine the good qualities of all...

My dear Mother
I know you will not mind my commencing this letter with self, and telling you that through God's blessing I am once more in a fair way of being strong again. You will certainly have received letters intimating that I was expecting to be confined about the end of last month, and also in consequence of my health being so much improved, my friends had great hopes that my baby would be born alive, and so it proved, but indeed only to make the disappointment greater, for my dear baby breathed a few hours, long enough to make my heart yearn towards him and to be deceived into hoping that he might be spared to us. I was not told at the time that although a remarkable fine grown child, he had an enlarged liver ... I did not think I should have felt so sorry, having become accustomed to the loss and not even this time allowing myself to be sanguine, ... I am wearying terribly to see my dear [sister] Mary and her little Kate, and am trying to persuade myself and George that I shall be able to go up in a few days. He shakes his head, for it is a long way ...
These letters and extracts also testify to the isolation of many of the writers from the normal supports offered by 'the family' for as Grimshaw points out, the Bussell family in their experience were perhaps the exception and not the rule. In a society which placed little value upon the loss experience by a mother of a stillborn or young infant child, as is shown within given and set mourning and funeral rituals, the possible grieving experienced by such a bereaved mother would have been largely unrecognised and certainly severely impeded and restrained. Yet, while acknowledging that the death of a child invokes a different and wholly individual response on the part of those bereaved, Griffin and Tobin argue that there is evidence to suggest that it involves a much longer period of grieving than that involving the death of a loved adult since the loss of the child continues to be experienced for 'we also keep on losing the child who would have been there in the future but for the death.' Penelope Selby illustrates the truth of this.

Mourning rules and etiquette covering dress, behaviour and time set the period for observance after the death of a child under twelve years at one year - it may well, in reality have lasted a lifetime. This did not moreover, include extremely young infants while stillborn babies were even recently buried in unmarked common graves, without funeral rites or ceremonies.

Bereavement for these women seems to have been a personal and inner experience but one which must have been influenced by such factors as ideology and perceptions of a mother's role as nurturer as well as of the ideal women, stereotyping of 'expected' and 'acceptable' behaviour, as well as class and religious beliefs and wealth and poverty. Yet, it must be noted that these ideologies may not always have been responded to and for various reasons. Mothers were also influenced by such factors as constant child-bearing, extreme poverty, illegitimacy and its social stigma, and for them the etiquette and rituals of mourning may have meant little. It must also be noted that these same forces may have acted to modify the experience of the bereaved father — seen to be the 'celebrator of life' and a picture which contrasts sadly with that of Shaw.

Stereotyped behaviour and ritual may have offered valuable supports at this time, but by acting as reinforcers and perpetuators of the institutions and social structures of nineteenth century colonial Australia they may also have acted to modify and influence the experience of bereaved mothers.
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Part 4.

Putting the Past in Practice
COMMUNITY HISTORY 1:
The Other Side of the Island:
An Oral History of Rottnest

by Jan Gothard

EDITORS' NOTE

The following article was transcribed from a radio broadcast produced by Murdoch University students and staff in August 1987. The programme was part of an oral history of Rottnest Island, a project undertaken by Murdoch's History Club and co-ordinated by Murdoch post-graduate student, Jan Gothard. The taped interviews, photographs and memorabilia collected by students have been stored in the Battye Library and in a special deposit in the Rottnest Museum.

JACK O'DONOGHUE

I was three weeks old when I first started my life on Rottnest and my memory starts off from about six years old. I can remember Rottnest as a total black prison. My father was chief warder of the jail and there was five warders, a jailer and also a superintendent of Rottnest Island. The jail comprised black prisoners, some 'civilised' and others not so 'civilised', and they were put to work on various jobs such as gardening and jobs like that.

JAN GOTHARD

Hello and welcome to the History Show. I'm Jan Gothard. Today's show is the second in our series on Community History and you've been listening to Jack O'Donoghue, one early resident of Rottnest Island who has been interviewed by members of Murdoch University's History Club for the Rottnest Island Oral History Project.

Jack was born in Fremantle in May 1894, and at the age of three weeks, went to Rottnest, where he lived until the early 1920's. His father John O'Donoghue was chief warder of the Aboriginal prison from the mid-1890s until its closure. Jack was one of five children: two sisters, a younger brother and one other brother who died aged ten weeks. Incidentally, Jack's brother's grave is the only one in the old Rottnest cemetery with an original headstone and railing. Jack's father made the railing and the headstone was carved by the lighthouse keeper.
Rottnest is best known nowadays as a leisure island and its history as a holiday resort extends back to the mid-nineteenth century when Governor Charles Fitzgerald expressed an interest in residing there. Dr W. Somerville, a former member of the Rottnest Island Board, wrote of Rottnest, 'No wonder that we in Western Australia refer to Rottnest as "The Island," for she holds those who come to her ever captive to her charms'. In fact Rottnest, isolated from the mainland by 18 kilometres of Indian Ocean, had a far more compelling way of holding people captive. The programme today will explore aspects of Rottnest as a fortress and prison.

One of Rottnest's earliest settlers, Robert Thomson, appreciated the potential of Rottnest's isolation when he left his holding of 1000 acres on the Swan in 1831, to take up 100 acres on Rottnest, apparently seeking some security for his family from the Aboriginal resistance fighters on the mainland. Ironically in 1838 it was decided to convert Rottnest into a natural prison for those same 'hostile natives', despite Thomson's protests. After some conflict concerning 'native' prisoners who attempted to escape in Thomson's boat, Thomson and his family were finally forced to relocate, leaving the island to the prisoners and their guards.

The island remained some form of prison for nearly a century. The last Aboriginal prisoners left the island in 1922; the last white prisoners did not return to the mainland till 1931.

Jack O'Donoghue recalls some aspects of life on Rottnest at the turn of the century.

JACK O'DONOGHUE

I also remember the 'natives' were allowed out on Saturday afternoon and Sundays. Saturdays they had a little camp just on a hill near the jail and they used to make their spears and woomeras and boomerangs and so forth, and Sunday morning they were allowed out all day and they had to be back by sunset. And they used to go out and they'd get dry wood out of the bush and make a big fire out around Baghdad, which is the west side of Geordie Bay; and they'd make their fires and they'd go away and they'd spear a couple of quokkas and fetch them out and singe all the fur off them and bury them in the ashes. Then they'd go down to the rocks and catch herring - you could catch fish anywhere off the island in those days - fish and crayfish - and they used to fetch the fish and put them on the ashes and roast them. And we boys, we used to go with them and we used to take a little bit of salt and pepper in a bottle and we used to really enjoy life with the natives. Matter of fact I used to watch them making spear heads, glass spear heads, and I could do it myself. And making boomerangs, how they used to cut the boomerangs and make one side, the low side, oval, and the top side flat so that it would spin properly, you see. And I used to...we boys used to use the boomerangs.
Evelyn Roberts Macnamara was a teacher on Rottnest in 1921, and she too has recollections of the Aboriginal prisoners, notably King Billy who used to empty her garbage bin in return for cakes. She also recalled a particular incident with one of the Aborigines.

When they went out on the Sunday to the west end of the island - to do fishing you see, then the warder brought them home...whether he had a roll call or not I wouldn't know but anyhow one didn't come - and I don't know what his idea was but he didn't come with the others. But I know I was in bed and I had my arm out and of course I suppose he got as big a fright as I did, he touched my arm and that woke me up, and I sat up in bed; and there at the foot of the bed, all I could see was his blue shirt and the black, his black head you see. I had matches then, I didn't have a torch or a candle or anything - I don't know whether torches were in vogue then or not but I didn't have one - but I know that I struck the match and it burnt down and burnt my finger; then I'd light another one trying to make out what it was, you see, and it suddenly dawned on me that it was a 'native'. The window was open and I suppose it would be as high (course, I couldn't do it now) - it'd be as high as three foot high - I jumped over that and ran out. Mr Storey was going on duty you see, it must have been after midnight...and I told him there was a 'native' in my room. 'Oh, there's no 'native' there', he said, 'you must have had a nightmare'; and 'no I haven't', I said, 'he was at the foot of the bed'. And anyway he came over but of course he couldn't find him. But I should imagine...there was a piano in the schoolroom and perhaps he was hiding behind that you see, because he went in the schoolroom and he didn't see anybody.

After this incident the school teacher moved out of her solitary quarters at the school house to a room with friends.

In 1914 on the outbreak of war, Rottnest once again seemed a natural choice for the prison for German nationals in Western Australia. By this stage the dismantling of the native and the white prison had begun although prisoners still provided labour on the island. Jack O'Donoghue spent some time as a guard of the prisoners of war before departing for France in 1916. He describes their life in the camp.

They didn't do much; only had to look after their own camps and that; and they used to be allowed to go on the rocks just near Bathurst Point there, fishing and swimming down around there, you see. They had a guard from the settlement part, you see, around the bungalows and down to the beach. That was their area, in there.
And they had three German boats, commercial boats they were, in Fremantle. There was the Griswald, the Torrington(?) and the New Munster, I think it was, they were the three boats. And they had the officers and crew of those boats on Rottnest. The officers, they were up in what you call the Lodge today, they were up there in rooms there, and they were allowed to roam about as they liked - they were on their best behaviour. But those officers were allowed there and Dad was very friendly with them...One German captain, when he came into Fremantle and they told him his country was at war with Britain and his boat was a prize of war, he said 'Oh mein Gott, what's going to become of my country?'

JSG

By 1931 the last white prisoners had left the island but within a decade the lovely island became home once again to a group of men and women many of whom would rather have been elsewhere. Captain Bill Holder was a gunnery instructor on Rottnest during the latter part of the war, and he explained to interviewer John Dunlop why Rottnest was chosen as the site for a battery of guns in the mid-1930s.

BILL HOLDER

Well, a decision was made to upgrade the coastal defences for defended ports - there have always been coast guns at defended ports from way back - and the function of coast guns was to defend the port against bombardment and interference by enemy ships. Not to protect the country against invasion, to protect the port. So a decision was made in Australia in the 1930s to modernise and improve the defences for defended ports, and of course Fremantle was a very strategic port on the west coast, so the decision was made to improve and modernise the coast defences for the port of Fremantle.

JSG

After 1942, military strength on the island reached a maximum, with about two and a half thousand personnel there, including up to sixty women from the Australian Army and Navy, who worked as signallers and plotters associated with the guns. Though the guns never fired a shot in anger they had to be fully manned and operational at all times. Despite the setting and the island's natural recreational facilities the Rottnest posting was not necessarily a happy one. Thomas Colvin and his wife Mena Colvin recalled their feelings about his posting to Rottnest in 1942.

TOM COLVIN

Dull, isolated, dreary. The thing is the permanent force -
such as myself - we were breaking our necks to join the AIF. At this stage we weren't allowed to, because we were joined up before the war and our job or duty was to be here, on the homeland. Eventually each week there'd be a ballot and two or three names would be drawn out and those personnel would be allowed to join the AIF and be transferred to a regiment and go overseas. Eventually we were all allowed to join the AIF.

But Rottnest really, it was a dull, uninteresting place. But at the same time the guns were always fully manned because we didn't know what was going to come next. It had its interests of course, the fishing was quite good, and I'm a fisherman; but really it was quite dreary.

MENA COLVIN

Yes he always wanted to go into the AIF. I could see his point of view. He had two brothers, the older brother was in the army, in Tobruk, and he had a younger brother in the air force who was with the occupation forces in Japan, and he wanted to join them - he was a soldier, and I should also say that even relations and a lot of people made snide remarks about him having a nice cushy job here when others were away getting themselves killed. He was an instructor, he was teaching others how to get killed but not getting killed himself. So he wanted to go away and do his bit but it just didn't work. He was all ready... to join the army when the Japanese surrendered.

Over at Rottnest he used to come home once a month for a weekend, and there was an old sailor called Gus Jansen - a Norwegian - and he would take the boat over, his little boat - he'd take it over no matter what the weather was like, it didn't make any difference, he'd have a bottle of beer in one hand and a corned beef sandwich in the other, and everybody else'd be hanging over the side being violently ill. But he'd come home on the Friday evening and he'd be still seasick and unsteady on his feet, and he'd just be beginning to recover when he had to go back on the Monday morning! So it was never really a very wonderful leave because they always felt so terrible.

JSG

Despite the flattening of Phillip Rock with explosives, which was deemed necessary to give an unobstructed sweep to the army's search lights, the army had a vested interest in preserving the island's landscape, as Bill Holder explains.

JOHN DUNLOP

What effect did the military occupation of Rottnest Island have on the island?
BILL HOLDER

Generally for the better, from several aspects. One of the most important ones which is often overlooked is the environmental one. The army did not damage the environment. They were practising conservation long before it was even thought of. But for military reasons. When the railroad was built, ... every embankment and cutting was carefully replanted, covered with brushes to regenerate the growth and so on, so there was very little environmental damage to the island. If a soldier drove a truck off a track he got into trouble. You had to use tracks not drive through the bush - for military reasons, camouflage. And in so doing they protected the environment, and it's very interesting to note that at the present time in the Kingstown Barracks area, where the Kingstown Barracks are, the army was in occupation a long time, there has been less damage done there to the environment and to the natural bird life than anywhere else on the island. And that's not generally realised. But let's be fair - it was for military reasons, and the fact that it was being done for military reasons protected the environment.

JSG

Eventually the men and women of the armed forces did leave Rottnest to the quokkas and to the tourists, though it was not until 1984 that the Barracks at Kingstown were finally vacated. They now function as an Environmental Education Centre and have become temporary home for thousands of West Australian school children who are being taught to view the island's history and environment with sympathy and understanding, and to participate actively in programmes of reafforestation and environmental protection designed to counter the thoughtlessness of a century. Their activities and the love for the island which is shared by most West Australians may provide a more optimistic note for the island's future than Jack O'Donoghue allows. Despite having witnessed some of the darker sides of the island's history, Jack retains a great love for the island and some fear for its future.

JACK O'DONOGHUE

As far as I'm concerned, Rottnest I would say is spoiled because it's too commercialised today. They've commercialised the island. I'd change the name myself from Rottnest to Commercial Island. It's not... it's not the same holiday place as it used to be. When they first started camping over there it was quite a real free holiday, but today there's too much restriction and it costs you more money to go there and more money to stay there and that. In the old days you went over there and it was a lot cheaper. You could go and you could get a bungalow or that for a pound a week. Now Geordie Bay and Longreach have got all these huts and that there, all the
flats, you see, and it's too commercialised. It's not a real holiday where you can go and have a free holiday. See it's too much like the city, commercialised you see, and you go there to the hostel - I still call it the hostel, the Lodge they call it today - and you go in there and they've got a swimming pool and lounges and all that - well you can do that here in the town. You're going out of the city into the city.

JSG

That was Jack O'Donoghue having the last word. This has been the History Show, produced by Jan Gothard using interviews conducted by Murdoch History Club students Gerry Varang, John Dunlop and Vicki McPadyen, speaking with Jack O'Donoghue, Mena and Tom Colvin, Evelyn Macnamara and Bill Holder. Next week's show will feature an interview with Ronda Jamieson from the Battye Library's oral history programme.
Australia, John Pilger once remarked, is a nation of remembrance. Every country town honours its fallen heroes, the mute figures of an Anzac standing guard over the names of friends and loved ones. At times even the landscape seems marked with the symbols of mourning, rows of gums and poplars the surrogate graves of soldiers. The irony, Pilger concluded, was that the wars they died in were almost always 'other peoples'. Of all the monuments which stand to battles in distant lands, none commemorate the battle in our own, the battle by Europeans to 'settle' Aboriginal Australia. But Pilger's observations are really only half the story. Monuments to the conquest of Aboriginal Australia lie all around us: the schools that stifle Aboriginal culture, the cities that scar the landscape, the prisons which provide a cell (often a last cell) for Aboriginal people.

Indeed the conquest is commemorated in the way 'history' is remembered. Towns and cities honour their pioneers in much the same way as they do their soldiers, their names are enshrined on parks, street corners and public buildings. Many a monument has been raised to these would-be celebrities, men who 'discovered' and 'settled' a country, discovered and settled 100,000 years before them. One such monument stands in the Esplanade Reserve Fremantle, flanked by the Norfolk pines and playgrounds of a typical Perth foreshore.

The monument is a memorial to three 'explorers', Panter, Harding and Goldwyer, killed on an expedition to La Grange, North-West Australia in 1864. Inscriptions and sculpture claim they were murdered in their sleep by 'treacherous natives' and praise the action of a punitive expedition which retrieved their remains. The expedition was led by Maitland Brown and culminated in the slaughter of an unknown number of Aboriginal people. A bust of Brown still crowns the granite pedestal, its eyes fixed towards La Grange in anger.

For many of the (so-called) Bicentennial year the statue stood at the centre of a controversy which involved several of Murdoch university's staff and students. The project was launched in
February, part of a course on Aboriginal history in which Geoffrey Bolton participated. It began as a teaching exercise. In early March, Bruce Scates delivered a lecture on the La Grange incident in an attempt to reconstruct the reasons behind violence on the black/white frontier. But the project soon grew in its proportions. By April students and staff had formed themselves into a working party to further research the origins of the monument, consult appropriate experts in the field and liaise with Aboriginal people. In May, Ray Minniecon, himself an Aboriginal student, visited La Grange and returned, sometime later, with representatives of the community. The research and consultation continued, culminating in a proposal for a plaque commemorating all Aboriginal people who died during the invasion of their country.

The proposal met with a cautious response from the Fremantle City Council, approving in principle to a plaque but prevaricating over its wording. This provided an opportunity for still more research and still more lobbying. By November, a second submission extended the original proposal, a new plaque explaining events at La Grange and so subverting the original intention of the monument. It too received the support of leading members of the historical community and members of the Aboriginal community at La Grange and elsewhere. On 21 November 1988, the Fremantle City Council formally ratified our proposal and the project entered its final dimension. Even as this article is being written, Ray Minniecon is preparing to travel once again to La Grange, to seek ideas on how the plaque should be mounted and what form the opening ceremony should take.

The documents reproduced here are a few of the many which emerged from this project. They include the original submission to the Fremantle City Council, the final wording of the plaque ratified in November and a statement issued to the press once the project had succeeded. In many ways they are a reflection of the Murdoch ethos and of the style of history Geoffrey Bolton helped to establish at Murdoch. From beginning to end the project was a collective effort; students and staff working together, sharing their ideas, hopes and frustrations. It was an example too of scholarship in the service of the community, bridging the gap between popular and academic history.

Finally, and most importantly, the Public Action Project asked that all Australians think more critically about their history, mindful that the way we see our past influences the way we act in the present. In a sense then, the monument which will be raised in Fremantle is also a monument to the way history has been taught and practised at Murdoch: it will change a symbol of racism and oppression, a symbol of Australia's past, into a statement all Australians can be proud of. As Humphrey McQueen once remarked, we cannot change our history, but we can escape it.
ENDNOTES

1. See the documentary, 'Other Peoples Wars' screened on ABC television in February 1988. For further discussion on the way Australia's war dead are remembered see Ken Inglis, The Australian Colonists: An Exploration of Social History 1788-1870, Melbourne, 1974, ch.15

2. For an engaging discussion of this aspect of public history see Graeme Davison, 'The Use and Abuse of Australian History' in Sue Janson and Stuart Macintyre (eds), Making the Bicentenary, Melbourne, 1988, pp.55-76. We disagree with Professor Davison's assertion that the challenge to this style of public history is 'essentially ephemeral (graffiti, handbills etc). Our efforts have shown it is not.

3. A revised text of the lecture is to be published in the next issue of Studies in West Australian History, under the title, 'A Monument to Murder: Celebrating the Conquest of Aboriginal Australia.'

4. Brian Alrich and Chris Carter examined COS Records; Vicky Hart and Elizabeth Thornber researched police files, Steve Hall, Judy Martin and Vicki McFadyen studied accounts kept by the explorers, Lorraine Williams examined other evidence by contemporaries and Justin Carroll prepared a video of our findings. Ray Minniecon and Michael Gallagher travelled to the North-West to supervise consultation with the La Grange community, whilst Carol Mann, Howard Pederson and Tom Stannage offered outside advice and encouragement. Rae Frances and Bruce Scates coordinated the project, and pioneered the research effort.

5. Ray Minniecon, Robyn Ninyette and Peter Scott (all Aboriginal students enrolled in Aboriginal history) have formed a Steering Committee to continue this process of consultation and seek funding from relevant government bodies.

6. This theme will be further explained in a forthcoming collective article in Arena: 'Honouring the Aboriginal Dead: Murdoch's Reply to the Bicentennial Celebration'. In November, Rae Frances and Bruce Scates were granted funding to travel to Broome, assist the Aboriginal community in locating the site of the massacre and prepare another collective item for Aboriginal History. We hope this project will materialise in the near future.

7. Humphrey McQueen, A New Britannia, Melbourne, 1975, forward
TO THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS OF THE CITY OF FREMANTLE:

The memorial pictured above stands in the Esplanade Park, Fremantle. It was erected in 1913 as a tribute to three explorers, Frederick Panter, James Harding and William Goldwyer killed on an expedition to the North West on or about 13 November 1864.

Source: Explorers' Memorial, Esplanade Park, Fremantle, 1988
The memorial claims the explorers were 'attacked at night and murdered by treacherous natives'. It implies they were killed in their sleep, a bas relief depicts two of the explorers murdered in their beds. It also praises the action of the 'punitive expedition' which retrieved their remains.

A bust of Maitland Brown crowns the granite pedestal. He led the expedition and supervised the slaughter of an unknown number of Aboriginal people. None of Brown's party were wounded or killed.

From the outset we concede that no-one can know for certain what happened at La Grange Bay. As always the historical record is incomplete. We have the testimony kept by the explorers but few stories told by Aboriginal people have survived. Much of the evidence is contradictory. Brown claims his punitive party was ambushed by 'natives', but there is much to suggest he deliberately sought the encounter. As a close personal friend of the explorers, his evidence should be seen as suspect.

Whilst we cannot reconstruct the past we should remember that there is more than one version of this event. We therefore ask the Council's permission to place a plaque on the monument commemorating the Aboriginal dead. Its text would read:

THIS PLAQUE COMMEMORATES
ALL THOSE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE
WHO DIED DURING THE INVASION OF THEIR COUNTRY
LEST WE FORGET

We base this request on the following grounds:

1) The monument is an insult to the Aboriginal Community.

The language the memorial uses is the language of colonialism. It describes Aboriginal Australia as a 'terra incognita', a land white people have a right to occupy and explore. It claims that the killing of the explorers was a cowardly and 'treacherous' act, but fails to consider the violence and provocation which led to their death.

Much is made of the claim that the explorers were killed at night, whilst asleep. Nothing is said of the firearms and horses which gave Europeans an advantage at any other time. Nor is mention made of the severity of the punitive action which retrieved the explorers' remains. At least four Aboriginals died for each of the explorers. They were killed without even the pretense of a trial. In short, the monument praises the achievements of the pioneers, but overlooks the cost, to Aboriginal people, of the occupation of their land. In doing so it reflects many of the prejudices of its time, depicting Aboriginal people as a savage and primitive race.
This monument was erected by

C.J. FROCKMAN

As a fellow bush wanderer's tribute to the memory of

PANTER, HARDING AND GOLDWYER

Earliest explorers after Grey and Gregory of this Terra Incognita, attacked at night by treacherous natives were murdered at Boola Boola near Le Grange Bay on the 13th November 1864.

Also as an appreciative token of remembrance of

MAITLAND BROWN

one of the pioneer pastoralists and premier politicians of this State, intrepid leader of the government search and punitive party, his remains together with the sad relics of the ill fated three recovered at great danger from the lone wilds repose under public monument in the East Perth Cemetery

"LEST WE FORGET"

Transcript of the inscription on the Explorers' Memorial, Fremantle
The images evoked by the memorial are equally offensive. A bas relief on the western side of the monument depicts the discovery of the explorers' remains. Two Aboriginal people stand in the foreground of the picture, chains draped around their necks. The message conveyed by the sculpture is that the 'wicked native' has been forced to acknowledge the evil of his crime; Aboriginal people are portrayed as murderers and Europeans as their innocent victims. But this again is a one-sided view of events. The two Aboriginal men depicted here were killed not long after the discovery of the explorers. Both were shot in the back whilst trying to 'escape'. Their deaths were only the beginning of the killing. Two days later, Maitland Brown's attack on an Aboriginal camp claimed at least 15 other lives.

Source: Explorers' Memorial, Esplanade Park, Fremantle, 1988
Given this portrayal of Aboriginal people, a plaque commemorating the Aboriginal dead would serve a very important purpose. It would remind white Australians that there is more than one side to the story, that Aboriginal people, here and elsewhere, struggled to defend their land against overwhelming odds.

Many Aboriginal people have welcomed this proposal. The Aboriginal community at La Grange, some of whom are the direct descendants of those killed by Maitland Brown, have given their permission for the placement of the plaque. As Appendix One suggests, our research involved long and careful consultation with Aboriginal people at La Grange.

Many members of Perth's Aboriginal community have also participated in the project. Several are signatories to the submission itself.

2) The monument is an insult to white Australians.

1988 is a year many Australians have begun to look more critically at their past. Of course there is a great deal to be proud of, but there is also cause for anger and regret. The occupation of Australia by Europeans led (directly and indirectly) to thousands of Aboriginal deaths. Many died of disease, others were shot, poisoned and starved. All were casualties of the European invasion of their country.

We believe that many of these deaths could have been avoided. We are ashamed that 'punitive expeditions' like that led by Maitland Brown was the standard response to trouble on the frontier.

By recognising the Aboriginal dead we are recognising our responsibility to the past. The plaque would represent an act of friendship and respect. It would symbolise the hope for peace.

3) The monument distorts and disguises the real causes behind the explorers' deaths.

In preparing this proposal, the students and staff of Murdoch University conducted extensive research into the early history of the North West. Our findings, along with copies of relevant archival material, are appended to this report. We are satisfied that:

a) There was a history of black/white conflict in the region. The purpose of exploration was settlement. Panter's expedition was financed by the Roebuck Bay Pastoral Association, a company formed to appropriate Aboriginal lands and 'settle' the district. There was no real attempt at negotiation, Europeans assumed the land was theirs. As such it is not surprising that there was conflict. Aboriginals and Europeans soon competed for the scarce economic resources of the region, notably water. This is
illustrated in Document A, where Frederick Panter, one of the explorers killed, captures and threatens Aboriginal people in an attempt to locate 'native' wells. The killing of Panter and his party may well have been retaliation for the indignities suffered by Aboriginal people. This argument is elaborated on in the article appended to the report (see appendix).

DOCUMENT A
FREDERICK PANTER'S JOURNAL
MAY 1864

May 14th 1864

Dined at Kagelik after leaving 18 miles of a high and rocky jasper country about the size of a large dish. Left Kagelik about 4 o’clock, the three other boats and canoes in sight of our vessel. Sailed close to land and kept up the left side of the ship, being stopped by some head which came under a head of the ship, to check for water, when cut off to the left by a head of the end of the land, around which waters (on their return) are kept, to keep the land to windward. But after some time, the land is seen, the boats are then brought to the left by the head, and about 2 miles off the land, off which two canoes, with a man on each, and Adolphe were then seen. The canoes, one in
May 19th 1864

Started at daybreak travelling over 12 miles of (flat?) and thickly grassed country, struck the seabeach at 5.30 pm camped close to Cape Le Touche Treville, which forms the further boundary of La Grange Bay. At the top of the flat on which we camped we found a (?) well with plenty of salt water in it. During the afternoon (?) myself and Tommy went ahead of the party to look for water. When within a mile of the well we surprised three natives (one man and two women) who were gathering shells on a reef, we tried to catch the man but after several (tries?) he was off the reef and none of us could catch him; he came up within 20 yards of me with his spear up as soon as I put my gun to my shoulder, he took to his heels. (?) the rest of the party came up when (then?) I went near the women they began to spit at me M.R. Martin and Back did not care for her spitting for they brought her down to the camp.

We gave her several small presents much to her surprise let her go, instead of (as she evidently thought) assaulting(spearing?) her.


b) The attack on the explorers was not unprovoked. Document B is comprised of entries made in the explorers' journals. It records the way in which Aboriginal people beckoned them to
b) The attack on the explorers was not unprovoked. Document B is comprised of entries made in the explorers' journals. It records the way in which Aboriginal people beckoned them to leave. 'They kept whispering', Panter wrote, 'and making signs we did not understand.' It is possible that the explorers' presence desecrated some sacred site. In any case, the whites' response was an invitation to further conflict. Panter fired his pistol over the heads of the crowd.

DOCUMENT B
FREDERICK PANTER'S DIARY
NOVEMBER 1864

The following are the Journals kept by the three unfortunate explorers of their route south:—

MR. PANTER’S.

Wednesday, 9th Nov.—Started at 5.30 a.m. for Lagrange Bay, and at sunset arrived at Cape Latouche Trelville, 30 miles, mostly through thickets with spinifex and little grass; found a plentiful supply of water in an old well. Nov. 10.—Went to the Cape to take bearings, saw 7 natives and spoke to three of them.
Nov. 11.—Left at sunrise for Lagrange Bay, first 5 miles spinifex, then 5 miles of plain narrow, with grass and some spinifex, the former most plentiful, good water at 7 miles; mid-day halt on good feeding country with a fine well; saw a number of natives who all ran away. After dinner followed a track running round the edge of a splendid plain; at 6 miles came to a well with lots of good water; this plain is well grassed with very little spinifex; saw the remains of a recent corobory; walked a short distance into the bush land which was pretty clear and better grassed.

Nov. 12.—Started at daylight across the plains for 6 miles, all of which was well grassed with 5 kinds; came to a dense cajeputi thicket with water 10 inches from the surface and, I have no doubt, in some places on it; trees 50 to 60 feet high almost perfectly straight; at 3 miles farther came to a small lake (5 acres) with beautiful fresh water, thousands of cockatoos, ducks, &c., shot four. In the afternoon Mr. Harding and myself found more swamps at 3 miles distant in a S.E. direction, there was not much water in them but splendid grass all round; we also found several strong springs in a cajeputi thicket; kangaroo tracks very numerous; returned to camp before sunset; saw 12 flamingoes.

Nov. 13.—Remained in camp. Early in the morning 24 natives came to us; gave them 5 cockatoos and 5 pigeons; they left soon after but in an hour returned with spears, &c., and as they appeared to be up to some mischief we frightened them away by firing a revolver; they kept whispering and making signs we could not understand. In another hour we again saw them sneaking behind some bushes, but when seen they ran away.
Further evidence of provocation is provided by one of Panter's letters to his superiors. (Document C). It confirms that the explorers' relationship with Aboriginal people continued to worsen after the incident on the reef. Note that Panter addresses Aboriginal people as 'niggers', such a man was hardly likely to inspire respect.

**DOCUMENT C**

FREDERICK PANTER'S LETTER TO THE
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE
OCTOBER 1864

Rockall Bay
October 14th 1864

My dear Mr. Hogan,

I must send you this letter to make it clear to our superiors all the difficulties we are running into with the Niggers. I have had two of them very badly beaten up to this present time. A man like me is not likely to inspire respect. What do you think of a man who is in his house as in the story: One night the rest of the boys bade farewell to their leader who went to the islands and left a man behind. He expected they would come back with him and live as they had been doing. They didn't come, and when they did they only took the 'dear thing'.

I have just returned from the north of the island. I had a very rough time, so far as the Aborigines were concerned, but they had left a boat and a few things for us. We were able to get back to Rockall Bay without much trouble. I have heard that the Aborigines are still fighting for the island. I don't know how they will end it, but I should like to return to the island. I have not heard from the island, and I am out of touch with the Aborigines. I have heard that there is something in the area which I cannot

... I expect before the next ship arrives some of the niggers [will get] a pass to 'kingdom come' things are not what George Leake would call the 'dear thing' ...

Source: Letter - F.K. Panter to W. Hogan (Superintendent of Police) 19 October 1864, Special Police Files, Acc No 129, 7/22, Battye Library, Perth
c) Given this history of hostilities in the region and that the whites had fired on Aboriginal people the night of their deaths, it is highly unlikely that they were killed in their sleep.

The myth of martyred innocents is enshrined by the monument and innumerable historical accounts. It was a way to justify further violence on the frontier. A critical evaluation of the evidence however suggests that the explorers were not killed in their sleep. Goldwyer's body was found several feet from the tent and four shots had been fired from his revolver (see Document D: Maitland Brown's Journal). This suggests that Goldwyer stood guard while the other two men rested. They were probably killed as they rose to defend themselves, all the blows being delivered to the front.

DOCUMENT D

MAITLAND BROWN'S JOURNAL

1865

Journal of an Expedition in search of Messrs. Panter, Harding and Goldwyer. 17

...to recruit, necessitated my coming here. All the country passed over to-day with the exception of the plains is entirely useless, consisting of thickets and spindles without grass; and from the appearance of that five miles further north than to-day's most northerly point, and 32 miles E. from the tree, I cannot possibly expect the existence of good country of any great extent near in those directions, but there is a probability of good existing all round the bay.

8.—Rested the horses all day; went out "hard" on the "Clarence Peaks" with Mr. Burgess, Williams, and Katrina; the latter I exchanged for two other prisoners, who he says are guilty and who, while on board the ship said they would cheer us at the remains of the missing party, but now that they are on land and have seen the four tracks of natives and signal fires, they profess total ignorance of the whole matter and want us to go to the S.W., to get some others as guides whom they say they will point out as guilty, and who are in possession of guns and a hatchet belonging to the missing party. I place no faith whatever in the tale for I feel sure they are themselves guilty, and consequently know where to take us to; bindman shall at first be used to induce them to show us what we want, if that fails they shall be put to tests which shall prove positively their innocence or guilt. Mr. Francisco, who has kindly volunteered his services, and native constable Tommy will supply proof of the pieces of Mr. Burgess and Williams, and I shall start to-morrow for Lake Ingredans.

9.—At sunrise towards Booloolboolo (Ingredans) with the two natives—A. and B.—preferentially taking the lead, each equipped with Dutchman's belt by a light chain. After passing the large open plain they kept up for some minutes an eager animated conversation with each other in low tones, seemed quite undecided what to do, and changed their course several times. But finally all talking ceased and they kept a direct course for the north end of the lake until within a quarter of a mile of it, when they gradually ceased to the left keeping a respectful distance with their eyes fixed on the ground. There was hardly a word spoken among ourselves—all saw that the fate of our poor friends would soon be learned, and every one looked anxiously round in all directions. After going a little farther Mr. Dougall cried out "Here they are!" His quick eye had caught sight of a prismatic compass hanging from a branch of a small cajopi tree to our right, in a level clear grass plot bordering the grove which encircles Lake Ingredans; it was a neat little sunken sign, and as Dougall cried out I turned in his horoscope and pointed to it, as if dreading to approach; it told the tale and he knew it.

With what dreadful anxiety we rode up to that tree; our feelings upon reaching it were beyond expression; there, at its foot, lay the dead bodies of our friends where they had been murdered while sleeping months before. Those of Panter and Harding on the one side lying head to hand, covered as far as the knees with a tent which had been drawn over them after death; the legs at both from the knees downwards, and the left arm of Panter protruded beyond the covering, almost perfect but slightly shrunk. The body of Goldwyer was lying on its face with the head turned to the right angles with Panter's feet, dressed in a riding costume, perfectly recognisable but decayed to a skeleton. Scattered round were broken pieces and splinters of arms and dorsals, three journals, books, leather packet, pouches, powder flasks, rusted revolvers, rags, boots, and usual travelling equipments. We sat for a few minutes on our horses looking sadly down nothing was spoken or heard but the repeated "poor fellows, poor fellows," in a tone which showed how much everyone felt. I then sent the rest to the sheds of three Mission trees one hundred yards away to form a camp, and remained with Mr. Francisco to examine everything minutely. After finishing at the camp and watering the horses, some of the rest returned and assisted in gathering up everything that could be found.

Of the guns and revolvers, two of the latter only were found; one, missing in a wooden plaited white shirt pattern, with a light silk pocket handkerchief, very much decayed, tied over the lower part of his forehead and eyes. Harding's was lying ten yards away with four barrels discharged and two loaded. Each of the journals were found lying near the body of its late owner.

On removing the tarp-covering from the bodies of Panter and Harding, I found up on their faces with the right hand of each underneath, and a revolver lying on the heads of both. The former was dressed in a woolen plaid shirt of a black and white check pattern, with a light silk pocket handkerchief, very much decayed, tied over the lower part of his forehead and eyes. The latter, in a light blue cotton shirt with a thick roll, very much decayed, tied over the lower part of his forehead and eyes. Harding was lying on a bed of cut
Of the guns and revolvers, two of the latter only were found; one, Harding's, was lying near him with every barrel loaded and the hammer down on the catch; the other, Goldwyer's, was lying ten yards away with four barrels discharged and two loaded. Each of the Journals were found lying near the body of its late owner.

Source: Maitland Brown Journal of an Expedition in the Roebuck Bay District, Perth 1865, p.17

D) We wish to make a final comment on the authenticity of the historical record itself. Great credence has been given to white sources, the records of the explorers and even those of the punitive party have been treated as literal accounts. By contrast few Aboriginal sources have survived. The only (contemporary) Aboriginal testimonies we have of what happened at La Grange were obtained by Maitland Brown. Many of these accounts were second or third hand and most were obtained by force (the interrogation of hostages). Linguistic differences posed another problem. It seems unlikely that these accounts represented Aboriginal perceptions, much of that recorded was simply what Maitland Brown wanted or expected to hear. Even so, the testimony of Aboriginal people (such as Pier ding mar ra) throws serious doubts on the conventional accounts of the explorers' deaths. Pier ding mar ra claims the explorers were killed after several battles, battles in which Aboriginal people also lost their lives. These battles took place by day as well as by night. The explorers were finally overcome when they were 'mortally wounded'. In all, the conflict was far more protracted and far more costly to Aboriginal people than the conventional account concedes. In Pier ding mar ra's estimate the explorers killed eighteen aborigines before they themselves were killed.
A native named Pendung marra came a few days ago from the east and told Pierre that about four months ago three white men with four horses were seen on a journey about ten days journey to the eastward of this, by the tribe of natives the tribe of natives at a river called Booleboo. The white men slept there that night and the next morning proceeded in this direction, but during the day were met and attacked by the natives who saw them. The white men shot and killed three of their number which caused the rest to run away. The white men did not come any further this way but returned that day to their camp of the night before, which was upon a level plain near the bank of the river, to this place the natives followed them keep ing out of sight and watched them until all fell asleep where


A native named Peir ding mar ca came a few days from the east, and told me that about four months ago three white men with four horses were seen one night about ten days journey to the eastward of this,
by the Wiogararry tribe of natives, at a river called Boolu boolu; the white men slept there that night and next morning proceeded in this direction, but during the day were met and attacked by the natives who saw them the night before with others but the white men immediately shot and killed three of their number which caused the rest to run away; the white men did not come any further this way but returned that day to their camp of the night before, which was upon a level plain near the bank of the river; to this place the natives followed them keeping out of sight, and then watched them until all fell asleep when with increased numbers stole upon them, stuck spears thro them all and tried to keep them pinned to the ground, but without success as they got on their feet in spite of their wounds and all the efforts made to prevent them, and killed fifteen of the natives and succeeded in driving the rest away. These knowing the white men to be mortally wounded, collected more natives who were all through the night gathering from all quarters, and returned before daylight this time overpowering the white men who were unable to offer much resistance, by rushing upon them with spears and clubsticks.

The next day they killed the horses with clubs. They have not touched an article belonging to the white men.

Source: Maitland Brown to Colonial Secretary
11 March 1865, CSR Acc 36, Vol 555,
pp 169-170, Ratty Library, Perth

It seems appropriate we end this submission in the same way we ended our letter to the people of La Grange.

...'History ... has great power. It has the power to enlighten and to change. If our stories are true, they can be a path to understanding, a means to heal the wounds that still divide our two people. But when the story is a lie, the past and the present are distorted. History becomes a weapon to do evil'.

We therefore believe a plaque commemorating the Aboriginal dead is in the interests of all Australians. It will help correct an imbalance in the way in which we see the past and lay a better foundation for the future.

We ask that the Council

a) approve this proposal for a plaque on the monument

b) contribute to the cost of the plaque
c) contribute to the airfare of a representative (or representatives) of the La Grange community to enable them to take part in any ceremony.

We look forward to your response.

NAME SIGNATURE

Ms Raelene Frances
Dr Bruce Scates
Convenors: Public Action Project

NAME SIGNATURE

Mr Brian Aldrich
Mr Justin Carroll
Mrs Chris Carter
Mr Steve Hall
Ms Vicky Hart
Mrs Judy Martin
Ms Vicki McPadyen
Mr Ray Minniecon
Dr Elizabeth Thornber
Ms Lorraine Williams

Members: Working Party, Public Action Project
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<th>NAME</th>
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<th>ADDRESS OR INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Michael Gallagher</td>
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<td>Historian of North West Australia</td>
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<td>Murdoch University</td>
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<td>Ms Carol Mann</td>
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<td>Aboriginal Liaison Officer</td>
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<td>Murdoch University</td>
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<td>Mr Howard Pedersen</td>
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<td>Aboriginal Planning Authority, Perth</td>
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<td>Associate Professor Tom Stannage</td>
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<td>Historian</td>
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<td>University of Western Australia</td>
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Public Action Project Advisers

The following members of Perth's Aboriginal community have asked that their names be added to this submission. All are considered spokespeople for Perth's Aboriginal community.

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<tr>
<td>Mr Tom Babban</td>
<td>Director, Institute for Applied Aboriginal Studies, WACAE</td>
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<td>Mr Robert Bropho</td>
<td>Aboriginal Spokesperson, Guildford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Ken Colbung</td>
<td>Aboriginal Cultural College, Wanneroo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Len Colbung</td>
<td>Black Action Group, Perth</td>
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<td>Mr Len Collard</td>
<td>Aboriginal Access, Rockingham, also Aboriginal Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Dannie Ford</td>
<td>Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Sealin Garlett</td>
<td>Theology Student, Murdoch University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Elizabeth Hayden</td>
<td>Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority, East Perth</td>
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</table>
Mr Cedric Jacobs
One Australia Movement, Midlands

Mr Darryl Kickett
Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University

Ms Gladys Milroy
Birukmarri Gallery, Fremantle

Ms Sally Morgan
Aboriginal Author, Perth

Ms Isobelle Proctor
Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Perth

Mr Keith Truscott
Aboriginal Studies, WACAE

Ms Mara West
Aboriginal Access, Mt. Lawley

Ms Joan Winch
Aboriginal Medical Service, West Perth

Mr Ken Wyatt
Aboriginal Lands Trust, West Perth

The following members of the historical profession have asked that their names be included in this submission. All have a special expertise in the field of black/white relations in Western Australia and/or West Australian History.

Professor Geoffrey Bolton
Dean, Social Inquiry, Murdoch University

Ms Jenny Carter
Librarian and Archivist, Aboriginal Planning Authority, Perth

Mr Neville Green
Historian, WACAE

Dr Anna Haebich
Historian, WACAE

Dr Lenore Layman
Lecturer in History, Murdoch University

Mr Paul Roberts
Film-maker and Historian, Fremantle

Ms Mary Anne Jebb*
Postgraduate History Student, Murdoch University

* Name accidentally omitted from submission presented to Council.
FIRST PREFERENCE: THE MONUMENT AS AN HISTORICAL ARTEFACT.

This plaque was erected by people who found the monument before you offensive.
The monument describes the events at La Grange from one perspective only: the viewpoint of the white 'settlers'.
No mention is made of the right of Aboriginal people to defend their land or of the history of provocation which led to the explorers' deaths.
The 'punitive party' mentioned here ended in the deaths of somewhere around twenty Aboriginal people.
The whites were well-armed and equipped and none of their party was killed or wounded.
This plaque is in memory of the Aboriginal people killed at La Grange. It also commemorates all other Aboriginal people who died during the invasion of their country.

LEST WE FORGET

Reduced reproduction of the plaque depicting explorers:
Panter, Harding and Goldwyer were killed by Aboriginal people at La Grange in 1864. Their deaths followed a long history of conflict in the region, the white 'settlers' having occupied the land without treaty and interrogated Aboriginal people as to the whereabouts of water. There is also evidence that they desecrated sacred sites. One of the last letters Panter wrote vowed to give 'these niggers (sic) a pass to kingdom come.' That in itself is evidence of the provocation behind their killing.

Reduced reproduction of camp scene:
A few months after the explorers' deaths a search party set out from Fremantle. It took several Aboriginal people hostage, placed them in chains and denied them food and water. The two hostages depicted on the monument (their names were not recorded) led the party to the explorers' last campsite on 4 April 1865. They were killed the following day, shot in the back whilst trying to escape their captors.

Reduced reproduction of Brockman:
C. J. Brockman built this monument commemorating the explorers and Maitland Brown, a friend and contemporary. Brockman was a prominent pastoralist whose fortune was made by the expropriation of Aboriginal land and the use of cheap (often unpaid) Aboriginal labour. Maitland Brown led the 'punitive party' which avenged the explorers' deaths, killing at least twenty Aboriginal people. He later became a magistrate at Geraldton and a member of the Legislative Council.

Historical research by the staff and students of Murdoch University.
The wording of this plaque has been chosen in consultation with the La Grange Community.

Unveiled by ____________________________ on ____________________________
as a gesture of peace and understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.
On behalf of all the people who have supported this project, students, historians, Aboriginal people and other concerned citizens, we congratulate the Fremantle City Council on the historic decision it has made this evening. For over 70 years the Explorers' monument in Fremantle has lied about our past; it has celebrated the crimes committed by Western Australia's white pioneers, condoned the slaughter of Aboriginal people and the theft of their lands. The plaque Council approved this evening is nothing less than a repudiation of that monument, and a repudiation of Australia's past. It explains the events which happened at La Grange, acknowledging that the killing of the Explorers was a logical consequence of European aggression on the frontier. The men honoured by the monument treated Aboriginal people with cruelty and contempt, their deaths were not unprovoked but part of an attempt to defend Aboriginal lives and Aboriginal lands.

The plaque also condemns the punitive expedition sent to retrieve the Explorers' remains, an expedition which ended in the slaughter of an unknown number of Aboriginal people. Punitive expeditions like this one were not uncommon in Western Australia's history, many such massacres marked the boundaries of the frontier. These killings were an attempt to squash Aboriginal resistance to the invasion of their land; it is a testimony to the courage and endurance of Aboriginal people that their struggle continues to this day.

Obviously this plaque is much more than a statement about events at La Grange a hundred and twenty years ago. It is a statement about today as well. It acknowledges that Aboriginal people are the sovereign owners of their country and that their land was taken from them at a terrible human cost. It acknowledges that the white settlement we have been called upon to celebrate this year was in fact an 'invasion'. Finally, it pays tribute to all Aboriginal people who have fought to defend their culture and their land.

This plaque is only part of a long process of rewriting Australia's history. All over Australia, monuments have been erected to white 'pioneers', overlooking those whose lands and lives were taken from them. Our plaque is intended to put the other side of the story, the
story from the other side of the frontier. We congratulate the Council once again on the historic example it has set. This plaque will become a symbol of hope to all Australians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who seek to renounce the crimes of the past, and the inequalities of the present and build a better Australia for us all.

(Ms) Raelene Frances
(Dr) Bruce Scates
Coordinators
Public Action Project

(Mr) Ray Minniecon
(Ms) Robyn Ninyette
Aboriginal Steering Committee
Public Action Project

for the Public Action Project
Murdoch University

Source:
- Submission to the City of Fremantle, October 1988, pp. 224-241
- Extract from Report to the Finance and Executive Committee, City of Fremantle, November 1988, p.242
- Statement to the Press, 21 November 1988, pp243-244
HISTORY ON THE AIR 1:

Coming Home: Vietnam Veterans' Experience of War

by Grant Walton, Anne Matacz, Ayaz Khan and Bruce Clarke

EDITORS' NOTE

The two transcripts reproduced here were broadcast on 6UVSFM in January 1989. They were produced by Murdoch University history students, part of a Special Topic in History - History on the Air: Popular Protest in Australia.

The course centred on the themes of repression and dissent, exploring the changing role of protest from Aboriginal resistance to the European invasion to the counter culture of the 60's and beyond. Its approach was both theoretical and empirical. A conscious effort was made to employ conceptual models from abroad, applying the work of Hobsbawn, Rude and Thompson to an Australian context. At the same time, students were encouraged to explore the archives for themselves, the documents they uncovered forming an important part of each week's seminar/workshop. Finally, and most importantly, Special Topic emphasised the need to populise the past. Students were required to produce a radio programme as well as a formal essay, offering them the opportunity to work with a new way of communicating history. The 'History Shows' (as they were called) also offered a departure from conventional forms of assessment, students working together in groups of three or four, collectively researching and producing their particular broadcast. The transcripts which follow offer two dramatically different perspectives on Australian's experience of war, but both share Geoffrey Bolton's commitment to writing history for a wider audience.

A. PROTEST RALLY

General Crowd Noises - Laughing, hubhub, murmuring, honking etc.

1. (Song) All We Are Saying is Give Peace a Chance.

2. (Shouting) Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh!! (Repeat)
3. (Chanting) One Two Three Four
   We Don't Want Your Bloody War!

4. (Song) People Come Gather Where
   Ever You Are, For the Times
   They Are a Changing.

5. Megaphone What Do We Want!
   Crowd Stop The War!
   Megaphone When Do We Want It!
   Crowd Now!
   (Repeat)

B. STATEMENT FROM PETER MCDONALD:

Whilst I was serving in Vietnam throughout the Tet Offensive
there were quite a number of strikes - mail strikes and wharf
strikes.

It was very hurtful, I was very angry along with a lot of
the soldiers there. People in my situation were spending probably
three or four weeks in the bush seeing quite an amount of action at
that stage because we were right in the middle of the Tet Offensive.
We saw a lot of casualties, a lot of people we knew quite well were
getting killed and wounded. We would come back [to camp] and the
only contact we had with the outside world - Australia - home - was
the mail and of course when we got back from the bush it just wasn't
there and we were told that the wharfies were on strike, the posties
were on strike in protest against the Vietnam War.

It made me very angry, so angry that I think I would have
done physical damage to a wharfie or a postie had I had contact with
them - as it was we had a saying going round 'punch a postie!'

C. INTRODUCTION

NARRATOR

Hello, and welcome to the history show.

Today, we want to take you into the recent past, and to
events which are still contentious in Australian society. Today the
history show, in keeping with the theme of popular protest, will
examine the protest movement during the Vietnam war, but more
importantly, the affects that such protest had upon the Australian
soldiers who fought in Australia's longest war.

During this broadcast we will be interviewing Peter McDonald
and David McArdle who served in Vietnam.
Australia's involvement in Vietnam began in May 1962, when Athol Townly, the then Minister for Defence announced that Australia would be supporting the American military commitment in Vietnam by sending a team of 29 observers to the Saigon. With the deteriorating situation in Vietnam throughout the late 1960's Australia's military commitment increased to include not only the army training team, but Naval destroyers, a diving team, air transport, helicopter and combat units and the Australian Army Task Force, the largest commitment, stationed in Phuoc Tuy province from May 1966 until November 1971. In all 46 852 military personnel from all services served in Vietnam at a cost of $218.4m., although this figure may have been as high as $500m. Of those who served, 17 424 were National Service men, 496 were killed, and 2 398 wounded.

The decision by the Australian Government to commit its armed forces to the conflict was rationalised by the Domino Theory, the belief that it was necessary to halt the southward expansion of Chinese inspired communism through a policy of 'forward defence'. American military might was seen as essential to maintaining the security of South East Asia and Australia.

It is certain that if the Vietminh were to overrun the whole country the present Government of Vietnam would be replaced by a regime scarcely distinguishable from other communist satellite governments...Should the forces of communism prevail and Vietnam come under the heel of Communist China, Malaya is in danger of being outflanked and it, together with Thailand, Burma, and Indonesia, will become the next direct object of further communist activities.
SECOND POLITICIAN

Indochina is the key to the defence of South-East Asia... The loss of this area would greatly simplify continued communist expansion in South-East Asia, which would probably lead to the collapse of Burma and Thailand and to a dangerous weakening of internal security in Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines... While Indochina is held, defence in depth is provided for the Australia-New Zealand main support area.

THIRD POLITICIAN

It has been Australian policy to attract U.S. interest in (and commitment to) South-East Asia and the western Pacific. There are signs of U.S. impatience with her allies. U.S. officials have expressed strong private criticism of U.S. delays. The danger of the U.S. withdrawing to isolationism should not be discounted... At the same time the American proposals have to be examined on their political and military merits, and moreover American public opinion itself might not back active military intervention by the United States in Indo-China.

NARRATOR - BACKGROUND MUSIC "THE TIMES ARE a'CHANGING", "TAMBOURINE MAN" AND "BLOWING IN THE WIND" BY BOB DYLAN.

The Vietnam war had many far-reaching consequences for the people of Australia. However these consequences were not confined to the combatants and servicemen alone. For a large number of Australians the Vietnam war generated further conflict, this time not in the jungles and rice paddies of Vietnam but in Australia itself.

Vietnam was a war which steadily grew more unpopular as the casualty lists increased and the years dragged on. The dual desire for peace in Vietnam and the end to the conscription of Australia's youth inevitably came into conflict with the more conservative sectors of Australian society and thus the Vietnam era was an era of protest and confrontation between opposing viewpoints.

NARRATOR

Protest about Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war was voiced in many ways; one of the most notable being protest rallies. Of these rallies the moratorium march of May 8 and 9 in 1970, led by outspoken left-wing Labor parliamentarian Dr. Jim Cairns, featured most prominently.

Further forms of protest which were utilised by the opponents of the Vietnam war were strike actions such as the strike on loading the resupply ships the Jeparit in December of 1968 and the highly disruptive mail strike.
These protest actions were done with the best possible motives of making peace in Vietnam and preventing young Australians from going to war against their will. However in its attempt to achieve its aims these actions unfortunately targeted, for the blame, the wrong people, who were the Australian servicemen. Many servicemen still bear the scars of the blame.

NARRATOR

Born in the cocoon of the sixties counter culture, the peace movement openly attempted to stop the war, but at what cost? No matter how righteous the cause, the protest targeted the wrong people, and the soldiers themselves began to question why they should become the victims of a misdirected nation's conscience.

DAVID McARDLE:

No one said 'Why?' No one ever questioned 'why?' No one asked the questions that should have been asked when there were those sorts of things going on.

NARRATOR

Many felt anger, confusion and frustration.

PETER McDONALD:

I was just sort of very angry, very hurt and very confused. I guess anger would be the right word... anger was always there because of the experiences I'd gone through and knowing that people were still there going through the same experiences. I think if anyone realised what the Australian soldier was all about they wouldn't have taken that attitude.

NARRATOR

The sheer size of the May 1970 moratorium took many aback. It was incomprehensible that a nation could condemn their own soldiers in such large numbers, without understanding the nature of the conflict.

PETER McDONALD

Well, for one, people don't understand why, especially now when you think back and you look at the death and destruction. I have very very close memories of friends of mine and think often of what happened. I mean every Anzac day, every reunion, every time I think about it I have that feeling that it was a worthless war; people just don't know what it was about. I think the hardest thing
of all was that when we come home and when we related to people not only during wartime... but years after that it was still embarassing to be a Vietnam veteran: People didn't understand what the Vietnam war was about, what happened, what we were there for.

DAVID McARDLE

Yes, I'd blame a group of sheep who went along without finding out both sides of the story.

POET

When you're on your protest marches with your badge of peace in tow, give a thought to those still up there for they'd really like it known, that you don't really scorn them you just fight to get them home.

NARRATOR

It was easier to blame individuals. Dr. Jim Cairns, the head of the Moratorium committee, became the symbol of many soldiers hatred, and came to be considered simply as a political opportunist.

PETER McDONALD

I think I would say that the most angry I got would have been with people like Cairns. I think if, at that time, if you had have asked nine out of ten servicemen if they would like to do him some damage or shoot him or something like that you would have got nine of ten volunteers each time.

NARRATOR

At a later interview, Dr. Cairns made easy excuses for the effect of the moratorium on the troops.

CAIRNS

The moratorium would have made the troops angry. I don't know whether that would have made them any less effective as fighters. Angry people generally fight better than those who are not.

NARRATOR

They were angry - and they were hurt.
PETER McDONALD

The theory was then that Vietnam was a very real threat. The fact was that we were highly trained, that in a situation we had no hesitation in killing. You did what you had to do, what had to be done to save your life or the lives of others. You didn't feel remorse for that... because you felt you were fighting for your country. And then you came home to a situation where people were calling you - I guess at the extreme - a murderer or ignoring that you existed, that Vietnam veterans even existed. It got to the point where you were totally embarrassed to be a Vietman vet.

NARRATOR

Yet no matter how difficult the moratoriums were, they were not as difficult to bear as the frequent anti-war strikes, threatening their supplies and links with home.

DAVID McARDLE

The main moratorium was just prior to my going to Vietnam. The first thing I thought of course was the people who were already over there and I'm pretty sure with the type of communication that was available in those days that they couldn't have understood why people would have protested as violently as they did. Fair enough that they protested to get you home but I believe somewhere in there it got completely wild and that's at the time when servicemen coming back from Vietnam were being called every sort of name - murderer - rapist - the usual sort of ragtag names that you can use.

NARRATOR

The strike by the supply ship JEPARIT hit hard. Many men were without mail for weeks, and suffered when the supplies for Christmas were subsequently withheld.

When they returned, it was not as heroes; many being brought in behind Mascot airport late at night. People didn't want to know about Vietnam veterans.

DAVID McARDLE

The other thing, of course, was that when you did come back no one wanted to know you, about what you had done and therefore you didn't get the opportunity to release all that frustration and anger and even question why people were carrying on the way they were.

NARRATOR

They were disenchanted.
The RSL and veterans from other wars turned a blind eye to the plight of many a veteran. After all, Vietnam wasn't a real war, hadn't they lost?

**MUSIC: COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH**

'AND IT'S ONE TWO THREE FOUR, WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR'

**RE-ENACTMENT**

**BACKGROUND PUB NOISES: BACKGROUND MUSIC - 'SHE'S LEAVING'**

1st Digger - Did ya, did ya hear Alfy. They're sendin' in more troops by God!
2nd Digger - Are they by Jesus. Nah, nev-ar happened in our day. Shit, send in a' bunch of thu boys mop it up in a few days a so.
1st Digger - Yeh, the old battalion.
2nd Digger - Yeh.
1st Digger - Not a real war is it.
2nd Digger - Nut.
1st Digger - It's just, just a bunch a slopey eyed Jibbos. Couldn't fight for nuthin.
2nd Digger - Yes. Stood up ta the Japs we did, and Jerry. Not a real war.
1st Digger - Yeh, thing is. They're all soft now. No fight in'em. The Aussie soldyus a thing a the past.
3rd Digger - 'Ang on Frank. What about Long Tan - 100 of our boys against more in 2 000 of them. Gotta be worth somethun.
1st Digger - Ah....Ah, that's nothin. Anyway your round in it. Tell ya though; lose this one, that'll be it; wouldn't wanna show ya face would'ya.

**PETER McDONALD**

Well they couldn't even call it a war they called it a conflict. I think the bullets are the same.

**DAVID McARDLE**

There's a lot of anger here tonight I guess. Yeah, angry, angry. I think the RSL until very recently has had a poor response to the Vietnam veteran. You get very angry. It wasn't really until my later life when I really began to think about it that I realised that the war should never have happened and focused on the reasons why it came about. But at that era because the war was on and because I was still in the army I really believed that we should have been there. And I still believe there was a strong communistic threat; that the North Vietnamese were overrunning a country that they had no right to overrun and that they were hostile in doing that and that we should have been there. And I felt that anyone who sided with the North Vietnamese was, to my mind, not patriotic to
Australia. The really hurtful thing was and the cause of the anger I felt was the experiences I'd had. I'd seen a lot of my friends killed and read the papers when I was home, read of other people that had been killed. Having this sort of reaction from the Australian public - well, the anger just grew, it did.

NARRATOR

When the war, and protest, were over many still felt angry.

PETER McDONALD

Well I think it had a great effect on all Vietnam veterans in that many of them wouldn't even admit to being Vietnam veterans. It was perceived by them that it was a period of shame, something they had to hide, something they had to cover up and I think that's quite tragic that that has happened. Less so since the welcome home parade in Sydney but certainly leading up to that time you have a great number of Vietnam veterans who had had as many as thirty-five to forty jobs in eighteen to twenty years. I think a lot of the job changing has led to marital discord, separations, divorces, trauma in the families a lot of support required by social security, Commonwealth employment service; the need for support from those areas. In recent years, of course, there's been the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service which has been a tremendous help to a large number of veterans who have sort of come out of the woodwork.

POEM - HOMECOMING (excerpt - by Bob McGowan)

- BACKGROUND MUSIC "A WHITER SHADE OF PALE" BY PROCOL HAREM

When I came home
I wanted somebody to mine your freeways.
I wanted mortar rounds to pound the Country Club
I wanted recoilless rifles to smash
  The glass and chrome
  Of the downtown financial district
I wanted men with satchel charges
  To destroy your banks
I wanted angry men with automatic weapons
  To stuff your money up your ass
I wanted you to be afraid to sleep at night
I wanted you to cover your head
  And scream for God's mercy
  As you shit your pants
I wanted you to talk and sweat and breathe and die
  Like real people do in the villages of the world.

NARRATOR

Protest and the antipathy of an unwilling public combined, with the unique and almost other worldly experience of the soldier in Vietnam to create a tremendous rift between the veteran and society.
In 1987, more than a decade after Australia's involvement in Vietnam, Australia's Vietnam veterans finally had a homecoming parade and were recognised by Australians as returned servicemen, and at last the social rift began to be removed.

DAVID McARDLE

I don't really think you'll ever be able to quantify the value, the value is so enormous to these people, the veterans, to know that Australia is now behind us. I believe that what happened in Sydney was a very big step towards the healing process, I don't believe it was the healing process but it's a very big step towards that.

PETER McDonald

Sydney helped us enormously. I don't believe I'd be here this evening talking about the Vietnam war if it wasn't for Sydney. It was a really incredible feeling, an incredible thing to be involved in and I believe any Vietnam veteran that didn't experience it really has missed something. I think the amount of people that we saw there, I think it was around about a five kilometre march or six kilometre march, it was over in seconds, people ten to fifteen deep just crying.

There wasn't a dry eye in the house so to speak. The old soldiers were there lining the side of the march. It was as if they'd suddenly came to understand the war. For me, that's the way I felt, they were clapping their hands and saying 'Welcome home, digger!' There were protesters from the era of the '60s and '70s, people had placards saying 'We're sorry!', people ran amongst the troops, the marchers, kissing them and saying they didn't really mean it.

BACKGROUND MUSIC "ONLY NINETEEN" BY REDGUM

NARRATOR

David McArdle was 32 years old when he served in Vietnam in 1970. He had spent 12 years in the RAAF and in Vietnam he served as a Corporal with 9th Squadron as an Armament Fitter.

Peter McDonald was in Vietnam for 5 months during 1967/68 and served in the 1st Field Squadron, Engineers, he was responsible for mine and bomb disposal. Peter was wounded during the Tet offensive....He was 19 years of age.

CONCLUSION

NARRATOR - BACKGROUND MUSIC "LEAVING ON A JET PLANE" BY PETER, PAUL & MARY
The statistics state that the Australian casualties in the Vietnam War were 496 dead and 2398 wounded, there are no statistics on the psychological trauma suffered by Vietnam veterans. Not listed among the casualties are:

- The veterans who have committed suicide, unofficial figures mention 500.
- Those veterans who are washed up old men at 40, misfits in our communities.
- The many wives and families whose lives will never be the same because of the Vietnam war.

The soldiers came home from Vietnam not as heroes but as evil persons blamed for the war. Their perceived rejection by Australian society compounded the post traumatic stress suffered by veterans. They experienced a great sense of shame; as a class of people they felt ostracised by the Australian community.

What was special about the protest against Australia's involvement in Vietnam was that the protest appeared to be taken on by the community and lasted 20 years right up until the coming home parade.

For many veterans the coming home parade was the first step in healing the rift between veterans and society, but there is still a long way to go.

We would like to acknowledge and thank David McArdle and Peter McDonald who shared so openly with us their experiences and feelings as Vietnam veterans. We also thank Noel Giblet from the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service.

Today's show was performed by Grant Walton, Anne Matacz, Ayaz Khan and Bruce Clarke and students from Murdoch University. We would like to thank Kim Le-Souef, Dave Lee, Bruce Scates and Rae Frances for their assistance.
HISTORY ON THE AIR 2:

Women and War: A Feminist Critique

by Steve Hall, Vicki McFadyen and Elizabeth Thornber

SONG:

The first time it was fathers, the last time it was sons
And in between your husbands marched away with drums and guns
And you never thought to question, you just went on with your lives 'cause all they taught you who to be was mothers, daughters, wives.

You can only just remember, the tears your mother's shed
As they sat and read their papers through the lists and lists of dead
And the gold frames of photographs that mothers kissed at night
And the door frames held the shocked and silent strangers from the light.

(chorus fade down)

OLD WOMAN REMINISCING

I was in Meekatharra when the war broke out. I remember it because I had a sweetheart at the time, Alan. As soon as that was announced I could see him dying on a hillside, you know, like in a dream. It didn't go away. I can see the picture now. When it was announced. You know, the ships were leaving England, leaving for the war zone, and everybody was crying, and I never forgot it because I was very puzzled about it, you know, I couldn't understand why, or what war was about, or anything. I remember asking the union secretary up there "Why?" I was so puzzled. I was very upset about it, really I was, and of course... the town emptied. They all went to war.
Britain's declaration of war on Germany on the 4th August 1914 meant that Australia was automatically at war too. Initially, support for the war seemed to span the spectrum of political opinion. Andrew Fisher, leader of the Labor Party, pledged to support Britain 'to the last man, to the last shilling. It was a commitment which reflected the close cultural and economic links between the two countries.

331 000 Australians enthusiastically volunteered to fight overseas by Britain's side. At wars end in November 1918, 213 000 of these volunteers had been scarred or wounded in mind or body. About 60 000 volunteers never returned.

Hello, and welcome to the History Show. The focus of war is usually about men. It is men who go off to war to decide the fate of nations and to reaffirm their manhood. In this show however, we wish to concentrate on the women on the homefront; those left behind, but particularly those involved in anti-war and anti-conscription campaigns.

We also wish to illustrate the way both pro-war and anti-war conscription campaigns manipulated the ideals of motherhood and womanhood.

As the feminist historian, Carmel Shute, points out, maternity was elevated to the realm of heroism and the worth of a woman was gauged by the number of sons she was willing to abandon to the imperialist cause.

It is a great pity that all mothers are not of same mind as Mrs. Budgin of Bulimba who has sent three of her sons to the front. One has been killed in France while the remaining two are still in the trenches. These are her own words...

If I had twenty sons I'd send them willingly, and if they would not go, I would not own them. I myself would go, and wash the poor boys' clothes if they would let me.

During the war several anti-war organisations emerged across Australia. One of these was the Women's Peace Army. Formed in 1915, it drew upon strands of Christianity, socialism and feminism. A member of the Women's Peace Army argued...
What can a boy think of a mother who teaches him one thing and then contradicts this with legalised murder? The time has come when the women, the mothers of the world shall refuse to give their sons as material for shot and shell.

This song was often sung at rallies to support this stand.

I didn't raise my son to be a soldier
I brought him up to be my pride and joy
Who dares to put a musket on his shoulder
To kill some other mother's darling boy.

The government found this song unpatriotic and it was banned under the War Precautions Act.

The Women's Peace Army encouraged and empowered women to combat their own oppression. Their double attack on patriarchy and war brought forth a brutal response.

The Women's Peace Army provoked a strong anti feminist backlash. Members of the group were amongst the first to suffer mob attack. They were caricatured as spinsters and traitors, accused of betraying their sex and their nation.

If anyone here would do to these women what the Germans did to the women of Belgium I'd stand by and watch them do it with pleasure.

Patriotic women's organisations encouraged young girls to refuse sporting and social engagements with eligible men unwilling to enlist. As one writer in a women's magazine argued:
CONSERVATIVE WOMAN
It seems incongruous and callous to see virile, athletic men who would seem to be dissipating so much energy in games when there is so much work calling them.

NARRATOR
Miss Cecelia Shelley recalls the pressure placed on men during these early years of the war.

MISS CECELIA SHELLEY
It was funny because we were so dead poor. It was dreadful really. The war was on at this time so now I've got fears because every day somebody was killed, everyday somebody was broken-hearted about somebody getting killed. Lil had a lovely brother, I met him, about 21 - He worked in.... Can't remember the place... the so and so's.
Every Monday the boss'd come around "Still here, Uren?"
That was what was going on, no conscription, but - out!
At last Uren took the hint and he went, and he'd hardly arrived there and he was dead. Just arrived there. I'll never forget bawling my eyes out about that.

NARRATOR
Anxious to ensure Australia a place in world affairs after the war, Hughes acceded to British demands to replace those slaughtered in the trenches. He proposed the introduction of male conscription in 1916.
But the 'little digger' did not have the full support of the Parliamentary Labor Party and referred the issue of conscription to the people by a referendum, first in 1916 and again in 1917.

HUGHES
You who have already done so much for Australia by giving your sons, brothers, or husbands to fight for Liberty, have now a great opportunity to help those whose glorious valour has won for themselves and for the Commonwealth a name that will live for ever.
Do you wish reinforcements to be sent to your dear ones at the Front? They only need 7 000 men from Australia every month, one man every working day of the week from each electorate in Western Australia.
Do not fail your own flesh and blood. Do not be false to Australia; Do not be duped by the enemies in our midst. Send the right men to help your own at the Front, by voting YES on December 20th.
NARRATOR Throughout the two referendums, Hughes fought tooth and nail to convince the people to vote YES. He used propaganda including cartoons depicting women with their breasts cut off by the filthy Hun.

Like the overtly emotive propaganda campaigns that attracted volunteers in the early years of the war, the conscription campaign appealed to the masculine image of what it meant to be Australian.

ALL VOICES
Protect your family! Protect the community!
Be loyal to Australia! Be loyal to mateship!

NARRATOR Since 1902, women had been able to vote in federal elections and both sides of the conscription debate tried to win the 'women's vote'. Women were seen to have the power to influence and encourage men to do their duty, and propaganda often reflected this image.

MUSIC SOUNDS

PRO-CONSCRIPTIONIST MALE
The heart's desire of every woman is for the war to end speedily and victoriously. Much depends, so far as Australia is concerned, on how the women vote. They can, if they will, ensure an affirmative vote at the referendum. The Germans know something of the fighting qualities of the Australian soldier, the aim should now be to show the Kaiser and his henchmen something of the moral fibre of the soldier's wife, mother and sister. What woman, be she wife or mother, sister or sweetheart of the soldier at the front, would like to have it said of her that she denied him help that it was in her power to give. It is in her power to give him the help he needs most, and that is too provide comrades to be by his side, and she can do this by voting YES.

ALL VOICES
Vote YES for Australia's sake.
Vote YES for the sake of the empire.
Vote YES for the sake of humanity.
Vote YES for God's sake.

NARRATOR Yet women were bitterly divided over the issue.

FIRST WOMAN
I am a woman. I can only be loyal in a woman's way. I cannot give to the state what is not mine. Voting away other people's liberty is not patriotism: it is persecution. Forcing other people to risk their lives is not courage: it is cowardice. Vote NO!
SECOND WOMAN

I am a woman. I was given a vote that I might impress my womanly feeling and point of view on public life. If I use that vote to strengthen men's faith in violence and revenge as against intelligence and moral force, my influence is worse than wasted. Vote NO!

THIRD WOMAN

I am a woman. I have an obligation to the men at the front. But I know that I cannot relieve them by swelling the number of sufferers. I believe the glory of Man is not in his brute strength and violence, but in his powers of intellect and spirit. For the relief of the agonised youth of all nations, our own included, I demand that he use these powers to bring the present war to an end. Vote NO!

FOURTH WOMAN

I am a woman. For the honour of womanhood, for the glory of Australia, and for the encouragement of men to be true to the highest in them, I mean to record a vote of want of confidence in war, and, vote NO!

NARRATOR

But often a woman's worth was measured by the willingness of her menfolk to enlist.

PRO-CONSCRIPTIONIST MALE

What is it but a dark reflection on the womanhood of every woman whose man can fight for her yet does not? Is she not worth fighting for? Is the man she loves a laggard or a coward? The nation's appeal is to our young manhood to enlist. But the nation's heart cry is to the women of Australia, the guardians of the spirit of the race, to be brave and stern and resolute and to match the heroism of the men of ANZAC by lending their menfolk to the nation in Australia's hour of need.

NARRATOR

Yet other women thought these attitudes and values insulting to motherhood.

MOTHER'S VOICE

It was not the thought of his being killed that was a nightmare to me..., that was terrible, but more terrible still, was the thought of his killing another dear boy like himself, a boy whose mother loved him as passionately as I loved mine.

NARRATOR

As Carmel Shute put it:
CARMEL SHUTE

Waiting was the motif of women's part in the war. Women waited for their sons, their husbands, their brothers, their lovers to return to them: they waited for news of them from the trenches of France, for the cliffs of Gallipoli, they waited, powerless and suffering while the male sex battled against each other in a senseless and bloody conflict.

NARRATOR

Ernest Scott, the official Australian historian of the Great War supports Shute's view:

ERNEST SCOTT

The time was to come when the strain was still heavier, when women were to hide themselves and sometimes faint at the approach of the clergyman of their faith lest he should bear them news of the death of a son or husband, when lamps burnt late in solitary rooms where sleepless women prayed and suffered. Such is a woman's part in war, how bitter and hopeless only a woman knows'.

NARRATOR

However, not all women wept and waited. Many participated in strikes, demonstrations and meetings. Pro-conscriptionists hired halls in which to rally support; their meetings in turn were disrupted by angry groups of anti's. Both challenged the passivity and ignorance expected of traditional gender roles.

THE AGE (newspaper)

Once again, by resorting to senseless and hysterical noise, anti-conscriptionists did their best to prevent their opponents obtaining a hearing last night at Richmond town hall.

For nearly three-quarters of an hour the women's mass meeting there was converted into a pandemonium by a shrill-voiced section of interrupters.

EXCITED CROWD NOISE. SHRIEKS, HOOTS, APPLAUSE, Hisses

WOMEN'S GROUP

'I didn't raise my son to be a soldier
I brought him up to be my pride and joy
Who dares to put a musket on his shoulder
To kill some other mother's darling boy.'

COUNCILLOR KEMP

Now, ladies.

LADIES SING 'GLORY, GLORY HALLELUJAH': STAMPING OF FEET.

KEMP (ASIDE)

Constable, I need some order here.
POLICEMAN
I'll have to ask you to leave, Madam. Come along outside.
CHEERS, HOOTS, APPLAUSE

KEMP
I have been asked to take the chair...
STAMPING OF FEET, GENERAL UPROAR

LADY 1
This is shameful.

KEMP
What about the boys who go to the front to fight for your liberty? Are you going to desert them?
HOOTS, SCREAMING

LADY 1
It's not Richmond women doing this.

KEMP
I know it's not Richmond women. There are a lot of women paid to come and make a noise.
UPROAR, HISSES
We have here Sergeant Fozard, a Gallipoli hero.
HOOTS, CHEERS
He went at the first call.
GROANS, HOOTS
I appeal for a fair hearing.

LADY 1
He's not the only one.

FOZARD
There are some people who seem to take the war as a joke.
HOOTS
The ones who are hooting are not mothers.
UPROAR

VOICE
I'm a mother!

FOZARD
I appeal to you on behalf of the lads at the front.

WOMAN 2
Why don't you go back again?
CONTINUOUS UPROAR
FOZARD

I am going back. The ones at the front now have done enough. But what have those done who have stayed behind? German money and influence seem to have made themselves prominent among those who attend these meetings.

EXTRA UPROAR

After the war, most girls will prefer the men who have fought and bled for them. I hope you will someday regret when you hooted the men who fought to keep the country.

HOOTS, CHEERS

WOMAN 2

Why did you come back?

FOZARD (HOTLY)

I came back with a bullet in my lung and a wound in the shoulder - got when fighting for people like you.

CHEERS

SERGEANT (ASIDE)

Come on, constable, let's move this lot outside.

CONSTABLE

Move along there! Move along.

SERGEANT

Outside, please - You'll have to go outside.

CHEERS, CALLS, APPLAUSE.

KEMP

I'll now introduce Reverend Henry Howard, from South Australia.

HOWARD

That disturbing element have come from other districts. Their fares were paid to come here. They have been seen at other meetings. Let me explain to you why conscription is necessary. We have a debt of honour that we owe to Britain, to the men at the front, and to yourselves. If democracy means opportunities for getting, and none for giving, a life without obligations, then it is composed of all the meanest and most contemptible elements in our national life, and is doomed to a speedy decay.

LADY 3

Do you mean that if we all vote No, we go to hell?

HOWARD

Everyone carries their own hell.

LAUGHTER

This is a matter for everyone's conscience.

LADY 4

How do you reconcile conscription with the commandment that forbids killing?
HOWARD
Moses, who brought down the commandments from the mount, raised the first conscription army himself.

CHEERS

APPLAUSE. FADE.

NARRATOR
By the end of 1916, overseas battlefields were soaked with the blood of Australian youth. Thousands of volunteers had been killed or wounded. Any enthusiasm of the soldiers soon waned when faced with the reality of war. As Miss Cecelia Shelley reminisced:

The conscription issue was a general sort of thing. I remember a kitchen maid. O God, she was going to vote for conscription, you know, but her boyfriend who was at the war wrote and told her to vote No. He was right at the war, and he wrote and told her. The boys were writing home and saying, Vote No. They'd had it! They didn't want it.

Australian society rejected both conscription referenda. The country was divided by sectarianism, strikes and Hughes' prosecution of the war effort. It had grown tired of a bloody and senseless war.

ALL SING 'MISCHIEF MAKER BILLY HUGHES'

NARRATOR
Possibly the most influential piece of propaganda against conscription was the Blood Vote leaflet. This portrayed a bewildered woman placing a YES vote in the ballot box, with Hughes (characterised as the devil) hovering over her shoulder.
MOUTH ORGAN MUSIC

MALE VOICE Why is your face so white, Mother?
Why do you choke for breath?

FEMALE VOICE 0 I have dreamt in the night, my son,
That I doomed a man to death.

MALE VOICE Why do you hide your hand, Mother?
And crouch above it in dread?

FEMALE VOICE It beareth a dreadful brand, my son:
With the dead man's blood 'tis red.

I hear his widow cry in the night,
I hear his children weep,
And always within my sight, O God!
The dead man's blood doth leap.

They put the dagger into my grasp,
It seemed but a pencil then,
I did not know it was a fiend a-gasp
For the priceless blood of men.

They gave me the ballot paper,
The grim death-warrant of doom
And I smugly sentenced the man to death,
In that dreadful room.
Feminists have argued that the war reduced the nature of womanhood to its essential biological function - motherhood. 'It was the lot of modern women, as it had been through history, to deliver up unconditionally to the "Moloch of War" the fruit of their wombs.' The Great War thus served to consolidate the dichotomy of the sexes in Australia. It reinforced the traditional stereotypes of men as warriors - 'the creators of history' - and women as mothers - whose role was to bear children and influence those around them into dutiful submission.

Cynthia Enlow put it this way:

The processes of military manpower acquisition are gendered processes. Military forces, past and present, have not been able to get, keep and reproduce the sorts of soldiers they imagine they need, without drawing on ideological beliefs concerning the different and stratified roles of women and men. Without assurance that women will play their 'proper' roles, the military cannot provide men with the incentives to enlist, obey convince their sons to enlist.... Militaries need women - but they need women to behave as the gender 'woman'.

Unfortunately, the gendered woman did continue to operate in ways that supported the military and state apparatus, and Judy Small's song "Mothers, Sisters, Wives" serves as a poignant reminder of the continuity of this process.

'MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS, WIVES' BY JUDY SMALL

(CHORUS)
The first time it was fathers, the last time it was sons, And in between your husbands marched away with drums and guns And you never thought to question, you just went on with your lives, Cause all they taught you who to be was mothers, daughters, wives.

You can only just remember the tears your mothers shed As they sat and read their papers through their lists and lists of dead, And the gold frames of the photographs that mothers kissed each night And the door frames held the shocked and silent strangers from the fight.
CHORUS
And it was 21 years later with children of your own
The trumpets sounded once again and the soldier boys were gone
And you drove their trucks and made their guns and tended to their wounds and at night you kissed their photographs
And you kissed their photographs and prayed for safe returns.

And after it was over you had to learn again to be just wives
And mothers when you'd done the work of men
So you worked to help the needy and never trod on toes
And the photos on the piano struck a happy family pose

CHORUS
And then your daughters grew to be women and your little boys to men, and you prayed that you were dreaming
When the call up came again and you proudly smiled
And held your tears as they bravely waved goodbye
And the photos on the mantelpiece always made you cry.

And now you're getting older and in time the photos fade
And in widowhood you sit back and reflect on the parade
At the forcing of your memories as your daughters change their lives, seeing more to our existence than just mothers, daughters, wives.

CHORUS
And you believed them that there was nothing more than just mothers, daughters, wives.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of this History Show gratefully acknowledge the help of all those who took part in the first broadcast. Special thanks to Jan Gothard, Anne Matatz, Jim, and the staff at ESTR.

Editor's Note

As both the preceding articles were the transcripts of radio broadcasts the usual footnoting conventions have been suspended. Both shows were based on the extensive use of oral sources. Students working on 'The Home Front' conducted several interviews with Vietnam veterans, whilst 'Women and War' employed the oral history holdings of the Battye Library. Students gratefully acknowledge the following sources:


Pat Gowan, 'The Women's Peace Army' in Elizabeth Windshuttle, Women Class and History, Sydney, 1980

Chris Healy, 'War against War', in Verity Burgmann, Jenny Lee (eds) Staining the Wattle, Melbourne, 1988

Carmel Shute, 'Heroines and Heroes': Sexual Mythology in Australia 1914-18', Hecate, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1975

Conclusion
CONCLUSION
by Geoffrey Bolton

Part One: The History of the Historian

Editors' Note: This piece was written by Geoffrey Bolton in February 1975, as an example of how first year history students might write a 'personal history'. We thank Rob Pascoe for drawing our attention to this source.

I was born in Perth on 5 November 1931, at a small private nursing home where for several days I was the only baby. This was because the Great Depression was nearly at its worst. Fewer people were having babies, and many of those who did could not afford a private maternity hospital. I was one of the lucky ones. Not only had I the attention of all the nurses, but I was much wanted by my parents who, except for a stillborn elder brother, had no children. Consequently, there was a strong sense of security present in my early years, which was reinforced by other factors. Although my parents were not well off, my father was never out of work; he was a clerk and later sales manager with a firm which sold motor-cycles, and a lower middle-class family in regular wages could manage comfortably at a time of low prices. There was no sense of belonging to an ethnic or religious minority; my parents were of English birth, practicing Anglicans by religion, and lived in North Perth, a suburb whose inhabitants in those days were largely of similar background.

When I was six years old, I went to North Perth State School. My first two or three years were not very happy. I was a rather awkward child, not good at games or sports, but I was academically bright, and did not realize that it was the correct pose among other kids not to enjoy work. So I was bullied somewhat, and rather envied the younger brother who had been born just before my sixth birthday. Things gradually improved as I grew older, partly because I developed some skill as the class comedian, partly because I found friends with common interests in such things as stamp collecting and (after 1939) tracking round the bush looking for German and Japanese spies. I don't remember being much scared by the Japanese threat in 1942. There were refugee friends from Singapore, and a couple of days off lessons digging slit trenches in the school yard; one night there was an alert because of unidentified aircraft; but on the whole the adults of that period managed to keep the children largely unaware of the fear of invasion. It might have been different if my father had been in the armed services, but he was manpowered. Being a thorough little patriot, I regretted that at the time.

I finished my time at North Perth a year too young for the Modern School scholarship examination, and instead went to Wesley College on a scholarship, remaining there from 1943 to 1947. For six months in my first year I was in bed with nephritis following scarlet fever. This was a time when I did a lot of reading, even tackling Sir Walter Scott's novels. My father had many works of biography and history, and he gave me access to them - the first proper book I ever read, at
about the age of eight, was Charles Dickens' *Child History of England*: full of blood and guts - and this period of enforced inactivity confirmed my strong interest in history. For most of my time at Wesley, however, I thought I wanted to be a lawyer. It was only in my last year that the headmaster made me aware that it was possible to pursue an academic career, and actually be paid for teaching and researching on the subject which I loved most. This was a revelation.

The period of illness confirmed my view of myself as lacking athletic potential, but although this meant missing out on a number of activities dear to most of my contemporaries, it was no great handicap to my social life. I went to dancing classes, and gradually moved into the swing of teenage parties - innocuous, teetotal affairs.

Both at Wesley and later at University I found myself mixing with people from a wealthier income bracket than my own. I never felt rebuffed by any sense of snobbery, but I hadn't a great deal of spending money, my family owned no car, and we had no telephone because much of my father's working life was spent in long distance calls, and he didn't choose to have the phone ringing at home in the evenings. These circumstances placed some restrictions on my social life, particularly with girls. A gawky adolescent, troubled with pimples, I languished after one or two girls at a distance, but didn't find it possible to court any of them. On the other hand, not expecting to be taken seriously as a boy-friend, I found myself able to converse with girls as people and treat them as individuals. This in later life I have come to consider fortunate. By the time I was sixteen or so I had a number of good friends of both sexes; my mother was an excellent cook, and her hospitality was appreciated; and, thanks to a good Leaving result, it was clear that I was going to the University of Western Australia.

Academically, I did what was hoped for me. My first year was successful. In my second year I edited the *Pelican*, then a fairly innocuous rag, whose staff between issues spent their time in marathon bridge games. My results suffered somewhat. After a fatherly chat from Professor Alexander, I resigned from the editorial chair in May of my third year, studied reasonably, and was admitted to Honours at the beginning of 1951. Before quitting as an editor, I went to the first conference of student editors, which was held in Melbourne. I had never been more than 200 miles from Perth in my life before, and the sophistication of Melbourne and its university left a lasting impression. (I may add that the conference was my idea, and I had originally urged that it should be held in Perth; but the other editors all said it would be cheaper to hold it in Melbourne, and for me to come to them. I had rather hoped for this outcome.)

I suspect I was fairly impervious to the religious and political ferment of those postwar years. I continued to conform to my parents' Anglicanism, although my own position was veering into agnosticism, particularly in reaction against the High Church views of the local parson; however, I didn't wish to hurt my parents' feelings and certainly didn't feel rebellious. I have always enjoyed the order and
form of Anglican ceremony, even at the times when I could assent least to the beliefs. As to politics, we were all rather bored with the Chifley Labor government, which seemed full of middle-aged men in badly cut suits holding forth about the Depression. Menzies looked like a new brand of Liberal. On the other hand, while I considered communists to be inexplicable and dogmatic, and was thoroughly repelled by what I knew of Stalin's Russia, I was unhappy about the attempts to ban the Communist Party in 1950-51, and protested when a Communist speaker was shouted down by Liberal rowdies at the University. I have ever since had the strongest of views that a university is one place where opinions must be free to be voiced, however repugnant or unpopular. It is important to me that Murdoch should be that sort of place.

From 1951 to 1954 I was a post-graduate student. I wrote an honours thesis on Alexander Forrest, which by good fortune was supported for publication as a book. Forrest was the explorer who opened up the Kimberleys to white occupation, and when it came to choosing a topic for an MA thesis, I decided to write about the Kimberley pastoral industry, largely because I knew nothing about the outback, which played such an important part in Australia's development. I had three months travelling around the Kimberleys in the drought winter of 1952. It was a time when some of the original pioneers from the 1880s and 1890s were still alive, cattle were still being driven on the hoof to Wyndham markets, and when resident owners were making new and hopeful experiments such as the Air Beef scheme and the first experiments in rice-growing on the Fitzroy. This was a maturing experience, and made me feel much better acquainted with the Australia outside the cities.

Completion of the MA was followed by the award of a Hackett scholarship. Like many Australian historians I chose to go to Balliol College, Oxford, which has a reputation both for hospitality to non-English students, and for history. Here I widened my fields of historical interest, made many British and North American friends, saw Europe, and got married. Subsequently I have been a research fellow at the Australian National University, writing a history of North Queensland; a senior lecturer at Monash in its early years, where I developed a taste for academic pioneering which has since brought me to Murdoch; and from 1966 to 1973 Professor of Modern History at the University of Western Australia.

My life's experience has given me both strengths and weaknesses in my approach to history and contemporary affairs. I enjoy reading, writing and talking about history, and have been lucky enough to be able to develop some fluency in dealing with the subject. It is unusually good fortune to work at the field one likes best. I do not have much imagination for new ideas, and when confronted by what Professor Manning Clark calls 'the great questions of mind and spirit' tend to take a middle position. I know myself to be strongly grounded in European, and particularly British, culture but ignorant and not as curious as I should be about non-Europeans. Coming to Murdoch has done a lot to ward off the risks of middle-aged complacency, and I like to imagine myself open to new experiences which will broaden my sympathies.
CONCLUSION

by Geoffrey Bolton

Part Two: Questioning the Past - and Future

The candidate is required to answer two questions:

1. Why did you leave the University of Western Australia to come to Murdoch?

2. Why are you leaving Murdoch to go to the University of Queensland?

Let us take the easy one: Why come to Murdoch? Largely because of frequent exposure to pioneer situations. When I was a student at the University of Western Australia between 1948 and 1954, history had been taught for close on forty years, but it was only with postwar growth that Professor Fred Alexander had the resources to venture into what were then uncharted academic waters. He doubled his staff by taking on two very bright and disputatious Melbourne graduates, John Legge to teach Southeast Asian and Pacific History and Frank Crowley for Australian History. (UWA is not uniformly conservative; no Australian university had ever previously employed a tenured full-time Australian historian). Under their inspiration I learned that history could be taught innovatively, that students could enjoy and benefit from the experience of research from original sources, and that Australian history possessed its own worth and could be explored and written up by the most exacting standards of history worldwide.

Later I had the luck to be at the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Australian National University when Sir Keith Hancock was at his most experimental. He started a famous wool seminar, bringing together historians, economists, biologists, botanists, epidemiologists, and - not least - practical graziers. To him "interdisciplinary" was not a dirty word. He was godfather to the great Australian Dictionary of Biography. He got mediaeval history going in Australia by summoning the very first conference of interested parties. The detail of organisation was left to the youngest member of his department, one Bolton, chosen because his research topic at that time began in 1860, which was marginally closer to the Middle Ages than any research of his senior colleagues. ANU under Hancock was a dynamic learning experience; but I needed to work at a teaching university. John Legge was just starting History at Monash. I went there for four exhilarating years. It left me with an ineradicable taste for being present at the creation of new ventures.

The lure of promotion and the home town brought me to the Chair of Modern History at the University of Western Australia at the beginning of 1966. I don't count this as the most successful piece of my professional career. It seemed to me then - wrongly - that Frank Crowley had skimmed the cream of the work that needed to be done in Australian History. My role should be that of a utility player while colleagues built up strengths in non-Australian fields, particularly
Mediaeval and Indian History, in which for various reasons Perth's remoteness from the rest of the world might not matter. Good work has been done in both Mediaeval and Indian History at UWA, but neither has flourished as we hoped. Meanwhile, my appetite for experiment was whetted by membership of the Murdoch University Planning Board between 1970 and 1973. With the example of Monash to build on, I was attracted by the notion of becoming a foundation Professor of History.

It struck me that too many students embarking on History in First Year, with perhaps no experience of the world beyond childhood and adolescence in Western Australia, were thrown in at the deep end of England in 1485 or Revolutionary France and left to find their own way back to familiar ground. My colleagues and I believed that students should start with the known; either controversies of some contemporary relevance, or else aspects of their own society, Australia. From Australia they should move out of the societies from which most of them originated, Europe and especially Britain; to the geographic neighbourhood of Southeast and East Asia; to the two superpowers, the United States and the USSR; and eventually because we live on the Indian Ocean littoral - to South and East Africa. We got as far as the superpowers before funding tightened, but were not able to retain our Russian specialist on tenure, and the design remains incomplete. However, we have been justified in our strong support of external studies and mature-age students, and we have played a creative and original role in reforming undergraduate studies so that Murdoch students gain experience in the craft of researching and writing history. Perhaps we have not paid enough attention to publicising ourselves. But the quality of Murdoch history graduates is widely respected, and other universities have done us the honour of imitating our ideas. It has been a continuing privilege to work with such lively-minded colleagues and students.

But the law of entropy applies even to professors. It is easy for the middle-aged to stagnate. With the merger between Murdoch and the University of Western Australia the pioneer phase is over. The inaugural Chair of Australian History at the University of Queensland offers the chance to share in the development of Queensland's established Centre for Australian Studies and to try out a few new ideas. With the centenary of the Australian Commonwealth looming in 2001, might not Brisbane be a suitable venue for a centre for federal studies? Ought we not teach more about the ethnic roots from which today's Australians derive? Murdoch has not been tied down by traditions because we have been too busy making them. But what are the opportunities in a long-established Department of History? Howell Witt, the Anglican bishop of the North-West used to claim that we place too much emphasis on the pioneer. It was not the pioneer, the Elijah, who required a double portion of the Spirit, but the next person in, the Elisha. During the next few years I expect to find out whether or not he was right.